

Example 1 - Orientation



1. Reading Founders Guide

My key takeaway from reading the Guide was to take criticism in a positive way and address it immediately as an action item by the following week.

*p.s. I also found a broken link at the end of **Incorporate Your Startup** section of Founders Guide, sent a message through **Contact Page***

2. Reading The Assignments

Upcoming assignments look like a clear plan for the next months to bring my startup to success, however, will require extra effort on my side to fit existing product rollout plan into the FI schedule.

What I find missing is a Personal Development track to help better understand internal strength and weakness, leadership potential, prepare mentally for the fun but stressful journey of entrepreneurship.

3. Markup Practice

I never used Textile before, but I'm familiar with HTML and JavaScript a little. As an exercise to learn syntax of Textile, I created this simple feature comparison table:

Textile Markup vs HTML Comparison Table

Markup Language	Cool	Not so Cool
Textile	Simple as pie	Limited and primitive
HTML	Advanced editing options	Need to remember syntax

4. Personal Strength and Weakness

I am a good person, very productive worker and creative thinker, but I still need improvement in focusing on what's important, managing my emotions intelligently and fighting my introvert habits.

Introduction Email to My New Friends at Yellow Team

Hi Fellow Yellows!

We had an interesting start yesterday. It didn't go exactly as planned initially, but I'm happy we ended up in this team together. I look forward to working with you over the next couple of weeks.

You can read my professional story on LinkedIn, if interested. In short my key professional achievements

include founding 2 large digital advertising companies in Russia and #1 CRM software provider, setting up and running Adobe Russia and spending 2-year of retirement vacation at Microsoft, where I got “Best consumer subsidiary of the year” award, “Best marketing” award, 1 sexual harassment case and lots of fun. I also founded an early-stage VC fund (Vestor.In) and sit on the board of a few startups.

My top personal strength are:

1. I’m generally a good guy. This is quite rare in XXI century.
2. I’m very creative and generate ideas on the fly.
3. I’m an unstoppable hard worker if I’m passionate about something.

My personal weaknesses are:

1. Not very good at saying “no”, resulting in blurred business focus.
2. Get emotional. When depressed, can turn rude.
3. Shy and nervous communicating to unknown people.

Here’s a short (30 sec) video about my Minutta app, prepared by my kids yesterday. Exclusively for Yellows :-)

<http://vimeo.com/91387647> (this is not a formal video, please do not share for now)

Looking forward to learn more about you all.

Pavel

Pavel Cherkashin

Chief Trouble Maker

Minutta.com – share your video story

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Mob RU: +7 985 222 6141

Mob US: +1 773 997 0621

<http://www.linkedin.com/in/cherkashin>

5. Entrepreneurship Strengths

I am motivated to do this World a better place. For my kids. For my country. For my internal beliefs. I change the world by inventing new things. I see future a little further than most of the people would see. Because I know how to dream. That’s my key competitive advantage. When it comes to making these new things happen I can work very hard, but what is even more important, I can make other people believe in what I do, get excited about it and become interested to join. I know this because I’ve done this before. This is an addiction that can never leave me. No matter, where I am and how much resources I have.

6. Expected Program Accomplishments

I know a lot about building successful technology business in Russia, but some of the latest political developments in my country forced me to move out. US is a great place to live in and the best place to start a technology business, but it is a different environment. Culture, competition, language, business practices. Even ethics.

I joined Founders Institute to learn more and adopt to this ecosystem. I will consider my time and money investment a success if I hire best advisory board for Minutta, launch killer product and start active user

acquisition before August 1 2014.

7. My Dream Mentors

Mentor Name	Why I need him
Alexander Garcia-Tobar	Alexander has unique combination of expertise in building large business in mobile and video that is desired for Minutta
Mark Pincus	Mark might be the only person on Earth to coach us on what to do with our 30M user audience on social networks
Ziv Gillat	Ziv could help us better understand our business development strategy in photo industry

8. Motivation

I just turned 41 on April 4 1973. Could you think of a better age to change your life dramatically? Especially if you have a good chance of going to prison at your home country for being in opposition to the government.

