

'Startup Van' meets 'The Garage': Two men, one idea that kept growing

The value of networking, sharing journeys, failures, successes, and being a community of like-minded people that genuinely want to help is something we should all aspire to. With that being said welcome to 'The Garage' - tech's answer to the outdated men's private clubs of old! Maddy Ness sat down with Graham Hussey, the Co-founder of Startup Van and its newest portfolio addition 'The Garage'.

Temps de lecture : minute

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Aptly named after 'Startup Van' the obviously stationary 'Garage' will be an online network and syndicate fund before becoming a physical space for networking, working and of course a film studio launching in Q1 2021.

Yes, there will be a members fee, but it's reasonable at around £1200 per year. They have cultivated throughout their journey around 3K members of this tight-knit community and everyone who is a part of it will opt into helping each other. The pandemic brought about many questions for startups and businesses alike at all levels, this community was a way for everyone to help each other get the answers they needed and quickly.

"Something that I believe is an invaluable resource."

Everyone wants in on the next big thing, so they set up a diverse panel group in the syndicate (Louise Rix from Forward partners, Zoe Chambers from Octopus Ventures and Andy Ayim who was Backstage Capital, now runs Angel Investing School) who would do the due diligence on startups and then send out blasts to the members to see if they would like to invest. When members invest in each other's businesses there becomes a notion of really wanting to help everyone succeed. A sort of 'we are all in this together' vibe comes about and it is less about competition.

Why networking is key

Looking ahead to 2021, when we can finally enter a literal space formed with a diverse group of people who are looking to leverage their network, chat through issues and gain as much knowledge as possible. The space will give members the chance to get in on the action as angel investors all within the comfort zone of knowing the due diligence has been done. The syndicate has been formed to enable founders helping other founders to succeed.

What a beautiful message of abundance and the notion that there is enough success to go around for all. It is not hard to imagine how invaluable this space (even digitally) will be, especially with its own dedicated community manager whose only role is to get to know everyone and make introductions! But how did they get here? Because like many businesses this has been a journey.

The beginning

Graham's journey started when he and Mark wanted to start a business together and wanted to record video content, but at this point, they had only interviewed entrepreneurs and written about them. They both felt like they were missing a trick and were slightly bored with the written word. They felt visually speaking to people on camera would get them to

open up and tell their story in a new and exciting way. This made sense as talking to people was their passion.

They decided to leverage the final year of Web Summit being in Dublin and put this theory to the test. So they hired a local production company and shot a promo video of their idea 'Startup Van'. After first trying a transit van and realising they looked like they were going to kidnap people, they finally settled on a 1957 Camper Van with a hippy vibe. With Web Summit wanting to charge them a fortune and knowing at this point they were all in, they parked it in Temple Bar and sent out a tweet.

What followed was genuinely incredible. Founders were lined up around the block! A quick call to family to bring clipboards and help keep the crowd calm and patient and the start of their business was truly born!

A cut above the rest

Graham and Mark knew they needed to turn around the content quickly, so at 1 am after finally finishing shooting a video editor cycled down and picked up the stuff and by 7 am had fully edited videos up and ready to go online. A genius and on the money move.

Their content was a success and showed brands that they could create content and give that brand/person/startup visibility on a scale that everyone was envious of. They were first and second on the official google search of the #websummit.

Clearly they had made an impact. Having handed out their business cards they returned to their day job with a slight reticence. From then as you can imagine their phones began to ring and they were well on their way

to evolving into a company that could drive hype and media coverage in a variety of tech spaces and on a global scale.

Old Street Roundabout

Not wanting to be a one-hit wonder and with even more knowledge they opened a film studio in Old Street. They didn't feel they needed the gimmick of the van and wanted to prove their strength lay in their interview skills and questioning nature. They then went on to create a daily show which produced 235 videos with content uploaded daily and averaging around 15K views per piece. (Although this was in a more formal film studio.)

All backed by a corporate sponsor, which is still their main revenue stream. WeWork approached them to do a 'Behind the Curtain' 10 episode show live in different locations, their first guest was a secret and the room was packed with fintech entrepreneurs and in walks Tom from Monzo!

They asked him all the hard questions, he discussed failure and things that are not so easy to talk about and 100K views later they had proven they had a successful model. But more importantly they were building their network and database.



So why now?

The Garage will not just be a physical space in Shoreditch, but a digital networking arena for startup founders and entrepreneurs, in which they can share their knowledge and experience. The idea is to build a network and have the ability to call on the talents and expertise of the fellow

founders in the community. Need legal help, [Anthony Rose from Seedlegals](#) is most likely your guy!

Need someone to talk through your journey and how to deal with [burnout](#), or deal with failure, well trust me when I say all founders have gone through elements of this! The main point is that starting a company is daunting and lonely, but here you are not alone!

Speaking with Graham you realise he isn't just doing this to make a quick buck, he is in it because he cares, genuinely cares about helping people be the best version of themselves.

There are some brilliant minds out there who need to be cultivated and helped. And in helping them network and solve the problems facing them and their businesses we might even help humanity move into the future with greater empathy and kindness. Something I think that is worthwhile under any circumstances. I for one am looking forward to a coffee with Graham and co in The Garage 2021 or when humanly possible! See you there!

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