

Promoting Pluralism

**An Interview with Ron Yekutiel,
Chairman, Chief Executive Officer, and Co-Founder, Kaltura, Inc.**

EDITORS' NOTE *Ron Yekutiel is a serial technology entrepreneur, starting and leading companies in Israel, the U.S., and Canada in the fields of Internet, mobile applications, and security. His previous ventures include Destinator Technologies, Paradigm Advanced Technologies, and VisualGate Systems. A former helicopter pilot, he holds an M.B.A. with honors from the Wharton School of Business.*



Ron Yekutiel

COMPANY BRIEF *Kaltura's (kaltura.com) mission is to power any video experience. A recognized leader in the OTT TV (Over the Top TV), OVP (Online Video Platform), EdVP (Education Video Platform), and EVP (Enterprise Video Platform) markets, Kaltura has emerged as the fastest growing video platform, and as the one with the widest use and appeal. Kaltura is deployed globally in thousands of enterprises, media companies, service providers, and educational institutions and engages hundreds of millions of viewers at home, in work, and at school. The company is committed to its core values of openness, flexibility, and collaboration, and is the initiator and backer of the world's leading open-source video-management project, which is home to more than 120,000 community members.*

What did you see in the market that made you feel there was a need for Kaltura?

Kaltura was incorporated in 2006 by myself and three colleagues and friends that have started companies both in Israel and outside of it.

Before deciding what our start-up would do, we committed to each other as partners and aligned around a common goal – to promote collaboration and pluralism. At the time, YouTube was already hugely successful, and we felt that videos were not just highly engaging but also great to collaborate around. We started a direct-to-consumer site that enables people to create video clips together – it was presented as a marriage between Wikipedia (also booming at the time) and YouTube: i.e. introducing the notion of peer production into the world of video.

We chose the name “Kaltura,” which has nothing to do with video. It resembles the word “culture” in many languages, and accordingly

signified that our goal is not just to enable group creation of video but to promote a global “culture” of collaboration and pluralism.

If we fast forward, our original idea of a consumer-facing site for collaborative creation and consumption of video has since morphed into a much more disruptive vision. We quickly understood how hard and challenging it was to utilize video for varying purposes. While the original breakthrough for YouTube was in providing video for entertainment purposes, we expected video to soon be used all over – tightly integrated into existing workflows in enterprises for learning, training, collaboration, or marketing; in schools for bettering learning, both on campuses and on the web; or for health, security, or just about any other application.

About a year in, we pivoted and turned our product into an enterprise platform (as opposed to a direct-to-consumer application) that enables organizations to build and launch any video experience.

Now, nine years in, we are the leading video platform, in use by large telecommunication companies, leading media companies, and large corporations and schools. We have over a dozen products whose common denominator is video, but the value offered by them spans from increasing engagement and revenue to improving knowledge and productivity.

What's most inspiring for us is that we achieved all of this while staying true to our core founding principal of collaboration. Our platform is best known for its unmatched openness, modularity, and flexibility, and is backed by an open-source community that we had started and lead, and that is now over 120,000 members strong. We are very proud to still be promoting co-creation and pluralism, and to be a democratizing force for the creation and consumption of media all around the globe.

Is the platform global and are there key areas you have been focused on for growth?

We're global so the company has offices in North America, South America, Asia-Pacific, Israel, and Europe, and is catering to companies all over the world.

We are segmented into three main areas: media and entertainment & Telcos, enterprise, and education.

For broadcasters, content owners, and Telcos, we are providing software that enables them to launch a “Netflix-like” over-the-top TV service quickly and affordably, as well as tools to better manage, distribute, publish, and monetize online video. Some of the largest media companies like Turner, Viacom, and Disney are using our products, as are massive Telcos like Vodafone, KDG, and Ono.

Enterprise customers such as Intel, SAP, and Bank of America are addressing their training, communication, and collaboration needs with our “YouTube-like” portal for enterprises, and by inserting advanced video capabilities and workflows into third-party enterprise software (e.g. software for collaboration and content management). We are providing for such companies all of their video backbone and functionalities for uploading, editing, management, distribution, publishing, and analytics.

In the world of education, we are used by almost all of the leading schools in the U.S., and by many others around the globe, to support distance education, and to enable students and professors on campus to upload, share, and consume videos.

As the company has grown, have the roles of the founders changed?

Generally, technology companies go through three main stages: building, selling, and growing.

In a growth stage, as we are in, the role of founders and other company executives is to relentlessly maintain the boldness and agility of a young start-up, despite being larger, while striving for sustainability and profitability. This requires striking a fine balance between intuition and spontaneity, and procedures and structure.

From a leadership perspective, as the company grows and additional layers of management are introduced, founders need to progress from leading in person to mentoring leaders, and eventually to mentoring other mentors. This transition often requires founders to fight their egos and their need for control, and to “let go,” and instead divert more attention to softer areas, like continuing to foster the desired corporate culture, and reminding people not just what they should do but, more importantly, why they are doing it, and who they want to be while doing it. ●