CASE STUDY:  PlusOne Solutions

The Company: Managing Service Provider Networks for Brand Name Retailers
PlusOne Solutions was founded in 2006 by Craig Reilly, a seasoned executive that ran Sear’s $750M Retail Service Provider Division. While at Sears, Craig’s group was responsible for managing third-party servicing companies that delivered all Sears’ appliances and services to consumer’s homes. In this role, Craig noted that most brand-name retailers had limited control over the quality of service deliveries, as few retailers directly employed service delivery personnel. Instead, they outsourced deliveries to third parties, who then hired and maintained the training and quality of service delivery personnel.

Craig felt there was an urgent opportunity to provide high quality service provider networks to brand-name retailers and manufacturers. There are extensive inefficiencies in the recruitment and management of service providers, and Craig felt that many of these inefficiencies could be reduced with a combination of software, data management, and dedicated service. With permission from Sears, Craig left his job to launch PlusOne Solutions, and Sears shortly became one of PlusOne’s first customers.

The Venture Lab: Transitioning from Corporate Executive to Entrepreneur
PlusOne was launched with a top-notch management team that had a clear understanding of the market opportunity, and a broad array of contacts that would be invaluable to PlusOne’s success. The founding team self-funded the company initially, but knew they would need outside investment to grow the company at the pace they felt was needed to take advantage of the market window. The CEO knew investors would require a business plan, and was confident he would be able to quickly craft a strong plan that would attract investors. Craig wanted an outsider’s opinion of his plan before approaching investors, and had heard that the Venture Lab might be a good resource to review his plan.

The Venture Lab team’s initial response to PlusOne’s plan was surprising to Craig. He felt he had done a good job – the plan was 42 pages long, and a lot of detailed thought had gone into plan’s creation. The Venture Lab team worked with Craig to help him realize that investors typically are not interested in a plan with too many operational details. In addition, Craig’s plan had a tone of salesmanship that overshadowed the important company and market information that investors want to know. Investors are interested in the specific facts related to the market opportunity, the business model, the qualifications of the management team, and the assumptions behind future revenue projections. Craig was coached to find ways to cut the size of the plan down by half, and to re-write the plan with the viewpoint of investors in mind.

PlusOne’s management team worked with the Venture Lab on several iterations of their plan. Once that was completed, PlusOne then worked extensively with a Venture Lab coach on the creation and refinement of the investor presentation. Within a few months, PlusOne was invited to present at the Florida Venture Forum. In recent months, Craig was invited to present to several angel investment groups in Florida, all of whom were introduced to Craig through the Venture Lab team.

Since first working with the Venture Lab, PlusOne Solutions has grown into a successful company with many brand name retail customers. The company is profitable, and employs 25 people. It is likely that the company will close its first round of funding by the end of 2008.

A Word from the CEO
“At first I was skeptical of the advice given to me by the Venture Lab team. I felt I knew PlusOne’s market well, and felt I had built a plan that addressed our market opportunity. After working with the Venture Lab team, I began to realize that launching a high-growth software company is very different from corporate life. The Venture Lab team was right on with their advice, and they have been a key reason for our success with attracting funding for PlusOne.” ~ Craig Reilly, PlusOne Solutions’ CEO