On the other hand, I've been to Microsoft and Adobe. I know how it feels to sit in a sweet jelly swamp and get your monthly portion of sweets falling from skies for making sure nothing ever changes within a mile around your work desk. No, thank you.

I have enough money to support my family and not care about monthly sweets. I want to spend the next 40 years doing things that will make my kids feel proud of me.

9. Co-Founders and Recruiting

I'm not looking for co-founders pro-actively, as I already have kick-ass technical and product development team. However, I'm always open for new connections and information exchange with people in the industry, which I specified in my profile.

Example 2 - Research and Customer Development



0. Learning Curve

On April 15 2014, I had a sleepless night. Just before the previous Assignment was due, I found myself watching the sun raising outside while still polishing with formatting of my report. I told myself that next time I would not let it get to that late moment and prepare my Assignment Report in advance as much as possible.

Here is what I have learned working on my previous assignment report:

1. **Start New Cycle Early.** If you spend Thursday in rehabilitation mood from Wednesday night party, then work hard on Friday to do all the other work you missed out through the week, then have a great

family weekend... Then you are screwed. You only have Monday and Tuesday to fulfill the Assignment. That is clearly not enough time.

2. **Get Into Pre-Exam Mode.** This study is stressful, but efficient. I learn a lot and build up my startup muscles that have weakened after years of corporate wank. However, the skill is there. It is that feeling at the very end of the school year, when you have to pay off for all the nice time partying and flirting at the University. Get yourself into that mood and enjoy the feeling of being young again.
3. **Work 90%-Complete Is Incomplete.** This is obvious, but still I fell into a trap of telling myself “I have almost everything done already, may focus on other things and give myself a break”. As the result, the final step of formatting the document took longer than expected and I almost ran out of time to complete the assignment well.

SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT: Anna Smith – Minutta Best Customer



Anna Smith is a 35 year old woman who works 30 hours a week at a desk job, but spends most of her energy on her family – a husband and a 4 year old daughter, Emily.

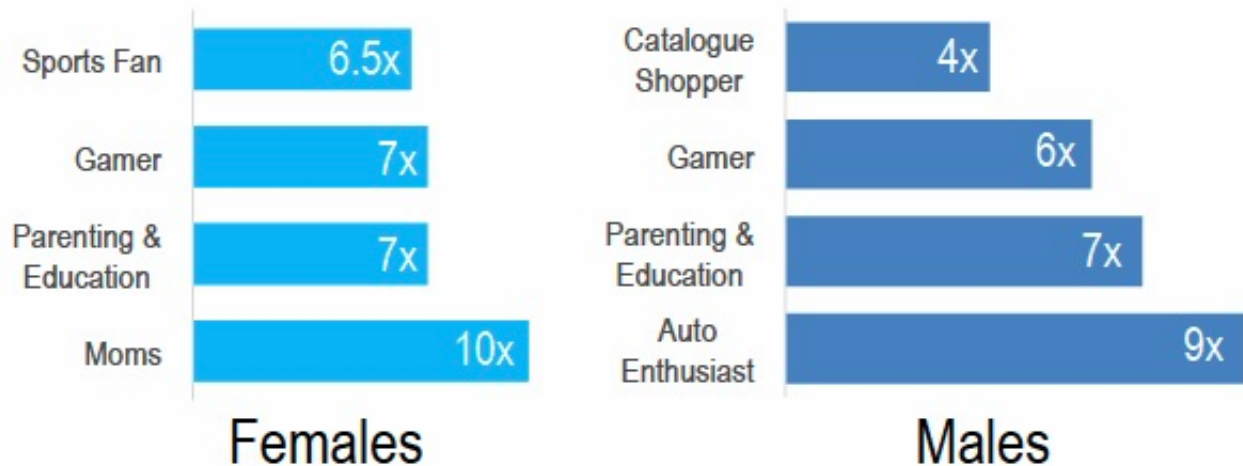
Anna likes reading magazines, crocheting, using Pinterest, and being a good mom, which includes volunteering at her daughter's preschool, but is concerned about her relationship with her husband's family, who come from a different culture, and losing touch with her dispersed relatives and friends.

To feel closer to her friends, she shares 2-3 photos on Facebook every few days and spends time looking at other people's posts.

