

Interview with Paul DeJoe of Ecquire

Apologies for the delay to those few who eagerly await excerpts from our book each week. This interview with Paul DeJoe of [Ecquire](#), part of our series of small business owner interviews, is worth the wait. Read the whole thing, don't be tempted to scroll down to the bottom just to find out how to take Paul's course "Get Your First 1000 Customers" for free. Seriously.

Who are you?

I know my name because I've seen my birth certificate but I think I'll spend my life trying to figure that answer and that's part of the fun.

What business are you in?

You could say technology but I think we're in the people business of capturing important information like messages and contact information for those with whom you'd like to do business.

Tell me about your favorite customer / client.

You mean other than small business triage? There's honestly so many that have been so awesome. I guess what makes a customer great is when we screw up they tell us and have some empathy for a startup and how big the challenge is we are tackling. Specifically, Mixpanel, Anaplan, Kontagent and UserTesting are some of my favorites. They're just awesome people and help us shape our product.

How does your business define success?

Employee happiness. Customer Satisfaction.

What advice would you have given your younger self when you first started?

This a popular question that I get a lot and I understand why but I don't like answering it because I don't think it helps anyone. So when you hear someone ask it at an event or in the future, consider why I feel this way: I'm going to try to condense something that took years of trying to figure out into a small profound statement which I'll most likely not get 100% right and then you'll have to not only interpret it to how you understand it but then apply it yourself if you think it's valuable. There's a great book called Antifragile by Nassim Taleb that I recommend reading. In summation, the topic is things that gain from chaos or things that get stronger. Think of the Hydra. When one head was cut off, two grew back. Chaos is a great thing on so many levels. I would not want to deprive a company or an entrepreneur I was trying to help of chaos. If you forced me to answer this question as I imagine you'd like me to, I would say being yourself all the time is what advice I'd give to a younger version of myself but I had to go through personal hell and be in those situations when I was trying to impress others or be someone I was not in order for me to realize how important that is. If I didn't have to struggle through that I would not have the confidence I do now to be myself. In short, impress yourself not others.

What do you consider your greatest success with your business?

Our team gets to live and work in whatever part of the World they want near the people they want to be around with the most freedom and responsibility you could ever have.

Have you ever wanted to quit, get a regular job? Why / Why not?

I don't know. If I wanted to do something I would have done it or I do it. I guess I thought about not doing it anymore a few times but never wanted to quit. A startup can drive you nuts

because there's a moving target all the time of what success means to you and there's never a shortage of things you can do or work on each day. So you get into a situation where there's no stability, most days of the year are bad days, you have to go out of your way to look for bad feedback to make your product better and there's such a propensity for entrepreneurs to strangle their work as in they don't walk away from it for hours or days/months on end then it ends up not being fun anymore. At the lowest point of the company I didn't quit because I didn't have to. There's always options and I was still so excited at the talent of our team and notably Adrian who saved our ass in ways I can't explain.

What was your biggest failure ... you know the one that hurt?

I hired someone too early without any direction. I have a goal of getting him back – he was such an asset but I did everything wrong with on boarding him and the timing of it.

How did you overcome/move past that experience?

I told him I messed up and I planned to get him back at some point. I wrote him a recommendation to a great company.

Tell me about your typical work day.

4AM Wake up

4:30 Omelette and working on the biggest one or two items on my task list as in the ones I really don't want to do. I'll talk about this for a second I think it's important: You should do the most difficult things in the morning before you check email or do anything else. You'll always find energy to work on things you want to work on that are fun later in the day. It makes a much more rewarding day for yourself if you aren't constantly nagged by that thing you're putting off.

5:30 Crossfit

7:00 Work for two or three hours on getting customers

12:15 Yoga

1:30 couple hours of work or reading

3:30 running or swimming

5: plan my day for tomorrow by actually writing down 5 things I need to do.

6-8 or 9:00 do things I want to do then I try to get to bed as early as I can. Sometimes that's not easy... most of the times it's not easy.

I love this schedule. I don't watch TV I don't have facebook. Im either pushing myself physically or mentally with the company all day. It's a great balance for me.

Favorite part of being a small business owner? Worst part?

I believe the preferred nomenclature is "vertically challenged". The best and worst part is almost the same. It's like a golfer; you have no one to blame but yourself when things go wrong and you're also your only limitation of how good you can get. Working with my team on our product and new products is my favorite thing in the World to do. I'd rather do that than anything else in the World like over surfing or snowboarding. It's what I love the most.

What's next?

Thinkin about having our office in Mexico next month. That'd be cool.

P.S. Speaking of cool, Paul's extending a nice plumb for our readers that ought to be right up your alley, a skillshare course on getting your first 1K customers. [Here's the link](#). The code to get it free is TRIAGE. Thank Paul by reviewing the course when you're done!