

Meet Tutti, the platform enabling creators to find the perfect space

As part of our quick fire questions series - or QFQs - we spoke to Gabriel Isserlis, cofounder and CEO of Tutti about being the 'opentable for creative spaces', ensuring that creators find the perfect space to create, and building a booking system for unique venues.

Temps de lecture : minute

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My personal experience inspired the business: I studied film and programming at university, and have worked in music, theatre, and photography over the past decade. There wasn't a one off event that inspired Tutti - it was my combined experiences across those creative disciplines where both my friends and I struggled to find and book spaces for shoots, rehearsals, and more, that showed me over time how much a solution was needed. Given my experience in programming, I knew the solution did not have to be groundbreaking. All we needed to build was a simple marketplace, which we launched on Halloween of 2018 (clearly I have no social life).

Tell me about the business - what it is, what it aims to achieve, who you work with, how you reach customers and so on?

In comparative terms, Tutti is "Opentable for creative spaces" - creators need physical spaces for video/photo shoots, rehearsals, recordings, and performances. These including studios, homes, churches, warehouses, pubs, theatres, but also unusual places like boats or parks. Our

technology is making it easier and faster for people to find and book any sort of amazing space for any creative hire. We have a marketplace where people can find and contact spaces in minutes, using our unique creative filters (instruments, noise levels, wall colours, etc.). At the same time we're building booking management software for venues to help them keep track of enquiries. In business terms we are a B2B SaaS enabled marketplace for the creative industries. We're reaching most of our customers through Google search currently as we spend a significant amount of our time optimising our technology for SEO.

How has the business evolved since its launch? When was this?

We launched in 2018 as a simple marketplace: "Airbnb for music rehearsal spaces" as music was where I had the most connections at the time. My experiences in all disciplines helped inspire the idea so I knew we'd expand at some point but, in a couple of months, it became clear music rehearsal was too niche. So we expanded into the disciplines that I believed had the most overlap: music, theatre, dance, film/tv/video, and photography. Those 5 verticals inspired the 5 colours you see in our logo today. Since April 2019, they have been our focus. At the end of last year we tried raising our first round of funding and failed horribly, which motivated me to talk to my customers more (you should always be doing this...) and we learned that more than 80% of our venues have no booking system to manage their enquiries. Even massive locations that are hired by Netflix & BBC regularly rely on spreadsheets, or in some cases, physical notebooks. This insight led us to evolving once more to build software for our venues and become a SaaS enabled marketplace. And that's where we are today.

How are you funded?

We were self funded until April of this year when we raised a friend/family/pre-seed angel round. We are now preparing to top up that money with a crowdfunding round on Seedrs in the next 6 weeks.

What has been your biggest challenge so far and how have you overcome this?

We've had endless challenges (If startups were easy, everyone would do them). One massive problem that we're still working on solving is a problem of our own making: too many customer segments. Our customers are in music, theatre, dance, film, tv, video, photography. We simply don't have the resources to create different marketing messages for each segment, so we've clumped them all into one: artists. But that means that our messaging isn't brilliant for any one group. One way we're tackling this is by crafting targeted SEO pages that do target individual segments at a time, but these don't give immediate results. The area this problem is most highlighted is our monthly email. We haven't quite figured out the right content for that - but we're constantly playing with ideas. Like everything in Tutti, I expect both the problem and our solutions will evolve a lot over the months to come.

How does Tutti answer an unmet need?

Being a SaaS enabled marketplace, we meet a few unmet needs. Our venues have never found good software for managing their bookings, so our system does that. A number of our venues struggle to market themselves effectively on Google as big venues can buy their way to the top. We're optimising our search pages for Google and will never accept paid for, featured listings, so we're levelling the playing field for our venues. And at the same time, our search enables artists to find spaces

based on unusual filters and data almost no other website has.

What's in store for the future?

In the very near future, we are raising money on Seedrs. Beyond that, based on the feedback from our pilot testers, it looks like our software will be a game changer for a lot of studios and locations who are used to relying on Google calendar and spreadsheets to manage themselves. We are working to introduce a number of solutions that no one has seen in this industry, but many have dreamed of having. So we're super excited to start rolling that software out to customers over the coming months.

What one piece of advice would you give to other founders or future founders?

Talk to your customers. Constantly. Every week. Whether you have 1 or 1000 (well if you have 1, maybe don't spam them!) Our customers have helped shape so much of what Tutti is today. I do a lot of work balancing my own ideas of what I want to make, with the problems our customers have and figuring out if there's a technical solution that fits into my plans, that solves their problems. Listening to customer problems and empathising with their struggles, and trying to experience those struggles myself on their behalf, is how I do a lot of the product design/planning work.

And for future founders who have 0 customers? The easiest company to make is one that solves a problem for you, yourself, making you customer number one. If you can do that, that's a great place to start. You don't have to stick with that first problem, in fact most don't (Look at Slack. It started as a game development company), but start solving a problem, and you'll find many more to solve down the road. Just be careful not to try to solve too many at once, focus is key!

Gabriel Isserlis is the founder and CEO of *Tutti*

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