

**From:** Lawrence Salberg  
**Subject: Re: Fwd: PayPerPost**  
**Date:** September 22, 2007 1:57:50 PM PDT  
**To:** Peter Wright  
**Cc:** lsmiles@  
**Reply-To:** lawrence@

Peter: I didn't know who you were, so I looked you up: VP of Software Development (referred to as something like Director of Coding Stuff in the videos).

First, I had no problem with you. Quite frankly, you seemed like one of the few who had a clue in the Rockstartup videos. Just the impression the video gave, possibly, and certainly one-sided maybe, but I don't think (!) I made any reference to you. Comments below in Miami Dolphins orange (to clarify). Not that it matters perhaps since we both obviously think for ourselves, but I'd be remiss in not clarifying, I think.

Peter Wright wrote:

Hi Lawrence,

First up I'm shocked at some of the statements in your email to Lori. I'm not going to go in depth into addressing every item in your mail - you have made up your mind and I doubt would take any other view. I do need to address a couple of points though. I would also like to point out that I'm doing this because I want to. These are my views, my opinions. I chose to respond because I felt you attacked me personally in many of your comments. I'm not responding as a representative of this company.

I have no clue why because I never addressed you personally - only Ted Murphy and Lori from PPP's recruitment firm. Maybe you are just sensitive/defensive about where you work - or associate your workplace with your personal identity. But I don't think PayPerPost is you, Peter Wright, the person. At least I hope not. Even your brief bio on the PPP website hints at a fair amount of interests and things outside work. Don't put all your eggs in the PPP basket (whether it succeeds or not). You just work there, albeit at a high position. Who knows what you'll be doing 10 or 20 years from now, but I'm sure it won't be PPP - or probably even anything with Ted.

First you say that the only people that would work at such a company are those with no brains, no self confidence, etc etc. I take offense at that. We have an incredibly talented team of people here, programmers who have developed some stunning technologies the likes of which you have never seen before. You'll see them when we release Argus in November. We have ex-military programmers,

specialists in data forensics, published authors and speakers, highly popular open source tools authors - the list goes on. Smart people. Brilliant people. Okay, that's my fault for being upset at Lori & Co. for wasting 3 hours of my time on a lark. First, I shouldn't have said "no brains". I didn't mean their technical skills. I fully believe you have a talented staff in that vein. I meant "no brains" in the aspect of not having the common sense to refuse to work until 3 AM for a web project. This isn't the DoD defeating Al-Queda where American lives are at stake or something. It's a software project. You may differ and believe in the "work until you drop" philosophy. I am very much aware of your tenuous position as having to defend Ted's "mania" to get things done, regardless of their overall importance in the grand scheme of things, and balancing that with the needs of your techies to have a life. As I said, many of these people will "wake up" one day and wonder why they spent countless hours toiling away their lives... and for what? To line Ted's pockets? Nothing wrong with a little overtime once in a while - just when it becomes a way of life. Tells me that middle management doesn't know how to encapsulate work output into realistic throughput - and the resultant "mess" is left to everyone else to play catch up. At their own expense. If the CEO **\*\*wants\*\*** to work 80-hour weeks himself, so be it. If he expects his underlings to maintain pace as a show of solidarity, he's delusional.

RockStartup is a show, and like any other show it dramatizes minutiae. What you don't see on the show is how driven everyone here is, not just Ted. We are a company that is changing the landscape of online advertising, opening it up to the small guy that can't afford a multi-million dollar MySpace campaign, or a multi-thousand dollar doubleclick campaign. The detractors of us are also bloggers that profit from advertising in a blog. Calacanis for example made his money with WebLogs Inc, a collection of blogs that makes money through advertising. Arrington's TechCrunch is a blog that makes money through advertising. We represent a very real threat to their revenue streams, hence their vitriol. If you had dug deeper into Calacanis' blog for example you'd have come across a video interview he did with Ted where he actually changed his entire opinion of the company.

