Superheroes Invade Southern Oregon

Photo by Jim Craven | www.jimcravenphoto.com

MEDFORD, OR - Ask Adam Cuppy, Trever Yarrish, and Sean Culver why they're building a coding company in Southern Oregon and they respond with, "Why not?" Then inquire about their firm's 1,400 percent growth in just over two years and they smile and say, "Great, right?"

The Medford-based company, Coding ZEAL, is a global web and mobile application development firm. With a focus on agile development, pair programming and lean methodologies, the Coding ZEAL partners have discovered their edge. And their 11 employees enjoy being on the edge with the firm's superhero-inspired branding and extraordinary zeal, or as they call it, "gross unadulterated enthusiasm."

They are not naive. They are not first-time business owners. In fact, the partners were entrepreneurs before they created Coding ZEAL. Adam and Trever, former Dutch Bros. marketing and creative directors, started a Grants Pass marketing company in 2007, and Culver spent time in Thailand where he headed up a cutting-edge development project. Former founder and partner Robert Head was a senior engineer at Amazon.com and Pivotal Labs in San Francisco.

Choosing Southern Oregon as their headquarters was easy. "In this industry you can be anywhere and work with anybody," Trever says. "We're here because we love it."

by Chris Cook/Karen Fronek

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From their downtown Medford office, Coding ZEAL team members have worked on projects for a variety of companies, including Amazon.com, Pivotal Labs, Mavenlink.com, SweetyHigh.com, SilverCloud, Inc., Dutch Bros. Coffee, Scratch-It.com, One Site, Iterate.io, Argen Corp, Wonderful.com, VIP PetCare, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Long Distance Voter, Sleadd and ZipLineGear.com

Adam says he sees an unbelievable amount of opportunity and potential in Southern Oregon. "If you get down to the logistics of it, we're equidistant between Portland and San Francisco. As a tech company, you almost can't be better placed than that. We're right up the I-5 corridor so shipping and accessibility is as good as it is almost anywhere in the country."

As for finding skilled programmers? "I think that because the environment and culture here are so great, you're going to easily attract talent. We get people who are tired of a 45-minute drive to work." Adam smiles, adding, "The other thing is that we have nearly 300,000 people here and there's a cultural and social pace to Southern Oregon that is very diverse depending on where you are."

Adam Cuppy, Partner and COO of Coding ZEAL talking about the value of the integration of corporate culture, creativity, and collaboration in the high-tech sector.

The Coding ZEAL team was able to share that diversity with a group of 55 digital artisans from four countries at the 1st Rogue Rails Conference in October 2013. The "Open Space Agile Summit" shared best practices in pair programming and other agile development concepts with participants from Facebook, Pivotal Labs and Railscasts—all industry thought leaders.

According to Trever, that kind of sharing is common in Southern Oregon. He explains it like this: "As an entrepreneur, or somebody starting or running a business, you benefit from a feeling of community and of sharing. Business owners want to talk, they want to share, they want to learn and connect with each other. Other places I've been, there's a feeling of secrecy, standoffishness or inaccessibility because it's just harder to make it there."

Coding ZEAL is just one of many global companies whose leadership has chosen to embrace a culture of "Why not?" in Southern Oregon. Others include Harry and David, Motorcycle USA Superstore, Lithia Auto Stores, Brammo, Carestream Health, Linx Technologies, Met One Instruments, Quantum Innovations, Darex and Rogue Valley Microdevices to name a few.

THE SOUTHERN OREGON EDGE.

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