

SORTING OUT YOUR PAPERWORK

TO START OFF WITH, COULD YOU GIVE US AN OVERVIEW OF ALLDOX?

Alldox is a solution for people to manage their important documents, be it home or business ones. It's a solution created for people to have access to these documents securely, anytime and anywhere. In every phase of life, you get a whole bunch of documents. There may be moments when you're caught unaware and might need them, so it's a real problem, which led to the building of this product.

Our research in 2010 says that 80 per cent of those surveyed believed that getting organised will change their quality of life. I think what puts us in a great place is that we've been going under the skin of our users and figuring out what they need to improve usability of the app.

Basically, we stand for three things. One, it has to be easy, because we're talking about general users who may not be tech savvy. Second, it should be a one-stop solution with different features. And the third is to have all these documents secure and private. Secure is whether you are going to lose your documents, while privacy is who can see your documents and access them.

YOU MENTIONED THAT THE COMPANY DID SOME RESEARCH, COULD YOU SHARE MORE ON THAT?

For our research, we assembled focus groups and got various consumers to come in – housewives, retirees, even school children. We did the research for our users to build Alldox. And I think we're just facilitators in the process, because it's the users who really built the app via the feedback they gave.

From there, we realised that a lot of people needed paper documents, so we created a feature called Originals, where you can manage the locations of paper documents. This means that you can not only tag the location of your original document, but even snap its location so that you won't forget where you kept it.

But there are some people who will say, 'listen, I don't have so much time to put in my documents', so we thought

There are people who are incredibly organised and then there are those who have mastered the art of an organised mess. But no matter which category we fall under, we have all experienced that panic when we cannot seem to find an important document right when we need it the most. Enter Alldox – an application (app) which allows for the management of an array of documents in one place. Showing that it is never too late to start a business, founder Dippankar S Halder (below), 49, shares the company's vision of helping others save time and live better, one document at a time.

AS TOLD TO RACHEL MUI

of something called AutoDox, which lets you upload documents from your e-mail, and is spam free. The whole principle that is we want to save people's time.

Once, I was sitting with an analyst in the Bay Area and this gentleman mentioned that a lot of your documents are actually your assets. There are times when you're not there and your documents need to be accessed. So we created something called Nomination, where people can nominate their family members – and I can tell you that this is important from my personal experience when someone who invested a lot passed away. It's not a positive thing to talk about, but it's a reality.

WHAT DOES ALLDOX DO TO ENSURE THAT ITS DOCUMENTS ARE SECURE AND PRIVATE?

Our documents are encrypted with the personal key of the user and stored in a server like Amazon. We also have processes which ensure that documents are not looked at, not even by our codes. Periodically, we get external security audits that look at our infrastructure. They ensure that we don't have vulnerability, because security is a dynamic thing. Today you may be secure, tomorrow you might not be, so you need to keep evolving.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MARKETS THAT ALLDOX IS IN?

The bigger markets are the Philippines and Indonesia. India is also a big market for us. We operate in seven languages: English, Spanish, French, German, Portuguese, Bahasa Melayu and Bahasa Indonesia. We're going to introduce more languages because we believe that if you really want to impact homes globally, you have to speak their language. Of course it's also a function of what you put in terms of promotions and communications, so we're focusing more on Asia at this point. It's a fairly large market, which is why Singapore makes so much sense. We've just come in with a holding company in Singapore and believe that this country has an awesome environment for technology and innovation. I respect it for its discipline. I love this place because there are so many things happening the way it should be. And Alldox is kind of doing that, it's putting a discipline in your document organising, so culturally we fit in.

WHAT DO YOU LOOK OUT FOR WHEN HIRING?

The catchphrase for us as a company is "intent in play". What it means is that if you desire for something strongly, you'll get there. Employees need to have a basic level of skills, but beyond that they need to have the desire to be the best. So we look at people who want to make a difference. They also need to be technically competent because we are a small team (of 15 people). Another quality that we look at is being comfortable with what they've not done before.

We're a solution-driven company; and personally I'd say that you should be in love with the problem, not the solution as the solution will keep changing. We also look for people with the humility and the courage to self-criticise, who will say, "Okay, we've done this. At that point, it was the best thing to do – but it's not good enough." Now, I can tell you that not everybody has that courage. It's tough getting these people together, and we're trying to build that culture.

WHY DID YOU TAKE THAT LEAP INTO AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT SECTOR?

I think there are two aspects to that. For me, I've been doing this kind of stuff within organisations, including when I was with Walmart India. At one point, I had no office and 2,000 people working for me because I was building the business from scratch. The second part is that if you really want to create an impact in the world, you have to take that step forward. Individually, we've done well for ourselves. But have we done well for the world we live in? We didn't. And that's what kept us going.

For over 20 years, I was in the retail industry. With retail, you don't make money from day one. You pick up a concept, you put up a store, the first few years, you don't make money. And that's one of the reasons why I come from the mentality that if you build something that's going to help people, in the long run, it will be sustainable.

WHAT'S THE NEXT BIG THING FOR ALLDOX?

For us, the next level would be document stamping and verification. We're building something which will put a laminate on digital documents to ensure that if there's anything done on the document, it can be traced. It will need a lot of work because you need to bring different people together. But it has potential because you'll be breaking time and space to send out documents in a second, instead of using couriers which are inefficient. Now I'm not saying the physical documents are going to go completely, but there will be more digital documents being accepted and more stress on authentication. ■