According to latest research by Flurry, moms are the most mobile addicted user (10x more than average!)

The Persona of the “Mobile Addict”

Mobile Addicts vs. Average Mobile Users (Persona)



Source: Flurry, 100k Sample January 2014 17

1. Market Research

First, I prepared Market Research for Minutta based on the provided template. The result of this work is saved here: <http://bit.ly/1nhD24G>

Key findings from this exercise were:

1. The three variations of business idea for Minutta app rely on three different business models. The business model defines the revenue and thus the target market.
2. Project #1 offers the largest market in size, but it is the most competitive market and difficult to sell to.
3. Project #3 offers the smallest market, actually shrinking dramatically (60% per year). But the addressable market of personalized greetings grew 54 times in 2013, making it a sweet spot for potential attack.

2. Interview Questions

Daughter of my friend, who just graduated from San Jose University with degree in marketing and customer research – Anna Fedosseeva – was very kind to help me with this assignment. She is an interesting candidate for the marketing intern position and working together on this project was a chance to evaluate her skills and get to know each other better.

Here are the questions that we have prepared together: <http://bit.ly/1jvwhGV>

The questionnaire evolved a little during the process. In most cases, we would ask people questions from all three projects, when we saw that they were open to communicate. However, the resulting sheet would only include the results on the project that would be most close to interest of the person.

3. Customer Interviews

We kept track of all the interviews in the same document as the questions at: <http://bit.ly/1jvwhGV>

I wanted to make interviews with people that would be as close as possible to Anna Smith, our target user profile (<http://bit.ly/1iA4d7v>). I used the following sources for interview leads:

1. **Office Hours (ohours.com)** – interviews there were most insightful, open and creative. Finding enough qualified people was a challenge though.
2. **Parents at school of my kids** – unlimited source of target audience users, very open minded and willing to help
3. **Relatives of peers at FI** – I intentionally decided not to make interviews with peers, as they know a lot about my idea and their opinion may interfere with their responses, so I asked some of them to give me access to their relatives whom they would think be good target users for my product

I had enough time to interview all 15 people on all 3 projects, but would only document the one, where I found it more insightful.

4. Interview Analysis

Project 1: Minutta as Video Editing Tool

All of the interviews about using video showed very similar patterns:

1. Almost everybody (13/15) finds videos more appealing than photo and very good to capture the best moments in action (first-time activities or kids). 2 said “results not worth the effort”
2. Most of the people (11/15) take videos occasionally with their phones and store them locally or on the cloud
3. Only few people (4/15) share videos on social media
4. Only 1 person (!) is doing any video editing, mostly very simple functions like cropping and titles
5. Everybody complains about large file size, demand for computer processing power, storage and inconvenience of editing tools
6. In many occasions GIFs (animated pictures) would pop up in conversations as a healthy alternative to videos
7. Everybody would refer to “lack of time” to finish video, which is a good opportunity for an automated tool

Conclusion: Video is very complicated for a consumer. It may provide great space for disruptive innovations, though the infrastructure for video may not be ready yet. Should look into GIFs and slideshows as an short-term alternative with similar social and wow effect, but lower demand for resources.

Project 2: Minutta as Family Photo Sharing

Photo sharing patterns differ significantly depending on age/gender groups:

1. Males normally don't mind sharing their photos on social media, but they tend to take and share less pictures overall
2. Female (especially elder and with kids) take a lot of pictures, but tend not to share them on social networks, would rather send by direct messages
3. Everybody would send many pictures by messengers, e-mails or text messages. Everybody would admit it's an easiest way, but has limitations
4. Most of the people raise privacy concerns, only 2 who are young and single do not care
5. Only 2/15 use dedicated photo sites (Shutterfly, Snapfish, etc.) to host and share photos
6. Majority of people (13/15) are rather neutral to having a dedicated photo sharing app (meaning they will not use it), even if it provides security and convenience they look for

Conclusion: it will be very difficult to differentiate and convince people to install the app with pure photo

sharing features

Project 3: Minutta as Personalized Mobile Greetings

Mobile greetings were the most controversial discussion topic. There was no clear pattern of age / gender / number of kids or other social or demographic characteristics. Some of the people would say they “never send greetings”, some would say this is “absolutely critical”. The second category would include a 50-year old full-time mom and 30-year old male investment banker.

