



Interview with Cédric Derycke (Classip)

“We are predicting 6 000 active customers for 2008”

Once upon a time, there was a virtual class room in which each pupil could make progress in real time taught by a teacher with qualifications customised to suit the pupil. High level PC to PC school support! Cédric Derycke from France and Jason Pillegi the American-Irish student wrote this story after their MBA in Barcelona.

Back in Provence, Classip opened its doors in the Belle-de-Mai Media Cluster in Marseilles in June 2006, in the company incubator. February 2007 marks the official start date of its cooperative private course platform on Internet. Classip is the first to arrive on this market, and is a pioneer that would like to become one of the leading school support providers in France, if not to be at the top of the class!



Cédric Derycke

> How did the story of Classip begin?

Cédric Derycke: Initially, a common driving force, simply the desire to start something new. A few years after working on the same MBA at the ESADE (1) in Spain, Jason and myself kept in contact to place the keystone of the Classip project: the combination of a virtual classroom and the Internet “IP” protocol – hence the name “Classip”.

We found the equation simple; the idea of taking advantage of the emergence of new technologies capable of providing services such as Web conferences and Voice on IP to offer school support through Internet seemed logical to us, at a time when 8 million French persons were subscribing to ADSL.

Finally, Jason met the IFA (Invest in France Agency) in New York at the beginning of 2006, and the IFA forwarded our project to Provence Promotion.

> And how did the adventure continue in Marseilles?

C. D.: In June 2006, we joined the Belle-de-Mai incubator in Marseille specialised in educational multimedia. Since then, we have been developing the Classip platform based on live exchange and interaction. Classip is working closely with Dr Pascale Brandt Pomares at GESTEPRO (2) to optimise this new teaching environment and optimise knowledge transfer between teacher and pupil.

For further information

The Classip Web site:
<http://www.classip.com>

> How exactly does this work?

C. D. : We use Webcams combined with a microphone/headset in teachers' and pupils' homes, so that they can see each other, talk to each other, share documents, work together on exercises, solve equations, analyse functions, comment on images, etc.

> How did you meet your partners and particularly the Incubator? How did their help materialise?

C.D.: Through the IFA, and Provence Promotion was the first player that we met in Marseilles. The agency steered us towards the Incubator. This was a great help because an enormous amount of work was done in 2006. We received an amount of 30 000 € from the Incubator to finance the complete development of the cooperative on-line solution. It was a reimbursable loan, to be repaid only if the Company is successful, starting 2 years later and then over 36 months at 12%.

> So what are Classip's objectives?

C. D. : The platform was launched on February 2 this year, which is a key date for us. It marks the beginning of our public advertising campaign about this new on-line school support solution. Much of the campaign will be through web links and targeted search motors. Furthermore, Classip was the first to arrive on the French market, and Provence Promotion and the Incubator set up a new financing pool for it. The funds raised will enable us to raise other funds to provide long term support for the project and the Company. Although Classip is an SARL at the moment with 10 000 Euros of capital, it will very shortly be transformed into a SAS (simplified joint stock company) after its capital is increased.

> So what are your predictions for it?

C. D. : We expect to reach the breakeven point 6 months from now and to have positive results by the end of 2007. We are expecting 3 000 active pupils in 2007 corresponding to 60 000 hours of private courses. In 2008, the turnover should be about 1.5 million Euros with 6 000 active customers, 200 teachers, namely 180 000 hours of support courses provided on the Classip platform in France.

> What would Classip's message to all young entrepreneurs be at the end of this step?

C. D.: Courage and perseverance are the keywords. Have a strong financial base and an indefatigable morale. Have an address book and particularly a partner who will guide you, a facilitator capable of identifying priorities and understanding constraints.

(1) ESADE : Escuela Superior d'Administración y Dirección d'Empresa

(2) Study group in scientific, technological and professional education. This is a Mixed Research Unit (UMR) working on ADEF (Didactic Learning, Evaluation and Training) supported by the University of Provence, IUFM (Aix-Marseilles University Teacher Training Institute) and INRP (National Pedagogic Institute).