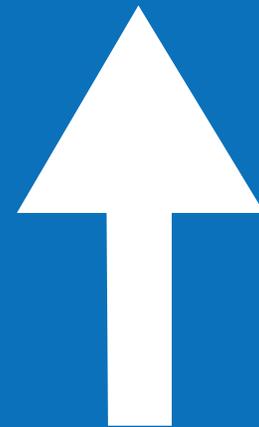
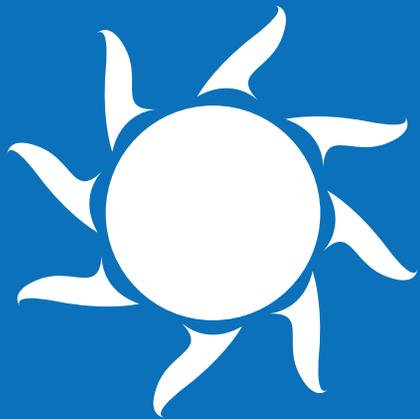


Sun, Surf, and Startups:

Entrepreneur stories of innovation, perseverance, passion, and creativity
from Puerto Rico



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Introduction

Puerto Rico is a Caribbean island and U. S. territory and many people are aware of the amazing beaches, world-class resorts, and captivating culture that exists here. In fact, you might have even visited on your last tropical vacation.

What you might not know is that right now, there is a startup revolution taking place in Puerto Rico; whereby, technical and creative entrepreneurs are working to shape the future economy of the island. More specifically, instead of waiting for the market to mold them or a job to “happen,” they are influencing the market and creating their own opportunities by launching startups and new inspired endeavors.

A few years ago I had the good fortune of attending the first Bar Camp in San Juan that was organized by Jose Padilla and Giovanni Collazo. It was apparent right then that the existing (and developing) startup movement in Puerto Rico was going to be a force to be reckoned with.

Indeed, after the initial Bar Camp—and continuing to the present day—there has been Tedx San Juan, Startup Weekend(s), and the launching of Founder’s Institute Puerto Rico by Marcos Polanco and Ramphis Castro. Recently, there have been Hackathons at the University of Puerto Rico Mayaguez campus and the formation of a Python user’s group.

This ebook is intended to provide a tiny glimpse into some of the individuals involved in the startup and innovative entrepreneur economy in Puerto Rico. It is not a comprehensive review of all of the intelligent folks who are working extremely hard today to “make something from nothing.” Rather, it’s a representation of people that I have had the opportunity to connect with in person or online.

(Editor’s note: if you are a startup entrepreneur in Puerto Rico and aren’t included or if you know of numerous others who should be featured, please help to highlight even more talented individuals either by doing version two of an ebook. Or, better yet, by implementing a Kickstarter project and filming a complete Puerto Rico startup documentary.)

The three major goals of Sun, Surf, & Startups v.1 are to:

1. Draw the continued attention of the global startup and inventive entrepreneur community and continue to build awareness.
2. Assist in actively shaping the startup story and message that is coming out of Puerto Rico. (Or what Ramphis Castro likes to call “hacking the media.”)
3. Help empower other startup entrepreneurs worldwide who are facing similar challenges and struggles.
4. Build further avenues of connection and communication.

As a closing note, I’d like to extend a big thank you to those who took the time out of their busy schedules to submit their information. For you, the reader, whether you’re a VC looking to invest in brilliant individuals, are considering a smarter project management solution, want to push your team to its creative edges, or need your killer iPhone app developed – Puerto Rico is here for you.

--Mark Hayward
@mark_hayward

(NB: Sincere thank you and gratitude to Mariangy Ramos @mariangy_neon for the design and layout.)

Investment Incentives

Puerto Rico offers the following incentives for businesses that apply to the 20-year decree:

- 4% flat income tax rate on Export Services Income (SaaS and Internet Business, specifically qualify). If certain thresholds are met, the rate may be reduced to 3%.
- 100% tax-exempt distributions from earnings and profits derived from the Export Services Income.
- 100% exemption from property taxes during the first five years of operations, then 90%.
- Because it is a contract, no law can invalidate the tax-decree once granted.

