TechSandBox

MetroWest's Innovation Hub for Entrepreneurs, Industry Experts, and Technology Professionals

Today's issue is all about catching up with some old friends.
Left: Joe Moriarty, CEO, Content Raven. Right: Vasu Ram, Founder/CTO ContentRaven

A Very Phoenix-like Raven

Content Raven of 2014 bore little resemblance to its current self. Larger, more diverse, but struggling, the company executives were faced with a difficult decision: sell or raise more money, and try to retool in order remake the company.

Today, in early 2016, with new funding and new office space, this version of Content Raven has completed its rise from the ashes. A key catalyst, according to CEO Joe Moriarty, and Founder/CTO Vasu Ram, was the set of opportunities afforded by their time at TechSandBox. You see, it was also during the 2014 soul-searching, that Content Raven was forced to find new office space as its sublease arrangement was no longer viable.

That search brought them to TechSandBox. There, Content Raven found a collaborative workspace, a host of new connections, and a fresh start on its second life. [continued on next page.]

Questions/comments about TSB Quarterly? info@techsandbox.org

In the Summertime...

People who have solid relationships and a deep network have an easier time at life. This is especially true for entrepreneurs.

People starting businesses often need resources and help in areas outside their 'wheelhouse'. And yet, many of us, especially with technical backgrounds, tend to isolate ourselves with our heads down in our work. And in our home offices. Then, when we get serious about finding someone to fund our development or find a customer, we are at a loss. This hinders our chance of success and causes much wasted time and effort.

Places like TechSandBox are here to make this easier. You build a network of people you can see several times a week who also know that 'perfect IP attorney' or can be a sounding board when you're challenged. Incubators, when done well, bring in advice (Experts on Site™), hold events and seminars, and provide an environment conducive to making progress.

All for very little money (usually only 25% of the market rate, just for the 'rent').

Hint, hint.

-Barb

A new strategy that focused on a narrower set of target markets and use cases, paired with lots of hard work from those who remained meant the effort could then shift to raising money. Joe elaborates, "Of course we wanted access to investors, but we also wanted advice about any and all topics related to re-launching a tech startup. We found that and more. Our experience at TechSandBox was invaluable to our rebirth."

Content Raven, recently moved into a new space in Framingham and secured $2.2M in funding with lead investor NautaCapital. Mass Ventures also participated in the round. The new investment will be used to rapidly scale sales and marketing, further enhancing Content Raven's position as an enterprise content and video distribution platform. The future is certainly bright for this reborn star, and the most recent of TechSandBox's "graduates."

A Gem of a Resource for MA-based Manufacturers

According to its website, MassMEP is a collaborative center comprised of government, business, and academic partners dedicated to helping Massachusetts manufacturers meet the challenges of competing in an ever-changing economy. According to Tom Andrellos, Business Growth Advisor, MassMEP is simply about helping small manufacturers get training and funding.

In that spirit, Tom has been a regular attendee at TechSandBox programs. It was during one such event, that in 2015, Tom met with two area manufacturers for a mutually beneficial connection. Lincoln Tool & Machining and Electro-Mechanical Technology, both of Hudson, MA took up MassMEP's offer of ISO 9001 certification courses after hearing Tom's overview pitch on the breadth of MassMEP's services. In addition to these two companies, Tom has already identified 9 others that have had received some level of support from their relationship with MassMEP, all prompted by the TechSandBox connection.

Tom states that the foundation's program are of immense value, especially for those manufacturers looking to do business with defense suppliers.

Beyond its training programs, MassMEP can directly help area manufacturers by supplying project managers to help companies document business opportunities that lead to qualification of several types of grant funding sources from the Federal government or State.

TechSandBox community members should pay attention to the goings on of MassMEP as well. Many 'treps might find they need the services of the manufacturers that MassMEP support. All in all, MassMEP is a great organization that can help other great organizations. It's already well on its way thanks again to connections established at TechSandBox.

Profile:
Expert on Site

Nick Pappas
VP, MassVentures
On-site: 6/17, 1-4 pm.

MassVentures funds early-stage, high-growth MA startups as they move from concept to commercialization, focusing on Series A with occasional and opportunistic seed rounds. They provide capital for first-time CEOs and/or founders and consider industry segments not adequately served by the venture community.