I will check into the Calacanis reversion. And perhaps I shouldn't have gone into that whole section where I criticized the company as a whole. It was pretty much outside the point I was making to Lori & Co anyway. Personally, I don't think being a broker between bloggers and advertisers qualifies as "changing the landscape of online advertising", but even if it did, it hardly equates to "changing the world". I thought the self-appointed gurus at Apple were the only ones egotistical enough to use that phrase - and they aren't doing it anymore either (not with a 5 to 10 percent market share). Be excited. Be happy about your work. I just think people are a little "over the top" when they start making prophetic statements inline with Biblical writ. Especially tech companies that have been around less than 5 years. Maybe IBM could preach like that and get away with it, but we expect a little more level-headedness out of our blue chip buddies. Web 2.0 Startups still living on Series B funding from private investment firms are hardly in a position to be so bold - save for the fact they have to, in a sense, to

keep the hype alive and keep the money coming in, until they turn a profit and all investments have been paid back in full. By the way, I don't know where you get the idea that I'm against making a profit with a blog. I just said that there are plenty (more than usual) of detractors to PPP. It speaks for itself. I've found lots more stuff since I wrote too. But it is what it is. You'll either prove them wrong - or prove them right. And you'll do that by getting bloggers to do it, and getting adv's to pay for it - not by writing responses to guys like me. I'm quite unclear as to how you represent a "threat" to TechCrunch and other blogger revenue streams. Seems to me the two could co-exist for an eternity. But, whatever. You can prove that down the road, too. Or maybe I should say "Ted can prove it", since he's the driving force behind the company.

You also speak about no-one here having a career. I'm a best selling author. I wrote the world's best selling Visual Basic book (and 13 others) and had a very happy career as a consultant specializing in Microsoft technologies that took me all over the world. I chose to come here because no other company on the planet is doing the things we do with technology. If you want a 'career' where the road ahead consists of nothing more than treading water in a company in the hopes of rising up some pseudo-reward ladder then go for it. Working here is all about doing cool things, writing awesome code and applications, solving technical problems that no-one else on the planet has ever done.

Um, okay. Congrats on the book. I'm not speaking about middle management careers - which are fairly firmly established. I'm speaking of what you refer to as "Code Monkeys" and "Code Ninjas" (not developers) in your video. The chimpanzees on the floor doing the actual work at hand. I don't want a career - nor do I believe in one. Lori was the one chattering on and on about how important it is for me, a prospective candidate, to "desire" a "career" at PPP. Go talk to her if you think she is misrepresenting your firm. I happen to like 6-12 month projects that Get Done, before the blood starts to flow and scope creep takes over. I'm very much a proponent of Agile development which is, I think, how Lori scraped my name up somehow. I just thought it was extremely odd that she would be so full of the career talk, when I saw none of it when I watched the videos. You don't make a career of a place that calls you a monkey, even in jest (that's a slur against programmers going back to the 70's - I would think you would know that), and who has no problem asking them to work until 3AM - all without any apparent regard for them as people, or even the quality of work after 15 hours of programming.

As for this company having no future, have you done ANY research at all? Did you notice the amount of competition we've spawned? Did you notice how the "big boys" out there are following our lead? Seriously - do your research!

Okay. I did my research. Apparently, in the small niche PPP is in, the massive amount of competition just isn't making front page headlines in Fast Company, Wired, and the Wall Street Journal. Maybe I missed the side column blurbs where it mentioned PPP. Sorry about that. I'd be careful about referring to PPP

as "we". First, I thought you said this was just "you" responding. Second, and way more importantly, that isn't healthy. Even if you have stock-options, there is no "we" between you and your employer. You could be gone tomorrow. Hell, as corporation, so could Ted. And then you. Don't throw yourself into this thing so deeply. Play ball with your kids. Go fishing. Ride a bike. Something. Geesh.... I'm scared for you.

The thing that amuses me most about your post though is how easily you are swayed by loud noises. "Arrington, as usual, has it dead on". You're kidding right? The same Michael Arrington that was the center of a HUGE deceptive blogging scandal recently for making positive paid comments about Microsoft's People Ready Initiative. The same Michael Arrington that actually went into hiding for a period of time after it was revealed that his posts are biased, lacking journalistic ethics and completely opinion based as opposed to factual reporting. Hmm... if I was so "easily swayed" by loud noises, I would think this email of yours would have been enough to turn me back to the good side of the Force. Apparently, Arrington is a bit louder than you. I'm no fan of Arrington (personally). According to the Wired story, he sits in front of his computer 17 hours a day in that dump of a home that he rents and doesn't even have a woman in his life. But at least he admits it and doesn't flatter himself. He is pretty knowledgeable about what he writes about. And even though he might have been a bit out of line (professionally) to call Ted the most evil person in the room, it was clearly said with a bit of tongue-in-cheek, plus the room was all aware of the differences between Ted and Michael beforehand. But, Ted stooped right down to his level and, arguably, even worse, by calling him an "ass" and the videos - and meaning it - and doing it behind the guy's back on his videos. Nice. That's a guy I want to work for. Yeah, right! But, Ted's a media mogul and has no problem using the heat from the controversy to build up his name. In fact, it was pretty obvious that, due to his concern about his own stage time at the end, that he used the more popular Q&A with Arrington to raise his hand and promote PPP, and challenged Arrington. He pretty much got what he deserved for that little publicity stunt. And in case you think I'm dumb enough to fall for your charge about Arrington going in hiding, I'm fully aware of Michael's frustration with running T/C because of all the grief its brought him. You two are peas in a pod. It's a shame you can't be friends with him. It isn't THAT hard. Nobody's perfect. And if PPP, and its employees, are going to respond to every criticism of their business model by using ad hominem attacks, I stick to my original prediction: Two years.

