Start-up makes music accessible to any child, anywhere

At 22, Jacob Zax launched his first business with a mission to give every kid in the world the chance to make music. His idea, for intuitive software available on any device to help kids create music, MusiQuest, won him the support of the US National Science Foundation, investment from TechStars and even a Mom’s Choice Award. Four years later, he’s built a team, a product and has powered a quarter million people in 120 countries to create and share 2 million songs. He’s also learned more about what compels him and also about what terrifies him: like processing payroll and benefits for his company.

Business issue
A first-time entrepreneur with fresh investment in his passion project, Jacob was desperate for a tech solution to help him manage the backend of his business. “I was 22 and deeply afraid when I tried to run my first company payroll. I knew I wanted to create an environment to support the health, stability, and well-being of our colleagues, and I didn’t want to screw it up.”
“Zenefits has made my life as a young entrepreneur so, so much better. The relief, dependability, support and frankly, joy, that I experience is extraordinary. Zenefits is a crazy lifesaver for us.”

JACOB ZAX, CEO

Solution
TechStars, as part of its investment, connected Jacob to TriNet to outsource all of his back-office programs, but it was too costly. “We are a low-burn organization and focus our funding on our mission. The Zenefits model made so much sense to me, and was well suited to small business.” Jacob selected Zenefits for Payroll, HR, and Benefits before his second payroll run in 2015 and has never looked back.

Making Music—and learning—more fun
For adults with memories of hours of forced practice time playing Claire de Lune on the piano or on a plastic recorder, one look at Musiquest's website breaks the script of what music education can be. For starters, the menu of nearly 300 courses is separated into categories that range from Reggae to Villians, Joy, Harmony, and Commas.

Jacob Zax is clearly on to something. He’s not only helping kids make music, but he’s also helping them create peak experiences and memories in a space where time, cost and dropout rates have traditionally been the biggest barriers. He explains that for instrumental learning, students have to build skills for a long time before they can really “be creative with music.” But with computer assistance, a child can discover their musicality while developing proficiency: accessibly, affordably and easily.

Building a beautifully thought-through human environment
This young entrepreneur cares for his new team as much as he cares for their shared mission. For his collected group of talented engineers and folks with rich musical insight, he’s looking to build a ‘beautifully thought-through human environment’ for Edify’s team.

“Benefits are not a perk. They are part of a healthy culture, which supports people with security, belonging, and meaning in their lives,” adds Jacob.

Inside this zen vision, there has admittedly been some learning and course correcting at Edify.

“It’s been an adventure, for sure. When you are young, you read a lot of blog posts about startups and fundraising, which is fun. But you don’t read about payroll and administrative functions. It came out of nowhere for me. It is complex and important and it snuck up on me with our first pay run. I realized I can never do this, ever again. That was when I selected Zenefits.”

Jacob says that his payroll is now “set it and forget it” simple, which is invaluable in terms of time and stress saved. While benefits are no less important, because selection happens once a year, he’s pleased with the thoughtful and reasonably priced plan access he gets from Zenefits and its broker partner One Digital. And HR, “just happens by email at this stage,” prompted by tasks in the Zenefits system.

“When I reflected on what I was most grateful for in 2018, Zenefits came to mind.

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