For individuals:

- Individual Investors that relocate (and have not been bona fide residents in the past 15 years) have tax-free capital gain on gains derived after their relocation, and preferential rates of 10% and 5% for capital gains built-in prior to their bona fide residency... They will also enjoy 0% tax-rates on particular outside of PR Dividend and Interest income.

Most important of all, Puerto Rico businesses and bona fide residents... are not taxed by the U.S. Federal Government on their income, except for FICA /FUTA Taxes (Social Security, Medicare, SDI, SUI) on their payroll.

Contributed by Miguel Nicolás Moreda @portocapital

Name: Marcos Polanco

Website: <http://mindchemistry.com/>

Current project: iCare Medical

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LinkedIn: <http://pr.linkedin.com/in/marcospolanco>

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Mindchemistry - Bend Space



Bio: Marcos is currently Chief Operating Officer of medical device startup iCare Medical; he started his career in Silicon Valley performing database research at Hewlett-Packard Laboratories that resulted in the TimesTen technology later acquired by Oracle. Mr. Polanco was the Founding Director of the Government of Puerto Rico's information technology investment promotion division. In that role, Marcos negotiated the launch of Microsoft, Honeywell Aerospace, Lockheed Martin, and HCL Axon technology centers on the island. Returning to private industry, he has cultivated the startup community as co-organizer of Startup Weekends, co-director of the Founder Institute and principal at innovation consultancy Clearshore. Mr. Polanco holds a bachelor's degree in Computer Systems Engineering from Stanford University.

What is driving the growth of the Puerto Rico startup economy?

Driver is affordability of dreams. We are artists seeking self-actualization and creative control, and earlier generations often abandoned their dreams or abandoned their land. Now, we can afford our dreams, and the world has beaten a path to our doorstep via the Internet. We have discovered we are far from alone in our quest, and have discovered a local community similarly deluded.

"...the point is we are now locals everywhere, so why live anywhere? When mobility meets globality, we can pursue our work without bounds of time & place." ~Marcos Polanco

Name: Ramphis Castro

Website: <http://gettainoapp.com>

Current project: TainoApp, Inc

Twitter: @jramphis

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/jramphis>

Email: jramphis@gmail.com



Bio: Ramphis is a serial entrepreneur, working on cool projects in the mobile technology space and is particularly interested in replicable projects for vertical industries. He aims to build software companies that create products that enable small to medium business compete with larger enterprises, while maintaining or lowering their technology costs.

Where is the Puerto Rico startup economy heading in the next few years?

During the next year Puerto Rico will continue to become a more mainstream part of the startup conversations at a regional level - connecting with the Miami/DC/Boston/NYC scenes, participating in all major events (SXSW, Techcrunch Disrupts, Founder Showcase, etc), and continued coverage by international tech media. We are also planning and establishing a semi-permanent presence in Silicon Valley.

The vision, over the course of the next 5 years, includes having all the major pieces in place - seed, early-stage, series-A, and beyond funds; multiple accelerator programs, 1-4 tech events per week, 2-5 credible exits from local startups, co-working spaces, angel networks, and etc.

The focus of all major entrepreneurship efforts will be divided amongst "traditional" entrepreneurship and technology-based entrepreneurship with 90% of all the media attention focused on the latter. Within the next 10-15 years, we hope to see the island on its second wave of innovation and entrepreneurs - now supported by our homegrown batch of tech-angels and investors who exited in years 5-10.

The ecosystem will also diversify its company portfolio, as more access to capital and successful entrepreneurs from their previous exits will take on even more risk in new markets - agriculture, energy, medical devices, etc. Hopefully, by then, a trend in the value-add of Puerto Rico in the global supply chain of knowledge can be discovered and secured.

Name: Francisco J. Uriarte
Website: www.espgroup.biz
Current project: Many different ones.
Twitter: @furiarte
LinkedIn: pr.linkedin.com/pub/francisco-uriarte/6/269/3
Email: furiarte@espgroup.biz



Bio: Twenty-two years of combined experience in the areas of Corporate and Entrepreneurial Finance, Strategy, Marketing, Operations and Mergers & Acquisitions. He's been directly involved in over twenty transactions with accumulated value over \$150MM and has been involved directly in two entrepreneurial activities which subsequently have been sold.

