

60 SECONDS WITH AN ENTREPRENEUR... PETER PROUD

Role: Founder and CEO

Company Name: Forrit

Sector: Software

Founded: 2014

Base: Edinburgh

Purpose: Enable the world's companies to engage the world's consumers while developing our staff and having fun.



Tell us a bit about your business? It is fairly simple to explain, we have built a Content Management platform to run very secure, very large websites, that are easy to build and manage all on Microsoft Azure.

How did you come up with your business idea? I facilitated a discussion between Bill Gates and the management team from Unilever to discuss digital engagement between large enterprise companies and the worlds consumers. What became apparent from that meeting was that it is very complicated and a mess. I wanted to build something that simplified and fixed these issues, while making life easier for the companies and a better experience for the consumers.

How did you come up with your company name? Forrit means forward in old Scots, and also happens to mean (computer) program in Icelandic! One of our team (Jerry) found it in the Auld Scots dictionary.

What's been your biggest challenge to date? Where do I start... Seriously I think starting any company is difficult. The unique challenge we faced was how do we afford the skills needed to build a large complex solution for large clients as a very small company. I think getting that balance right has been the most difficult challenge over the years.

How has SE (or any other support organisation in the Scottish ecosystem) helped you on your journey? Jim Scott of SE helped us a lot through his contacts to get going in the early days. Up to now though we have been pretty self-sufficient.

What's been the highlight of the last year for you? Getting version 3 of our product into the hands of clients. It has validated 8 years of hard work, sweat and tears.

What's your favourite thing about being an entrepreneur? Being able to help others further their careers and building a culture in a company where people can thrive and create an amazing life for themselves.

What's the best thing about being an entrepreneur in Scotland? There are few jobs I would want in Scotland to be honest as there is not really any large positions for me at my stage in my career, so I had to make one for myself. Having worked all over the world and I am delighted to be back here. For me the most important things in life are your health, your freedom, clean water and clean air. Scotland offers all of this and is an amazing place to be with beautiful scenery, talented people and a healthy outdoor lifestyle on all of our doorsteps.

What's the best piece of advice you ever received? Keep Going.....

What advice do you wish you hadn't listened to? We used to get a lot of feedback in Microsoft about getting better at things we were not good at instead of focusing on our talents. I hate bell curves for performance... on the back of this all my peers through our 30's had imposter syndrome... never let this happen to you.

What has been your proudest achievement since starting your businesses? Watching our first five apprentices walking across the stage at the Usher Hall to receive their degrees. They got four 1st Class honours and a 2:1... I had a tear in my glass eye...

Is there anything on your business bucket list? I want to be invited to present our solution at either the annual Microsoft sales conference Inspire on the main stage to all the sellers, or to speak at the main stage of the Web Summit held every year in Lisbon.

Who's been your biggest supporter? I don't think it is as simple as a single person... it is a collection of many people who I have been lucky enough to have in my life.

How do you care for each other's wellbeing at work? Teamwork goes beyond standard departmental groups; everyone plays a valuable role in the wider organisation. From company-wide Town Halls to social activities throughout the year, everyone has the chance to find their place in the Forrit community. We're proud to have been named one of the UK's best tech places to work.

How do you start your day? Always in a rush... I am up shower and out the door usually in 15 minutes tops. I usually walk 2 ½ miles every morning before work doing a few calls and thinking about the day.

What do you do for fun after a busy week? I love all sport. So Saturday play golf in the morning and watch football or rugby in the afternoon... and try to chill as much as I can.

What's the best business book you've read? The Autobiography of Andrew Carnegie with the Gospel of Wealth essay... it takes you on a journey from being poor in Fife in the 1870's to being the richest man in the world in 1900. It shows the principles of business and being in control of your company by being frugal when you must and investing hard when the time is right. It also has an essay on how to behave when rich. It was first out in about 1918 and is timeless.

Any office pets? Nope and not from the lack of requests.

What's your best tip for achieving a good life/work balance? Prioritise, do the things you are good at and do the things you like... work smarter not harder.

Do you have a favourite TED Talk? Amos Miller's "[Light up the world through sound](#)" and Al Bartlett's "[The Greatest Shortcoming of Human Race is our Inability to Understand the Exponential Function](#)".

Any recommendations for entrepreneurship/leadership/sustainability/ climate/generally inspirational Instagram or Twitter accounts to follow, podcasts to listen to or programmes to watch? [Steve Jobs 2005 commencement speech at Stanford](#) and [Bill Gates at Stanford in 2014](#).

What would you say is the secret to success? Hard work, great ideas, doing things you enjoy, and a ton of luck.

What's your big dream? I want budding entrepreneurs to look at how we built our company and learn from our mistakes and take inspiration from our successes. I love bringing business problems and technology solutions together to create value for everyone involved.

How would you like to be remembered? As someone who gave more than he took.

Where can we find out more about your business? www.forrit.com / [@forrit](#) /

www.linkedin.com/company/goforrit