WiNG

The Truth Is Out There: Wing Welcomes Jay Kidd To Drive The Search For Product/Market Fit

JULY 14, 2015 PETER WAGNER

I am a former Product Manager. So is my co-founder Gaurav. Our experience as Product Managers imprinted us early on with a deep appreciation for product / market fit. We came to believe that it is the heart of strategy, the *sine qua non* of startup success.

Later we became entrepreneurs and venture capitalists. In these roles we saw time and again how product / market fit trumped all. We saw terrible teams that had stumbled upon it succeed; we saw superb teams that lacked it fail valiantly.

When we founded Wing, we knew the single place that we could add the most value was around product / market fit. Could we identify it more accurately when making new investments? Even more importantly, could we help great teams achieve it more quickly, and with a higher hit rate? We made product / market fit a core part of the Wing mission, and resolved to build a unique capability within the firm designed to help our companies nail it right from the start.

The work we do at Wing is focused on early-stage ventures in business markets. We invest long before things are obvious. This means we operate in a world filled with uncertainty and judgment calls, but to quote Agent Mulder of the X-Files: “the truth is out there”. It takes a distinctive talent to discern product / market fit under these conditions, which is why we are so excited to announce that Jay Kidd has joined Wing as our Partner, Market Acceleration, to lead our initiative in this area.

Jay is one of the only people I know who has been both CTO and CMO of the same major public technology company (NetApp). This unusual duality speaks to his rare facility with the subtleties of both product and market. We knew we would need a person of incredible depth on both sides of this “fit” we were aiming for, and Jay has it like few others.

Jay is also one of the reasons I first came to Silicon Valley. He led the product management group at Silicon Graphics that gave me a chance as a summer intern on the launch of the soon-to-become-legendary Indigo workstation. I returned full-time and worked alongside Jay as part of a spectacular peer group. Eventually we both departed in the massive SGI diaspora that has spawned so many great entrepreneurs and venture investors. It’s simply fantastic to be working with Jay again at Wing.

We like to say that Wing is a simple, beautiful machine: one that is pure of purpose and powerful in performance. We choose our moments, and have chosen product / market fit as one of the pivotal ways we will make a difference to our companies. Nothing could be more important.

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