

Building the Future

Andy Khawaja is the Founder and CEO of Allied Wallet, a global leader in online payment processing solutions. We got in touch with Andy to talk about how he built his billion-dollar company, as well as how he continues to revolutionise the world of online payments.





Although the role of CEO typically involves working long hours, Khawaja manages to clock up a total of 19 hours a day when running his business. "Today I've been up since 2am, and will probably put in the same shift as anybody else in any other company," says Khawaja. "After that, I will be going to Money 2020 in Las Vegas and will then spend another 10 hours in meetings. In total, my average day stretches to about 19 hours. The reason behind this is simply because I really enjoy what I do and every day is full of new ideas and innovations. Innovation really is the future and we want to build it."

Khawaja's humble beginnings in war-torn Lebanon are a world away from the life he lives today. However, despite the myriad trappings of success, Khawaja has taken great care to not let his impressive accomplishments change who he is. "I've seen friends who have become successful and have let their money take over who they are," says Khawaja. "I strongly believe that people make money, money doesn't make people. My philosophy from the start hasn't been about making lots of money, but rather has been about doing something that will be remembered through constant innovation and building for the future. I want people to think of me as a guy who made beautiful things for people to enjoy that also make their lives easier. Above all, I want to be remembered for what I've given, not what I've taken."

With the fourth quarter of 2015 now very much in full swing, all involved with Allied Wallet can look back on a very successful financial year and look forward to the many exciting new products and services due to launch in 2016. "2015 has been an amazing year, and business has been up around 200%, which is outstanding in our field," says Khawaja. "I'm really looking forward to 2016 because we've got so many new ideas that we've been developing. We will be releasing most of them in the first quarter and a bunch of others in the second, and I am confident they are all going to make big waves in our industry."

Among these new developments is 'New Generation', a product that Khawaja firmly believes will make a real impression on the business world and beyond. "With New Generation, I've combined the services of Amazon, eBay and Ali Baba, and at the same time improved them massively. It really does have everything you could want and more."

"We are also working on the virtual shopping mall, which is going to be better than Amazon or eBay and will be the largest shopping mall in the world with a billion users a day. This will probably be ready in summer 2016 and is going to generate 10 to 15 billion dollars a year."

When it comes to innovation, Khawaja has a very simple process. This involves observing other products, finding their weak spots, and building a newer and better product themselves. "We look to improve on what people have failed in, and make our own product that is better, cheaper, and can make the consumer happy. However, you really do need to be on the go all the time to see what's happening out in the market. In doing so, we are constantly innovating and updating our services."

Developing services such as these, particularly in the world of online payments, requires an incredibly high level of testing and analysis in order to ensure that they are ready to launch. "I've seen a lot of companies try and fail, mainly due to the architecture and mechanics behind it," says Khawaja. "Some companies get two to three hundred million dollars of investment and because of problems with the architecture, they went bankrupt. It's not just about the money and the coding, it's about the functionality behind it and how it's going to work. We ensure that products go out only when 110% ready and there really is a lot of work behind ensuring they reach the high standard of service we set for ourselves. New Generation is a product that really is state of the art, and we strongly believe that it's going to shape the future."





As well as the many innovations at Allied Wallet, Khawaja also believes the key to its success lies in the fact that it is a global company that is always looking to expand its services. “When you compare us to banks like RBS or HSBC, they don’t have the compliance required for processing global transactions and are simply not capable of understanding that business,” says Khawaja. “Allied Wallet, on the other hand, was created to accommodate global transactions for customers, consumers and merchants worldwide. We did this from the start and this is why we are way ahead of the game. As a result, we really do have no competition out there.”

Although Allied Wallet is a company that is always looking towards the future, the company still holds true to many old-fashioned principles when it comes to delivering customer service. “People want to work with a processor that works with them,” says Khawaja. “They want to be able to pick up the phone and talk to somebody. For example, if you try to contact PayPal, you won’t get through to anybody on the phone and everything is done through messaging. What we do is ensure that there is a live human being who can speak to and assist our customers. I know this is old-fashioned, but people like to see we’re paying attention to their problems.

“For a lot of processors, it’s all about the numbers and not about the relationships, at Allied Wallet building and maintaining relationships is what is important to us. Banks are all about the business and not the consumer, and this is the biggest mistake they have made. From our perspective, the customer comes first, and with anything else you can solve the problem later.

“When you look at other providers like PayPal or any major bank, they’re lucky if a customer stays with them for a year, whereas we focus on building long-term relationships with our customers. We regularly survey them and constantly exceed industry norms for service, preference and security. What many other providers will see is merchants switching from bank to bank and processor to processor so they can save a nickel and a dime every six months. With Allied Wallet, customers sign up, taste the honey and never want to leave.”

According to Khawaja, one key difference between Allied Wallet and the major banks is the lack of efficiency in the banks’ services - particularly when it comes to running a business. “If you go into a bank and try and set up an account, they will probably schedule you in for an appointment a month later before going through a process that takes about three months. This really is a joke. How can they run an economy when they are simply running people out of business? Furthermore, you could lose a lot of customers in three months - a full financial quarter. If a bank doesn’t see it like that, then they don’t care about your business. Unlike banks, we want to see our customers becoming successful and we want to see their business grow. With our customers, we guarantee them a customised payment solution in just 12 hours.”

As a company that deals with money and personal details, security is also a critical concern of Khawaja’s. “On a weekly basis we update our security to ensure the safety of our customers’ identity through encryption. Furthermore, we don’t have problems with security breaches, however other companies do because they don’t invest enough in security. We invest heavily in security to prevent credit card fraud and credit card theft and that’s why we put in the hours and effort to produce a product that can protect our customers.”

With so many satisfied customers across the globe, yet still plenty more work to do, Khawaja is confident that Allied Wallet will continue to innovate, grow and prosper. “We view our work as more of a dream to be fulfilled and I really do see myself as living the dream.”