



We Built It, Now Will They Come? bOK Systems Corp.

Prescott C. Ensign¹

Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada

Aydin Y. Mirzaee

FluidReview by SurveyMonkey, Canada

Abstract. bOK Systems Corp., a Canadian-based start-up, has been able to launch its product in the market but is looking to take it to the next level and increase the adoption of its service amongst the masses. The venture team is facing challenges such as a shortage of time and money. A dilemma is that time and money are substitutes; chasing capital takes the focus away from other areas that need attention. Raising funds for the venture is not easy given the lacklustre investment environment in Canada. The team is now considering multiple alternatives, such as focusing full time on bOK (i.e., quitting all other efforts), bringing in an external CEO, or liquidation and exit.

Keywords: technology-based enterprise, high potential, high risk, new venture financing, leadership, vision.

Funding: The authors acknowledge funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

1. Introduction: The Problem

While a university student living in Ottawa, Ontario, Aydin found it almost impossible to cost-effectively use his cell phone. Although the convenience of portability was great, unfortunately, in Canada, cell phone use was not practical from a price perspective.

Aydin had a cell phone plan that included 100 daytime outgoing minutes. If he ever used more than his allotted minutes, his phone company would charge him approximately 35 cents a minute. This meant that an hour-long conversation would cost over \$20. Long distance calls to cities within Canada or to the United States were equally expensive—about 35 cents a minute.

Having grown up in the City of New York, Aydin found it expensive to call his family and friends to keep in touch. Calling cards were an option, but they were definitely not hassle free. With calling cards, one had to dial a 1-800 number

1. Corresponding Author: Dobson Professor of Innovation & Entrepreneurship, Lazaridis School of Business and Economics, Wilfrid Laurier University, 75 University Ave. West, Waterloo, ON N2L3C5, Canada, ensign@wlu.ca

and then enter an access code. Every time the calling card ran out of funds, a trip to the convenience store was necessary to purchase another one. With a busy schedule, this was not ideal. Having a \$100/month cell phone bill as a student was not easy to justify. This was not just a problem for Aydin but one that many shared. A better alternative was needed. This realization led Aydin to pursue what would become bOK Systems Corp.

2. Canadian Cell Phone Plans

Limited Minutes

Most cell phone subscribers in Canada had a limited number of daytime minutes as part of their cell phone plan. If a given cell phone user exceeded his or her monthly-allotted talk time, charges would be 35 cents for each additional minute. Conversations at this price ultimately discouraged most people from using their cell phones as much as they would have liked to during the day.

Unlimited Incoming Calls

In Canada, it was common for cell phone users to subscribe to a plan that supplied them with unlimited incoming calls. An unlimited incoming plan allowed users to receive calls for free. Hence, cell phone calls could be divided into two categories: incoming and outgoing calls. A typical phone plan would give a user about 100 daytime outgoing minutes per month and unlimited incoming calls. Of course, most plans also gave users more night time and weekend minutes (i.e., not during peak hours).

Long Distance and International Calls

Using one's cell phone to call another city domestically (e.g., from Ottawa to Toronto or Montréal) was expensive. Calls outside the US and Canada were plagued with exorbitant rates that made it illogical for anyone to use their cell phone to call abroad.

3. The Solution

The structure of cell phone plans in Canada led Aydin to wonder if there was a way to transform all outgoing calls into incoming ones. If such a method could be devised, then this would potentially give him the opportunity to make as many calls as he wanted to without using up his daytime minutes. It was then and there that the idea of bOK was conceived. Of course the company was not called bOK. It did not yet have a name. It was simply an idea and nothing more. The concept was straightforward:

Instead of just calling someone directly, one could...

1. Compose a text message that contained the destination number.
2. Send this text message to the bOK number: 613-614-0285
3. Receive an incoming call. Pick up and talk.

The following exhibit describes the process:



For example, assume that Amanda lived in Ottawa, Ontario and would like to call her friend Jill in the City of New York. Amanda composes a text message that contains nothing but Jill's phone number in New York, which is: 718-520-7734. She sends this text message to the local bOK number, which is: 613-614-0285. After about five to 10 seconds, both Amanda and Jill answer a local incoming call on their mobile phones. When they pick up, they can start talking. In the process, Jill will not notice a difference in the way she receives the call. Amanda saves money and the friends can talk for as long as they want.

