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Limitless **VISION,**  
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The Story of Allied Wallet **CEO Andy Khawaja** and his Multi-Billion Dollar Company



empowering communication globally

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The Story of Allied Wallet

**CEO Andy Khawaja**

and his Billion Dollar Company

“Keep on climbing, the sky is the limit and believe me you will never reach the top because it’s endless.” In this interview, CEO Andy Khawaja of Allied Wallet shares to us the story behind the most successful payment processing company across the globe. Read on and witness the power of vision, courage, and integrity.

**Q** The name Allied Wallet has been known in the industry for quite some time now, how does it feel to be one of the most successful CEOs in the global arena and can you give us some background on how your journey began?

**A** It feels great to be the most successful CEO in the e-commerce and the fintech arena, but a lot of work has to be done. It’s very important for a CEO to be hands on, to know what’s going on internally and to work along with the team members of the company, with the employees – work with them, not work above

them. Of course you have to monitor daily operations, you have to know what's going on but you also need to step in and help and make sure that your sleeves are rolled up and that you're working, trying to help out and trying to make them understand and trying to add to their knowledge rather than just being one of those CEOs who's on the go, if you know what I mean.

**Q Tell us how did you gain interest in a payment processing company?**

**A** At that time, when I started Allied Wallet there wasn't much going on electronically online and I wanted to build something that can secure online payment. I wanted to be able to make sure that people can sell their products online. I found myself always thinking about it, it was just eight or nine years when the Internet had begun before I started Allied Wallet.

**Q Was it in 1991?**

**A** Correct, we're talking about 24 years ago when the Internet began and some years after that there was pretty much nothing online. If you have a store on the street you'd just put an ad on the Internet for the website, "This is where we are located". But as I was saying, you can't buy any product, there were no web developers to add products online, no one to give you an option to do online transactions and sell your products online. So I thought about all that and I wanted to do something.

I wanted to be able to create independent careers and I wanted to bring entrepreneurs out there and let them start their online business be independent, let them have their own businesses, be their own bosses. And that's part of the reason why I created the company, to help others conduct electronic business and help them expose their products to the world and be a part of something big. I wanted to be part of it, I wanted to be one of the starters who build this engine; to enable people to connect electronically across the globe and that's the reason why I wanted to start an online payment company.

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**Q What does Allied Wallet do exactly?**

**A** Thirteen years ago I built the platform which is a virtual gateway. It is able to take credit card from the consumer, encrypt the cards and pass it to MasterCard for approval or decline. The most important thing here was security, that's the whole engine of Allied Wallet from the start, to secure credit card data and credit card numbers and make sure there will be no fraud taking place and that consumer identity is 110% protected, that was my goal.

**Q How do you maintain such a level of security?**

**A** Security is very important because before I went online I spent about ten years in the retail business and we used to have a lot of people come in and they had physical plastic cards that were counterfeit, they were just copies. You know, they were even able to redo the magnet on the back of the card so when you swiped, it read the card but actually they were all fabricated cards, and I dealt with a lot of that and there were a lot of people across the world that were becoming victims of credit card fraud.

And that got me to be concerned. I thought, "What is it going to be in 10, 20, 30 years?" It was 13 years ago and I said I need to build an engine to protect these consumers. And then we started to build the Allied Wallet gateway and we saw this potential way to generate profit by adding merchant processing to it at the same time, and that's how the company started – from one merchant to two merchants and so on. Before we had a few customers, and now we serve millions of consumers worldwide, 116 million from 58 countries around the world.



Allied Wallet is the preferred online merchant services and global payment gateway solution for businesses that need to accept online payments. As an award-winning payment processing company, Allied Wallet specialises in state-of-the-art payment services that connect a world of buyers and sellers.



The interest of Allied Wallet is to gradually grow and make sure consumers are benefitting, make sure our merchants are benefitting, make sure that whoever works on our platform are benefitting and they're growing with us.

**Q Was there any significant obstacle or blockage that you and the company encountered when you first started?**

**A** Yes, from the start, absolutely. This is the only company in the world in technology or fintech that didn't want investors – the only company. And when I mentioned that, the boys at Goldman Sachs, Merrill Lynch, JP Morgan all started dancing and saying, “Are you kidding me? I've never heard of that before”. We are the only company in the world that started from a no dollar investor, we never took a penny from any third party investor. Look at Stripe, PayPal, and Square, massive investments and the tens of millions of dollars invested into the platform and we never had an investor because I don't want investors, I had investors lined up knocking at my door to give a cheque; sorry, not interested, I'd like to keep the company for myself.

**Q Did you really just tell investors that you weren't interested? Why?**

**A** Absolutely yes, not interested. We had investors with \$400 million, \$500 million cheques at the start but I just don't want it because my whole strategy wasn't to grow with the speed of light. I wanted to grow gradually, slowly, and I wanted to learn myself and I wanted to educate my team. The whole concept of Allied Wallet is not just to make fast money, we're not just a bank that wants to make fast money to show the investors, “Hey, there you go, look how much fast money we're making!” We don't want that because we're not greedy, we're not into being a fast money making machine to please the investors.

