

Meet Baboodle, flexible baby equipment rental for UK parents

As part of our quick founder questions series - or QFQs - we spoke to Katie Hanton, cofounder of Baboodle about the benefits of renting vs buying, reducing the waste associated with babies and the power of word of mouth growth.

Temps de lecture : minute

19 December 2023

The idea for Baboodle hit me like a train when having my daughter Marnie. I was spending thousands on items that I wasn't 100% keen on, or Marnie was growing out of within a couple of months. I'd bought a few items second hand but realised the quality was never as high as I'd liked, and thought there must be a way of accessing premium, quality baby equipment without having to buy it new and sell it if I realised it wasn't for us.

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

Baboodle is a baby equipment rental platform, offering new and expecting parents access over ownership on premium baby equipment. We're on a mission to save parents money, space and reduce the waste associated with kitting out their baby. We partner with major baby equipment brands to offer the latest gear, ensuring parents don't have to compromise on quality and comfort for their baby.

We launched at the end of 2022 and have had an incredible response

from consumers. Thankfully, mums spend time talking to other mums, and so news of companies such as Baboodle travels fairly quickly. So far, we've mostly grown using word of mouth, but are now starting to focus our brand building on performance marketing.

How has the business evolved since its launch?

When launching in September 2022, we were focused on building a business focused on longer term rentals. Whilst this is still our major goal, the travel side of the business has been incredible for us in pushing brand awareness, allowing us to increase our stock, and generating quick revenue. We didn't expect this to be quite so drastic, but it's given us a great base from which we can build our recurring revenue models.

Tell us about the working culture at Baboodle

I started Baboodle with my brother Dan which has been great. There's a level of trust working with your sibling that I've never had with colleagues previously. It's created a very relaxed working atmosphere that runs throughout the team. We are all office based, partly because our office is above our warehouse and we often need to give our team a hand with the order fulfilment, and partly because we enjoy it!

How are you funded?

We bootstrapped the business for the first year, funding it with our savings and buying stock using previous revenues. This has worked up to a certain point, but we are now ready to super-charge our growth. We are just closing our pre-seed investment round from friends, family and angels which will give us a bigger budget for our digital marketing activities, as well as allow us to streamline our processes and make a

couple of important hires.

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

Summer was a challenge as we struggled to keep up with demand for certain items. Thankfully, we've developed partnerships with a couple of retailers allowing us to purchase stock at reasonable prices last minute. It's a good problem to have, but certainly keeps you up at night!

How does Baboodle answer an unmet need?

The cost of kitting out your baby is becoming ridiculous. With parents quite rightly wanting to provide the best possible comfort for their baby, they are having to spend more than ever. During a cost of living crisis, something has to give. We are trying to bridge the gap, making premium equipment affordable and accessible to all. The short-term nature of baby equipment also creates a huge amount of waste. By increasing the lifespan of products, we are reducing families carbon footprints.



What's in store for the future?

We're heading into our growth phase. We want every new and expecting parent to have heard of Baboodle and understand the benefits of renting vs buying. Increasing our product range is also on our mind, but we are pretty selective about the items that we want to push.

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

Keep costs under control. It seems obvious, but it's so easy to let costs spiral. By creating accounting processes and strict budgets early on, you'll find it far easier to spot potential red flags and problems on the horizon.

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

My mornings and evenings are dictated by my 2-year old. As any parent knows, creating routine at this age is a little tricky, so I try not to get too strict on routine myself as I'll just end up breaking it!

Katie Hanton is the cofounder of [*Baboodle*](#).