We managed to identify certain patterns though:

1. Everybody has a smart phone and uses it to take pictures. These pictures are shared one way or another with close friends and relatives
2. Greetings only makes sense when the recipient sees significant amount of effort put into it. Doesn't matter if it's a paper or electronic greeting – it has to include time and passion
3. Paper greeting cards are considered old-fashioned, even by those who believe they are essential (“Yes, I'm old-fashioned, but that's how I was brought up and that's how I will bring up my kids”)
4. Electronic greetings (e-cards) discredited themselves over the last decade when it was crude and underwhelming, people consider them “silly animations” and “not engaging enough”
5. E-vites and thank-you messages form a significant part of US culture, which is not developing to same extent in Eastern Europe. Even those who “never send greeting cards” turn out to send e-vites for the events and thank-you notes after them
6. Younger generation tend to use pictures (mostly GIF animations and social stickers) to communicate, instead of writing text. This looks like a big trend that older people do not understand.
7. Mobile greetings with pictures get some response from people when they realize it could be used for casual greetings to their friends and family members

Conclusion: Mobile greetings look like an interesting idea to investigate deeper. It is compelling enough and covers a market that was ruined by some bad decisions by competition some time ago. If we return credibility to the market, we can get a leaders position.

5. Key Assumptions

Based on the customer interviews, we made the following assumptions for each of the projects:

Project 1: Minutta as Video Editing Tool

1. **Consumers prefer video to photo as a social sharing media.** Video is cool and much more engaging, but consumers may not have time to watch video, may not have enough bandwidth and experience other difficulties with video, preventing them to enjoy video.
2. **Automatically generated video might be interesting to watch.** Template-based video might improve user content dramatically, but if all the different consumers use same templates – fun stops.
3. **Data channels are good enough for video upload.** Many people complain about upload and processing speed. Is the technology ready for real mass consumer video production?

Project 2: Minutta as Family Photo Sharing

1. **People are ready to make extra step (install an app) to improve privacy.** Everybody talk about privacy, but nobody even checked other applications available out there – this means that the problem is not that compelling.
2. **E-mail and text sharing is not sufficient in terms of user experience.** What if e-mail and text sharing is “just good enough” for consumers and they will not change the habit?
3. **Technical capabilities would allow offering better terms for storage and uploading speed than**

competition. It costs a lot of money to host and serve billions of consumer pictures. What if it doesn't pay off? Unit economics must work better than for competition.

Project 3: Minutta as Mobile Personalized Greetings

1. **People continue greeting each other even after social media killed traditional greeting card business.** What if consumer behavior changes so dramatically, that people just don't greet each other anymore? Greeting is about showing you dedicated time to preparing something for the one you care.
2. **"Casual mobile greetings" make sense for consumer.** We think we invented a new product category, meaning electronic greetings you send casually (without a very strong case like Birthday or Christmas), but does this category mean anything to consumer?
3. **GIFs and text edits can dramatically improve the quality of a user photo as a mobile greeting.** GIF is not dead, as it turned out during the interviews. It is a very convenient format for youth communications and emoji. What if personal photos turned into such format be used for casual greetings?

6. Online Survey

I made a decision to verify my Project 3 and its most critical assumptions with an online survey. My idea was to find dependencies between social / demographic characteristics of the audience and their greeting behavior, in particular, their attitude towards animated personal photo greetings.

To verify the assumptions, I conducted two online surveys:

1. **SurveyMonkey Research**, called *"IMPORTANT FAMILY STUFF"* (<http://svy.mk/1kV3sa0>) – primarily for social media, friends and peers. It recorded **295 responses** (as of end of day 04/22/2014) and showed some very interesting results <http://svy.mk/1ieJqBL>
2. **AYTM Research**, called *Family Photo Sharing* (<http://bit.ly/1tAXpvf>, PDF) – paid research with gender targeting (only women) to analyze behavior patterns in more detail and collect e-mail leads for the Assignment. It recorded another **200 responses**. Results of the research also include: <http://bit.ly/1mCMOhD> – List of e-mail leads, generated through AYTM research (PDF) and <http://bit.ly/1ppUDcu> – Raw Data from the Research (CSV)
Both surveys included "Not sure" answer for "What is your gender?" question in addition to "Male" and "Female" to evaluate if respondents take the survey seriously enough. Less than 1% referred to that option, which demonstrated that people considered the survey seriously enough.

