

Evan Spiegel: Discovering the Other Side of Picture



“Snapchat really has to do with the way photographs have changed. Historically, photos have always been used to save really important memories; major life moments. But today, pictures are being used for talking” – Evan Spiegel, Co- Founder and CEO Snapchat now Snap Inc.

In the 1500's, a lens was used in a small opening of a darkened room to project images as a drawing. This formed even more curiosity amongst people and after multiple attempts; in 1840 the first camera was invented which could permanently save images.

Fast forward to the 20th century, technology took an enormous leap. The era of digital Cameras emerged. Taking a photo became easier than before. Thousands of individual started buying their own cameras. These cameras gave them an opportunity to preserve their till the last breath memories. With the emergence of camera-phones in 21st century, taking and preserving photos became an obsession. The art of photography never cherished like this before.

One visionary decided to take advantage of it and envisioned to develop a fun application that people would love and find convenient to use as well.

Born with the Silver Spoon

Evan Thomas Spiegel was born into a family of lawyers on the 4th of June 1990 in Pacific Palisades, California. He had a very generous childhood with not too many challenges. Even as a child, Evan showed a lot of enthusiasm towards technology and consequent innovations. Upon attending school at Crossroads School of Arts and Science, he was certain to cradle the path of his interests. With his caliber, he then went on to pursue his further studies at the reputed Stanford University. Alongside his degree, he also took design classes in the Otis College of Art and Design.

During his juvenile period, he had adapted to his lifestyle of having everything provided to him. Born with a silver spoon boy once even convinced his mom to buy a his dream car – a BMW on a lease for him. This was his first real deal and it is proof of his actions yielding results later on in life.

Inspiration behind Inception

While pursuing his academics at Stanford, one of the family friends gave Evan a chance to attend a graduate level class related to entrepreneurship and venture capital. This step sowed a seed of idea in Evan's mind.

Popular tech personages, like the former Google CEO Eric Schimdt and Youtube co – founder Chad Hurley. This provided him an environment that nurtured his passion for technology and he started believing in his potential to become a successful entrepreneur. To his astonishment at Stanford that he also met two others who shared an ardor towards the same things. Timeless discussions with professors and these new friends sparked Evan to constantly think about innovative ideas and concepts.

Prior to founding his own company, Evan Spiegel was also a part of an internship with a popular energy drink brand. He also had the fortuity of working with Scott Cook who is the CEO of Intuit. Before working for Intuit, Evan met Scott in the same session about entrepreneurship. He had given impressive answers to the questions asked by Scott. This earned him an opportunity to work on Cook's Intuit project which was supposed to be released in India. The two had a great bond of friendship, and Scott found Evan to be an efficient team person when he found the fact that Evan turned down a handsome deal of a social media giant for his project.

Evan soon dropped out of Stanford in order to focus on his dream project. Alongside Reggie Brown and Bobby Murphy he decided to develop the prototype of a messaging that would use disappearing photos. He decided to name it Picaboo. The social circle made fun of his idea and the name he recommended. Many people termed it as an unrealistic product that wouldn't take off. But over the years, it proved to be a game changer and its popularity continued to rise.

Strategizing Success

He constantly followed the 90 % rule, where if he didn't find a 90 % advantage in the deals brought to him, he refused. Evan is considered as one of stubborn leaders. He strictly follows his principles and wishes his employees to do the same. Being particular, he ensures that his employees maintain and follow his rule of maintaining secrecy in case of a new product launch. A lot of times he doesn't give them an inkling of the product or strategy until it is directly launched amongst them.

At the time when he acquired a new startup called Vergence Labs to design the popular Spectacles, the one thing he strictly ensured was maintenance of secrecy. The fact that he placed his company's priority as keeping things simple for the users is something that caught on with the general crowd. Such consequent approaches ensured successful growth of Snapchat.

Worthy Recognitions

Evan Spiegel's dream project found its place amongst the top applications in 2012 where 25 images were sent per second. By November of the same year, the number images of users on the IOS version had grown to over a 20 million. In the year 2013 he was also awarded with the Crunchies Best Mobile Application award. Snapchat by then had over 187 million active users. The biggest milestone of his life was when he was featured in Forbes as the youngest billionaire when he was just 28 years of age.

Getting out of comfort zone and believing in your idea although no one shows a faith in it is always the first step towards starting a successful business. Although it is not a cake walk, Pictorials like Evan Spiegel does motivate to do the same isn't it?

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