The advantage was that one could initiate a call as an incoming one rather than an outgoing one and anyone with an unlimited incoming call plan would not use up their minutes. The destination party would not notice a difference between a call initiated through bOK and one initiated through conventional means.

This all sounded very nice. However, there was a long way to go. Aydin spoke to his brother Amin, a math and computer whiz now a student at McGill University, about the idea and together they set forth the plan to complete the project. Amin reflected, "The process was long and arduous." Aydin and Amin decided to bring two others on board to help create the product (see Appendix A). After about three to four months of work, the first version of bOK was ready. Amin explained, "The first version was really more of a test than anything else."

The founders started using bOK on their own. They told a few friends but made sure to tell them not to spread the word. Aydin recalled:

Almost overnight, about 150 people started using the system to make their phone calls. The traffic was too high for the platform in place at the time to handle. It was for this reason that we had to shut down the system and go back to the drawing board. Except, what we realized is there's a lot of interest in the product we put together.

This was very exciting and it was the beginning of their business endeavour. The founders realized that this could be turned into a viable operation if a good business model were developed.

The business model originally conceived allowed users to call any location in the US and Canada or internationally for prices lower than what phone cards offered. Amin explained, "bOK is able to undercut phone card prices by dealing directly with end consumers whereas phone card companies have to deal with intermediaries before their product reaches their target customers." Aydin added, "This is a unique business model and everyone's quite excited about the possibilities."

bOK Systems Corp. was Aydin's first start-up and was proving to be a great learning experience. It was now October 2007, nearly 18 months after graduation, and Aydin was discovering that living the life of an entrepreneur had some allure and fun times but it also had its share of challenges, stressful decisions, and sleepless nights.

4. Competitive Landscape

As bOK's founders were building the product, market competition seemed healthy and bOK's solution looked like it would be a sure winner. There were a few VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol)-based companies operating internationally. Some of the most notable ones were Skype, Jajah, EQO, VoxLib, and iSkoot. The competitors' offerings, however, were quite different from what bOK was offering.

Skype was a revolutionary product as it did an amazing job of introducing a VoIP application to end-users. Using Skype was relatively simple. Users simply downloaded the Skype software on their desktops and installed the product. Once they had the application, they could create an account and start making phone calls via a headset attached to their computers.

Skype gave users the ability to call other Skype accounts for free. It also provided users with the opportunity to call landlines or mobile phones for low rates (typical of any VoIP operation). The major disadvantage with Skype was that one had to sit behind a desktop/laptop with a headset to be able to participate in a voice conversation.

Jajah was an interesting firm started by two entrepreneurs in Austria. As soon as they were discovered by Silicon Valley venture capitalists, they were brought to California in order to expand operations as an American company. Jajah's initial offering was quite simple. Users would simply log onto the Jajah website and would see two text boxes. One would type their own number into the 'from' textbox and the destination number into the 'to' textbox. After both numbers were entered, users would press the 'call' button. This would cause both numbers to ring. Jajah offered low cost calls to international destinations just like Skype.

VoxLib (renamed MobiVox) was a company that allowed users to access their Skype accounts through their mobile phone. The disadvantage was their business model's ultimate reliance on users to already have a Skype account.

iSkoot was yet another company that allowed users to access their Skype accounts using their mobile phones. Like VoxLib, iSkoot had the drawback that it was necessary for users to have an existing Skype account. Further to this, iSkoot required users to download an application onto their mobile phones in order to use the service.

EQO—pronounced “echo”—also allowed users to access their Skype accounts. EQO required users to download an application on their cell phones and download an application on their PCs to enable them to make their Skype calls. This was not practical because it required users to leave their computers on all the time in order to make Skype calls via their cell phones.