I wish you the very best of luck in your search for a 'career'. I know there are lots of safe little environments out there with well structured corporate ladders that you can happily spend your days climbing and climbing until eventually you retire.

Blah, blah, blah. You haven't a clue what you are talking about now. So, anyone that doesn't like PPP's wild and crazy (and possibly unlawful) work environment - must naturally love and adore the opposite: A safe corporate environment with well-structured ladders, right? How very polar of you. I couldn't be more the

opposite of what you are talking about. I'm a huge fan of Free Agent Nation, 4-Hour Work Week, etc, ad nauseum. But if an ad hominem attack will serve you better than facts, feel free, I suppose. Speaking of ladders and ad hominem attacks, Peter, do yourself a favor and stick to doing code. Not management. You oversee code - not people. You are a perfect example of the Peter Principle. Which is okay - not your fault. I got suckered into that once too. I just hope you aren't an example of the Dilbert Principle (I highly doubt it based on your own acclaim as a star programmer). Else, you'll soon be experiencing the Peter-Out Principle at PPP, if you haven't already.

Personally, when I retire I want to tell the grandkids when they ask what I did with my life that "I helped people. I helped people on low incomes get a break. I helped small companies get going. I helped change the face of the Internet. I invented some of the cool technology you take for granted today. I made a difference!"

I just find that so much more compelling than "Well, I climbed a corporate ladder and....well that's it really".

Hey, tell your grandkids whatever you want. You might want to bring a Driver's License and a Passport so you can prove who you are. They sure as hell won't know by looking at you since you spent every waking moment of your life "helping" (that's a laugh - you really are in trouble, aren't you?) a dot com startup. You're a real Boy Scout, Peter. A true humanitarian. A regular Red Cross volunteer in action, eh? Get a grip. It's a JOB. You give them code. They give you money. It's pretty simple. Trying to find personal meaning and self-fulfillment in your job? Holy crap, are we in the 1960's?

And let's be VERY realistic here. You haven't INVENTED one piece of technology. What do you think is going on over there? What is in the Kool-Aid? It's a regular Hewlett-Packard over there, eh? You do code. Plain and simple. You take other people's code, that they created (i.e. Larry Wall, etc) - not invented - and make programs. Programs that let bloggers write about companies and get paid to do so. Good grief. You'd think you invented space travel the way you are talking. In fact, I'd venture to say that not a single web 2.0 company (god bless them all) has "invented" anything. It's all database crap being thrown on the web. But, hell, if you worked for Amazon back in the heyday, or Yahoo, I could at least see how you might be under the impression that you were "making a difference" or that you were "helping people". You'd still be dead wrong, of course, but I could see how the phenomenal growth and power of those companies would have led you into such a self-delusion. But, how in the world a 30 person company that hasn't even turned a profit can lead you into such a way of thinking, I'll never know. I have to believe you've lead yourself down that road. Ted is a maniac - sure - but you are still responsible for your own thoughts/ideas/etc. Get away from that guy before he has you thinking he can start a church on the internet or that you are the next Bill Gates. Ride a bike. Get some fresh air. Talk to some small children - tell them what you do and ask them

if they think you are helping people - or if a firefighter is. After they look at you the way all small children do when you start talking about computer programming (I know), they will pick the firefighter every time. So will your grandkids.

How about this? Since I won't be working at PPP, nor encouraging anyone else to do so, maybe you could stretch your mind (I can hear the synapses popping right now) to think that I might work somewhere else that has "cool technology" without being a middle management drone. Oops! I'm not the one with "VP" in my title. Go assuage your guilt elsewhere, Peter.

