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USF Alumnus Selected as a Finalist in the 2013 StartupBus Competition

“Buspreneurs” start companies; build products on the road

By Lauren Golin
USF Research News

TAMPA, Fla. (Mar. 19, 2013)—University of South Florida alumnus Alexei Novitzky was selected from thousands of entries to participate in the 2013 StartupBus, a three-day competition among hundreds of entrepreneurs who band into teams and create startups while on buses headed to SXSW in Austin, Tex.

Novitzky’s team, BriefSkate, was one of six teams selected as the StartupBus All Star finalists and the only team to build a product while on the StartupBus. BriefSkate is based on a technology created at the University of South Florida (USF).

The competition began on Mar. 3, 2013, when 152 strangers met on one of six buses stationed across the country and headed to Austin for the annual business competition. While traveling, participants broke into teams to create a business idea and promote it using social media. This year’s competition included 36 teams traveling from New York City, Tampa Bay, Chicago, San Francisco, and Mexico City, with the finals held at Rackspace’s headquarters at SXSW on Mar. 8.

Novitzky was one of 20 “buspreneurs” on StartupBus South East, which traveled 1,180 miles over the three days. As one of the six in the final round, his BriefSkate team competed in front of a panel of judges which included Robert Scoble and Dave McClure.

The team pitched a skateboard with a built-in compartment to hold your laptop, papers, cell phones and chargers, that they managed to create and prototype in just 72 hours.

They also did an interview pitching their idea to Tony Hawk, professional skateboarder and actor, on his XM Radio Show during the StartupBus experience.

While a student at USF, Novitzky created the skateboard and storage compartment combination, which has now been patented. He partnered with USF’s Technology Transfer Office, and since graduating, founded Looshes Labs, LLC, to commercialize his technology.



BriefSkate team (Photo: siliconhillsnews.com)

Founded by Elias Bizannes, StartupBus is an invitation-only community of coders, developers and designers passionate about startups that focuses on developing the potential of individuals to maximize their success in the startup world. The teams from StartupBus can launch fully functional, publicly available products by the time they land at their destination. StartupBus has evolved from an experiment to an annual competition across two continents and an international community of unique people.

About the University of South Florida

The University of South Florida is a high-impact, global research university dedicated to student success. USF ranks 50th in the nation for federal expenditures in research and total expenditures in research among all U.S. universities, public or private, according to the National Science Foundation. Serving more than 47,000 students, the USF System has an annual budget of \$1.5 billion and an annual economic impact of \$3.7 billion. USF is a member of the Big East Athletic Conference.

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