In a global marketplace, what is Puerto Rico's unique competitive advantage?

Puerto Rico has two major advantages that constitute a unique competitive advantage: (i) its geographic location; (ii) its relationship with the US. These advantages are both overlapped by a highly educated workforce and professional service providers.

These advantages, when exploited correctly, present opportunities for southern global markets that want to go north and northern global markets that want to go south.

The available talent—technical, service, legal, accounting, insurance, entrepreneurs—can support both budding local entrepreneurial activities as well as entrepreneurial activities domiciled abroad that want to locate operations in PR.

The unique features offered by the relationship with the US, including legal system and rules, also provide very attractive tax mechanisms for entities and individuals. The quality of life—seas and beaches around the corner and city living combined—distinguishes itself from other jurisdictions that are tax heavens but lack the metropolitan life amenities.

As an example, the pharmaceutical industry cluster and the biologics industry cluster produce a significant amount of the chemical and biological drugs in the world market. This has created, over time, an available capacity of a highly capable food chain of people—from line workers to process integrators, validators and more recently, clinical trials and research & development.

Name: Angiemille Latorre

Website: <http://seriouslycreative.com/>

Current project: Owner and Partner at Seriously-Creative

Twitter: @space4ideas

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Bio: Problem Solver, Entrepreneur, Idea Producer, Wife and Mother (not necessarily in that order). Passionate about scouting good ideas, making connections and getting things done.

What's your view of Puerto Rico's creative startup entrepreneurs and what's the "special sauce" they have to offer the world?

Puerto Rico's creative startup entrepreneurs are the group with the highest growth potential in the Island. Their demonstrated leadership, confidence, and ability to collaborate are key elements to be taken into consideration in the economic development plan of any company and nation.

We all talk innovation. The creative startup community is innovation. We should all think and act like "startupers".

Name: Javier Monllor

Website: <http://www.twitchly.com>

Current project: Twitchly: Helps you discover new training partners, clubs, coaches and events.

Twitter: @teamtwitchly, @profmonllor

LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/monllor/>

Email: javier@twitchly.com

twitchly



Bio: Mechanical Engineer, Assistant Professor at DePaul Univ. Chicago, triathlete. Fan of creativity, problem solving and entrepreneurship.

How did growing up in Puerto Rico contribute to your development as an entrepreneur and how did it help shape your current startup?

Early in my childhood my dad decided to quit his job in a large multinational corporation to start his own business and I had the opportunity to work in his business as a kid get and get immersed in entrepreneurship. My family always encouraged my ideas and I've done everything, from selling fruits and vegetables in the street as a child to designing and selling my own brand of surf lifestyle shirts in college. I paid my way through graduate college by starting a web design company and later opening a warehousing and logistics company in Ponce, with my dad. It was at this time that I was exposed to entrepreneurship as an educational option at the University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez and decided that I wanted to teach the next generation about entrepreneurship as a viable and preferable option. Although I currently teach and research creativity and entrepreneurship in Chicago, I am very attached to Puerto Rico and continue working with local universities, providing workshops to faculty and students and by organizing trips where Chicago students network with local students.

Name: Manny Morales

Website: <http://www.facebook.com/GrassLark>

Current project: Grasslark

Twitter: @manny_morales

LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/mannymor>

Email: manny@grasslark.com



Bio: Visual thinker by virtue of dyslexia. Passionate and persistent entrepreneur. Father of two, husband of one. Newbie Crossfiter.

How do you bring your ideas to market from Puerto Rico to the world?

Very carefully. Because we live on an Island we don't get many chances. So when we do, we better get it right!

Honestly, I've been asking myself that same question for the past three years. On August, 2009 I was awarded a US Patent for a vending machine that refills containers with liquids after cleaning them. The overall idea is to reduce (or eliminate) the need for single-use plastic containers. Rather than purchasing your products such as: laundry detergent, window cleaning, shampoos and body wash on containers which you end up throwing away - you'd take your reusable container to the vending machine select the product you want on a touch screen then the machine would clean your container and fill it up with the selected product.

