

Meet Renude, helping you build a skincare routine for your personal skin goals

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 Pippa Harman, cofounder of Renude.

Temps de lecture : minute

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We have an interesting backstory in that both Cate and I had been working on this idea when we first met. Before Renude, I trained as a cosmetic scientist and spent 10 years formulating and developing skincare products for large global corporations and high-growth startups. I was always being asked for product advice from friends and colleagues, so started offering personalised skincare routines to those in my network and as word spread the demand became wild! I had created almost 1000 skincare plans before meeting Cate.

Cate had come to the conclusion that a service like Renude was needed after a close friend had been struggling with cystic acne and rosacea. Despite seeing various professionals, he wasn't seeing any improvement. Cate took to Reddit, using before and after image data alongside peer published routines, and developed a routine for him, which worked! Seeing the hundreds of thousands of people in these channels with the

same issue, and realising the application of computer vision and machine learning in the space, she was inspired to start building the solution.

Can you share your elevator pitch?

Renude is a skincare recommendation service combining advanced AI and licensed professionals to offer personalised skincare routines and expert advice. Our proprietary AI has been built from 2 million data points and combines computer vision skin diagnostics with machine learning recommendations. Our skin professionals are licensed aestheticians, each with over 10 years experience in clinics.

This combined approach has resulted in 94% of customers seeing visible improvements in their skin after 6 weeks and a 4.2X increase in LTV when compared with market norms.

Can you tell our readers about your engagement with Antler?

Jed Rose, one of the Partners at Antler, reached out to us after we won the Tech Nation Rising Stars and Applied AI awards in 2022. We were about to start raising a new round of investment, and Antler was the first investor to back us in that round, which was amazing. The level of support we've received from the Antler team since has been fantastic - from office hours to networking events, the mentor directory, they have been able to help with such a wide array of asks!

THERE HAS 
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Tell us about the working culture at Renude?

We're a really passionate team who all believe in what we're building and the positive impact it is having on people's confidence. The first step in building the culture has been hiring people who truly believe in this mission, and I am really proud of the team we have on board the journey with us.

We're a fully remote team, so we ensure we meet virtually every week to discuss company KPIs and priorities, so that everyone knows what is happening in other areas of the business. We're pretty flexible with how people work, we've hired an exceptional team who we trust completely so hours can be flexible to accommodate individual needs, whether that be parental commitments or timezones.

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

Raising investment has been a rather steep learning curve. A totally new experience for us, I can certainly say I have much thicker skin now.

Handling the inevitable rejections and learning to see the opportunity in each conversation rather than being deterred by those no's has required a mindset shift and has been quite a process, but it makes it all the more sweet when you hit your fundraise targets and can execute the next phase of the business with a group of smart and supportive investors.

What's in store for the future?

This year we started working with B2B partners, utilising our technology to deliver personalised routines and expert advice to their customers. We've seen a lot of momentum with this side of the business, with AI being such a hot topic right now, so we're excited to grow our partnerships to provide more people with personalised experiences.

We also have a few market-first technologies in the works, which I can't say anymore about but do watch this space!

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

We have always focused on offering value to our customers, and as a result we're continuing to grow through the cost of living crisis as people search for value for money. A skin consultation with one of our aestheticians in a clinic could set you back £150, while we're offering this for free, you just need to buy your products with us.

People will always buy beauty - there is a well-known phenomenon deemed 'the lipstick effect' where in economic downturns, people swap their bigger luxuries (holidays, luxury fashion) for more affordable feel-good items, such as beauty products. Despite being one of the hardest hit industries during Covid with clinics being the last business groups to

reopen, it bounced back in 2022 and is set for 12% YoY growth in 2023, so we're in a very resilient industry.

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

One of the things that surprised me the most was a lack of diversity within the world of VC. The statistics are so shocking as to where funding is allocated and this stems from the limited diversity across those who work at the funds. More light is being shone on this now, with some great organisations like Diversity VC working to increase transparency through data and starting this important conversation.

There are also so many aspects of fundraising that you don't get taught through standard educational routes, like VC economics, angel investors, SEIS/EIS schemes, all of these things I had no idea about before starting out. That's why accelerators are great to arm you with the knowledge, because you don't know what you don't know, and at the start of the journey, there is so much to learn.

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

Get a support system in place. Being a founder is a unique type of job and it's so helpful to share it with people that are experiencing the same journey, both the great and less great bits. We're in London so are spoilt for choice on networks to join, and Antler of course organise regular meetups to connect with other founders in the portfolio.

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

My morning starts with a coffee in bed, which my partner kindly makes as he is a much more energetic morning person. We then take our two dogs out for a walk - we live near a huge green space with extensive marshes where we go every morning. This is my non-negotiable, then I'm usually working from home so will pitch up at my desk for the day. My partner and I split the cooking, then after that it's an evening dog walk and I aim to be in bed by 10pm as sleep is my other non-negotiable. It sometimes feels early, so if my mind is still feeling active I will listen to a session on Clementine to help me fall asleep.

I gave up alcohol at the start of the year and am really enjoying the compounding benefits of this, feeling much more motivated to exercise and cook proper meals. I also did the ZOE nutrition tests earlier in the year which proved very insightful to have data on how best to eat for your body, so I've had a bit of a 2023 health overhaul and I'm feeling the positive impact. Coffee and chocolate have proven harder to address, but one thing at a time!

Pippa Harman is the cofounder of *Renude*.

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.

