

THE GLOBAL MILLIONAIRE

A publication dedicated to entrepreneurs, business leaders and game changers

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One On One With Jeremy Stewart – One Of The Co-Founders Of The Award-Winning Animism Studios

by admin



Jeremy Stewart is an award-winning animator with over 20 years of experience in the film industry. Prior to Animism Studios, he was an animation supervisor at Double Negative, a 5x Oscar-winning Visual Effects Studio. He has also held Supervisor and lead roles at several other top studios. His long list of credits includes Marvel's Ant-Man and the Wasp, Pacific Rim II, Jurassic World, Star Trek: Beyond, The Thing, X-men, Happy Feet, Charlotte's Web, and many more.

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With fellow founders Victor Barbosa and Stephen Kelloway, they have built a Visual Effects VFX company that creates stunning visuals and animation for movies, episodic series, commercials, and more. The company started as 5 artists and quickly grew to 30 prior to the pandemic slowdown. This boutique studio employs some of the world's top VFX artists. The studio has won numerous awards and its clients include; Netflix, Apple TV, MGM, and Paramount.

Global Millionaire Magazine recently caught up with Jeremy to discuss his journey in the entertainment world and here's what went down:

When did your entrepreneurial flair first reveal itself?

My parents are entrepreneurs, so I think I inherited their entrepreneurial spirit and work ethic. From when I was 11 years old I always had some little side jobs like mowing lawns, a paper route, or washing cars. Shortly after I started my career as an animator I realized that I was more like a sole proprietor than an employee. In this industry employment is project-based, artists like myself are offered contracts for anything from a few weeks to a few years. Most animators crave the security of full-time employment. However, I was always more interested in finding the next opportunity that would offer a new challenge where I could learn or improve.

How did your life look before being an entrepreneur?

As an employee, I was an intrapreneur and focused on my career goals. I'd take on extra responsibilities, learn new skills in my spare time, or take on side projects to build up my portfolio. Now as an owner my focus is totally on the company and the success of our employees, not me or my career.

As an entrepreneur, what is it that motivates and drives you?

What motivates me is a desire to grow. Before co-founding Animism Studios I felt I was near the limit of how far I could go as an employee. So it was only natural that when I met the right people we would start a company together. Now we're building something much bigger than what we could as individuals.



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In one word, describe your life as an entrepreneur and explain why.

Rollercoaster. Because the ups and downs seem to happen when you least expect them which makes it an exciting ride.

What were your top three motivations for starting your business?

It seemed like a great opportunity. It was a chance to be much more than an animator, a chance to take my creative talents and leadership skills to the next level. As I mentioned I was raised by entrepreneurs who were always encouraging me to start my own business. However, it wasn't till I connected with the right people who had the same ambitions that starting a VFX business seemed possible. Full credit goes to my fellow co-founders. So it was a combination of timing, ambition, and meeting the right people that motivated me to leave a good job and take the risk.

What would you say are the key elements for starting and running a successful business?

In our case, it all comes down to the people in our organization. Without my fellow founders, our employees, and our network of supporters we would not be in business, let alone successful.

What are the three biggest challenges you have faced growing the business and how did you overcome them?

The other founders and I are well established as VFX artists but not so much in business, so the formal side of building the business has been challenging at times. My personal challenge has been sales, but I seem to be getting the hang of it. Surviving the slowdown caused by COVID-19 has been our biggest challenge



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so far. We overcame all these challenges thanks to our great team, strong networks, and a lot of hard work.



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What form of marketing has worked well for your business throughout the years?

We have a good presence on LinkedIn and social media. However old fashioned word-of-mouth networking seems to be giving us the best results.

As you grew the business, what have been some of the most important leadership lessons you have learned?

Work with people based on their reputation, not their resumes. As a leader, you need to protect your team from external problems. So never make their lives (and yours) more difficult by bringing someone into your organization that is not a team player. We all make mistakes, so the moment you realize you've made a hiring mistake fix it right away.



What is the best advice you have ever been given?

The company comes first. I have plenty of personal goals and ambitions but they all come second to the success of the business and the team. This may sound a bit cliché but when the company succeeds we all succeed.

What advice would you give to a newbie Entrepreneur setting up their first business?

Figure out your “Why”. Why do you want to be an entrepreneur? Your “why” doesn’t need to be anything deep, you just need something more than money to motivate you to put in the long hours, push past the setbacks, deal with the frustrations, and all the not-so-nice stuff that comes with setting up a business. The other good bit of advice I got was “build your network before you need it”. I’m amazed and grateful for the help I’ve been given from the people in my network. In my opinion, the best way to get help is to give help. So if any of your readers could use my help please feel free to connect with me on LinkedIn.



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