

Leap into the unknown with Anthony Rose, Founder and CEO of Seedlegals

Maddyness spoke to Anthony Rose from SeedLegals about what it takes to be a good entrepreneur and founder. Rose created SeedLegals, a company that allows Startups of all stages to get the best practical and legal advice on their personal journeys to success. Here Rose talks problem-solving, looking at COVID-19 as an opportunity, the difference between UK and USA ecosystems, the importance of PR and marketing and why global business is the way forward.

Anthony Rose is an entrepreneur with an incredibly interesting and varied background. He built up, grew and sold startups Zeebox and 6Tribes and was brought in by the BBC to launch BBC I-player. Rose is a solution-focused entrepreneur that uses both his knowledge and expertise with data and technology to solve problems.

Startups face a great challenge when they launch, with questions about

funding rounds, to dealing with shareholders, legal frameworks, how to grow a team, when to scale, and the general questions that the lifecycle of a startup brings up as it develops.

SeedLegals was created as a way to solve those problems. Talking about the altruistic nature of such an endeavour, it becomes easy to see that success is often that sweet spot between altruism and making money as Rose says “The magic is in the middle.”

“The magic is in the middle.”

SeedLegals is a subscription service, free for the first 30 days, then from £19 monthly thereafter, and with additional paid-for help that businesses will need when scaling (and can afford it).

At the start, of course, most businesses have no cash to spend, especially on legal fees, with the terminology being bandied about that no one quite understands, so SeedLegals spells it out for you by offering you articles of advice and clickable links to documents.

It also asks you if you have considered different approaches, or if there are for example tax questions you need to answer when bringing on new team members, or during a fund round. It is there to guide you much like an accelerator does, but all through the power of technology and at your own leisure.

Problem-solving

Most startups need to focus on solving a problem, Rose insists that startups should be answering questions and be consumer/client-focused. Let the consumer know what your business can do for them, how it can help them solve problems. Show rather than tell essentially.

SeedLegals is self-service, it gives you the tools to move forward in your business as you will confidently know you have the top, up to date advice that is out there, enabling you to make informed decisions. Think about how decisions will impact your business not just in the now but in the future.

“You have to be forward-thinking, you start with a vision but you move forward to practicality and always coming back to the consumer, as too much functionality is not attractive, yes you need it but you don’t always have to explain that part.”

In essence, you need to have two points to think of for consumers in a pitch, 1- tell them how you solve a problem and 2- think about writing a press release, what it would look like, will people pick it up or buy into the idea? Then, if so build your product around that.

Although Rose is also quick to point out there has to be a “shtick” or rather a hook around a story, there needs to be something organic and unique. So often the PR and Marketing comes secondary when in actual fact it can help you think about your product in a client-centric way. It can help focus the founder on the product and how it enables or helps the consumer.

Be the editor of your own life: COVID-19 and the pandemic doesn’t need to be scary!

Rose is also quick to point out the way you ‘edit’ the idea that change is terrifying is to think of it as an opportunity. “The best founders thrive in uncertainty” Good founders look at this time and adapt their businesses, pivot and take advantage of the opportunities open to them.

“There is no such thing as a challenge” simply the goals and opportunities have indeed shifted.

The idea of things going back to “normal’ is an open-ended question, how long will we work from home?

Will town centres be the same again?

If businesses essentially get smaller and people work remotely, how will real estate change?

It is also asking businesses owners to decide how they want to run their

business in future, what it will look like?

For Rose, it's about taking necessary risks and sometimes knowing you have to "leap into the unknown" of course with your due diligence, but you have to take a bet on how the future will pan out and if your business will flourish in the imagined future. Taking a leap of faith is how most businesses transform into the next stage of their journey.

UK versus USA ecosystems

The UK ecosystem of startups is more focused on angel investors as the government has a 50% write off for them on tax, so there is a lot more personal investment than the big VC firms of Silicon valley etc.

Risk appetite in the UK is less than in the USA probably because the size and ability to scale quickly is so different, but Rose points out it does allow for smaller startups to come through with smaller angel investment and then look to grow into VC investment.

The UK sits at that midsection where we are slightly more conservative, and people are wanting to see "positive cash flow and route to marketability," which is of course always hard in the beginning. In the US, investors are willing to bet big on global ideas, knowing they will not see a return until the sale. Like anything, it's a risk, but if it pays off you stand to make very good money.

Start local but think global!

The UK is uniquely positioned in the world of businesses as it sits in a great position to do business globally thanks to its timezone. As the world develops and businesses become more globally orientated, SeedLegals is there to help make sure that deals can be done on this global scale with ease.

No doubt the big players of the future in both big business and the startup world will have a global footprint, so it would be wise to get ahead of the curve and create a practice and work mode that can easily scale and translate into this model. All very good points as to why SeedLegals will ultimately succeed and grow into new territories itself.

The need for information is there and they are solving very real problems in very quick timings. When furloughing was announced the website was up to date with coherent information for businesses all available within 48 hours. All linking to relevant documents and knowledge, which of course was a godsend to many businesses worldwide.

Working out restrictions and implications from COVID-19 is not simple by any means. Just this example proves that SeedLegals can be as agile as a startup, but it is also armed with the wealth of knowledge and expertise of the big business. There is no doubt this is a winning combination that will help startups and founders find their feet in their journey to success with slightly more ease than was previously thought possible.

I would ask everyone to reframe their narrative and change their frame of reference. Opportunity is the keyword here. There is space to manoeuvre, to take risks and to plan for the future, however uncertain this may be.

London has a special place in the startup ecosystem and this should be fully embraced in this present moment. As Anthony says, do your due diligence, look for the growth angle, but don't forget to 'take the leap' of faith that your company has a place in the future of the world.

What is your favourite book and why?

Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid by Douglas Hofstadter

What is a quote that you like to live by?

Act in a way that, if everyone else acted the same way, the world would be a better place.

Read also

[Are you ready to re-open your office? Here's what London's top startups are saying](#)