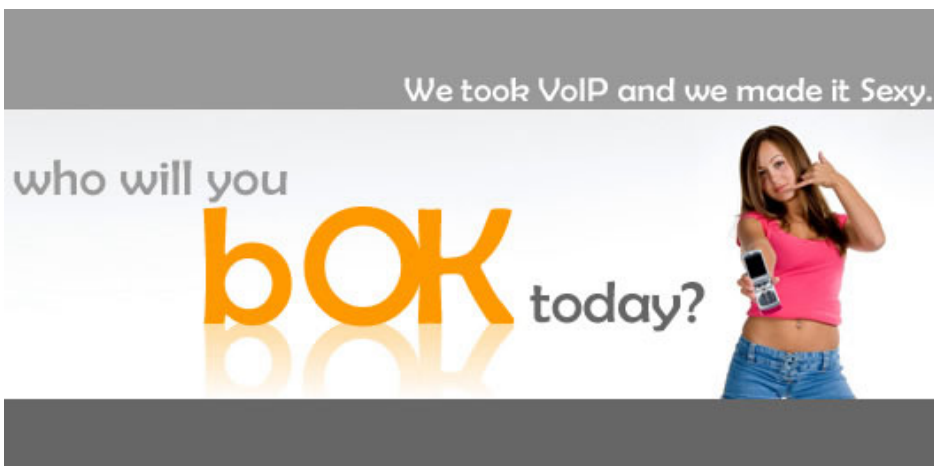
5. Competitive Advantages

The competitive environment was beginning to become crowded with companies looking to gain market share in the mobile VoIP sector. It was becoming exceedingly difficult to compete with what was currently available. As of October 2007, Aydin believed that the venture team had built a product that truly had some strategic advantages:

- No downloads. bOK did not require users to download software onto their cell phones before they could use the service.
- No PCs. bOK was a cell phone-based service and hence users did not need to have PCs to make use of bOK.

- No Skype account required. bOK had no tie with Skype and hence did not require users to have an account with Skype to be able to use the service.
- No data usage. Unlike other companies, bOK did not require users to have a data plan.
- All calls were incoming in nature. All phone calls initiated through bOK were incoming and so anyone with an unlimited incoming call plan could benefit and use bOK without using up their minutes.
- Calls initiated through website or text message. For users who wanted to initiate a call through their cell phone, they could do so by sending a text message. For anyone who did not want to send a text message, bOK gave users the option to start phone conversations through the website. Users could simply log onto the website and type in the cell phone number of the person whom they wanted to reach and then click on the call button. This would ring the user's phone as well as the phone of the destination party. When both picked up, they could start talking.
- Low VoIP rates. bOK allowed users to call international destinations for a low cost (typical VoIP/phone card rates). Users could simply add money to their accounts via the website and start calling international destinations. As they talked, money from their account would be deducted in accordance with the rates posted on the bOK website.
- Canadian concentration. From their own research, the bOK team knew that most people they spoke with in Canada were not aware of the competing companies' offerings (with the exception of Skype). This led the team to realize that with a focus on Canada, they could very well capture users in a niche market that had not been explored as much.
- Marketing advantage. The bOK venture team realized that they would have to create a marketing campaign to rise above the rest. It was for this reason that attention had to be paid to the corporate branding strategy. bOK would have to develop an amazing website, logo, and promotional material. In alignment with this strategy, when bOK was choosing its company name, the founders made sure that a name was chosen in the form of a verb. This verb would replace the word call. 'bOK' was the name chosen. The company's tagline then became: "Who will you bOK today?" 'bOK'ing was the action of calling someone with the use of bOK. In alignment with this strategy, bOK

used the tagline: “We took VoIP and we made it Sexy.” The following are examples of the material created:



6. Marketing Research

The Mobile Communications Environment

Cell phones had become mainstream in most societies around the world. According to the Yankee Group, a telecommunications market research firm, the number of cell phone users in Canada was 52% of the population or about 16.6 million people and was projected to reach about 65.4% of Canadians (21.7 million people) by 2010. Explosive growth of cell phones had also been a phenomenon in other parts of the world. According to the Insurance Information

Institute, in the US, 224 million people were using cell phones as of November 2006, in comparison to only 4.3 million users in 1990.

Cell phone use was no longer only common amongst above average income households. More and more households relied exclusively on cell phones as their primary means of communications (i.e., not having a land-line). According to a survey done by Statistics Canada in 2006, price sensitive households were more likely to have only a cell phone. Specifically, 7.7% of households below the LICO (Low Income Cut-Off) rate had only a cell phone, whereas only 4.1% of households above the LICO rate had only a cell phone.

