First day of StartupBus 2015



4:30am on a Thursday morning. That's when the journey began. That might sound early to most of you, but for the crazy buspreneurs, it's normal – just part of the adventure – and we have to earn it ;)

All the San Francisco buspreneurs met at the StartupHouse just few hours after the kick-off party we hosted at 3scale HQ ended. Even with very little sleep, we were super excited to get started building our projects! Bill, our conductor, welcomed everybody on to our cozy little shuttle bus and described the agenda of the day: buspreneurs will introduce themselves, pitch their ideas, form teams, and get started right away. In just a few hours, two teams were created, Screet and Luvvid. Before we knew it, there were only a few hours left to prepare before presenting our projects for the first time to potential users and investors in Las Vegas.

To keep the competition going throughout our journey, we're following a series of milestones and receive points that rank us against all of the other teams competing across North America. With this motivation, we quickly had domain names set up and a landing page to collect email addresses of people interested. Being active on social media, using it early and often, is a winning strategy to get your name out there and get people excited in this sort of competition!

While both teams on our bus were working hard to make progress, we suffered the first breakdown of any bus of StartupBus 2015. Luckily, the StartupBus organization is used to dealing with this sort of logistical challenge. Last year, StartupBus was in March, and a few buses got stuck in a snow storm. We thought since we're riding the San Francisco bus, nothing could happen (weather-wise at least), but we were not immune from an engine breakdown…

> FIRST 2015 Breakdown … Startups don't quit … #KeepWorking #NoWhining #StartupBus pic.twitter.com/MjOGSZfjD4
>
> — StartupBusSF (@StartupBusSF) June 4, 2015

We'd all just met for the first time at the party last night or that same morning, and suddenly we were all pushing our shuttle bus together to get the engine to start again. That's definitively a core value of StartupBus: all pushing forward in the same direction, but usually it's more metaphorical! Eventually, we were able to leave the gas station where we were stuck and get back on road.

We arrived in Las Vegas around 4pm, one hour before we had to present our 10-hour-old project to potential investors and members of the Vegas tech community. Then when we arrived, our conductor announced a "surprise" – we would be flying to Atlanta over night to join the Florida bus, combining two smaller buses into a big bus with double energy! Wow – completely unexpected!

When it came time to present our projects at 5pm, we were given a warm welcome at The Innevation Center, a community workspace for entrepreneurs and startups in Las Vegas. The panel of judges was impressive, including many successful entrepreneurs such as Jennifer Peck from Banjo who just announced at $100M round. This meant a bit of added pressure for me and my fellow buspreneurs, but pressure is always present when you're working all day, heads down so we were mentally prepared. We received some interesting feedback from the audience and the judges. Some of the questions covered areas we'd already thought about, and others helped us redefine our strategy for the next few hours before getting some sleep.

We left just after the event to catch our surprise flight to Phoenix. Every minute we had was used to take advantage of wifi, to make progress on our code and work on our social media presence. Our flight to Phoenix was short, so we didn't have much time to use our laptops between between takeoff and landing. Then as soon as we arrived in Phoenix, it was already time for the flight to Atlanta. You can be sure we buspreneurs took advantage of the 4 hours of sleeping time available!

> Sleepy @3scale #apininja is somewhere new… What happened overnight ?! #startupbushttps://t.co/RBEw9pyLGc pic.twitter.com/lFj97N6ZAy
>
> — Nicolas Grenié (@picsoung) June 5, 2015

Tomorrow I'll let you know how the merge between SF and Florida buses is going and more about the different projects people are working on. In the mean time, you can follow us on #startupbusand #apininja and play with the StartupBus Stock Market.