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### Interview with Kok Choong Ong – Founder and CEO of Teliwave

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Serial entrepreneur Kok Choong has founded two funded companies, one of which remains in the past, but the other, Teliwave, the company behind Hoiio (helps you reduce your mobile call rates), is alive and kicking. Teliwave has so far raised a total of S\$1.5m in angel funds and grants. We had a chat with Kok Choong to find out a bit more about his story and that of Teliwave and Hoiio.

Tell us your story, what were you doing before setting up Teliwave?

Beside Teliwave, I am also the founder for another NUS EDTF funded company, ByteSquare Technology, which was working on mobile data technologies in areas of mobile surveillance and mobile content. However, we were not able to attract much investor interests into ByteSquare businesses and all the founders have moved on to work on something else. For me, I moved on to setting up Teliwave.

What motivated you to set up Teliwave?

Somewhere inside me, I always dream of building a great company in the mobile space. With committed investors on board with a common dream of conquering the mobile telecommunication spaces, it was an opportunity that I relish. The fruit of this dream is now named Hoiio, which stands for a Smarter Way to Say Hello.

Hoiio is the product most of us associate with Teliwave. For people who are unfamiliar, what is Hoiio?

Hoiio is a smarter way to communicate. Hoiio provides enterprise grade international call and SMS services at up to 80% discounts off the standard telecom rates.

What is so interesting about Hoiio? What makes it different from existing competitors out there?

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Fundamentally, we have successfully harnessed the power of Smart Phones to empower the mobile user with a simple choice to save money for every call or SMS they make.

We have a software that will auto start and operates in the phone background. Whenever you make a call, the application is able to seamlessly intercept the call and route it to our servers, bypassing the local telecoms. We are also able to provide the users with a choice during every call to choose between calling via the operator or hoioo.

Apart from Hoioo, does Teliwave have other products out in the market or currently in development?

Hoioo product roadmap is currently only 1/3 complete. Hence, the whole team is still currently working on Hoioo.

How does Hoioo engage her users and get them to use the product?

We engage the enterprise users through the enterprise channel partners; e.g. System Integrators, Internet Service Providers and Enterprise Managed Services Partners. For the direct consumers, they normally sign up for our services through the web or mobile applications.

What is Hoioo's business model?

Hoioo has a very simple utility business model. You pay for what you use in terms of international calls and SMS.

The amazing thing is that we are able to provide the services at up to 80% discounts off the standard telecom rates. Hence, every call and SMS made pretty much pays for itself.

What challenges have you faced in setting up Teliwave and developing Hoioo?

The main issue facing Hoioo currently is market awareness. We need to attract the attentions of the enterprises as they are the ones which our solutions can help to save the most money.

How has Teliwave been funded and what are your funding needs?

Teliwave was founded on 18th April 2007. Till date, we have received up till SGD\$1 million in angel funding and another SGD\$550,000 in grants. We are currently looking for investors willing and able to work with us to grow Hoioo into an international business.

What do you see are the emerging trends in your industry?

As the internet utility business has evolved from costly per minute tariff charges to cheap flat rate unlimited broadband, I believe we are not far away from the dawn of the era of cheap flat rate unlimited communication. Skype has fulfilled this dream on the desktop. Hoioo hopes to fulfill this dream on the mobile phones, fixed lines and beyond.

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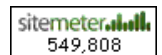
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*Teliwave team*

Where do you see Hoiio and Teliwave in one year?

Hoiio was officially launched in CommunicAsia in June 2008. At CommunicAsia 2009, our product was 1/3 complete and we had around 10,000 registered users and 1,500 active paying users in Singapore. By CommunicAsia 2010, I hope to have our product 2/3 complete and have around 100,000 registered users with 15,000 active paying users internationally.

What are the three most important qualities that an entrepreneur should have?

My three personal choices will be "Dream", "Passion" and "Humility".

It all started with a dream about a better future that is to be created. With that, you will need the passion to sustain everyone towards fulfilling the dream. Finally, you will need to have the humility to sincerely learn from everyone on how best to fulfill the dream.

*CEO/CTO of Teliwave, Mr. Ong Kok Choong holds a Bachelor of Computer Engineering (Hons) from the National University of Singapore. He has over 6 years of experience in the telecom industry and has overseen successful development projects in mobile surveillance, messaging, network monitoring and telecom VAS. He has been conferred several local and international awards; namely Tan Kah Kee Young Inventors 2005 (Merit Award), NETS MENSA Innovator Series 2005 (1st Runner-up), 2005 International University Student Creativity in Action Contest, Taiwan (Excellent Award), Start-UP@Singapore 2005 (NUS INTRO Award) and Singapore Computer Society IT Youth Award 2007.*

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