Surveys included the most important question about visual format of possible greeting. We provided three options for review (the star of the experiment – Anna Fedosseeva): static picture, gif animation and personalized greeting on top of the picture.



7. Survey Analysis

The data still requires more in-depth analysis, but here are some of the initial data points:

- Female over 36 years of age have a clear profile: they like tangibles (printed pictures), share overwhelmingly on FB/Instagram, feel they share enough and don't feel an obligation to send photos to anyone.
- People with 1 child are more likely to have an Apple phone, 2+ are more likely to have an Android. Both prefer personalized greetings, a good chunk sometimes share gifs (52/149).
- People who choose a gif greeting overwhelmingly prefer tangibles.
- FB/Instagram users are mostly female and they mostly share enough, overwhelmingly preferring gif greeting.
- People who feel obligated to share photos overwhelmingly put pics up on FB/Instagram, send gifs sometimes, and enjoy tangibles.
- Men are less likely to send gifs.
- The "not sure" gender questions respondents are 2 males (most likely joking) and 1 person who genuinely does not identify with a gender.

8. Second Mailing

My mailing list consists of **83** subscribers now. Latest mailing is available here: <http://bit.ly/1gQM0hP>

Example 3 - Team And Advisors



1. Identifying Advisors

Here's my current list of potential advisors. This is still probably the weakest part of my whole business equation, I plan to spend most of my upcoming week working on this.

Launch & Scaling Advisors

Name, Title	Company	E-mail, LinkedIn	Comments
1 Aaron Patzer, CEO	Leonardo Software	www.linkedin.com/in/apatzer	Initial contact established
2 Travis Giggy, CTO	Swing by Swing	travis@giggy.com , www.linkedin.com/in/travisgiggy	He's in the mobile space and understands customer acquisition. He's been super helpful. Companies: SnapFish, SmileBox, Instagram, Paperless Post.
3 John Beeder, President – COO	American Greetings	johnbeeder@aol.com , www.linkedin.com/pub/john-beeder/2/b37/48	Established initial contact through LinkedIn, got positive response

4	Martin Gedalin, Partner	Lumia Capital	martin@lumiacapital.com , www.linkedin.com/in/marting	Knows emerging markets and not afraid of them
5	Igor Shoifot, Director	TMT Investments	i@fotki.com , www.linkedin.com/in/shoifot	Established working connection

Product & Monetization Advisors

6	Alex & Ivan Karpenko, Software Engineer / Product Designer	Instagram	alexkarpenko@gmail.com , www.linkedin.com/in/alexka	Their company Midnox developed video editing app luma.io and was acquired by Instagram in 2012. Low level, but may be helpful with product design
7	Kevin Systrom, CEO	Instagram	www.linkedin.com/in/kevinsystrom	Connected through Alex Gurevich, Javelin
8	Sergey Parilov, Senior Programmer	MonkeyFun	s_parilov@yahoo.com , http://www.linkedin.com/pub/sergey-parilov/7/b06/746	Existing advisor
9	Rus Yusupov, Cofounder	Vine	workday@gmail.com , www.linkedin.com/pub/rus-yusupov/4/340/522	Awaiting response

2. Recruiting Advisors

I have sent out e-mails and / or LinkedIn invites to all of the people on the list. My primary questions were about launch strategy and priorities for Minutta on the road to become a global company.

Example of the e-mail to *Aaron Patzer*:

Aaron, hi!

I'm the Russian guy with 30M users on the social app now re-launching as mobile app worldwide. Thank you for helpful criticism and feedback during mentor session at the FI.

Adeo mentioned that you were the best expert in launching a product I could find in this hemisphere, so I decided to reach out.

