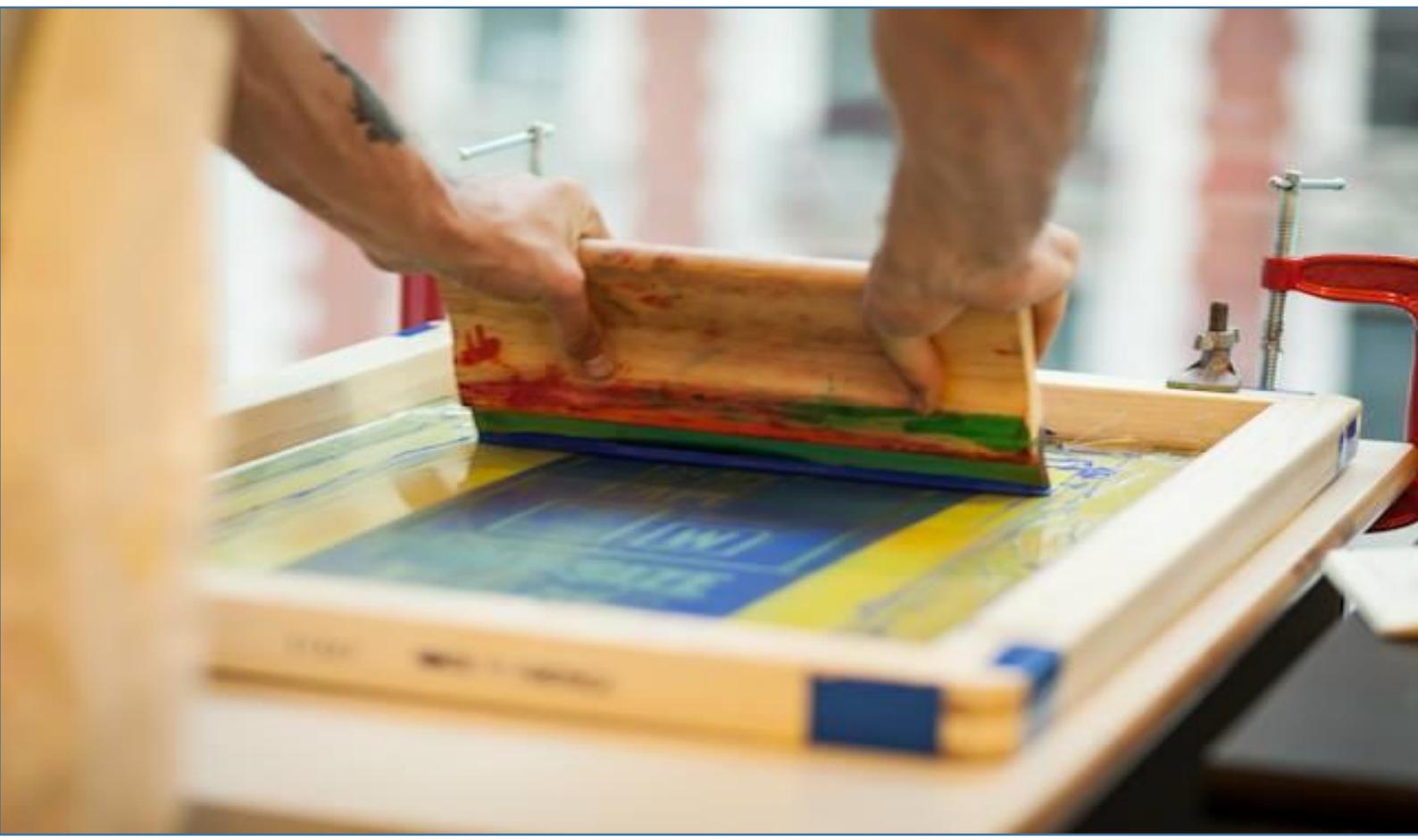




MY START-UP: MOBYMAPS

FOUNDER – RORY LAWRENCE



I met Rory in the winter of 2015 in beautiful Bournemouth. He was the very first entrepreneur I interacted with in the region. Within a half-hour meeting, I understood Rory was an integral part of the entrepreneurial landscape here. Among other things, Rory has organised and run the Bournemouth start-up meetings for two years until 2015.

