

One App, One World

By connecting riders to drivers through a mobile app, Uber aims to make cities more accessible and safer and open up more possibilities for riders and more business for drivers

Headquartered in San Francisco, US, Uber provides a mobile app that connects riders with drivers. Users can use the same app in 300 cities around the world where Uber's service is available.

The company soft launched its trial services in Hong Kong in June 2014 and started full service operation in July 2014. "Hong Kong is an incredible city, combining global commerce and local culture, large industry and startup entrepreneurship and innovation. It makes a fantastic regional headquarters for us as we expand in the Greater China area," Sam Gellman, who is leading Uber's Asia expansion, said.



Founded in 2009 as a startup, Uber had raised US\$49 million in venture funds by 2011. The company started to expand internationally from 2012 and has continued to raise additional funding, reaching US\$2.8 billion in January 2015.

The number of staff based in Hong Kong has grown from five a year ago to 25. The majority of the local employees were born and raised in Hong Kong, and oversee operations, marketing, legal, and human resources. "The best way to build a business is to find the top local talent," Gellman said.

Uber's goal is to make cities safer, to enhance urban transportation and logistics, to take vehicles off the road via Smart City initiatives, and to enable drivers – men and women – to earn more. "Our vision is a world with almost no private vehicles. This will eventually improve air quality, save parking spaces and make cities more liveable," he added.

On the business-to-consumer side, Gellman is seeing an increasing number of families using Uber's service for multiple purposes, including sending their children to school. On the business-to-business side, Uber has already launched its first Uber-van service in Hong Kong where users can hire vans to transport goods.

Gellman believes that safety and good service are the keys to sustainable business growth. The average waiting time for an Uber taxi in Hong Kong is six minutes and the entire payment process is cash free. Drivers are motivated to deliver good service as they are rated by their customers at the end of the ride.

InvestHK provided Uber with significant support, including information on public transportation and advice on market entry strategy prior to its launch.

Having lived in Hong Kong for almost a decade, Gellman sees the city as home. "This is one of the greatest cities in the world. It has a strong entrepreneurial spirit and a vibrant startup scene," he enthused.

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Sam Gellman
Asia expansion lead of Uber



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Fast Facts

- Uber's service is available in 53 countries and 300 cities worldwide (as of December 2014)

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