

Meet YardLink, the B2B marketplace digitising the construction supply chain

As part of our quick fire questions series - or QFQs - we spoke to Neeral Shah, cofounder and CEO of YardLink about digital marketplaces, the complexities of construction supply chains and how connectivity and efficiency can boost profit margins.

Temps de lecture : minute

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I've always had an entrepreneurial streak in me and had the idea for YardLink while providing trade finance for construction buyers around the world. Sourcing and financing heavy equipment and construction materials, and experiencing the large capital expenditures for assets that would be significantly underutilised on sites, got me thinking that there had to be a better way.

I then spent a couple of years in strategy at a rapidly growing tech startup, where I discovered the power of digital marketplaces and network effects. It was there I realised a marketplace for construction equipment and materials was the best way to solve the challenges construction buyers face with their supply chain.

Tell me about the business - what it is, what it aims to achieve, who you work with, how you reach customers and so on?

YardLink is a B2B marketplace digitising the \$1TN construction supply

chain. We connect customers with a growing network of highly vetted suppliers, enabling contractors to source and manage equipment rental, materials and services within seconds.

Currently, suppliers find it challenging to deliver orders on time due to a lack of inventory or vehicles to deliver equipment and machinery. This can lead to delays, or customers finding alternative solutions with suppliers which can be expensive and much further away. This fragmented supply chain, where contractors and local suppliers are all disconnected from one another, can also make it difficult to track orders, costs and stick to projected budgets.

Most contractors require equipment and materials orders on site within just 24 hours, which doesn't work within the current model of supply chains. The entire supply chain of the construction sector requires revamping for greater connectivity. Fast forward to today, and YardLink connects contractors with local suppliers across equipment rental, bulk materials, fuel and construction waste management, giving buyers full visibility of their orders and spend. Ultimately, YardLink is reinventing construction procurement for SME contractors from the ground up.

How has the business evolved since its launch? When was this?

YardLink was launched in 2018 as a marketplace, mainly focused on construction equipment rental to start with. Since then, we have shifted our focus to strictly B2B and evolved our relationships with suppliers to increase the size of the network customers have access to. Today, we serve over 3,000 construction SMEs and facilitate deliveries of equipment, materials, fuel and waste management services to more than 10,000 projects across the UK.

We also reduce the carbon output of projects by helping customers

source locally. In fact, over 95% of deliveries organised through YardLink are within 15 miles of each project!

Tell us about the working culture at YardLink

I'm incredibly proud of the team we've built at YardLink! I can describe our culture as friendly, transparent and results-oriented. We're also super collaborative - just the other day three of our sales reps volunteered to jump into our operations team to help out after an influx of new orders.

I know it might sound like a cliché, but even though we're a highly ambitious team, kindness is at the heart of everything we do. We live and breathe our six cultural values:

- Build Trust
- Be Bold
- Be Curious
- Empower Others
- Care Deeply
- Own It

How are you funded?

We recently announced our *series A financing*, led by Beringea. Amplifier and our existing investors, Speedinvest and FJ Labs, along with our existing Angel investors. To date, we've raised \$20M.

What has been your biggest challenge so far and how have you overcome this?

Our biggest challenge is the construction industry's willingness to adopt new technology. With construction being the second least digitised industry in the world, we knew we'd need to be very thoughtful in our

approach to building products and onboarding customers.

To solve this we work closely with our customers on feature development, and have built a lot of our technology to work in the background, giving customers the ability to utilise YardLink's procurement software in a way that's familiar to them.

How does YardLink answer an unmet need?

Construction planning is incredibly complex, with each project unique in its requirements. With an average of 50-70 subcontractors working on a typical large project, construction projects run 80% over budget and 20 months behind schedule due to poor planning and communication, as well as a lack of coordination between the various stakeholders.

Currently, over 95% of transactions are still being sorted over the phone, on email or even pen and paper. This process can be a huge burden for contractors, as they have to coordinate a host of subcontractors, suppliers and deliveries for time-sensitive projects, which often leads to costly delays and overruns.

YardLink was launched to provide a solution to this aspect of the construction industry. By digitising the entire network of contractors and local suppliers and bringing them closer together on a single platform, we're making the entire process of procurement more efficient and taking pressure off their budgets.

What's in store for the future?

There's still work to be done before the construction industry fully integrates technology into the procurement process. The good news is that as we bring on a larger number of suppliers and products to our platform, customers will have an increasingly robust, centralised

marketplace where they can have visibility across the entire supply chain with real-time availability. In the next few years, construction businesses can expect a higher level of connectivity and efficiency that will boost their profit margins.

As for the evolution of YardLink, the recent investment will be used to double our headcount and better integrate with our supply chain to offer real-time availability across all products.

What one piece of advice would you give other founders or future founders?

Just get started! We often wait for the perfect moment or sit on ideas and fine tune them to “perfection”. What I’ve learnt over the last few years, is that there’s never a perfect time or perfect idea. As soon as you launch something, no matter how small, you have the ability to learn from customers and iterate, so just get started!

And finally, a more personal question! What’s your daily routine and the rules you’re living by at the moment?

I have two young kids (two and five years old), so it’s hard to pin down a routine these days! Building a company and raising kids is a constant juggling of priorities and quite challenging to get right. I definitely haven’t got it right yet, but my days are generally split between YardLink and family, with little else around that. Unfortunately, I get very little “me time”, but these early years with my kids are very precious, and the early stage nature of YardLink requires a lot of my attention.

Given the constraints on my time, these days I generally say “no” to a lot more than I say “yes” to, whether it’s external events or even internal

meetings I don't necessarily need to be a part of. I also review my plans and goals every night ahead of the next day, to make sure I'm focused on the largest opportunities and challenges at YardLink. I delegate as much as possible and have an amazing team around me to drive execution and make sure everything runs smoothly.

Neeral Shah is cofounder and CEO of [YardLink](#).

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