The idea came to me as I was walking out of my hotel room in NYC with water bottle on hand. I came across these huge piles of plastic bags filled with plastic containers. This was my aha moment - I realized the water bottle I was holding in my hand would eventually end up in a plastic bag where its 'post consumption' life cycle would begin. I figured there had to be a better way.

Today we're in an odd place. We have a solid business plan but with the limitations of living in an Island. There are no local resources that can build a prototype of the vending machine. Without a prototype, its very difficult to get a use-case to validate market acceptance.

Fortunately we recently applied to a program with a top US University that has us collaborating with four MBA students for the next three months. We're very optimistic these students will bridge the gap we have with the resources from the mainland. Stay tuned!

Name: Miguel Nicolas Moreda

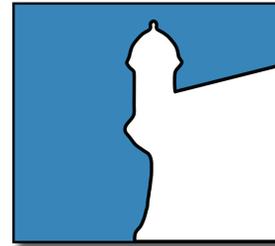
Website: <http://www.portocapital.com>

Current project: Porto Capital, Inc. (advising multiple projects)

Twitter: @Portocapital

LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/miguelnicolasmoreda>

Email: moreda@portocapital.com



Bio: CPA with a PE background a legal mindset and an entrepreneurial attitude. Believer in startups and SMEs as means to boost "social wealth". Surfer/beach bum.

What are the funding opportunities like for Puerto Rico's startup entrepreneurs? How can outside investors get involved?

While there is a lot of talent in the island, funding opportunities are extremely limited. This is particularly true for early stage companies. Local government does not provide equity or loan funding, and Angel Investors are lacking. Tech-preneurs rely mostly on FFF funding, or just plain traction.

On the other hand, the limited amount of investors wishing to invest in these projects are not bothered with individuals that believe they can "build a billion dollar business" on their own without a full-fledge team. By team we refer to Sales and Marketing, Finance, Operations, etc. Once these individuals with great ideas reconcile that fact, the funding-idea gap will narrow down.

As for Foreign investors, they definitely have a great advantage by investing in Puerto Rico. With talent and a low cost-of-living, seed money can go a long way in helping smaller projects become scalable million-dollar revenue companies. Projects can get farther with less money, in comparison to Silicon Valley or NYC. Furthermore, recently enacted tax incentives make Puerto Rico an ideal place to headquarter a tech company, if not the best jurisdiction under US rule of law. Companies that export services obtain a preferential 3-4% corporate income tax rate and 0% tax on dividend distributions. These incentives apply to all tech-companies selling their platform services online.

When investors realize the amount of bilingual, technical talent available in the island; and entrepreneurs understand that a great idea is not the same as a revenue-generating company... Puerto Rico's startup scene will boom.

Name: Carlos Garcia

Website(s): Nobox.com, SocialShows.com, Gustazos.com
(Board Member)

Current project: SocialShows

Twitter: @carlosnobox

LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/carlosgarcia>

Email: carlos@nobox.com



Bio: Tech entrepreneur and angel investor. CEO @Nobox. Board Member @Gustazos. Currently working on the future of #SocialTV.

How can the Puerto Rico startup economy be a world leader and a model for other nations?

Puerto Rico has the potential to become a leading hub for tech startups. The success of programs like "Startup Chile" demonstrate that a country does not need the legacy of decades of innovation and entrepreneurship that Silicon Valley has to rise to the top. The technology created over the past two decades has leveled the playing field to large extent for the current generation. That said, Puerto Rico lacks basic building blocks to become an example for the world and the US of an economy that is sparked by innovation and entrepreneurship.

I have witnessed over my career, the exceptional talent that Puerto Rican developers and entrepreneurs have. I have seen upclose that many of them have what it takes to compete and succeed in the global tech startup community. However, when you visit the leading hubs of tech entrepreneurship you find an ecosystem composed of universities, co-working spaces, incubators, angel investors, venture capitalist, private equity, lawyers, bankers and mentors that collaborate to develop new entrepreneurs and contribute to the success of some. The absence of these building blocks makes it impossible for most tech entrepreneurs to succeed in PR and many of them migrate to Silicon Valley and other tech hubs.

