

Inside Job: He helps people secure their passwords with Keeper

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What's it really like to work at Chicago startups and tech companies? Blue Sky's Inside Job lets people on the ground tell us in their own words.

Steven Bertrand, 32, User Experience/User Interface Interactive Designer, with a focus on Motion Design, for Keeper

Keeper is the world's leading password manager and secure digital vault. We have more than 11 million customers worldwide, and we protect about 4,000 businesses.

On the consumer side, the user would download Keeper, and if they have an Amazon account or a Macy's account, they would enter those credentials in Keeper and use that as a safeguard to ensure hackers don't steal their information.

You don't have to memorize all these passwords; it's only one master password to get into your vault. There are also files, photos, sensitive information stored in people's vaults.

We've been around since 2011. Chicago is our headquarters, and we also have a location in El Dorado Hills in California. We have nearly 100 employees. We have about 10 in the Philippines doing support because we have 24-hour support.

I code, I design as well as animate. Besides creating traditional design,

static screens for all platforms - the interface of the application - I do the motion design for support videos. Support videos are pretty much a way of teaching businesses and consumers how to use our product. They're tutorials.

We created animated emojis for the application. We used our lock icon and put faces on it. The clown is my favorite because he does something with his eyes, and his hair wiggles.

I was born in Evanston, and I grew up in Skokie. My parents are from Haiti; I understand Creole more than I speak it. I went to Niles North High School. I ended up moving midway to Palatine High School. In Palatine, I enrolled in an advanced multimedia class. I was so in tune with creating and animating and entertaining people looking at it. I fell deeper in love with it.

I was an artist growing up. I've always had a fascination with drawing roses, nature and stuff, and I ended up marrying a girl named Rosie. She loves my drawings.

My first application I started designing with was PowerPoint. I was probably 11, 12. I created a multimedia presentation, and my older brother was my client. He wanted something "Simpsons"-related, so I created a multimedia "Simpsons" show for him. It was animation and interactivity at the same time. I was obsessed with it. There were at least 100 slides in that thing!

Prior to coming here, I actually had the Keeper application on my phone prior, to save my passwords.

I was a victim at one point. Someone had stolen my information and hacked into my Dropbox. I was very scared. It's a terrible feeling because you don't know what they've seen or what they're going to use.

That's why we have Keeper, to safeguard. You gotta protect yourself.

We have a giant wall with orcs when you first walk in. They're all trying to break into the Keeper Vault. They're unsuccessful. It's amazing. It's an exaggerated look, but it gives you an idea of what hackers are trying to accomplish, literally every day.

There are a lot of dedicated people here. There's creative freedom, and "let's see what you're thinking, as far as what needs to be done for Keeper." To trace back to "The Simpsons" and my brother, he was like, "Make me happy. Let's see what your thoughts are." Here, it's no parameters: Just do something.

There are four people on our design team. We laser-focus in on the work we do, but we laugh at the same time. We love drawing cartoon characters on the glass board. We just create stories about them. If you sit in that design room, you wouldn't stop laughing. There was a time where my gut was about to explode.

The past few years, we've rented out a movie theater with just our company and have seen the "Star Wars" movies. We rent out Owen & Engine, and then we go to the movies. You can bring your family. I brought my son. We didn't have our daughter yet; she's three months. It was a great time.

We have very close collaborations with a lot of the bosses here. We get immediate feedback as far as what's being created, and I think we love the fact they trust us with their baby, the baby being the company itself. I love it here. This is probably the most important job I've ever had.

As told to freelance reporter Erin Chan Ding. Stories are edited for length and clarity.

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