Because that's what happens when you take investors' money, you have to give returns back, you constantly have to take short cuts

to make fast money to show your investors, “Look, we're growing.” But that's not the interest of Allied Wallet, the interest of Allied Wallet is to serve the community, the interest of Allied Wallet is to gradually grow and make sure consumers are benefitting, make sure our merchants are benefitting, make sure that whoever works on our platform are benefitting and they're growing with us. We're not just out there to get their money and charge them high fees and to show phenomenal growth, that's not the direction I wanted to take. And because I took the right direction, to be frankly honest with you, interestingly, we grew pretty quick just by word of mouth, we are the best processing out there and the best CEO in the business today.

**Q Which challenges do you consider as the company's biggest?**

**A** A big challenge is that you have to constantly be in compliance. You have to obey the rules and regulations in each country. Each one has local jurisdiction, say if you were in the UK or in Germany or in Spain and you conduct business, there's a lot of compliance and regulations on how you can do business. Like, what sort of businesses you can take, what types of businesses are you allowed to accept based on the rules and regulations of the country. And your hands will be full just trying to be compliant in one jurisdiction.

So imagine us, we're doing 58 countries around the world, so 58 different jurisdictions. We are pretty much the bible of compliance and risk and AML, anti-money laundering.

We earned the respect of government agencies all around the world because we can see the bad things, and we report these. There are things which they can't figure out themselves because some law enforcement agencies don't have the manpower to be able to go after it. But all these go through our system, we track it down and we just give it to them on a gold plate. So we built that reputation and pretty much the door into any jurisdiction we want to get into because governments respect what we do and they

**If you ask me the question is China a good market for e-commerce I'd say it is today and the next five years. I would probably say that they will dominate the world of electronic payments, absolutely.**

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respect the company's profile, and that's an important part.

**Q You're one of the people who anticipated profitability in China's economy., do you have any future plans concerning China or Asia or do you plan on ventures to other business sites or innovations?**

**A** We've been working with China for the past nine years, China is very interesting, it's a growing market and I think it's going to grow bigger and bigger. The dominator of China isn't MasterCard, it's CUP, China Union Pay, it's the dominating card over there, so they have 2.5 billion cards and in fact when I first started to work with China Union Pay nine

years ago people were looking at it and thinking why would you want to work with a Chinese card, who cares? And I said, "You watch out what's going to come out of China." Some call it a hunch but we've always predicted that and now we have a great relationship with them, we do a lot of consumer transactions in China and outside China. If you ask me the question is China a good market for e-commerce I'd say it is today and the next five years. I would probably say that they will dominate the world of electronic payments, absolutely.

**Q They've got the population and the consumer demands. What do**

**you see in Allied Wallet's future, how will it continue to thrive in the coming years and what are your strategies?**

**A** The way I see the company, we're just constantly growing. I want to be in more jurisdictions, and more regions around the world. Right now I'm looking at the African market, I'm interested in entering Africa, I know there's a lot of products and banks which don't want to enter Africa – from North America, from Latin America and from Europe because they're very concerned about fraud. So first of all I want to implement my system in Africa to eliminate these fraudulent transactions and make it more safe and secure for

non-Africans to transact. So my next step in 2017 will be to enter the African market, no particular country, just the whole continent.

**Q What about all the rapid and radical technological changes today, how do you yourself as CEO keep updated? Do you have business habits you can share with us?**

**A** I've got 20 brains and developers, I have five PhD dot net coders which are constantly ahead of the game. We are the ones that invented the organisation about nine years ago, an organisation that's been out there six years and a lot of people are catching up to it but we invented it nine years ago, so we're pretty much at least two to three years ahead of the game in front of everybody else in the market today.

The reason why I do a lot of travel myself and I visit a lot of tech companies and fintech companies across the board in Japan, Hong Kong, China, Germany, the UK, and many in America, I go to a lot of conventions and I see the future of the technology and I try to combine that together and I put a map and I pretty much bring it back to my senior PhD dot net coders, Microsoft developers. I'll be like, "this is what's out there, this is the combination of six or seven countries, that's what they're going to be working on in the next two years, what can we do to beat it, we'll come up with a better plan and we'll code it." We do a lot of analysis on the market and how the market is going to be looking like and we always improve it and we're pushing two or three years ahead of its time.

**Q In terms of company culture what is it like to be part of Allied Wallet, how do**

**you keep excellence and innovation in your team's spirit?**


**A** It's amazing, people love it here, 80% of the company's employees have been here for more than ten years, 20% are the youth, some of them want to work hard, some of them want to work and play. This is not a place to not grow, so we give you the opportunity to grow but you have to put your share in it. So if you work hard and you produce we give you stock options, you get increase in payroll, we even have free lunches.

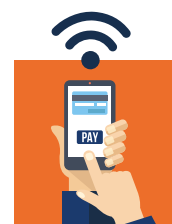
**Q How do you decide who gets stock options?**

**A** We do evaluations based on performance. Each team has its leader and the leader evaluates and we always see what you're producing, what you're adding to the company. These things are very important; we do evaluations once every six months and once a year we do the money evaluation – if your pay deserves to be increased and if you're eligible for stock options.

So we do a lot of these things which are very important. Hardworking people always deserve to be rewarded and people who don't want to work hard, don't deserve to be rewarded. In every company in the world you have the good and the bad, it's just the way it is, you just have to monitor the data to make sure that everybody is producing somehow.

**Q Would you like to leave a message to other up and coming CEOs and business leaders?**

**A** Absolutely, I would say my message to them is to keep on climbing, the sky is the limit and believe me you will never reach the top because it's endless. 



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