To achieve a leading position in tech entrepreneurship, Puerto Rico should create a program that openly exports and imports entrepreneurs as long as their startups are legally established in Puerto Rico and maintain a percentage of their team headquartered in the island. Politics aside, it's time for Puerto Rico to leap forward through a cohesive program that sets clear advantages to starting and growing tech startups in Puerto Rico. In conclusion, my short answer to the question How can Puerto Rico's startup economy become a world leader and a model for other nations? (1) government initiative that makes it appealing for tech entrepreneurs to start and grow their startups in PR, (2) access to capital and other basic building blocks of an entrepreneurial ecosystem, and (3) incentives for people and venture capitalist that invest in tech startups based in Puerto Rico.

Name: Dana Victor Montenegro

Website: www.seriouslycreative.com

Current project: Grasslark - fighting plastic waste one single use container at a time. Our business model replaces the plastic shampoo or laundry detergent bottle with a reusable container, a refilling machine and credits for every time you use it.

Twitter: @SCideaengine

LinkedIn: Dana Montenegro

Email: Dana@seriouslycreative.com



Bio: A.D.D enabled, did cool stuff @ RedBull, founded SeriouslyCreative. Lifelong status quo disruptor, lover of ideas, startup junkie, creator.

What do you feel are some of the common misconceptions when it comes to Puerto Rico and the startup scene here?

The worst misconceptions about Puerto Rico's startup scene originate right here on the island. Too many people think that technology and business model ideas start and stop in big US cities, and that we are too small to compete. The world is changing rapidly, but people in Puerto Rico tend to hold on to an old economic model with big companies run by old men leading the way.

We have incredible talent on island, ideas are blossoming and we need to start inspiring people with ideas to jump off, jump in and start competing with the ideas of anyone, anywhere.

We are a mind shift away from making a dent in the global innovation economy.

Name: Ricardo Alcocer

Website: <http://ricardoalcocer.com>

Current project: <http://gettainoapp.com>

Twitter: @ricardoalcocer

LinkedIn: <http://linkedin.com/in/ricardoalcocer>

Email: alco@ricardoalcocer.com



Bio: Entrepreneur, hacker, blogger, trainer, author, public speaker, technology evangelist, full-stack web and mobile developer.

How can individuals around the world go about investing in startups in Puerto Rico?

After looking at Puerto Rico from the Bay Area, I have come to the shocking realization, that people not only have no idea of how technically competent Puerto Rico's talent is, but are completely oblivious of the benefits of our cultural and political relationship with the US.

I think that more efforts must be made to educate on what Puerto Rico really is (and what it is not). Puerto Rico is seen as a "Latin American country", which to many people means "developing country". More success stories need to come out from the island or by people from the island.

Taking the US as an example, but recognizing that investments can come from other countries, I don't see Puerto Rico popping-up in people's minds when it comes to entrepreneurship and startups. I think that it's a matter of marketing, be it via networking or via success stories. Perhaps, what is needed is a TechCrunch-like website for "Startups of Puerto Rico" to provide a go-to place for everything that has to do with the scene.

Like any marketing effort, it will take time, but most of all consistency. If there's a steady flow of information about what is going on in Puerto Rico, and we find a way of successfully making that information available, perhaps we will be on our way to not having to explain "Why Puerto Rico" every time we pitch a business idea.

Name: Edgardo Jiménez

Website: <http://www.sellingbytes.com>

Current project: Lively Media Inc. (<http://www.golive.ly>)

Twitter: @edgardojimenez

LinkedIn: <http://pr.linkedin.com/in/edgardojimenez/>

Email: ejimenez@vivire.com



Bio: Proud father and creative businessperson. For the better part of 12 years I've been working in advertising, digital and social.

When getting started what were you afraid of (or what gave you pause)?