All the best

Pete Wright

[Begin forwarded message:](#)

**From:** Lawrence Salberg  
**Date:** September 21, 2007 11:53:14 AM EDT  
**To:** Lori Smiles  
**Cc:** Charles Creamer  
**Subject: Re: PayPerPost**  
**Reply-To:**

Lori,

I'm very glad you referred me to these videos of Pay per Post. I'm stunned. I saw some of the most immature, unprofessional behavior in a workplace (not counting episodes of "The Office"). Quite frankly, who WOULD want to work in a place like that? Only kids with no brains, no self-confidence, and who want to write letters home to mommy and daddy telling them about their great job (read: paycheck) at some "cool" web company.

You made light of the fact that there are some Star Wars geeks there and so forth. I happen to be a S/W geek so I had no problem with that. However, you didn't say there

were a modern day cotton-picking farm and that employees are to be viewed as the "negros" out pickin in the fields. What century are these people living in?

You also seemed hell-bent on making sure I wanted a "career" there. Huh? What career? Did you WATCH these videos with any degree of discernment? Do you see ANYBODY there making a career out of that place (besides Ted and his girlfriend)? It's a job of a job of a job. A career starts, first of all, with a company that has a future. Then it takes a management squad which jealously guards its people and which provides a real environment for growth and balance - not a kid running around with a maniacal laugh telling people they have to work more and more (their personal lives be damned).

Ted is delusional. He made the classic "dumb employer" comment that everyone needs to believe in the company as strongly as he does. He's a typical ego-driven owner who doesn't give a damn about his employees but wants them to care about him. He had no problem asking them to work until 3AM to meet an arbitrary deadline. He then assuages his guilt by giving them ClubMed trips, employee of the month cash, a day off with pay, etc.... essentially, all ways of saying "thank you" with OPM. He's a real piece of work. The idiot writes a piece of code that screws up the launch - and he is not a code writer by any means. But he has no problem telling people when deadlines are due. You gotta love it when a suit comes through and tells the mechanic how long it should take him to replace the timing belt. Hysterical. There must be more caffeine flowing through that place than a Starbucks. The guy actually thinks he is going to change the world.

I loved the episode where Arrington told him off. Arrington, as usual, has it dead on. I went and read Michael's posts on PPP and I think he is absolutely correct. It is a flawed business model that COULD be modified and corrected by a more level-headed person. I think Ted could do very well one day when he grows up a bit, but the body count behind him will be significant. You know, the series starts off with him practically bragging about starting six other companies. I'm all for admitting that failure is the key to future success, but I hope those other companies didn't leave graves of people's lives scattered all over the landscape.

You "sold" this position to me on the basis of a "cool" place to work. There's a vast difference between "cool" and "unprofessional". There's a world of difference between "young" and "stupid". And there's a big difference between "clever" and "smart". PPP's business idea is just clever, not smart. They will be belly-up in two years. Guaranteed.

Great TV. Terrible company. Someone needs to mash up these episodes with some voice overs offering a healthy dose of reality. I wouldn't work for this company for three times the amount of money. What a joke. The sad thing is that by the time those people wake up and realize how miserable they really were, they will have wasted some of the best years of their life. There ARE lots of good companies out there. This isn't even close to becoming one of them.

Lastly, when you do a little research on PPP, you quickly find out that they are the pariah of the blogging/social networking industry. There seems to be not just a few major

bloggers who have nothing but disdain for them. Arrington is one, [Calacanis is another](#) (which is big when you consider his financial background), and the [several posts](#) from Valleywag don't help. But even without that, and the dozens of other naysayers, those videos make the case in and of themselves. It's bad enough that they act, behave, and run a company in such a juvenile manner, but that they would have the stupidity to film it and post it to the internet -- and now try to get a real network to produce this for TV -- it just shows that they lack complete discretion, care, or common sense.

As a result of your willingness to either (a) suspend disbelief and push PPP against your better judgment, or (b) your failure to exercise good judgment, I will not be accepting any work through your firm - for any company. Remove me from your candidacy system immediately. I'm pretty sure it is (b) since you also had no problem violating the law and asking me questions about my family during a phone interview - information which you gleaned from scouring my blog. Too bad you didn't [read more](#) or else you would see why I, and any half-intelligent person, would never work for such a place like PPP.

Lawrence Salberg  
Melbourne, FL

Lori Smiles wrote:  
[Hi Lawrence:](#)

[Again, it was a pleasure to speak with you. Please take a good look a few of the episodes from \[www.rockstartup.com\]\(http://www.rockstartup.com\) and then let me know if you](#)

would like to move forward with PayPerPost.

Best regards,

Lori

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