

Meet Glaize, disrupting the \$45B nail care industry

Creating a startup is always challenging. Founding one during a tech downturn, cost of living crisis and recession seems near impossible. However, with risk comes reward and many of the world's most successful companies were founded during times of economic uncertainty. As part of a series with Antler, Maddyness has interviewed founders hoping to become the entrepreneurial success stories to emerge from this time of crisis. This week, Maddyness spoke to Gina Farran, Founder and CEO of Glaize.

Temps de lecture : minute

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I've always loved manicures but when I was working in investment banking, I didn't really have time to go to the salon and the last thing I wanted to do was to paint my nails late at night. I became increasingly frustrated with alternatives to nail polish like gels which made my nails weak or cheap DIY solutions like press-ons and nail strips which looked awful, didn't fit and didn't last at all.

I started looking into the nail care industry and realised that the products we use today haven't evolved for almost 100 years, and nail care wasn't a key focus for the big beauty players. So I felt the urge to do something about it by creating products that were better for women and the environment.

Can you share your elevator pitch?

We're building the L'Oreal of the future by disrupting segments within the

beauty industry that are high margin and low innovation. Our first stop is the \$45B nail care industry which we're disrupting by giving consumers access to sustainable, salon-quality manicures & nail art without the hassle of a salon trip. We launched with a 4,000+ person waitlist and are now selling on Sephora UK.

Glaize is not just a D2C company, we've built a factory and formulate and manufacture all our products from scratch in-house in the UK. This has allowed us to make our gels 40% plant-based compared to the market standard of 0% for UV gels. We've also built our proprietary nail sizing technology which we filed a patent application for in October 2021.

Can you tell our readers about your engagement with Antler?

I joined Antler in March 2020 to build Glaize and it's been an amazing launchpad for us. I met my co-founder there, Antler was our first cheque and the team has been incredibly supportive along the journey.



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Tell us about the working culture at Glaize?

Ambition and humility probably sums it up: we work hard, have big dreams and treat people well.

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

I'd say building Glaize in the middle of a pandemic and supply chain crisis has been extremely challenging: we had to find ways around lab closures, significant material shortages and delays which added a lot of uncertainty to our journey. We just had to roll with the punches and lean on our suppliers who became almost an extension of our R&D arm.

What's in store for the future?

We're about to launch nail art which is a moment that we've been working towards for almost two years. We're also fundraising so we can grow and scale Glaize. We spent almost two years working on the product and now is the time to shift gears and focus on growth.

How has the cost of living crisis and the tech downturn impacted your experience building Glaize?

On the supply side, we've definitely seen and felt costs go up when it comes to raw materials. On the demand side, it's hard to see a trend as we're still very early in our growth journey but our theory is that since Glaize is cheaper than going to the salon, we will see customers switch to cheaper DIY solutions like Glaize in an attempt to cut down on their expenses.

What barriers have you faced in realising your entrepreneurial ambitions? How can we make entrepreneurship more accessible in the UK?

I think being an Arab female founder in the UK comes with various challenges, especially on the fundraising front. I think investors need to be held more accountable, support female-founded businesses by investing in more of them (as opposed to just offering office hours or advice) and to assess female founders like they assess male founders. In my experience, investors always put their risk-averse hat on when they're speaking to a female founder while male founders are able to talk about their vision in an almost unhindered fashion.

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

Block out the noise and stay focused. When you're building a startup, you're going to have to deal with a lot of rejection and failures. It's super important to stay focused and not let the blows get to you mentally or emotionally. It's sometimes useful to remind yourself that rejection is often not personal.

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

I wish I could give you an inspiring answer but then I'd be lying. I roll out of bed, jump in the shower, have a coffee and then start working until it's pretty much bedtime. That's the reality of building a startup (especially in the early days) and I think it's important to be honest about it.

Gina Farran is the Founder and CEO of [*Glaize*](#).

Antler is one of the world's most active early-stage investors. With 900 portfolio companies in 27 countries, they have a global community of early-stage founders addressing the world's biggest challenges.