The cell phone billing model had also been changing in the past decade. It was common for users in Canada to have a plan that included unlimited incoming calls. A typical plan with 200 anytime minutes would cost \$20/month, while \$25/month would buy a user 1,000 evening and weekend minutes, 100 weekday minutes, and unlimited incoming minutes.

Cell phone plans in the US were a bit different. Most plans did not include unlimited incoming calls. Leading providers such as Verizon, AT&T, and T-Mobile did not have plans with this option. Moreover, they did not charge extra for domestic long distance calls. The main mobile service provider in the US that offered free unlimited incoming calls was Sprint/Nextel. For about \$50, one could purchase an unlimited incoming plan with 300 outgoing minutes.

Cell phone plans in Europe were more similar to plans available in Canada rather than the US. European plans almost always included unlimited incoming calls. A typical plan would include 300 anytime minutes with no extra charge for domestic long distance calls (i.e., calling locally and calling long distance within the country were not accounted for differently).

Geographic Target Market

Canada seemed the ideal market for bOK to begin its operations for the following reasons:

- There were currently over 16.6 million cell phone users in Canada.
- Unlimited incoming call plans were quite common.
- Long distance calls on cell phones were expensive.

The following table shows the areas of opportunity available in each of the three main considered markets:

bOK's Opportunity Index

	Unlimited Incoming Calls	Extra Charges for Long Distance	Extra Charges for International
Canada	Yes	Yes	Yes
United States	No	No	Yes
Europe	Yes	No	Yes

As the number of Yes's associated with a specific market increased in the table above, the opportunity in that market grew for bOK. The reason was that cell phone users in the respective market would derive more benefit from using bOK's services. According to this index, Canada earns 3 points, Europe earns 2 points, and the United States earns 1 point.

Target Market

bOK's primary target market was people around the world aged 14 to 25 with cell phone plans that had unlimited incoming calls. These were younger users who were more concerned with the cost of using their phones and would love to be able to talk more without having to pay more. bOK's secondary target market included people who may not have an unlimited incoming call plan but still stood to benefit from making long distance cell phone calls at lower rates.

As demonstrated in bOK's Opportunity Index, Canada ranked the highest and was therefore the first and primary market bOK aimed to pursue. According to the 2001 census, there were over four million people within bOK's primary targeted age range.² Of the four million people in this age group in Canada, a large number were assumed to be cell phone users.

A survey by youthKnowhow (a London, UK-based company that specialized in understanding youth behaviour) showed that in the year 2004, 82% of those in the United States between the ages of 15-19 were cell phone users. Because cell phone use grew annually, this figure was likely larger.³ Adding in people between the ages of 20-25, this market was larger still. It was also assumed that users that were 15-19 years old would not stop using their cell phones as they aged. Furthermore, it was likely that people who did not have a cell phone would acquire one sooner or later. While this survey did not take place in Canada, it was speculated that the situation was quite similar for Canada.

If 85% of people in bOK's target range were cell phone users (3.4 million individuals), bOK needed to reach 4.8% of this market to reach its goal of acquiring 162,000 users in Canada (i.e., 1% of the total cell phone users in Canada). With over 709 million people in Europe and 300 million in the United States, there would be plenty of room for expansion into other markets.

2. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Canada

3. http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m4021/is_9_26/ai_n6261055

bOK's target was avid cell phone users who would like to make calls and save money. In general, the group that bOK was aiming to entice with its campaign was price sensitive. Survey data showed that Canadians with annual earnings of less than the LICO (Low Income Cut Off) rate were more likely to own only a cell phone (rather than only a landline). Statistics also showed that this group of people was more likely to be in the age range that bOK was targeting (15-25 year olds).⁴

7. Turn of Events

Aydin believed that one of his responsibilities as CEO was to constantly be on the lookout for what other enterprises in the same industry were working on. This involved a few hours of reading every day. bOK had competitors while it was in the process of developing its product. All of the competitors that Aydin was aware of (he conceded that he could not to be cognizant of stealth operations) were well-funded and VC-backed. Aydin explained: "bOK was in start-up mode and operating on a shoestring budget. Even with all of this, the company did have some real strengths. Other companies in the sector, though, were catching up fast."