The fear of failing is always there and that's why it's better to start early, when you have less to lose. Fail early they say, instead of often.

That original fear turns to pause when you have been in business for a few years. It's more difficult to start a second project when your original endeavor consumes most of your time and pays for the bills.

Constant innovation, a great team and the discipline to delegate are keys to avoid inertia.

Name: Pablo Tirado

Website: <http://ml42.com>

Current project: Thingie, Orbital Station, lil' Pine, Receipt Loader, making the government a better place.

Twitter: @pabloiv

LinkedIn: <http://pr.linkedin.com/pub/pablo-tirado/12/646/8a4>

Email: pablo@ml42.com



Bio: President at ML Studio, I deal with the talking and selling, while my brother makes it all a reality.

What will it take for the world to take notice of the amazing startup entrepreneurs in Puerto Rico?

I think that's happened already to a certain degree. Jeff Pulver, Alexis Ohanian, and many others have been on the island, Founder's Institute, TEDx and Startup Weekend, have had events here. News about local startups have made the front page on Hacker News, as well as been written about on Huffington Post.

There's been a pretty decent effort in the last couple of years to organize the community, and I think it shows. I'm pretty sure the world has noticed already, but I'm not sure that's the appropriate goal. Sure adding credibility to our work, to the geeks building companies here on the island, and the community we've built, certainly adds value to all of our efforts, but building and shipping great products is always the best way to garner international attention. The classic case being Skype. Who had ever heard of the Estonian startup community before this world-changing product hit the market?

So, although community building and event planning is all important, it pales in comparison to the need to ship great products, and take advantage of the existing global marketplaces, because that's what's great about the internet. One great app can reach everyone, and one great app puts us all on the map.

Name: Gianpaolo Pietri

Website: <http://yasta.pr> <http://yastamedia.com>

Current project: Yastá, Yastá Media, Yasta Design

Twitter: @gianpaolopietri

LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/gianpaolopietri>

Email: gianpaolo@yasta.pr



Bio: Architect, Writer, Entrepreneur, Designer, Newsman. I built @yastapr, @yastamedia and @yastadesign in order to change the way we live.

Did you bootstrap your current project? Or did you receive outside funding?

In order to kickstart our 24/7 Spanish language newspaper, Yasta.pr, we relied on a small investment (between 100-200K) from prominent businesspeople on the island. We purposefully kept the group to less than 10 investors in order to maintain creative control over the project.

Name: José A. Padilla

Website: <http://jpadilla.com>

Current project: <http://getblimp.com>

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LinkedIn: <http://linkedin.com/in/joseapadilla>

G+: <https://plus.google.com/109257588146603524338>

Email: jpadilla@getblimp.com



Bio: Hacker, developer, and co-founder at Blimp. Member of Startups of P.R, co-organizer of Barcamp San Juan/Mayagüez, Startup Weekend P.R. and TEDxSanJuan.

What problem are you trying to solve as a startup entrepreneur?

At Blimp we're building a project management app to "trick" doers into acting like highly organized managers. We have a process that offers a simple and obvious way to think about your projects, managing them easily, and make your clients happy.

As a startup entrepreneur, I'm committed to coming up with solutions for problems that affect directly the way people work, which in turn affects directly the way they'll feel. While on this journey, I want to continue helping build a strong community of entrepreneurs and startups in Puerto Rico.

Name: Juan Carlos Pedreira

Website: www.juancarlospedreira.com / www.caribnews.net

Current project: Social Business Hub

Twitter: @juancpedreira

LinkedIn: pr.linkedin.com/jcpedreira

Email: juancpedreira@gmail.com



Bio: Digital marketing strategist + Social Media Consultant. News hound @caribnews. Enjoys the disruptive nature of digital and social media. Always looking for new trends

How can startups in Puerto Rico utilize/hack local media for greater exposure?

Entrepreneurs should not wait for opportunity to knock at their door. Startups should embrace social media and use it to expose their stories to the millions of individuals who login daily to Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and etc. They should get their message on as many relevant digital platforms and blogs out there. Also, Tweet consistently and engage with new prospects using LinkedIn.

