

How to scale from a small startup to 200m downloads

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Igor Zhadanov, Co-founder and CEO of Ukrainian-founded tech company Readdle – which creates award-winning productivity apps – reflects on building a business in a new CBS leadership series

February 24th, 2024, signifies a sombre milestone for many in Europe — the second anniversary of the invasion of Ukraine.

This hasn't stopped Ukrainian-founded software company Readdle, along with other leading tech brands in the region, from continuing to scale globally.

The privately-funded company delivers productivity apps which regularly top the App Store, including Spark Mail, PDF Expert, Documents, Scanner Pro, Calendars and Flux – a B2B workflow system for businesses.

Spark Mail (<https://sparkmailapp.com/>)

PDF Expert (<https://pdfexpert.com/>)

Documents (<https://readdle.com/documents>)

Scanner Pro (<https://readdle.com/scannerpro>)

Calendars (<https://readdle.com/calendars>)

Flux (<https://flux.io/>)

Recently, Readdle - which began as a four-person startup in Odessa in 2007- celebrated over 200m downloads of its products worldwide.

This is an achievement that CEO Igor Zhadanov and his 300+ employees - working from hubs in Odesa, Kyiv, Lisbon, London and Berlin - don't take for granted.

"What is important is that over 200 million times, someone has evaluated one of our products and made a decision to install and use it. It means a lot to us," says Igor, who maintains operations in Odesa and Kyiv via Starlink satellite coverage and electricity generators.

Readdle's remarkable story of growth and resilience is featured in Acumen Media's 'A Moment With' series, now available on CBS News. The episode

(<https://www.cbsnews.com/video/a-moment-with-igor-zhadanov/#x>) includes:-

- The formation of Readdle (2007) - which began with four graduates and an idea to build a document reader for the then-new iPhone
- How Igor's parents saved up several years of wages to buy him and his brother their first-ever computer during their teens
- A belief that AI will revolutionise the future of work in a practical and positive way
- The importance of authentic customer service

- The best advice for anyone starting a new company

As the new program illustrates, Readdle's evolution is one of independent innovation and pushing ahead despite considerable setbacks.

"In total, we've launched 40 products over 16 years, and right now we're left with five," says Igor, "So you can say our success rate is slightly above 10 percent!"

"If there is a mistake or issue or gap in the software market, we've probably done it. And that's ok as long as you learn.

"For example, with Spark [email client], we tackled a very complex problem of how to improve email across a range of professional use cases. We had to build a lot of internal prototypes - sometimes rebuilding it from scratch - to get it to a place where we were really willing to ship it to customers."

Watch the Readdle A Moment With... interview here
(<https://www.cbsnews.com/video/a-moment-with-igor-zhadanov/#x>)

Readdle's History:

Readdle's history is interwoven with that of Apple. It began in 2007, when Steve Jobs presented the first iPhone to the world in San Francisco.

Igor, a keen reader, loved this sleek new device but saw an opportunity to add more to it - a product that would enable people to read books and documents on their phones.

He and three graduate friends started coding relentlessly and their new Readdle product soon caught the attention of developers at Apple.

Their final submission 'ReaddleDocs' was launched on the first-ever App Store in 2008. Today, they continue to develop products which would ignite productivity for millions.

About Readdle:

Readdle is the leading software developer established in 2007, Ukraine whose mission is to ignite productivity for millions around the globe.

Delivering chart-topping consumer products on Apple, Microsoft and Google platforms, the company has grown from a small but ambitious startup to a global company reaching over 200 million downloads worldwide, and employing 300+ talented Readdlers across 30 countries. www.readdle.com
(<https://readdle.com/>).

Media Contact:
Saffron Dale

Distribution Coordinator
Acumen Media
s.dale@acumenmedia.com