In the midst of bOK's development, Jajah launched a mobile application. This put them in the direct space that bOK was targeting. With Jajah in this market, things became a lot more tenuous. It was surmised that Jajah could produce any and all of the features that bOK would be able to put together. This was a scary notion for the bOK team. If this were not enough, other competitors also popped up in this space: namely Truphone, Jaxtr, Tokiva, and a few more.

Aydin stated, "The situation's becoming complicated. We're still not done developing our final product, were not funded, and new competitors are emerging regularly." While all were offering slightly different products, the competition was VC-backed and developing product lines fast. Competitors had huge advertising budgets while bOK was still bootstrapping on a no-budget basis. The following was a snapshot of competitors that had appeared and their funding status:

4. <http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/060405/d060405b.htm>

	Location	Launch Date	Funding (\$ millions)
EQO	Vancouver, Canada	February 2006	12.5
Fring	London, UK	January 2007	12+
iSkoot	Cambridge, MA	February 2006	13.2
Jajah	Mountain View, CA	June 2005	28
Jangle	Pleasanton, CA	November 2006	9
Jaxtr	Menlo Park, CA	December 2006	1.5
Rebtel	Luxembourg	May 2006	20
Talkster	Toronto, Canada	December 2006	ND
TalkPlus	San Mateo, CA	January 2007	5.5
Truphone	London, UK	May 2006	24.5

Source of table: techcrunch.com

Jajah and **Rebtel** primarily focused on allowing users to initiate their phone calls through their websites. Users typed in their own cell phone number and the number of the person they would like to speak with and pressed the call button to initiate the call.

MobiVox gave users access phone numbers that they could call and through IVR⁵ dial the number of the person that they would like to speak to in order to initiate the conversation.

EQO, **Truphone**, and **Fring** offered a mobile application through which users could initiate their phone calls. Truphone and Fring also allowed users to make phone calls through a Wi-Fi connection.

iSkoot primarily focused on offering users access to their Skype accounts via a mobile client.

Talkster was in the process of a re-launch.

TalkPlus offered a service similar to Jajah but allowed a user to have multiple phone numbers for a given cell phone.

Jangle and **Jaxtr** allowed users to call each other through an email address/permalink.

5. IVR (interactive voice response) was a technology that allowed humans to interact, via speech recognition, with computers. In this context, it would commonly be referred to as an automated attendant.

8. Alternatives

The bOK venture team had to make a decision on what to do and it needed to act fast as things were changing rapidly around them. The truth was that bOK was now late to market and this made things difficult. A few options came to mind:

Quit and Try a New Idea

Despite the harshness of this option, it was not a bad alternative. Aydin recognized that many entrepreneurs tend to stick with their original ideas for too long. He explained “Often they’re blinded by extreme belief in the success of their start-up and hence ignore the environment around them.” Aydin knew that sometimes it was just best to realize that the given business would not succeed or that the chances of success were slim.

If the bOK team were to leave this venture and pursue another one, all would not be lost. Through the journey thus far the team had already learned a lot about their industry and business in general. Further to this, the venture team had had the opportunity to meet many valuable people in their industry and create a network of individuals and organizations that trusted the founders and could usefully be leveraged in creating another venture.

Opportunities were truly plentiful in the current environment. Aydin noted, “The tech sector is positively booming and start-ups are appearing by the hundreds every month in all sorts of new areas.” The venture team had a few ideas percolating on which they could work. Amin added, “VCs and angels are pouring money into start-ups at levels that have not been seen since the first tech bubble.” However, as usual, there were no guarantees.

On the downside, the bOK team had spent four to five months ‘ironing out’ details of their product and business model. They estimated that it would likely take another two or three months in order to complete their product and launch. During this time, it was likely that other competitors would pop up and it was a certainty that current competitors would gain market share during this time frame.

On the other hand, bOK already had customer confirmation that their product was indeed beneficial and that people would use it (150 beta testers). Customers not only used the service but they absolutely loved what bOK had to offer (see Appendix B).

Tweak the Idea to Make bOK Ahead of the Game

Aydin admitted, “bOK’s window of opportunity was closing. Had we launched before competitors such as Jajah, we would have been ahead of the game.” With the technology currently developed in the VoIP area by bOK, the founders could devise a new strategy to take advantage of VoIP in a different way, such as to incorporate a social networking concept.