I have documented a few things I discussed with Rory here,



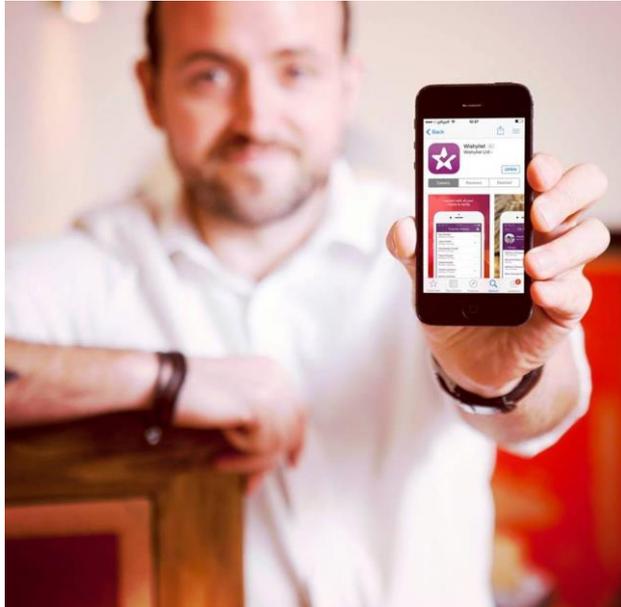
1. Tell us a bit about your projects – WayMoby, MobyMaps and WishyList.

WayMoby is the name I operate my freelance graphics and web design consultancy services under - serving mainly advertising and design firms as specialist help with digital products.

MobyMaps is a pet project I was inspired to start working on after a 2-year stint travelling around South East Asia & Australia. I like to call MobyMaps 'functional art' – they are stylish world maps silkscreen printed on to large cork boards and framed with rustic wooden frames – there's nothing quite like them. It was always my aim to produce cool, affordable maps for backpackers on their return home. The demand for them have been growing amongst the luxury furniture stores here in Dorset & Hampshire.

Wishylist has also been a rather long project - something I started 4 years ago when I created a prototype for my family to use - to share what we wished for Christmas each year. Our rather large family lived abroad and rarely got to see each other, it was difficult to know what to get one another.

Since then my vision has expanded and my pursuit to build something bigger and better has taken me all over the world from London to Germany, Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines (but not yet America).



Currently Wishylist is a (free) app on iTunes with features that work and daily downloads.

2. What do you think of the Bournemouth start-up scene? You also organize the Bournemouth Start-ups meetup every month. How has that experience been?

Bournemouth is a great place to live with a bright future, but it's not all it's cracked up to be. It definitely lacks the infrastructure and support for a tech scene to thrive. The local councils seem to believe that having 'the world's fastest broadband' is a big incentive which isn't true – just look at the thriving tech scene in Thailand and Bali – they have some of the worst connections yet they're thriving because of low-cost of living on one hand in Thailand and access to a pool of funding in Indonesia.

The trouble with Bournemouth is the lack of funding and initiatives to support tech start-ups which do not meet with traditional business models.

Unfortunately, the British mind-set is not as risk-averse as US investors' are at - hedging their investments on start-ups with great ideas.

A couple of years ago I began Bournemouth start-ups with a few chaps to create a place for likeminded tech entrepreneurs to meet and help each other. It had a good run until the other founders left Bournemouth in search of better support in America.

The experience has taught me a lot and I've perhaps been the most fortunate from it having met so many interesting people some of them I can now call good friends.

I'd still like to see the group get going again, perhaps with help from the new Silicon South taking steam.



3. What are your biggest learnings as an entrepreneur?

"Never give up!"

Be kind to yourself when things get tough. Meet as many people as you possible can. Take what everyone says lightly – they don't know your business, or quite what you envisage. Stick to your guns as you're probably right.

But the biggest learning is probably that unless you've been through business school, you probably have to fail at starting a business before you will learn how to actually run a business. The one thing I learnt the hard way is that unless you are a whiz developer, then really "all about the money".

I would suggest, do not give up your day job until your business is making enough money to support you. Oh! and The Lean Startup is probably the best book ever, read it and re-read it.

4. What are your expansion plans? Is Asia on the cards for you?

Asia is definitely on the cards, as I mentioned I've spent a great deal of time making connections out there both for Wishylist & MobyMaps. I wouldn't mind having a more permanent base in SE Asia / Pacific!



I was at a [KickStart my](#) start-up event in Kuala Lumpur in 2014, held at the headquarters of [Mindvalley](#), shortly after I had attended the Awesomeness Fest ([A'fest](#)) conference for entrepreneurs, in Thailand. I was working from KL for a couple of months and stayed at one of [Khalee Ng's](#) apartments (Managing Partner of the legendary 500 start-ups).

I also visited Philippines at this time in search of contacts. I was at the A'fest (Awesomeness Fest) to make contacts with investors and found myself quite randomly on a plane to KL with a bunch of other entrepreneurs for 2 weeks of utter madness and business-partying. (LOL!)



5. Are you looking for funding? If so, at what range would you pitch your requirements at?

Yes, funding I am in need of, specifically for WishyList. Something to the tune of £20K will help build a better prototype. To create the capabilities that's my vision for this product, I would say an amount of £250k is required.



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Notes

All the wonderful pictures in this post are sourced from Rory's own collection

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