



A GLOBAL VISION

Allied Wallet CEO Andy Khawaja is reshaping global e-commerce, one transaction at a time



2002

Andy Khawaja leaves his retail business to found Allied Wallet

2005

Allied Wallet debuts its Gateway technology for merchants, and digital wallet for consumers

2010

Receives Level 1 PCI Compliance validation – the highest ranking on the industry standard

2012

Inc. recognizes Allied Wallet as one of the fastest-growing private companies in America

2012

Opens the company's U.K. headquarters in Trafalgar Square

It was a fairly typical workweek for Andy Khawaja: meetings in London, Hong Kong and Tokyo, then back to LA for an afternoon conference call on Thursday.

This sort of itinerary is table stakes when you're revolutionizing global commerce. Khawaja is CEO of Allied Wallet, a fast-growing provider of digital payment solutions to online merchants and their customers worldwide. Allied Wallet is at the forefront of e-commerce, processing payments in 196 countries and in 164 currencies, with offices in the U.S., London, Frankfurt, Hong Kong, Macau, Tokyo and India. So Khawaja gets around some.

"I've slowed down a little," Khawaja says matter-of-factly. "When I was younger, I didn't need so much sleep."

Young businessman in a hurry

Born in Lebanon and raised in Switzerland and Germany, Khawaja was fluent in five languages by the time he was a teenager, and fascinated by business and the world at large. At 11, he accompanied his father to business meetings, and at night he pored over an atlas, memorizing country names, populations, imports, exports and natural resources. By 15, Khawaja was pursuing a business career. "I learned things on my own, and I know what it is to struggle," he says. He eventually found success in online retail before founding Allied Wallet in 2002, inspired in part by eBay and PayPal. "I saw that as a new era in e-commerce, and started Allied Wallet as a way to bring online merchants into a global marketplace."

Today, merchants of all sizes utilize Allied Wallet's services, and more than 45 million global customers use its eWallet to safely make purchases or receive payments. Despite the recession, Allied Wallet has grown at annual rates of between 500 and 1,000 percent, and it ranks among the fastest-growing private companies in the U.S. To Khawaja, the reason why is simple. "If you owned a restaurant and had guests from Sweden, would you turn down their payment? E-commerce is the same in many respects, but most domestic banks are scared of international business. We embrace international commerce so our merchants can take their business worldwide."

Whenever Khawaja stops at any of the company's offices, he makes a point to visit

every department and to ask employees for ideas, and what they need to do their jobs better. "I also love to answer customer-service calls," he says. "It's the best way to understand customers' concerns and what we need to do to accommodate them."

"Life is good"

Rather than being the boss from hell, Khawaja is unfailingly upbeat. "People tease me because when they ask me how I am, I always say: 'Amazing—life is good!' Let's enjoy it. Let's build something that improves the world. Let's accomplish goals."

To that end, Khawaja promotes a free-thinking and flexible culture at Allied Wallet. "There's no micromanagement here. I want my team to be relaxed and

happy. We are painting the future of commerce, and you have to be comfortable and happy to produce art," Khawaja says.

One idea his team is working on is a large-scale global online shopping mall. "A customer from anywhere in the world can select a product—say, a watch. Then, merchants—whether from Geneva, Hong Kong, London or New York—can respond directly to the customer who, if he or she agrees on the price, can purchase it via our software system on the back end, confident and secure against fraud. We can open the door to Chinese customers, and we'll soon be able to tap into much of the Indian consumer base. We project that within three years of launch we could grow to a billion customers worldwide." — *Tom Dellner*

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