

Smart Break grows towards international markets

Starting as an in-house start-up in Raisoft, a software and expert company in Kokkola/Finland, Smart Break is strongly targeting the international market. The networking and promotional trip to New York in February exceeded expectations.

- The goal of the trip was to build a network and meet people. It is easy to say with satisfaction that our expectations were well overcome. The doors are now opened, and we were able to introduce Smart Break to New York with many follow-up measures on the way, says Johan Boholm, who returned to Finland recently.

The trip also brought surprises.

- We have gained tremendous new perspectives and we see the potential of Smart Break in the US market is more diverse. Meetings with top experts from different fields and new cultural perspectives, taught us a lot about our own product. I didn't expect that, Boholm says.

A strong network - good connections

The Grow to USA event was organized by Kasvun Roihu's impressive network of partners. The network includes, among others: Nasdaq, Business Finland, FACC and Marsh, who the participants got to know on the trip to get valuable advice. During a visit to Nasdaq, participants also witnessed the closing market bell ceremony of Eagle Pharmaceuticals on the stock market.

- Nasdaq rewarded three Grow to USA companies by presenting corporate logos in the Nasdaq Tower on Times Square in New York. The selection of award-winning companies was very challenging when there were several innovative companies. Miradore, Raisoft/Smart Break and Safera were distinguished by their size and capacity in the US market. Smart Break is a great example of a business idea that fits the prevailing wellness trend and is easily scalable, says Minna Korpi, Account Director at Nasdaq Helsinki.

5-day tight program

The schedule for the participants in the Grow to USA program was packed, from Monday to Friday, February 11-15. The program of the days included various company visits and a lot of advice from both investor gurus and Finnish entrepreneurs who are successful in the US market. Smart Break also participated in many pitches, the compact 3 to 5-minute business presentations. The companies pitched Thursday night in a competition where Smart Break finished second. StepOneTech won the race.

- It was exciting to see how all the company pitches developed and sharpened from one event to another, after having received top-notch expertise from experienced investors and other advisors, Boholm says.

The Smart Break team, Johan Boholm and Lawrence Smith also did a small market research on their own.

- On taxi rides, we asked the Uber drivers whether they had back problems at the end of the shift from sitting so much. Each of them answered yes, even though the youngest of them was only 23 years old. Some even said that it is hard to fall asleep in the evening because of the pain. All the respondents were also willing to make targeted movements to ease the pain. New York alone has more than 200,000 Uber drivers, so the market is huge, says Johan Boholm.

Next to Sweden

- We are very pleased that Smart Break participated in Grow to USA. It was great to have a larger company spinoff team with a scalable solution to a global problem. It is admirable that Smart Break has begun to seek international growth right from the start and is not just satisfied with the Finnish market. Luckily our co-operation with Smart Break does not end here, as we will also be able to follow the company's internationalization steps in Stockholm in April with Grow to Sweden, says Business Director Anna-Mari Blek from Kasvun Roihu.

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