



Five Questions With....Vantrix CEO Allan Benchetrit

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Vantrix CEO [Allan Benchetrit](#) worked for HP, Oracle, and Wysdom before co-founding Vantrix in 2004 with Jean Mayrand. Montreal-based Vantrix makes products that allow mobile carriers to deliver real-time mobile TV/video and messaging. The company uses patented technology to reduce the cost of delivering video on a mobile network by up to 70 percent. Vantrix evolved from two successive media processing pioneers: Sipro Lab Telecom and VoiceAge Corp. The company [raised \\$14 million](#) last May, a third round of funding, this one led by [Tudor Ventures](#). Vantrix has more than 100 employees. Digital Puck recently asked Allan five questions.

Digital Puck: What problem does your company solve?

With the launch of the iPad, iPhone and other smartphones, the amount of video traffic on the mobile network is ballooning at an exponential rate. Industry giant Cisco predicts that by 2014, video traffic will represent 66 percent of ALL mobile Internet traffic. With current and projected video usage, mobile networks are experiencing difficulties in handling the ever increasing demand on their networks. This is where Vantrix comes in. Vantrix enables mobile operators to optimize their networks and reduce the cost of delivering video to laptops and mobile phones by as much as 70 percent. Our award-winning patented technology sets the standard for multimedia content optimization in the network while delivering a rich and robust experience to end-users.

DP: What differentiates Vantrix from others in its space?

There are several things that differentiate Vantrix from the competition. First is our deep understanding of video and optimization dynamics; specifically our ability to limit the trade-off between compression and quality. Our [products](#) are the catalyst that enable mobile carriers to deliver real-time mobile TV & video and messaging while maintaining the best end-user quality of experience (QoE). Second is our capacity to [reduce the cost of delivering video](#) in a mobile network by up to 70 percent. Our unique platform – Mediadvance – features a databank of over 14,000 device profiles and a media encoding engine that supports more than 35,000 media combinations.

DP: Can you talk about notable customers or partners?

We are deployed in more than 60 networks, [serving over 700 million subscribers worldwide](#), where we enable mobile video through streaming, browsing and messaging services. Our customers are global Tier-1 and Tier-2 mobile operators, as well as cable companies. We are proud to be working with leading

companies such as Sprint, Orange, Telefonica, T-Mobile, TeliaSonera, MTS Russia, Etisalat, Saudi Telecom Company, and Tata Telecom.

DP: How close are we to “any content, anywhere, on any device” ?

For practical purposes we are already there. Content on mobile devices is just part of a bigger picture in which content becomes platform agnostic and capable of moving from the home, to the car, to the handheld device. Vantrix is already creating the seamless experience across multiple screens. Here’s an example: a consumer starts watching her favorite morning show before she leaves for work in the morning. When she gets on the commuter train on her way into the office, she catches some more of her favorite show on her mobile phone. During her lunch break she watches the final few minutes of the same show on her PC.

Mobile video will create a paradigm change in the way content is produced, delivered and paid for. It has profound implications on the media industry, the film industry, the telecommunications industry and the advertising industry. Vantrix is proud to be at the nexus of all these trends, the tipping point to accelerate video delivery and optimization.

DP: Any key lessons learned that you can share with Canadian entrepreneurs?

I would strongly suggest a crash course in all of the governmental resources available (research grants, tax credits, or assistance through the EDC). We are extremely lucky to have as supportive an infrastructure, yet it’s a pity that we don’t make better use of it.

Another key lesson is to build, to the extent possible, a local management team with international experience. Most Canadian companies will need to sell outside of Canada in order to grow, and having the benefit of an international network and sensitivity to foreign cultures and business practices is a key to success. The trick is to do so while avoiding spreading your team across multiple offices and geographies before the time is right as a tight cohesive team is critical in the early days. If you find the right candidates and they’re interested in the company, don’t be shy. Move them to Canada to be part of the team!

The last piece of advice is to make sure to properly research your market. Once you’re convinced that there’s a strong opportunity, attack it with laser focus. The key is to quickly build repeatability into your business, as this is critical to scaling profitably. It’s very easy to get distracted with science projects in the early days, especially if your core market is taking longer to mature. Instead, work closely with a few key customers, win some early deals for your product and then grow your partners/customers into strong references that you can use to acquire new business.