We are now preparing to launch our mobile app. It will allow people to send photo slideshows to any phone number or e-mail to relatives to eliminate tedious phone calls and updates. We fine-tune our iOS version with 100+ beta testers through TestFlight. If our real-life engagement ratio is going to be anything close to what we see with beta-testers, we will have a 100M+ users app and >\$1B valuation in a year from now.

But we have to do the launch right. Our plan is to go in 2 steps:

1. Launch in Australia (smartphone and iOS penetration similar to US, same language) – use paid traffic to get up to 10,000 users, no PR
2. Measure engagement and viral growth (when I send a slideshow to you, you can watch it in browser, but to download photos we will ask you to install the app) – same mechanic gave us millions of users in Russia

3. Launch in US and worldwide (together with Android app) as soon as we confirm growth KPIs. That's when we start shooting all weapons – mostly aiming at content marketing, PR and partnerships. Our goal here is to get to 2M installs in the first 3 months after launch to become visible.

Would you be able to give me a quick feedback, please:

- How would you launch such a startup in US?
- What would you pay attention to?
- What would be the channels to consider for user acquisition?
- Considering we gain 2M users worldwide (20% of them in US) in the first 2 months of launch – would you think we will get fair attention from Silicon Valley VCs?

Looking forward to hearing from you

Pavel

P.s. BTW, I think Leonardo is an awesome idea. If you ever need image search technology for it (I'm investor in a successful startup in the space) or any connections in Russia or Ukraine (developers, access to large partners, audience or startups) – I will be happy to help.

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3. Product Definition

As we've learned during the latest mentor session, Minutta global success will not come from best monetization model. It may only come from the fact that 100M users worldwide will adopt the concept of mobile greetings and will become the users of the app.

Attracting such a large audience is only possible through viral growth and distribution. This means that every user of the app should be an advocate, bringing certain number of new users. Will it be 3 new users? 5? 10? Or maybe 1.2...

This is the riskiest assumption for us. And this is what we need to test during our MVP launch.

Here's what I've got as my definition for the MVP project scope. Copy of it is available at:
http://bit.ly/minutta_mvp



Minutta MVP

Product Scope: iOS app to send photo slideshow (without greeting card covers) via e-mail, sms, in-app notification. Landing page to view slideshows on any device. Sharing tools and widget for Facebook and Pinterest (?)

Geography: Second-tier market with large share of English-speakers, high iOS and smartphone penetration (>60% smartphones, >25% iOS). Candidates: (1) Australia (2) Czech Republic (3) Canada

Target Customer: Young parents (moms)

Size of the Audience: 1,000 – 10,000 installs

Sources of the Audience: paid advertising (\$2/install), direct mailing, social recruiting, limited PR

Key Assumptions to Verify:

1. Initial engagement (more than 25% of installs make at least 1 minutta in the first month)
2. Secondary engagement (each minutta shared is viewed at least 2 times)
3. Viral growth model (create – share – download – install) creates at least 1.2 new install per active user

What is Considered a Success: Use case confirmed with the test audience, engagement and viral assumptions verified

Next Steps: If MVP is not successful – re-do and start over. If successful – replicate on Android, launch in US and globally with heavy PR support.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

We are now preparing to launch our mobile app. It will allow people to send photo slideshows to any phone number or e-mail to relatives to eliminate tedious phone calls and updates. We fine-tune our iOS version with 100+ beta testers through TestFlight. If our real-life engagement ratio is going to be anything close to what we see with beta-testers, we will have a 100M+ users app and >\$1B valuation in a year from now.

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4. Initial Team Design

I have identified the following key roles for the launch of Minutta in US:

President & CEO – is the most critical role, currently taken by myself.

Job Description and requirements are specified in the Offer Letter, provided by Minutta Inc. to myself (<http://bit.ly/1nDixye>)

Compensation will include \$60k/year after funding is received, in addition to founder shares already provided.

Product Director – responsible for the success of the product itself (mobile application) as well as accompanying services and facilities (website). Here are the requirements for the role (it is currently filled by Vlad Ignatenko)

Compensation will include \$10k cash bonus on successful launch as well as 3% equity vested over the period of 3 years.

