

How a fledgling idea can grow wings: Twitter and TweepForce



Did you know that Twitter – which is now worth an eye-watering \$5 billion – grew from something called Odeo? Its origins are actually shrouded in controversy and creative differences. Proving that the road to greatness can be tough.

In fact, sometimes, the difference between a good idea, and a good idea that's commercially successful, is money. An injection of much needed cash at an early stage can be crucial. Even the most visionary innovations can't carry out Research and Development fueled entirely by enthusiasm and self-belief.

For some businesses, that early investment comes from traditional lenders or crowdfunding projects. However, many start-ups experience a series of doors shutting in their faces. Especially in the crowded tech field.

Other enterprises, such as Twitter-related tech company TweepForce, get much-needed help to “take-off” from an R&D tax relief claim.

Twitter's rise – fall – and rise again

The saying goes, that it can sometimes take years to create an overnight sensation.

Social media has become such a powerful force in our work and lives, that it's hard to remember what it was like before it arrived; with its limitless opportunities to spend every waking minute posting, commenting, sharing, liking and watching hilarious videos! The major players in this market are now beginning to overlap and share common features.

However, the origins of the various social media platforms lie in distinctly separate purposes and different sets of entrepreneurs.

There are various versions of how Twitter came to be, but the common ground is that it grew from something called Odeo. The aim of this was to create a platform for podcasting. That hit a huge setback when Apple announced that iTunes would include podcast capabilities.

Then in 2006, the development team behind Odeo (and some new creative talent drafted in) came up with a fresh plan. A system that would enable a user to send a text to one number, that could then be viewable simultaneously by all their friends. The Odeo team initially called it Twtrr.

It's amusing to picture Twitter starting life on a founder's IBM ThinkPad, connected to the internet by a wireless card. Proof of concept came in August 2006, when a small earthquake in Odeo's home city of San Francisco was effectively communicated via Twitter.

Fast forward to modern times, and Twitter – and “Tweeting” - have become a vital component of social media for both businesses and individuals. Recently, the character length has been extended and the imagery options developed, but it remains a favoured way to communicate short messages to a community of followers.

Twitter has also been described as a digital conversation. Its 330 million active users share transitory exchanges in real time or scroll back across profile pages to recap on musings and announcements. Your own unique postings can be interwoven with “re-tweets” from other Twitter users, adding even more value to the way Twitter's business and social communication works.

Twitter inspired tech and concepts

With such tremendous outreach and value, it's not surprising that Twitter has stimulated other innovators to develop “bolt on” services and functionality. This includes, for example, several dashboard software options to help you to manage your Tweets and orchestrate them with other social media posts.

But just how do you bring such an idea to the stage to become a viable business proposition? How do you get around the complexities of adding a new dimension to such a sophisticated and well known entity?

One solution with “wings” is to apply for R&D Tax Relief. It could reduce the costs of developing software by as much as 33%. This is the route to success that TweepForce chose.

What is TweepForce?

Just like the source of its inspiration, TweepForce began life with a concept that plugs a hole in the social media marketplace. In the case of the more recent fledgling business, it was a self-financing, family enterprise that was formed to get it off the ground. None of which reduced TweepForce's ability to make an R&D Tax Relief claim.



The basic premise of TweepForce, is that it makes it possible to use Twitter as an eCommerce tool. The software developed by the start-up, enables marketers to piggyback on Twitter's existing messaging service to sell products. Customers have the option to learn about products, select, pay and even add reviews in one streamlined process.

The R&D priorities

The innovators behind the TweepForce concept needed to ensure that this real time web-hosted service software was configured to avoid hard sell. To be successful, and achieve a strong market share, the emphasis had to be on securing consumer engagement. This was the most likely way to create the potential for lead conversion and transactions. It also worked around the problem of advertising-weary and suspicious consumers switching off from direct selling.

The TweepForce developers wanted to build a high degree of credibility into their software. Consumers needed to feel comfortable with it. In that way, commissions from digital marketing companies and in-house advertising teams would be more likely when a fertile Twitter audience could be established.

There were several legal and commercial complexities in the early stages. Not all these hurdles could be considered for R&D Tax Relief. But TweepForce had expert help to identify the technical design and prototyping challenges that were ripe for this valuable financial support.

Where TweepForce can go

Building on the potential that opened up thanks to a successful R&D Tax relief claim, TweepForce is ready to take flight. It looks set to provide digital marketing companies, top brands and in-house marketers with an exciting commercial option.

Through a self-service suite of Twitter tools, software purchasers can build eCommerce opportunities into the social media's messaging function. Not only does this represent a valuable "new path to market", it could potentially save substantial amounts of money normally spent on advertising and lead prospecting.

Having such a captive audience and a more drilled down approach to marketing products and services, can also provide TweepForce clients with higher conversion rates and a strong return on investment.

Could R&D Tax Relief be the secret to success?

Just as Twitter in its earliest form hit obstacles and faced funding issues, new tech such as TweepForce could easily trip over initial hurdles.

Having R&D Tax relief available, and the help needed to claim successfully over a five-year period, proved a vital catalyst in TweepForce's viability.

If you would like to explore a similar R&D Tax Relief claim, contact us for advice and information.

Highly recommended for R&D Tax rebate to startups, entrepreneurs who have limited time in hand for preparing their tax returns.

The no win no fee structure also suits early stage businesses.

S Garg, Director