

Personalised AI insights and enhanced setups for faster simracing with Track Titan

Creating a startup is always challenging. Founding one during a tech downturn, cost of living crisis and recession seems near impossible. However, with risk comes reward and many of the world's most successful companies were founded during times of economic uncertainty. As part of a series with Antler, Maddyness has interviewed founders hoping to become the entrepreneurial success stories to emerge from this time of crisis. This week, Maddyness spoke to Max Teichert, the founder of Track Titan.

Temps de lecture : minute

23 October 2024

I used to be a professional racing game player which luckily enabled me to get into pro-level real-life racing. Starting out as a teen, I just had to grind it out and was lucky enough to have an affinity for the data side of things. Knowing that not all 200 million racing game players out there have the knowledge nor the time to figure out how to improve their driving, I knew something was needed to automatically help everyone unleash their full potential. This is what we do at Track Titan through AI-based coaching.

Can you share your elevator pitch?

Track Titan turns motorsports raw data into actionable insights, focused today on helping racing game players improve their driving through AI coaching.

Can you tell our readers about your engagement with Antler?

We are one of a few Antler-backed startups that did not take the traditional route via their cohorts but instead as a so-called “direct investment”, meaning Antler joined one of our funding rounds alongside other investors after we were already revenue-generating. The great thing is that the team are still as involved and supportive as with all other startups so we massively benefit from their hands-on support and global network.

Tell us about the working culture at Track Titan?

We are extremely tech and data heavy with me actually being the only team member with a commercial background (who then drifted off into the data side of things). That means we can all go deep into quantitative topics ranging from product-related A/B tests to growth projections based on new marketing experiments or talk about the tech architecture about a new growth-related minimum viable test and this is very much by design. It means we all speak the same “language” and can go deep into all topics in team-wide meetings.

In terms of practical culture aspects, we have zero formal requirements regarding the location or timing of work besides recurring meeting slots to have some core overlap. I and we expect to push hard and the output shows that this happens without checking in on it. Many of us come to the office because it’s more productive depending on the work but also to simply chat and connect. In a high-pressure startup environment, we see this as a key mental health aspect.

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

As all startups, we have faced several tough moments related to runway, growth or mis-hiring but by far the biggest challenge was losing a team member in a car accident. Nothing prepares you for that, neither personally nor professionally and it makes the usual struggles around fundraising or growing fast enough feel like ridiculous things to even complain about. I think we overcame this by realising exactly that and very openly talked about how to move forward as a team and remembering that there are bigger things in life than driving in virtual circles and building tech companies. Some of us took time off, others said the best way to handle it is to get stuck into work to keep the lost team member's work going and to build a legacy he would be proud of.

Telling team members about the news one by one was easily the hardest thing I ever had to do as a founder but I'm glad we managed to talk about the event, show vulnerability towards each other and feel more united than ever today.

What's in store for the future?

We are close to profitability so doing what we're doing a bit better every day to get there is step one. A big next step for us is to go beyond AI coaching for gamers and moving that to real-world racing. That has different hardware requirements which is challenging but also exciting and given some of our team members' real-life racing background and network, we are well-positioned to pull this off. Long-term, we want Track Titan to be perceived as something you could call the "Strava for motorsports" where - as with Strava - people will say "If it's not on Track Titan, it didn't happen."

How has the cost of living crisis and the tech downturn impacted your experience building Track Titan?

You would think that a paid product that helps you improve your gaming performance very much fits into the “nice to have” category of customer spend that could be hit by the cost of living crisis but as with gaming in general, our platform seems to be very recession proof. Our users have already spent hundreds if not thousands on their gaming setup; limiting their discretionary spend and sacrificing the last bit of performance really only happens as a last resort for few people.

Regarding the broader tech downturn, we can definitely see a difference in investor sentiment towards consumer startups. Raising as a consumer startup in Europe has never been easy but you could see that many seed funds now really only do early A rounds or “generalist” funds are really 99% B2B unless your growth is completely off the charts.

What barriers have you faced in realising your entrepreneurial ambitions? How can we make entrepreneurship more accessible in the UK?

A million things but I would say I had quite a big blindspot on the VC fundraising side despite having worked as an early employee in three startups before. The depth and breadth needed to convince institutional investor to be that one in a few hundred startups they should invest in is massive and after having done it, it's actually very interesting and a great way to think deeply about your business but I simply burned through some VC conversations because I didn't know what I didn't know.

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

In racing, there are moments where you need to push to the max and moments where you need to save your tyres to have enough grip left to attack later. Get to understand when and how you perform at your best and when it's time to push or to recover/prepare. I find it both amusing and sad how despite all known advances in sports science, there is this toxic hustle culture in the world of startups and VCs. Don't get me wrong, we like to push hard; after all we're racers but never taking time to recover will eventually lead to worse performance.

And finally, a more personal question! What's your daily routine and the rules you're living by at the moment?

A bit of exercise ideally every morning and very importantly: Chai Guys chai at Spitalfields market after lunch. It's the fuel that keeps Track Titan going.

Max Teichert is the Founder of *Track Titan*.

Antler is one of the world's most active early-stage investors. With 1,000 portfolio companies in 27 countries, they have a global community of early-stage founders addressing the world's biggest challenges.



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