The advantage of this strategy was that bOK was in a position to switch its roadmap quite fast as it was still pre-revenue with no investors dictating

compliance to a business plan that was pitched to them. The disadvantage was that this setback would delay bOK's launch and possibly be a source of disappointment for bOK's current team and shareholders.

Another disadvantage was that there was no assurance that a new business model would necessarily win in the market. The technology landscape was progressing rapidly and it was not possible to predict how the market would accept any particular new offering.

Obtain VC/Angel Funding

In order for bOK to be able to go head-to-head with competitors, it would need to obtain external investment. This investment was necessary for several initiatives:

- Improvement of current offering.
- International expansion.
- Large-scale marketing.

This strategy seemed like an obvious choice; however, what had to be considered was that obtaining such funding was not an easy task. Chasing external funding could take six months to over a year of effort. Raising funding by itself was a full-time endeavour. It was also something that might or might not come to fruition. Investors were always looking for an idea that was 'ahead of the game.' However, being in an industry that was crowded with competitors, Aydin believed it would not be easy to convince investors to commit funds. Also, given that all four members of the bOK team had other full-time commitments (school/work), a focus on fundraising would take time and energy away from other aspects of bOK operations.

Further to this, VCs (especially those in Canada) typically backed experienced teams; i.e., people who had raised funding in the past and had managed multi-million dollar successful operations. bOK's team ranged in age from 19-24 and lacked a proven track record.

bOK was also pre-launch. The only validation that it would be able to demonstrate to investors would be a private demo and proof of 150 beta users that loved the product. The venture team would not be able to guarantee that people would pay for the service as bOK did not yet have any paying customers.

Attempt to Sell the Product/Firm

bOK had been building out its product offering for a number of months and had developed some impressive technology and a good product/business plan for the next few years. The venture team had spent about \$10,000 on the current development and were pursuing six patents on technology that they had put together. They believed that what they had generated was surely worth

something. The founding team considered trying to sell what they had to an outside company or entrepreneur who would have the desire to make use of what they had created.

Aydin figured the advantage of such a strategy was that the team would at the very least earn back the capital that they had put into the project and take away the experience that they had gained as a result of the venture. This would also free up their time and give them the cash to pursue other opportunities.

The disadvantage to this strategy would be that the founders would be giving up on an idea that they had been working on for some time. Aydin stated, “The team cherishes this thing that we have put together from scratch. It would be so tough for them to give up on what we have and turn over all this hard work for a measly sum.”

Even if this strategy were chosen, it would be difficult for the founders to find someone to step in and take over. As their product was pre-launch, they would have to focus attention on selling the enterprise. Even with all of their energy focused on this task, there would be no guarantee that a successful sale could be made. At the same time, the founders would also be revealing all of their cards to anyone—including existing or potential competitors—who would show interest in what they had. Aydin believed that this would make it impossible to turn back from such a decision and attempt a market launch anyway.

Bring in a New CEO

As painful as such a decision would be, the bOK team did realize that an external CEO who had experience building a few companies in the past might be exactly what bOK needed for a number of reasons:

- The right CEO with a good network and connections into the investment community could bring funding to the venture.
- The new CEO could use his or her network to facilitate strategic partnerships with other telecommunications firms and carriers. Such strategic partnerships would help market bOK through currently established channels and would also help bOK obtain better rates for international calls that it could then pass on to its customers.
- The right CEO could also put his or her experience in marketing and international expansion to use and help the bOK team achieve its goals.
- The founders could learn a lot from first-hand dealings with such a CEO and use this experience for current and future opportunities.

This option was also attractive as the bOK team would not be giving up all of their shares in the company. The new CEO would be offered stock but the

founders would still have a majority (or in the worst case, a near majority) of the shares. Aydin figured if bOK did take off, they would still benefit—financially and also in terms of experience gained—from their efforts as part owners of the company. This would then be better than selling off the firm in its entirety and not keeping any shares for the founders.

As noted in previous alternatives, bOK would have to spend a considerable amount of time and energy looking for a new CEO. In the meanwhile, they would be revealing valuable and proprietary assets to a considerable number of external parties.

