Developed | The App Economy Tour is a series of events that brings entrepreneurs, business leaders, industry experts, and local, state, and federal officials together for an eye-opening discussion on next-generation apps, game-changing mobile solutions, and innovations driving the app ecosystem. These events are an opportunity for developers and entrepreneurs, at any stage of the development or business cycle, to get more insight into how to build a brand, what rules and regulations they must be mindful of, how to get into app stores quickly and efficiently, and how to figure out what comes next in terms of funding streams and business opportunities.

Minneapolis, Minnesota
Monday, November 25, 2019

The app economy is a $1.7 trillion ecosystem led by U.S. companies. The app marketplace is growing in areas outside of traditional tech hubs. In the United States, more than 83 percent of app companies are located outside of Silicon Valley, and 13 percent operate in rural or suburban areas.

Our sixth stop on Developed | The App Economy Tour took us to Minneapolis, Minnesota. Minneapolis is typically associated with big name brands like Target and 3M, but over the last 10 years, the city has become a hub for small businesses with a vibrant community that is already making astonishing contributions that span industries. The event on November 25th focused on companies that chose Minneapolis as their place to grow and included a discussion featuring panelists representing the various components of the app ecosystem.
Developed | Panelists

Parag Shah is the co-founder of Vemos. He has been developing technology companies for more than 10 years and has co-founded companies such as Lunchbox, Foodsby, and Vemos. During the panel, Parag shared his thoughts on how technology can bring people closer together, create better experiences, and make industries more efficient. Parag also explained the benefits of thoughtful privacy, security, and data stewardship practices for small businesses, and ways that Minnesota could better support the changing workforce.

Michelle Tran Maryns is an inaugural FINNOVATION fellow and the founder, CEO, and sparkler-in-chief of We Sparkle, a software-as-a-service (SaaS) social enterprise dedicated to helping small businesses care for their customers and communities. During the panel, Michelle shared her experiences as a FINNOVATION fellow and provided insight into how she taps into the community to expand and create new business opportunities for her company.

Casey Shultz was one of the original employees of CouchSurfing International where she helped the company raise its $7.9M A-round. Casey came to Minnesota via the Twin Cities Startup Week Fly-In Program as the director of program management at BETA where she oversees the logistics and strategic partnerships for Startup Week. During the panel, Casey pointed to some resources in Minneapolis and how attendees can get involved in startup programs created to support small business and innovation across the city and the state.
When discussing platforms, Casey highlighted the change platforms brought to the launch cycle for small companies. “Platforms have really helped the bottom line when it comes to going to market. Anyone can make an app or a website, and the cost is next to nothing. As technology continues to develop, it will only get better.”

As the conversation shifted to privacy, Parag suggested companies make their privacy practices simple and relevant to consumers. “How do we make sure consumers opt into things they can really understand? We need to have privacy policies that don’t take an entire weekend to read.”

“There is an education issue in Congress. It’s why I’m here, and why I want to hear from all of you on what you’re doing and why, and the kinds of issues you’re running into. Call me. Email me. It helps me to hear from you on tech issues.” Landon Zinda

“Take advantage of all the resources available in Minneapolis. But as you’re taking advantage of those resources, try also to get involved and support future generations in the community.” Michelle Maryns
Developed | Your Backyard

When considering difficult policy issues, the first question you likely ask is, “how will this affect my constituents?” At Developed | Minneapolis, we asked those questions directly to your constituents. During Developed events, Members and their staffs have the opportunity to speak directly with small business constituents about the app ecosystem, their relationships with software platforms, and how regulations affect their ability to grow and create jobs. We are happy to facilitate ongoing dialogue between your office and any of our panelists. Let us know if you would like more information on Developed | The App Economy Tour, the panelists from our Minneapolis event, or how you can get more information on policy issues critical to small businesses in Minneapolis.

“How do we make Minneapolis more of a tech center? I think it starts with the University of Minnesota. We have a lot of things working for us, but the first step is supporting programs and the students coming out of those programs.”
Congressman Dean Phillips

If you have any questions or would like more information, please reach out to the App Association’s senior director for public policy, Graham Dufault.

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