

Meet DeepStream, the business centralising all business data exchanges in one cloud platform

As part of our quick fire questions series – or QFQs – we spoke to Jack Macfarlane of DeepStream about optimising the exchange of information in the transacting of goods and services on the best terms achievable in the fastest time.

What was the catalyst for launching DeepStream?

Information, and how it is shared, in my opinion, is the most important part of how global commerce operates. It is what drives companies to collaborate, communicate, and come up with the best transaction outcomes. Just look at how a trading floor operates- success hinges on transmitting information quickly, efficiently, and with the right counterparties. Despite this, when I looked at procurement operations, I saw a sea of inefficiency, where everyone used emails and followed manual, outdated and process-driven communication frameworks.

Instead, we created a business that would centralise all data exchanges

between businesses procuring goods and services on a single digital, auditable, and user-friendly cloud technology platform. This is how DeepStream was born into the world.

Tell me about the business – what it is, what it aims to achieve, who you work with, how you reach customers and so on?

DeepStream delivers a cloud-based digital platform to global businesses which enables them to optimise the exchange of information with counter-parties for the transacting of goods and services at the best terms achievable in the fastest amount of time.

The services we provide to clients fall into the following broad categories:

1. Digital transformation of procurement communication with all suppliers and joint ventures, migrating all negotiations and communication from opaque emails and attachments onto an agile, collaborative and user-friendly platform;
2. Total auditability for all information flows, not only in theory but in real time, giving unparalleled business protection against bad practices within procurement operations;
3. Dynamic and structured framework to engage with counter-party businesses in ensuring best terms are achieved by procurement professionals when they go out for a desire to transact/contract;
4. Tech enabled automation to drastically reduce the amount of time procurement leaders spend on manual admin intensive source-to-award processes.

The platform is truly industry agnostic, and to the extent that our users procure goods & services on a regular basis, we deliver them value. This means we target a broad spectrum of clients around the world, from finance to energy. One notable industry vertical to mention is the Energy sector, especially renewable energy, where we see a huge demand for efficient and auditable digital ways of getting transactions done. We have the two largest global gigafactories on DeepStream, Britishvolt, Vekor and leading nordic gigafactories, which are pioneers in ensuring their procurement operations are carried out as efficiently and effectively as possible.

How has the business evolved since its launch? When was this?

We evolve every day! Being able to move quickly, optimise, change tack and evolve based on new information we get from our existing and target users has been critical for us in our journey. The business was “officially” launched (i.e. incorporated in Companies House) in 2016. In practice, we operationally got started in early 2017. In the beginning, we made more mistakes than I can recall, and we iterated on as many as we could to get the company moving forward.

First, we focused on the Energy industry, considering how much procurement occurs in that sector and how compliance and auditability are critical components for businesses from a regulatory and governance perspective. We quickly realised that the product vision was universal and industry agnostic, fitting into any procurement or RFX flow and that we had essentially built a turbo-charged communication system for commerce where there was a material degree of back and forth information in going from source to award, with the potential to totally replace email inboxes. This was the key eureka moment in crystallising our product vision vis a vis our target market.

How are you funded?

At first, the business was funded by angel investors, including myself, as I shared the vision for what DeepStream was setting out to achieve with its technology. This funding took the company all the way from seed stage to Series A stage. Before Series A, DeepStream was also backed by the leading global accelerator Techstars, who also decided to fund the business,

When it came to our Series A, we decided to engage with venture-capital investors, and are proud to have secured backing from transatlantic VC firm Beringea who led our Series A round, alongside participation from Seed X Liechtenstein, Conviction VC, Portfolio Ventures and a number of Angel investors (including existing shareholders).

What has been your biggest challenge so far and how have you overcome this?

To date, the most difficult task for DeepStream has been overhauling outdated procurement methods. Since many businesses are stuck in their ways when it comes to procurement, courting them and gaining their trust has been an

unavoidable difficulty. Despite this, we were able to demonstrate to the industry that the RFX (Request For anything) communication system is inadequate and that there is a better approach to manage procurement, one that eliminates the pain of emails!

How does DeepStream answer an unmet need?

As an industry, procurement is still overly reliant on outdated ways of communicating such as emails or clunky procurement software with overbearing features, businesses rely on emails and attachments for an overwhelming majority of their communications and negotiations. However, when working with email, it's easy to lose track of important facts, and recovering information can be complicated and time-consuming. According to *McKinsey*, the average professional spends 28% of their workday reading and responding to email, amounting to 2.6 hours and 120 messages every day. So procurement officers face the real risk of drowning in emails every day as their teams send out multiple tenders to as many suppliers as possible.

All of this begs the million-dollar question: why is the procurement industry still using old prescriptive systems or doing everything via email? Millions of transactions and bids are handled in this manner every day, resulting in clunky, opaque, and prone to misunderstanding conversations. Even though software-based technology can transform the way organisations interact and enable game-changing results in how businesses exchange information with the market, there remains a lingering perception and, correspondingly, an unmet need as people falsely assume it will be faster and easier to send an email or make a phone call. This attitude creates a huge value wedge in how global commerce operates today and has resulted in a sense of complacency with outdated and antiquated systems.

At DeepStream we seek to change the resistant culture in the RFX process and see clunky processes as an impediment to procurement professionals making the most of technology. By merging processes, tools, and data, we think that procurement software has the potential to dramatically cut time and costs through an easier and more dynamic process with suppliers. Instead of depending on archaic systems, we think that it's time to step up and embrace digital tools in procurement.

What's in store for the future?

We are continuing to deliver on our mission to create the most compelling technology for connected businesses to exchange information, source and transact seamlessly where RFX processes are not a barrier to doing business. We are growing our footprint in the clean energy sector with partners such as Britishvolt (UK), Verkor (France), IONITY (Germany) but at the same time innovating bigger enterprises' procurement processes, such as Maersk (Denmark) by delivering a best-of-breed solution that sits within their current ecosystem to bring enhanced business outcomes such as:

Cost Management: reduced costs, greater efficiency.

Supply Chain Risk: lower supply chain risk, increased transparency.

Supplier Innovation: greater access to supplier innovation, use of emerging technology

Sustainability: upholding sustainability values throughout the supply chain with reduced reputational risk.

Staying true to our mission, and delivering value to our customers, we are on a good path to our vision of a world of connected businesses empowered to seamlessly exchange information and transact rapidly and transparently.

What one piece of advice would you give other founders or future founders?

Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the face. Learn how to double down on your vision whilst realising that there is no pre-baked plan that you can rely on. Also, most people will say that what you are trying to do is impossible, until you do it, then they will tell you that it was inevitable – avoid these people, they don't add any value to your life.

Jack Macfarlane is CEO at [DeepStream](#).