Quit All Other Engagements and Focus on bOK Full Time

Another factor that impeded progress for the bOK team was that the four founders had full-time obligations outside of bOK. All work on bOK was done on a nights and weekends schedule. The reasoning behind this alternative was for the venture team to quit all other obligations to devote their full efforts toward bOK to first see if they could gain traction with the venture. However, things had changed and with competitors constantly speeding ahead, the team had to do something to catch up. There were many things that the team could do but in reality there was not enough time with their current evening and weekend schedules; bOK had not yet received their undivided attentions.

The advantage to this option would be more time to drive the company to compete with those that were after the same target market. The disadvantage to such an approach would primarily revolve around the financial and educational repercussions. With full energy concentrated on bOK, three of them would have to drop out of their university programs and postpone their educations in addition to Aydin quitting his job and foregoing a stable salary. Losing this income would then limit the money that could be put into bOK and also give them a reduced time frame to take bOK to a cash flow positive state that could sustain the founders. As Amin put it, “Quite simply, although it would increase our horsepower, it would considerably shorten our runway.” Such a decision would also likely lead the founders to use credit cards, family/friends/bank loans, and whatever other means possible to secure capital. This in turn would be perilous as it could leave the founders with a large debt if bOK did not follow the trajectory for which they were hoping. It might also contribute to personal dissonance and stress.

The options were many and each required solid consideration. As CEO of bOK Systems Corp., Aydin wondered which option he should choose? Could he choose a combination of options? Which ones? And how would he go about implementing them?

Acknowledgement: This research was funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

Appendix A

Meet the bOK Team...

June 13, 2007



Good memories... This was back in February 2007 when the guys were working hard to get the platform up and running. No time for lunch, popcorn instead... Back then, the office was really any place where laptops could be plugged in... At the far end, you see Amin Mirzaee and counterclockwise from there, you see Samuel Cormier Iijima and then Pooya Eslamdoust... These are some of the smartest guys you'll ever meet. bOK was developed by the guys in this picture and all due credit should go to them... All of them have done great things even before bOK...

Sam, for example, developed the Python Interface to the Facebook API... impressive since about 10% of all facebook applications out there are built on top of his interface... good job Sam! Sam is also a musician who has won many national awards... Amin was the captain of the New York City Math Team amongst other things and was also the youngest person (at age 18) to work as an investment banking intern for Deutsche Bank on Wall Street... Pooya has been developing games and other applications since he got his hands on a computer... Sam and Amin are still students @ McGill. Pooya is a student at Humber College...

All in all, these guys are awesome! Still being teenagers, these guys have developed one heck of a system... Glad to know them!

Aydin Mirzaee.

Appendix B

Some Encouraging Testimonials...

June 30, 2007

Fellow **bOKers**,

We've been getting emails from our users since the very beginning... So, here are a few excerpts from what other **bOKers** are saying:

"This is the best system EVER! I can make long distance (US/CAN) or local calls for FREE. The support team is very helpful, quick at responding to your requests/questions and knowledgeable in their fields. If you're not bOKing, you are losing"

Shukri Hersi – Ottawa, Ontario

"I'm so glad I found you and have your service so far. It's so wonderful I can't even say enough. Where have you been all my life :) Keep up the good work you guys, how wonderful of a job you guys are doing. THANK YOU FOR OFFERING SUCH A SERVICE. I'm so grateful every single call."

K. – Toronto, Canada

"I STRONGLY recommend bOK to EVERYONE interested in calling International! bOK has completely surpassed my expectations. Awesome and keep up the good work!"

Tamer M. – Thunderbay, Ontario

"A must use for international calls."

Florian Seroussi, CEO – Global Roaming Inc., Miami, Florida

"First of all I wanted to thank you a ton for making the bOK website. It's amazing. I am using it. And I also referred it to my family and in-laws. They love it too."

Raihan K. – Ottawa, Ontario

"I hate downloading stuff onto my phone. With bOK, I make free calls without having to do much of anything. You've gotta try this out!!!"

Amanda Beaubien – Barrie, Ontario

Keep the emails coming!

bOK Team.

NOTE: Teaching Notes for qualified practitioners are available for this article at: info@senatehall.com

