

# LAUNCH FESTIVAL 2015

This spring we went to San Francisco, CA to participate in the [Launch Festival](#). It's a significant event in the world of IT startups: there were over 12 000 attendees this year. The Launch Festival is a great opportunity to present your product and your concept in front of notable judges. It's a competition and the winner gets funded with \$100 000. Moreover, you can secure additional investments. By the way, the Launch Festival 2015 overall winner is [ABRA](#) - "the world's first peer-to-peer digital cash money transfer network". Participants also get a chance to tell about the innovations they work on, communicate with representatives of globally renowned companies and venture funds such as LinkedIn, [Salesforce](#), [Kickstarter](#), [Sequoia Capital](#), [AngelList](#), etc.

As for us, it was all about finding new partners, signing new contracts, working on new exciting projects. Our CMO Evgeniy and one of our account managers Alexey travelled to the Silicon Valley to showcase the Magora Team's talents. I asked them a couple of questions about the event and here's what they said:

## **- There are many IT conferences out there. Why Launch?**

We've considered many different events, but ended up picking Launch because it's a big event for startups. We do a lot of projects like that. Start-up entrepreneurs tend to go for outsourcing, as they don't have unlimited funding and always try to save money. Plus, they usually have fresh and interesting ideas, which are exciting to work on. They often require thinking out of the box and coming up with unique solutions for complex problems, which happen to be our core competences.

## **- How did you get ready for Launch?**

First of all, we needed to contact event management to find out how to get registered for the festival and what kinds of participation they offer. After a few rounds of negotiations we were set on having a stand location and type. Choosing it right is key to making the most of such events. Then we focused

on creating banners that showcase our projects, advantages and motto. We also packed in some giveaways: booklets, pricelists, pens, candy. You see, it's important to have something that draws people in. In our case it was candy:). And lastly, we created scripts: comprehensive information we'd want to share with interested visitors. It allowed us to sound confident and engage people easier.



**- What was your first impression? How did the event go? Share your most memorable moments.**

The first impression was kind of strange. The main event building used to be a military marine dock (Note: Fort Mason Centre). And, overall, it felt like the event organisation was not to the highest standard. However, these were subjective thoughts based on previous experience. The thing is, in Russia conferences and expos are typically held in specialized expo centres. But after the action had started, we changed our minds completely. Everything was pretty well arranged: the types of participants, pass distribution system, catering, stand equipment, etc. And the building itself added a unique flair to the atmosphere.





There were lots of people all the time. The conference actually took over two buildings: one for lectures from seasoned start-upers, investors and veterans of the IT market, and the another building - for expo stands.

