



KANSAS CITY IS LOGISTICALLY CONNECTED

ACCELERATOR PROGRAMS PUT KANSAS CITY ON THE STARTUP COMMUNITY MAP

Got an idea? A really fantastic idea for a startup company? One that can positively disrupt a commercial space, and potentially scale up globally? **If you're in Kansas City, you're in the right place.**

Ideas that can change the way business is run **need mentors, advisors, connections, funding and office space. Startups can find all this and more via incubator and accelerator programs, and Kansas City is loaded with them.**

One such company that has greatly benefited from the accelerator programs is Super Dispatch, a mobile platform aimed at trucking owner-operators and small fleets that helps them eliminate mounds of paperwork and invoice deliveries instantly. This can improve cash flow by 60 to 90 days. The initial target group is auto transporters and other specialized freight carriers.

At least eight different fast-track programs are scouring the Midwest for the best entrepreneurs. Not surprisingly, some of these startups are focused on the logistics industry, since Kansas City is a mecca for such activity.



Meet Bek Abdullayev. The energetic entrepreneur has neither a strong background in logistics, nor is he a software developer. But he is a problem solver in the purist sense. Once conceiving the idea for Super Dispatch (www.superdispatch.com), he decided the only way to discover true pain points was to join drivers across the country and walk in their shoes. For weeks, he rode along with various drivers, learning their lifestyle, how they conducted business, digging into their problems and finding huge inefficiencies.

“After a trip, each driver has a giant stack of papers that is inches thick – invoices, receipts, proof-of-deliveries and more,” Abdullayev said. “Papers get lost, or a signature might be missing. It all leads to mounds of paperwork, human error and the worst part – no payment for 60 to 90 days from the point of delivery. I knew there had to be a better way.”

Each driver was already carrying the solution in their pocket – a smartphone. Abdullayev began the process of developing an app that was easy to use and understand, would automatically interface with back office accounting software, and would result in instant confirmation and invoicing. No small task!

He smiles as he discusses the first version of Super Dispatch, which he labels a colossal failure.

“Our core values are being bold, experimenting and learning. It is OK to fail – you just need to learn, grow and adapt.” Version 2 of Super Dispatch has been a hit, and he is now up to 18 employees. In fact, in his view, being an “outsider” to the logistics industry is actually an advantage.

“I’m trying to introduce a disruption to how business is traditionally done for owner-operators and small fleets. We can find a solution without being blinded by common practices.”

ACCELERATOR PROGRAMS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Abdullayev said **Kansas City has a rich accelerator presence.** He was accepted into the TechStars Kansas City program, and began an intense program of learning and growing. In addition to some funding, he also has free office space for the first year.

“Accelerators are great resources to get connected to mentors, advisors and investors. Super Dispatch wouldn’t have made the fast progress we have without the accelerator.”

Located in the Sprint Accelerator facility, a rehabbed brick building situated in the heart of the trendy Crossroads District of Kansas City, Super Dispatch shares space with a half-dozen other startups – or “cohorts” as they are called – each trying to introduce disruptions and new efficiencies to a waiting world.

“The entrepreneurial and the corporate community have really been engaged together in the last five years,” Abdullayev said. ***“Kansas City has developed a real culture, with lots of character, which has attracted a lot of people to move here.”***

He takes advantage of the strong higher education community, which includes several large universities, using interns and drawing from a wealth of knowledge. “Schools here have made a conscious decision to educate students on all the career alternatives, and that includes startups as a viable option today for college students.”

Abdullayev also makes sure that each new employee has the same impactful experience of “life of the road” that he gained a few short years ago. “Yes, we send them out with a driver who is one of our customers so they can see how the product is used, and understand what it means to be a truck driver. You gain a real appreciation.”



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