There are many great resources on the net to take startups to the next level. Social media makes the process so much easier than a few years ago. It is a great time to be an entrepreneur.

Name: Pablo J. López
Website: <http://polsense.com>
Current project: Polsense
Twitter: @onedgepr
LinkedIn: <http://pr.linkedin.com/in/pablol>
Email: pablo@polsense.com



Bio: Developer of complex iOS / Android applications and platforms that deliver simple, easy to use interactions to end users. Specializing on the development of native custom solutions for large companies and brands.

How did Polsense come to be created?

Polsense was created after I fell in love with iPhone development. In 2009, I was a successful software developer and architect at one of Puerto Rico's leading financial organizations. While I thoroughly enjoyed my day job, developing web based consumer financial systems, I was always on the lookout for "fun" projects to work with at home.

Shortly after Apple allowed third party developers to create their own iPhone apps, I teamed up with a friend (a Graphic Designer) and developed Parranda iPhone app as one of those "fun" projects. After its launch, Parranda reached the seventh spot worldwide in the iTunes paid music category. We were featured in Billboard magazine, TUAW and many local publications and TV Shows. A "fun" project had become a commercial success and for the first time as a developer I had obtained an income that did not come from a consultancy or salary -- but from something that was envisioned, produced and developed by just two friends.

Months later, that seed and the urge to "do something greater" lead me to quit the comfy salaried job I had held for 8 years and jump into an unknown yet unbounded path that lead me to create Polsense. During the beginning, Polsense was a "one man show" doing everything BUT iPhone development and 30 iPhone proposals were sent during that period. Almost a year passed before we obtained our first iPhone project. At that point I asked an ex-coworker to join me during his Christmas vacation and we had 2 weeks to develop four apps.

From then on projects found us, instead of us looking for them. Between full time employees and contract workers, the company has grown at times to 10 and is now concentrated on creating platforms that simplify the development of iOS and Android applications and several other "bootstrapped" startup products.

Name: Rick Lipsett

Website: <http://ricklipsett.com>

Current project: DaddyKnows (ongoing) and a few website designs

Twitter: @ricklipsett

LinkedIn: <http://pr.linkedin.com/in/lipsett>

Email: rick@ricklipsett



Bio: Family man, storyteller, founder of UNDOdigital.com, creator of DaddyKnows comic strip. Illustrator, Graphic Designer, blogger & follower of Jesus.

For other creative entrepreneurs, how do you balance out being an entrepreneur with the time management required of fatherhood?

Short answer: I work, when everyone else sleeps. Long answer: I take time off from being with my family, and while they play or do something with mommy, I work. However, this is not very fruitful. They will interrupt, and I can't postpone them, so I give in.

I always end up finishing, or doing the "heavy lifting", once they go to sleep. You need to have discipline and be as efficient as possible with your time. That means, turning off smartphones, Facebook, email, Twitter, G+ and everything that becomes a distraction, once you sit down to do your thing.

Name: Alfredo Richner

Website: <http://www.puertoricoindie.com> / <http://www.eyetour.com/work>

Current project: Blogging at Puerto Rico Indie / Video production at EyeTour

Twitter: @redod / @puertoricoindie

LinkedIn: pr.linkedin.com/in/alfredorichner

Email: redod@puertoricoindie.com / alfredo@eyetour.com



Bio: Creative type. Web Content Producer. Blogger. Enjoys collaborating with others. Loves dogs. Has a decent record collection. Will work for fun.

What are the similarities and differences between Puerto Rico's music artists and the entrepreneurs driving the startup economy?

Independent musicians and entrepreneurs probably have more in common than they care to acknowledge - for example, both groups are largely ignored by other Puerto Ricans! I kid (but not really).

To be either, you have to be passionate, creative, open minded, and confident. A little crazy doesn't hurt either. You have to learn how to market yourself, work well with others, and be open to (lots) of criticism. The challenges ahead for entrepreneurs are similar, often having to deal with uncertainty and indifference.

And the goals are certainly the same: you want to create something and share it with enough people so that you'll be able to create even more stuff - while hoping that cycle never ends.