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JOB TITLE: Product Director

BRIEF JOB DESCRIPTION

As Product Director, you will be in charge for product line contribution as a business unit. This extends from increasing the profitability of existing products to developing new products for the company. You will build products from existing ideas, and help to develop new ideas based on your industry experience and your contact with customers and prospects. You must possess a unique blend of business and technical savvy; a big-picture vision, and the drive to make that vision a reality. You must enjoy spending time in the market to understand their problems, and find innovative solutions for the broader market.

You must be able to communicate with all areas of the company. You will work with an engineering counterpart to define product release requirements. You will work with marketing communications to define the go-to-market strategy, helping them understand the product positioning, key benefits, and target customer. You will also serve as the internal and external evangelist for your product offering, occasionally working with the sales channel and key customers.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Managing the entire product line life cycle from strategic planning to tactical activities
- Specifying market requirements for current and future products by conducting market research supported by on-going visits to customers and non-customers.
- Driving a solution set across development teams (primarily Development/Engineering, and Marketing Communications) through market requirements, product contract, and positioning.
- Developing and implementing a company-wide go-to-market plan, working with all departments to execute.
- Analysing potential partner relationships for the product.

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Creative Director – this is the most critical missing vacancy at the moment. Below is detailed description for the requirements and skills required for this position.

Creative Director (Co-founder or Key Employee)

Compensation: Equity or Salary with Stock Option

Minutta is re-inventing greeting process on mobile. This means that old-fashioned greeting cards are passing away, while people are looking for new concepts to greet each other from their mobile phones. More than just sending an instant message. These new ways should be visual, engaging, dynamic and should include user pictures, telling the life story, because this what makes them personal and engaging.

Creative Director is the key decision-maker and inventor of mobile greetings. He/she will be responsible for

formulating the concept, visualizing them, selecting best designs from partners and contractors, communicating with the technical and business teams defining the product functionality and content policy.

Skills & Requirements

- 3+ years of experience in Interactive Design
- Impressive creative portfolio on Behance, Dribbble, etc.
- Understanding of the greeting cards designs
- Morbid sense of beauty
- Good drawing skills
- Deep understanding of Axure, wireframing, rapid prototyping
- Experience working with technical team
- Experience in executive presentations
- Expert in Adobe Photoshop / Illustrator, Sketch or other professional design tools

Ideal Candidate

Digital creative professional with background in Interactive Design, Game Design and Licensed Graphics Design, knowing how mobile applications work, but also understanding what makes design outstanding and heartwarming for people.

Candidate also has to be a good manager and have some entrepreneurial spirit, demonstrating passion to solve one of the biggest pain for consumers in the social media age. There should always be a way to get around “boring”.

The only missing position for now is the one for Creative Director.

Interesting fact: I have 450 people with “Creative Director” title as my 1st level connections on LinkedIn. Should be enough to pick from. Picking creative talent is much more difficult though than in marketing or technology.

5. Role Targets

Here are the examples of good candidates for this role:

Philana Surkis, Senior Graphic Designer at Linden Lab
www.linkedin.com/in/philanasurkis

Lisa DiPaula, Art Director at 12 Gigs
www.linkedin.com/pub/lisa-dipaula/3/9bb/641

Kevin Hosmann, Director, User Experience at Rosetta
www.linkedin.com/pub/kevin-hosmann/3a/407/30b

Liza Walsh, Director of UX Visual Design at Bitcoin
www.linkedin.com/pub/liza-walsh/0/b43/b47

Ross Viator, Associate Creative Director, Copywriter at Edelman
www.linkedin.com/in/rossviator

Jason Wilson, Lead Product Designer at Pinterest
www.linkedin.com/in/jasonwilson

Lynn Bryant, Art Director at Conversant, Inc.

6. Recruiting Process

Here's my 10-step recruiting process.

1. Post the position (angel.co, LinkedIn and other services)
2. Proactively find potential candidates on Dribbble, Behance, LinkedIn and thematic blogs
3. Send inviting letters to candidates
4. Conduct telephone / in-person interviews
5. Organize competency test
6. Discuss short-list with the co-founders
7. Run test project
8. Check references
9. Negotiate an offer
10. Close the deal

7. Hiring Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators

Number of Candidates	> 20
Number of Telephone Interviews	> 5
Number of Test Projects Completed	> 3
Number of Shortlisted Candidates	> 2

8. Working Group Approval

This week we had very productive and constructive review session. Here's my formal resolution (<http://bit.ly/1nDhIpe>).