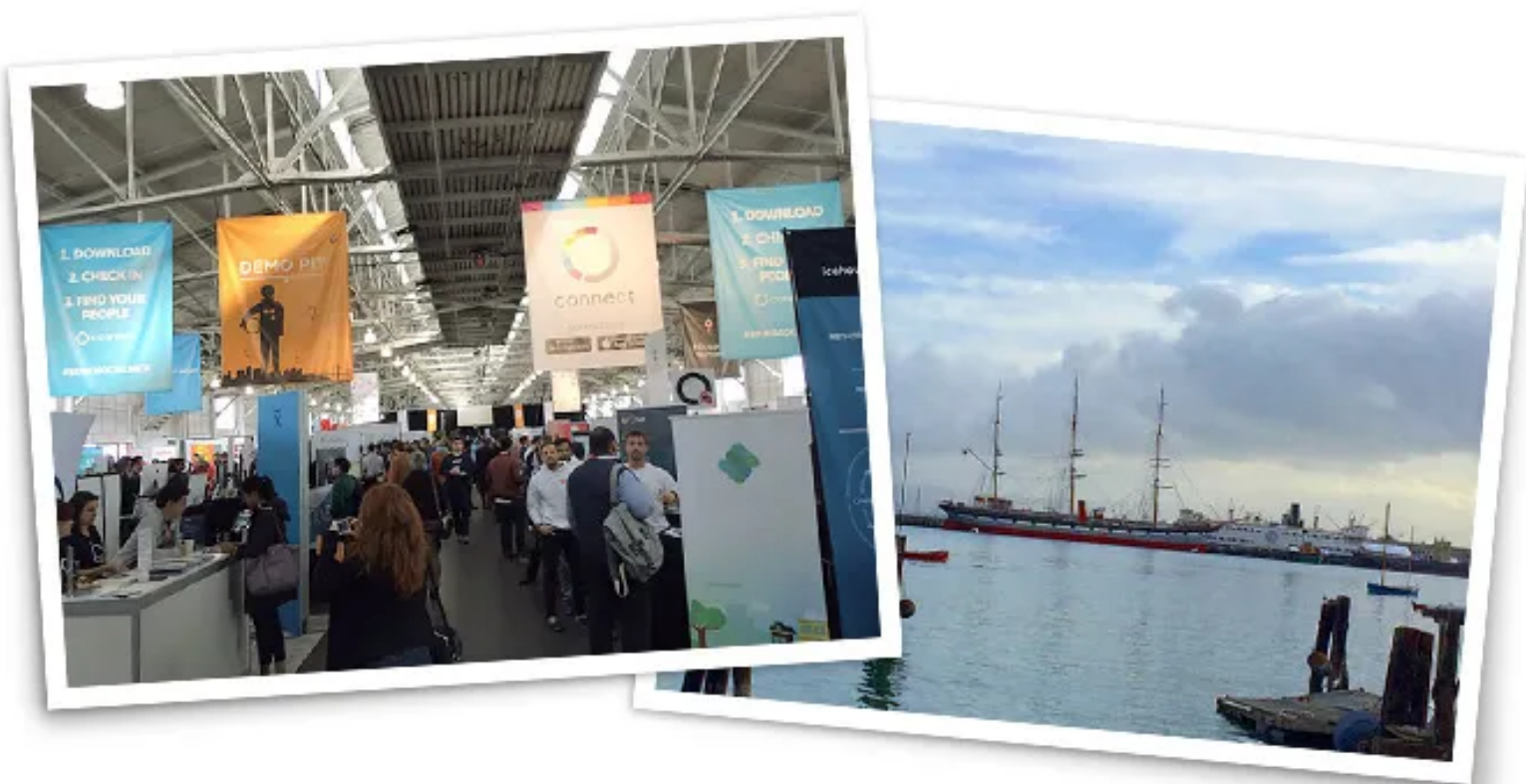


As the two of us needed to deal with the constant flow of interested visitors, we just couldn't find a moment to sneak into the other building. Being on foot all day wasn't easy, but we spent our days talking to people interested in our services and time flew by.





From time to time we walked around the hall to take a look at the other stands and talk to start-uppers. We were really impressed with the quantity, quality and variety of presented ideas and products. It became clear that the US IT market is huge and it keeps growing exponentially. Things typically came to a close at 6 PM. After that visitors could spend time in the lounge area for participants. It was a great opportunity to get to know all the people you met during the day a little bit better.



**- Have you made any discoveries about the American start-up market? How is it different from the Russian?**

The biggest difference is that people in the US are not afraid to invest into start-ups. They carefully craft a business model, calculate the risks and start the implementation with confidence. The US market is also packed with investors, who are eager to help young entrepreneurs turn their ideas into reality. In Russia, unfortunately, this sphere is much less evolved.

**- Did the outcome meet your expectations? Will the company be presented at the Launch next year?**

Expectations were fulfilled, results - achieved. This little trip sparked a lot of interest in our company. We've met a lot of people, with whom we're actively negotiating right now. Things are going towards closing new deals and beginning new long-term partnerships. I think it's quite possible that we'll come back next year. But we're also considering other options.