

COVID-19: Interview with Greg Watts, Founder & CEO of Findr

Findr is a revolutionary networking and matching platform for businesses helping companies of all sizes cut down the time and effort it takes to connect with each other. Maddyness spoke with Greg Watts, Founder & CEO of Findr, set to launch in Q4 about how they have coped during lockdown and what the future holds.

Temps de lecture : minute

16 September 2020

Lockdown has probably been one of the most productive times of my life! I incorporated Findr, a marketplace for business partnerships, on March 10th, just before the restrictions hit. However, being at home really heightened my sense of focus and enabled me to work in the present. In contrast, pre-lockdown, I was dashing around London going from meeting to meeting, whereas in a post-lockdown world, that was no longer an option.

We're launching Findr in October as originally planned. If it weren't for lockdown, that date might be different.

[Maddyness] What have been the biggest personal challenges during lockdown?

[Greg] Keeping fit! In the early days and weeks of the restrictions, I didn't want to leave the house. That led to me rediscovering yoga (there are a lot of great YouTube yoga options) and then eventually going on morning and evening walks in the surrounding West Sussex countryside. Walking was something I didn't particularly enjoy before lockdown, but it's now

become something I can't live without. It's the perfect time to think and reflect.

Was remote working a new thing for you and if so, will you be adapting your work to allow more of it?

Like many, I've always struck a balance between being in the office and working remotely. However, this has been the longest time I've ever worked from home. The restrictions have helped me and the other members of my team to stay focussed and productive, even if we're not physically together.

In fact, it's allowed us to live and breathe our values: we're building a platform that allows businesses to create partnerships in a matter of minutes and a few clicks without the need for physical contact. Since lockdown ended, we've implemented quarterly face-to-face meetings which provide a healthy dose of interaction.

How have you been keeping your teams happy?

We've created a positive team spirit by keeping things as 'normal' as possible. In our case, we've had something to focus on - building and launching our own tech startup. That's enabled us to rally around a common goal - something I think many professionals have missed during lockdown.

Another thing that keeps individuals happy is asking how they are feeling. We all have good days and bad days, and they need to be acknowledged.

As a leader, have you successfully managed your (and your teams) mental resilience through lockdown?

Mental health is very important. We've tried to keep things as normal as possible and regularly check in with each other. We must be doing something right because we're growing the team and are on track for our launch!

Have you made any changes to your business and business model?

In our case, no - we incorporated the business days before lockdown and, as a result, this way of working is our norm. Our team is spread around the world, including the UK, Poland, Antigua, Netherlands and Cuba, so we're conditioned to working across cultures and time zones.

What have you implemented to stay competitive?

No one is doing what we're doing, at least not in an automated way. There are some spreadsheet-driven businesses who claim to do matching, but none are underpinned by machine learning, which can cut down the partnership creation process from months or years to minutes or hours in just a few clicks. In our case, users sign-up to Findr, tell us about their business and the types of partnerships they're looking for.

They then get presented with recommended partnership opportunities and can request a one-hour Discovery call. If the request is accepted, both parties hold the call within the Findr platform. The requestor only pays a £99 fee once the call has been held.

How is your relationship with your investors?

I'm fortunate to have brilliant investors who I can pick up the phone to any time for advice. They're all angels or HNWs and come from backgrounds spanning start-ups and scale-ups to law, investment banking and technology. My advice to other founders is to surround yourself with supportive investors who can add value in specific areas. We've also turned down investors because I didn't feel there was a good fit - it's important to occasionally say no as well.

Do you feel confident in your business post-COVID?

Yes. For us, the backdrop of a global pandemic that restricts people being physically together is the ideal timing for launch. We're creating a platform that allows businesses to create partnerships in a short space of time without in-person contact. Now, we're not naïve enough to think we can completely eradicate the 'handshake impact' of a deal, but we can certainly speed up the process.

Are there any changes in society/economy that you think will help you?

Globally, businesses are struggling. While there are many reasons for this, what we want to do is provide a platform that enables them to speed up the creation of commercial partnerships to help them grow and thrive.

We also believe now is the time to cut through longstanding, bureaucratic systems and processes that hold back innovation. To that end, we're working with a number of procurement and partnership teams to introduce Findr.

Tell us about your future post-COVID?

We plan to launch Findr to beta users in October. At present, we're approaching 300 people across a number of leading businesses and startups who have signed up for early access. Then, we'll roll out the platform to the financial services industry in Q1. Later in 2021, we plan to launch into additional industries and geographies. Our ultimate goal is to become the partnership matching platform for all businesses across all industries around the world.

<https://youtu.be/QmrwkhQA3il>

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