In addition to that I got some interesting feedback from peer colleagues below.

Feedback:

Dan:

So are you launching in Australia, Czech and Canada first? Maybe put "Initial Target Geography." I thought you were doing US but I think I'm reading right. That will come after you prove key assumptions. Good idea. That way you don't burn you launch in the US without working out the bugs first. I like it.

Key Assumptions are good. If those 3 things happen then you're on your way. Can you incentive that behavior at first. Share your first Minutta and win chance for 1 and 10 odds of winning free gift card to Amazon. (Maybe you shouldn't because this might skew the data on the key assumptions)

This is brilliant: *Measure engagement and viral growth (when I send a slideshow to you, you can watch it in browser, but to download photos we will ask you to install the app) – same mechanic gave us millions of users in Russia*

Putting number on key performance indicator is a great idea. Going to steal that... Thanks

So you only need the one creative director. No one else on the look out for? What if it scales fast then what will your next most important hire be?

Jill:

Sources of the Audience: I would also add Mom Bloggers. They are an influential group, at least in the U.S.

“Morbid sense of beauty” – this is so Russian. :)

Phitha:

MVP sounds great to me. Should we test your monetization idea as well? Add a button to let them buy custom printing good? It can lead to any coming soon landing page so you can check early conversion rate for early adopter market.

David:

Very nice. How do you relaunch differently if the MVP is not successful? Would you learn enough from the secondary market having the unsuccessful launch to proceed with a revised strategy to launch in the US instead of delaying it?

And another one:

Hi Pavel,

I just got back from my son's 5th grade promotion ceremony and had some ideas about Minutta. You may already be doing this, but just thought I'd mention it.

Capturing Life's Milestones

Graduation, Prom, Holidays, Trips, New Baby, Anniversaries, Birthdays, Baby's First Steps, etc. What if you had specific soundtracks to go with each one? I'm imagining graduation with "Pomp & Circumstance" New baby is "What a Wonderful World" etc. Perhaps you create themes that folks can choose from. You'd be like the super easy Smilebox.

PR: Content Creation

As you mentioned for me, content is King (and Queen). :) How about a PR strategy to incentivize the top 100 mom bloggers to make Minuttas and share on their blog and social media. What if you had Minutta contests? Funniest. Most Hartwarming, etc.

Public Sharing & Virality Factor

What if great Minuttas could be shared with the public? I know one of your assumptions is that people don't want to share these moments, but I actually question that one. That may be an Eastern European thing. In the US, I think the tendency is to share (and overshare). I think this would increase the virality.

Just some thoughts.

j

Aaron also provided interesting insight:

— — —

Hi Pavel,

First off, you have a pretty good launch strategy already. I like the Australia / New Zealand launch angel for something like this to refine viral loops, retention, and pricing strategy.

As for launching in the US, your acquisition strategy has to be the product itself. As an example, you probably should have followed this email to me up with a photo slideshow of me at Founder Institute. Taking that idea further, take a bunch of photos at an event / conference where there are plenty of influencers, and follow up with an (unsolicited) email with some flattering photos of them in slideshow format. See what kind of pickup you get. I assume that when viewing your slideshow on the mobile web you've made it really easy to share on social media?

2m users in 2 months would be solid enough to get attention. More important than that (because there are so many photo apps) would be solid retention numbers, and even better would be solid conversion numbers: week 1 cohort converts a 0.3%, week 2 at 0.45%, week 3 at 0.50% etc. so see how far that curve goes.

Good luck,
Aaron

9. Initial Outreach

Up to now I only managed to put down the list of the candidates and reach out to them through LinkedIn. Not much response so far, hope to catch up before the end of the week.

10. Seventh Mailing

My latest mailing is here (<http://eepurl.com/VKRmr>)

Landing Page done about 1 hour ago: by Mark Montalban for ([edit](#) [delete](#) [copy](#) [replace](#) Version 1 [Previous](#))