I feel that it is often far easier for me to relate with musicians on those terms, than as a fan or music lover. I have yet to record a single song and if I ever release an album it will have somebody else's music on it. But I understand the process of bringing an idea to life, getting all the parts right, and really making them sing so people "get it" as quickly as possible. Sort of like trying to get an audience excited about your work and leaving them wanting for more.

Concerts will forever be cooler than presentations to clients, but I've found that you can liven things up by taking a portable record player to meetings (although it doesn't work 100% of the time). Just remember you are always better off with a projector.

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Bio: Dad, Vegan, Dog Parent, & Nature lover trying to enhance how businesses communicate & present themselves online by adding the human factor.

What are the roadblocks facing Puerto Rico's creative entrepreneurs & how have you overcome them to build lasting connections with those outside of the island?

The main roadblocks facing Puerto Rico's creative and tech entrepreneurs are the laws that are created to support traditional and larger corporations. Coupled with the lack of the (sometimes missing) entrepreneurial spirit of truly creating something organic and whole for the island. This is the root cause of many projects and efforts not gaining the traction or progress you would expect.

At present, the education of professionals is geared towards creating employees and not nurturing the creative spirit into those newer generations. You get a degree and the system pushes you toward grabbing a job as an employee in the private or public sector.

For those that step in front of the challenges, they are left alone trying to combat the larger interests, which are very well aligned with politicians and larger businesses. If government served as a facilitator, as opposed to the role of obstacle, things would be much different.

I am able to continue my efforts by sharing my experiences and story via multiple online platforms. That same way I have been able to connect globally with other entrepreneurs and individuals who are facing the same challenges and struggles as I do locally. Through this world-wide collaboration, I use those opportunities to seek solutions with the purpose of paving a path where there is none. My goal is to connect the Island and its residents in multiple ways with the outside and to have them understand that we can learn from other cultures.

Name: Jose Rubio

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Current Project: Twitchly

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The Twitchly logo is displayed in a dark grey rounded rectangle. The word "twitchly" is written in a blue, lowercase, sans-serif font with a white outline.

Bio: Computer Engineer, retired volleyball player and currently a triathlete wannabe. I'm the crazy idea guy with the skills to get things done.

Is Twitchly your first startup? What stumbling blocks or issues have you had with the Twitchly launch?

My first startup company where I made the full leap and quit my corporate job was Mineful. Before that, like many other entrepreneurs, I had many small projects that never made it out of the garage. Those projects taught me the skills I was good at and which ones I needed to work on. From designing t-shirts, printing digital pictures, and wireless Internet. I have tried them all. The one thing I was always missing was passion. Not passion about building stuff or creating something that solved a problem, but being personally involved and in love with the problem and product I was building. That's how Twitchly was conceived. We saw a problem that my partner and I were both having while training for the different triathlons.

The major stumbling block that I'm facing with Twitchly is time. Having a baby towards the end of my last startup has changed my life upside down. My previous startup was going hard for about 5 years, so now I have to re-fill my brownie points with the family. This means I can't personally work on Twitchly full time, but it taught me how to delegate and look for help. It has made me less of a control freak and micro manager!

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Bio: Spaniardrrican. Engineer, project manager, life coach. Helping people find the intersection of productivity and meaning through coaching, project management and art. He creates Neuron Igniters - silent thinking partners that inspire meaningful productivity.

What is Puerto Rico's competitive advantage in today's connected economy that values productivity and creativity?

The Cluetrain manifesto helped us better understand that markets are conversations. Conversations are born out of generosity and a desire to connect.

Like Marcos Polanco says, "We're not an Island anymore." Everyone is connected to everyone, and creativity requires making businesses more human. In Puerto Rico people embody this joie de vivre from which creativity flourishes, you see it everywhere.

In our current environment, the productivity increase that businesses need has little to do with doing more in less time with less people and money. And is has everything to do with aligning ourselves with meaning and belief in what we do in order to push through the hard parts of starting up. That is something every member of the community demonstrates.

Human connection, creativity, generosity. What the economy most values now, people in Puerto Rico have in their DNA.

