



«Patience is the biggest factor »

In Switzerland, various offices and meeting rooms remain empty and unused during the day. This is the challenge that the Swiss startup Workspace2go hopes to tackle as they try to optimize the use of these spaces. Start-alp spoke with company founder and CEO Manuele Fumagalli about his inspiration for founding the company, about the competition and the success of the start-up thus far.

Hi Manuele, First of all, how did you get the idea for [Workspace2go](http://workspace2go.ch/) (<http://workspace2go.ch/>)?

After a trip around the world, I came back to Switzerland and I found that I didn't want to work in the banking sector anymore. I started tutoring in a school. While there, I noticed that the rooms were empty all day. The children came to classes in the evening, but the rooms weren't used during the day. And yet, the school paid rent for the entire day. This makes no sense ecologically and economically. Then it occurred to me that they could rent the rooms during this time, and the idea was born.

You are the CEO, but not the only founder. How did you meet your partners?

We are three founding members. Thomas is a good friend of my family. He has a lot of experience in the start-up scene. He told me that I should get a technical co-founder. Based on his suggestion, I teamed up with Samuli, whom I know through sports.



The founders of workspace2go (Samuli, Manuele, Thomas) Credit: Instagram

How did you come to the Impact Hub

as an office location?

It was pure coincidence. We were in a restaurant and were talking about the idea of the start-up. Someone at the next table overheard us, came over and recommended the Impact Hub. After we visited, everything went quickly and we applied.

What do you like about Impact hub?

The mood in the office is quite unique. Good people with interesting companies work here. There is a positive energy in the office. We've even found investors here!

You probably had financial goals when you started. What did they look like?

Of course we had our business plans, but we were not driven by numbers. Our main goal was to bring our idea into being.

Nevertheless, you have seven employees, who must also be paid.

We are lucky to be well-positioned in this regard, we completed a first financing round this summer. The financial data is important, but not our solely focus.

What did things look like before you acquired the investors?

In September 2016, we paid out salaries for the first time. Before that, we didn't pay out any money for one and a half years. The trainees didn't receive anything either. It was all just about the start-up. I was also tutoring at the time while working on our project. It is important to keep costs low.

How are your customers segmented?

We distinguish between suppliers and tenants. Many consultants and coaches use our services. The larger meeting rooms are even booked by companies. Swisscom and UBS have already booked on our platform. At the supplier side, we are always on the lookout for new locations. It doesn't matter whether they are big, small, cheap or expensive.

Although big companies have already booked with you, Cowodo offers a similar service in the market. Do you feel any pressure? And how do you differ from Cowodo?

It's hard to say – we don't feel any specific pressure. We stand out because of our multitude of different spaces and we just try to have the best offer.

We are looking for new offices every week...we are always going full throttle!

What kind of quality requirements do you have for the suppliers?

Clean rooms are extremely important, but our only requirement is that the suppliers receive and greet the tenants in person.

What was your longest booking so far?

We rented a seminar room for three months. It requires the same effort as we have for an hour-long booking, but we get more money.

You are on Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram. How important is social media for you?

It's a very important point, and the most difficult part is to maintain the right rhythm. It is great to communicate through these vehicles and it lets our interns develop their entrepreneurial skills. We are still working on our strategy for Snapchat, Instagram and Facebook, because each medium needs different content. It is a lot of hit and miss.

What was the biggest obstacle in the start-up process?

Pointing out a single obstacle is tough. You need a lot of desire and focus, because it takes longer than you think. This is also probably a reason that many start-ups fail. Whether it's in the financing or the development, patience

is the biggest factor.

And was the most negative experience so far?

With one supplier the collaboration was quite unlucky. There were problems with every booking. Once there was no beamer on site and another time, the room was not ready due to a misunderstanding. At another booking, the user made a “movie.” We can only guess about the nature of the film, but the provider took its room off our platform.

**Is a merger with Airbnb possible?
What are your plans for the future?**

We must continue to give 110%. The better we work, the stronger our negotiating position becomes. Airbnb won't be interested in us for a long time, so I don't think about what we will look like in two years. We go step by step. We have a great vision for Workspace2go.

What does this vision look like?

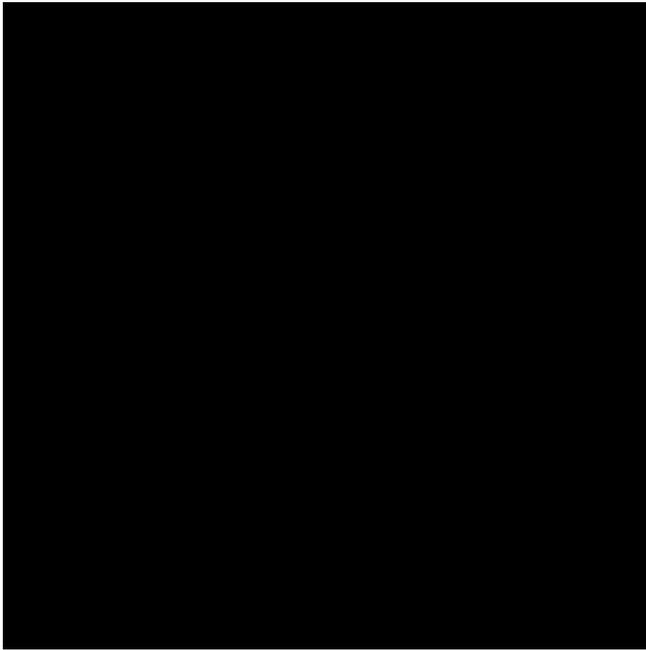
We want to become the market leader for transactional usage of real estate in Switzerland. We want to remain positively in the memory of the users.

Thanks a lot for the interview

You're welcome.



The workspace2go team at a Christmas party



Sven Forster

MSN was my first [VIEW ALL](#)
digital love, but I still do not
have a functioning webcam.