

Meet Beagle, sniffing out the best products, at the best prices... with the lowest impact

As part of our quick founder questions series – or QFQs – we spoke to Daniel Hemsley, cofounder and CEO of Beagle about the climate crisis, the desire to make more sustainable choices and tackling consumer pain points.

Temps de lecture : minute

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The climate crisis is fuelled by an over-consumption crisis. We are socially conditioned to buy stuff that will supposedly make us feel good. A growing number of people are waking up to the unfortunate reality that collectively we're causing catastrophic damage to the planet with our everyday actions.

It definitely is not the fault of the everyday consumer but it is undeniably a problem we're all going to have to face. The good news is that the vast majority of people want to make more sustainable choices. Recent Kantar data suggests that by 2030, 62% of UK consumers will be 'Eco Actives,' highly concerned about the environment and taking action to reduce their impact.

We know from speaking to our users that the 3 main obstacles stopping them from living more sustainably are price, concerns of greenwashing and inconvenience. We saw an opportunity to use technology to help bridge the intention-action gap that so many people struggle with.

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

We're a sustainable retail tech platform, we exist to help people live a more sustainable life. We do that by finding (sniffing out) sustainable options. Our first product, *The Beagle Button* is a browser extension that automatically suggests sustainable alternatives as you shop online. With our extension downloaded you can shop on any major UK retail website, for everything from running shoes and coffee beans to toothbrushes and frying pans and we'll suggest a sustainable alternative.

We want to help accelerate the transition to a green economy. We approach that by tackling each of the consumer pain points I mentioned previously (price, greenwashing and inconvenience) Greenwashing is a huge challenge, the CMA recently reported that up to 40% of green claims made online could be misleading consumers. To help our users avoid greenwashing we do the research so they don't have to, carefully vetting the brands we recommend. We integrate into the shopping experience for convenience. Now with the launch of our rewards program, we're tackling price.

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

We started Beagle in 2019, the very first version of our product worked on one website and we had 3 products in the database (toilet paper, beer and a frying pan). Today we work across hundreds of retail sites and have built a database of over 5000 sustainable alternatives spanning FMCG, fashion and refurbished tech. We've grown a community of over 25,000 passionate sustainable consumers, established brand partnerships with over 100 of the UK's leading sustainable retailers and in January we

became a Certified B Corp.

Tell us about the working culture at Beagle

The Beagle motto is, if there's a better choice, we'll sniff it out. We are all unreasonably passionate about sustainable products and services. Across the team there is a genuine excitement about discovering sustainable alternatives and sharing them with our community. That shared purpose really helps, it's a clear positive mission that is easy to rally behind. With every switch we encourage we can see the impact we have, the revenue we divert from traditional retailers to the green economy.

How are you funded?

We're backed by Sustainable Ventures, Marchmont Ventures and 839 crowdfunders.

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

Time and time again we hear from our users that price is the number one thing stopping them from shopping more sustainably. As an intermediary, for a long time price felt like a challenge we had limited ability to address. There are amazing circular economy products like refurbished tech or reclaimed furniture that are cheaper than buying new but when it comes to fashion, the sustainable option will almost always be more expensive. It was our biggest challenge, so we decided to flip it on its head. Our loyalty scheme will make it cheaper for consumers to shop sustainably.

How does Beagle answer an unmet need?

It's 2023, climate change is now communicating itself. Why can you earn

reward points for flying around the world but not for making more sustainable choices?

What's in store for the future?

In the future, if you're choosing the sustainable option, we want to reward you for it. Whether you're buying a reusable water bottle, shopping second hand, choosing a train journey over a flight or checking into a FairBNB you should be earning points for reducing your impact.

