

## propulsion

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### Get ready...On The Go Technologies enters Seattle startup scene

The mobile application space gets more crowded every day. Although this certainly presents a challenge to a new market player, it's one that Seattle startup [On The Go Technologies](#) is willing to tackle. In our continuing series of interviews with entrepreneurs, we asked [Drew Morrison](#) to tell us a little about On The Go Technologies and to share some of his experience in prepping a company to launch with others who may be considering a similar move in the near future.



**Drew Morrison**

**Question:** On The Go Technologies has only been on the Seattle startup scene for a year, so tell us a little about your company. Who are your co-founders? You're a mobile software development team, but what is your primary focus?

**Answer:** Yes, we're a pretty new company. We spent 10 months as a fumbling LLC struggling to gather moment as well as to gain a clear understanding of how to execute. We had this great idea, we just didn't really know what to do with it. Our greatest gains have come in the past 2-3 months. We were able to find two amazing advisors: [Jeff Coon](#) of [Makegood Software](#) and [Richard Luck](#) of [Loudlever](#). I can't tell you enough how blessed we are to have these two on our team. Both have a tremendous amount of knowledge, passion and heart, and thankfully, they offered a lot of that to us. Additionally, during this time we finally were able to build a team (two developers, two non-developers), hire a contractor to help with UI (Bill Hones), secure our first test subjects and finally make the transition to a C-Corp. We just built our first prototype a few weeks ago (yes, applause here!) and are working on gathering more intel to build a marketable beta, which we hope to have in the market around Christmas.

As a company, we're only four deep; five if you include our contract guy, Bill. There are the three co-founders: I handle everything related to business,

[Nicholas Sveslosky](#) handles everything product related (he had the idea for On the Go) and [Chris Rosenquest](#) is our technology guru. Although he isn't technically a co-founder, our fourth member is truly a rock star. [Kevin Mansel](#) is our senior developer, but I think his title should be "stud." With the four of us, we have this unique dynamic. The guys trust me to lead and direct us in the right direction, which I can only do because I trust they all can do their jobs just as proficiently. We're this weird mix of business-junky-meets-Zen-master-meets-technogeek-meets-techno-nut... I have no real description for us except that we're the team of OTG and yet, I keep hearing the theme song to the Addams Family as I type this...

Our focus is addressing a problem that we see in the market — a lack of simplicity that allows a user to quickly search, locate, plan multiple venues and navigate all in ONE easy-to-use platform. In a nutshell, we are focusing on improving current consumer location software platforms and other current colloquial consumer sites like [Yelp](#) or [Urbanspoon](#) and make them function in one easy-to-use mobile or non-mobile program or application. Our twist comes in how we present information and the functionality we offer to a user by suggesting venues and events based specifically on their personal preferences. Our goal is to make a user a local expert no matter what city he or she is in.

**Question:** It seems that you are in one of the most challenging business climates for startups. Not only is there a lot of noise in the market for enabling mobile technologies...the economic sector is very tight for young businesses these days. What's your strategy for getting On The Go Technologies out of the starting gate? Since you're an investor as well as an entrepreneur, are you bootstrapping the company? Or are you looking for angel or VC funding and, if so, how are you getting in front of other potential investors? Have you found the Seattle startup community helpful for business and funding support?

**Answer:** Gosh, tough market? You bet. Everyone is trying to go mobile and mobile apps is the hot ticket. We really only have a few years to make our mark before this eventually fizzles out and we're all back to the drawing boards. And you're right, the economy is just terrible, making it impossible for new startups to get financing, unless you're an ex-Apple exec, which many of us aren't. The question of strategy was a huge discussion point for us. In the beginning it was only Nicholas and me, two non-technical co-founders piecing together this huge puzzle. I almost think this helped us. Since we didn't know how to build, we really had to focus on what the problem was and how to best approach it to get our answer to, "How do I get into a highly

saturated market?" To us was a no brainer, don't enter it.

On The Go's core product might have the final end user as the consumer and our primary build specs about making it functionally very appealing to the user, but we don't have to get to the user by going directly to him or her. Instead, we chose to partner with hotels. Build them a quality commercial product that can integrate with their current guest services or concierges and allow their guests to benefit from the marriage. This process gets us into the market with a lower barrier to entrance, we can fine tune our pitch and sales goals and go after hotels that inherently have hundreds, thousands and even millions of guests annually...and in the end, we get what we have always wanted: consumer users.

In the beginning, we did seek out VCs and angels. We found this process dull, mainly because no one responded! I think out of 20 requests, only one or two had the decency to respond. It was this lack of response that made me realize that we were going to have to do this on our own. As great of an idea as we had, no one was funding ideas anymore (not for Average Joes, at least); we would have to take that idea to reality and then, we could re-approach those oh-so-grand VC and angel guys that for some reason could not hit a "reply" button. So for now, we are bootstrapping. Nicholas and I have put in a sizable amount, but this time around, OTG will look to me to fund them. I feel honored that I can and am happy to push our company forward. Now, in fairness to VC and angels, I know they're busy and see a lot of ideas come across their desks. I'm not bitter and, in fact, their lack of response helped me to revamp our approach, a good thing for us.

On the opposite side of the spectrum is the startup community. Let me tell you how amazing it is and how open and willing everyone is in Seattle to help a fellow entrepreneur out. All I had to do was to join a few forums and meetup groups and email my idea and a request for help, and literally the same day, people responded offering valuable opinions and face time. To this day it still amazes me how much good advice, coffee time, referrals and support we received for basically being an idea funded by two daydreamers. If life allows me, I'm going to make sure everyone that helped us along the way receives their due thanks. Guys like Jeff Coon, Richard Luck, Justin Smith, Derek Johnson, Chirag Pancholi, Brandyn Hill (and her concierges), Bret Matteson and our awesome attorneys Gordon Empey and Allan Hambleton from [Cooley LLP](#) (to name a few) have all made a solid difference in our lives. If we are successful, I can honestly say that it's because of these people and their commitment to help fellow startups do the impossible: survive. Seattle seems to emulate an age-old saying, "It takes a village to raise a family." And I tell ya what, Seattle is a cool village to be family in. Trust me.

**Question:** You are a serial entrepreneur. What do you find so attractive about creating new companies? Any advice you can share with other potential entrepreneurs about launching a company in today's market climate?

**Answer:** Yes, I am a serial entrepreneur. I currently own three companies, each started from the ground up. I have half a dozen other startups that have failed, but each failure added to the success of the next. I think the most attractive part of self-starting is knowing that you're taking this basic idea that's in your head and then figuring out the problems to make it come to life and grow and survive. I think it's human nature to build. It isn't easy and very few of us can actually make it. But in reality, the line that separates the successful from the failed is very very thin. It's that uncertainty of which side of the line I'm really on that helps drive me.

If I had any good advice to offer to other potential entrepreneurs, it'd be something like this. Do what you know and do it well. If you don't know how to do something, get someone on board that does. There is a huge difference in running a company and owning a company, and most owners are terrible at running theirs. Know your weakness and let others execute. And don't waste time writing big plans and hoarding over who gets what, and what fair is. There are thousands, if not millions of us that have come before you and have already thought of what you have. If you are just a single owner, hire people to do your admin and all the roles to support you. If there are multiple partners, then complete your idea on paper, determine if it's actually doable, adds REAL value and then, go to an attorney like Cooley to help you sort out the inner workings. You're not as smart as the rest of the world if you don't utilize them to help you. Now go build, go create, go open a new company. Know that you will fail, but learn at least one thing from that and try try again. Successful people are the ones that have failed the most, but chose not to give up. You'll see what I mean one day.

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