

Case Study: CommonCoach + inDinero

How Inline Is Democratizing College Admissions From The Inside Out

Although the college admissions process is dreaded by most high schoolers, there has been no tool to give students affordable advice on the entire application. A couple of former admissions officers, Anna Ivey and Alison Cooper Chisolm, recognized this gap and decided to build a product that provides real-time, expert support for all those pesky general questions. Starting in 2015, they launched the product (called [Inline](#)) through their company, CommonCoach.

Inline works in tangent with the Common App, a single application system for over 800 universities nationwide. To use Inline, you can download the free Inline Google Chrome extension so that it automatically appears in your Common App account the next time you login. Right away, strategic advice from former admissions officers guides you through each section.

Challenge

- Attention pulled away from product development for day-to-day bookkeeping needs
- Need expert financial advice for future growth plans

Knowing the high-stakes admissions market allowed no room for errors, CommonCoach built a market-ready product through slow, deliberate growth. There would be no haphazard, partially built product launch for this self-funded team, so both Anna and Alison needed to be able to focus 100% on developing their product. For these founders, the old saying “time is money” rang very true.

Anna explains, “I’m not a bookkeeper, I’m not an accountant, it’s not my goal to become one. We want to be focusing on making great products and generating revenue.” She continues, “Every minute that we spend on bookkeeping and accounting is a minute we’re not spending on the things that we really need to be prioritizing.”

Anna is responsible for creating and updating all Inline advice. With a political landscape in constant flux, admissions advice must be updated regularly, leaving little room for anything but content creation.

They also knew that they wanted to grow their business, so they needed a team that could scale with them from the financial data they need now into increased value-add services (like financial analysis, fundraising preparation, and other CFO services) they’ll need in the future.

Solution

- Outsource accounting and tax functions to experts in startup finances
- Accessible advice from a personal team of accountants and tax experts
- Ability to scale with investor-ready books and CFO advisors available for consultation



With scalability and growth in mind, CommonCoach found a partner with inDinero. A team of accountants and tax experts dedicated to CommonCoach's financial success helped alleviate the burden of day-to-day bookkeeping, giving Anna and fellow co-founders the freedom to focus on refining their product.

"inDinero really helps us leverage our time effectively and outsource the things that are not what we're best at and not what we want to be spending our time on. And they do it in a transparent and predictable way."

They meet with their inDinero Assistant Controller regularly to talk over any questions and make sure everything is on track. "It's so easy to get good advice from within inDinero and they are just ruthlessly efficient, nobody wastes my time," says Anna. As Anna and team look to the future, they see a time when bootstrapping will run its course and the time to fundraise arises.

To grow their human resources and technology, they will need to build a bigger budget, and with inDinero as their growth partner, CommonCoach will have all the reports, projections,

and advice needed to secure investors. Anna shares her confidence that inDinero is the growth partner for her business, "We've gotten this far on our own and we've been a lean and mean operating machine. And inDinero has certainly played a role in that. Next steps we'll probably need outside funding, and when that time comes, inDinero will be there to help us make sure we have our books ready to go."

About

inDinero

Founded in 2009, inDinero is the leading financial software and services solution for startups to automate accounting, bookkeeping, and tax preparation. Working with over 750 organizations across the world, inDinero is changing how business owners run operations. Headquartered in San Francisco, CA, inDinero has over 150 employees at offices across the United States and in the Philippines. Visit inDinero.com or call 855-463-4637 for more information.