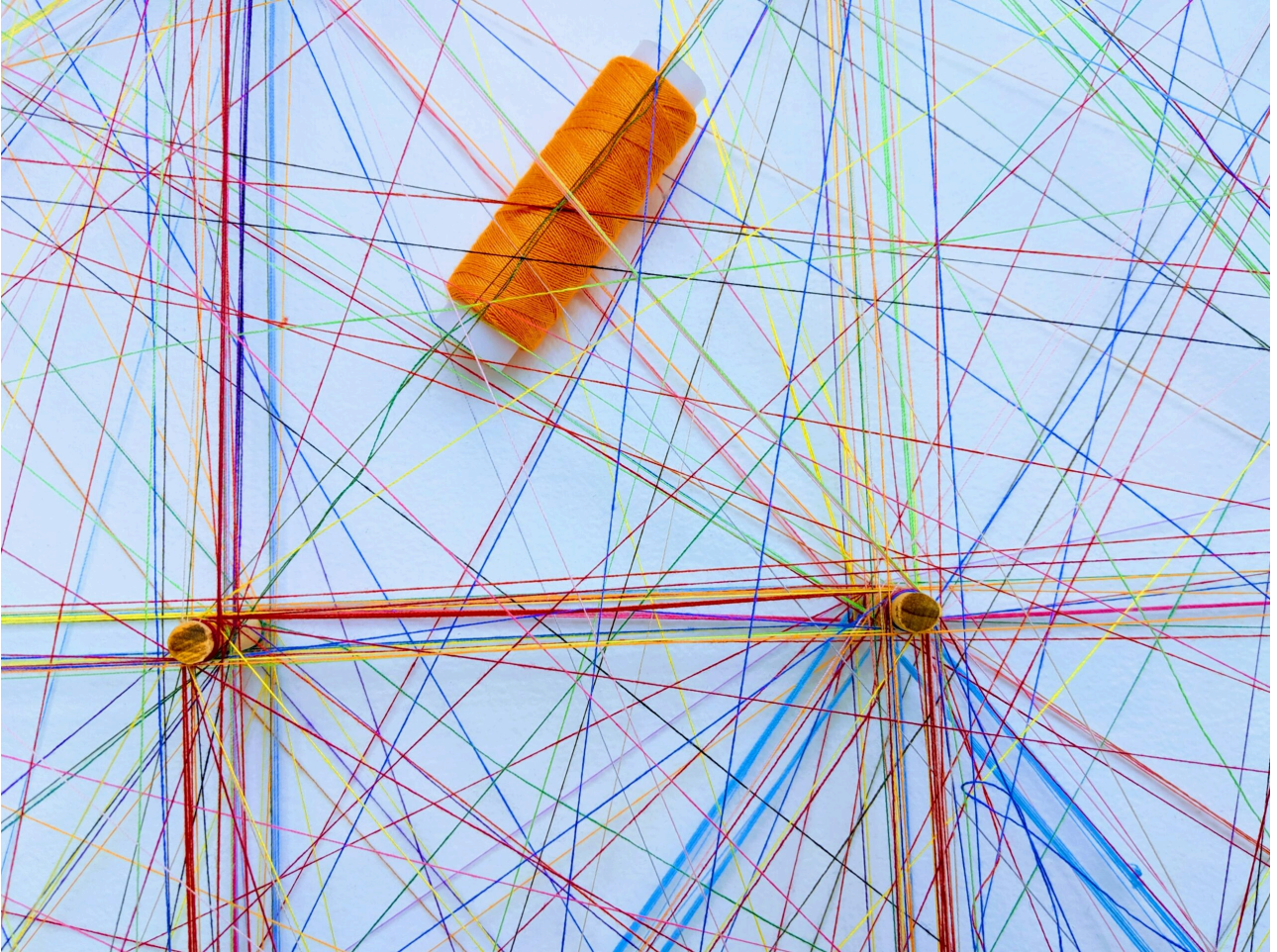
What one piece of advice would you give other founders or future founders?

Pick your battles. Build strong foundations by picking 2-3 core components of your business and really nail them. Be focussed and keep incrementally improving those key things. Those improvements will start compounding and it's much easier to build on strong foundations.

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

On a good day I rise at dawn, after 90 minutes of silent meditation I... but in all seriousness building a business is a marathon so I strive for balance with longevity in mind. Rules I'm trying to live by, business-wise I like the idea of delivering massive value as a healthy rule of thumb. Don't let perfect be the enemy of good, is another helpful aphorism. We value execution over excuses, objectives over obstacles etc. When it comes to the climate emergency, doing over doom. At the end of the day it's much easier to talk about something than it is to do it. So do it!

Daniel Hemsley is the cofounder and CEO of [Beagle](#).



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Article by Daniel Hemsley