

Reinventing carbon for a thriving planet, meet Mission Zero Technologies

As part of our quick founder questions series - or QFQs - we spoke to Dr Nicholas Chadwick, co-founder & CEO Mission Zero Technologies about Direct Air Capture, recent investment and building a sustainable relationship with carbon.

Temps de lecture : minute

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Mission Zero started when our Chief Technology Officer and Co-founder, Dr Gaël Gobaille-Shaw, recognised that society needed more sustainable sources of carbon, and at the same time there was a lot of carbon pollution pooling in the atmosphere around us. Through his electrochemical research background, he knew that, on a chemical level, anything made from oil can be made from CO₂. As such, he saw that the solution to this issue could be the same thing, if humanity connected the economy with atmospheric carbon emissions. That's where DAC comes in.

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

Mission Zero is a Direct Air Capture company on a mission to reinvent humanity's relationship with carbon. We do this by recovering CO₂ from our atmosphere and providing it as a high-grade commodity to innovators in the carbon removal and carbon utilisation space. The core social and economic value lies in permanently removing that carbon from our

atmosphere, or using it to displace the use of fossil carbons in products and processes. We are a technology provider who can flexibly source on-demand, sustainable carbon in a way that no one else can.

How has the business evolved since its launch?

We launched Mission Zero in June 2020 as a co-founding team of three, and are now a team of 30. In three years, we have moved from developing a brand new, frontier climate technology to delivering our first commercial deployments to international customers.

Tell us about the working culture at MZT

Despite the urgency we feel to combat climate change, we're a pretty easy, friendly, and optimistic bunch. We believe in trust and autonomy up front, as well as flexibility; provided staff fulfil their responsibilities to each other and actively contribute to the culture of the company, we don't ask questions as to where people are, or when they clocked in and out. We buy everyone lunch on Wednesdays, which usually means Wednesdays are pretty busy in the office.

How are you funded?

Mission Zero is predominantly venture capital backed, but is deploying systems under commercial contracts proactively throughout 2024.

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

Not having the luxury of time — especially when you recognise that there are so many ways to *do* DAC. When scaling critical climate tech, you need

to continuously reflect on the time it takes to increase understanding of a problem, acknowledging that some rabbit holes may have no end.

How does Mission Zero answer an unmet need?

The world has a fundamentally unsustainable relationship with carbon, and the current climate crisis is a symptom of that relationship. At Mission Zero we're working to tackle both the symptom and the cause — scaling a technology that can permanently remove megatonnes of planetary-warming CO2 that we've historically emitted into our atmosphere, while also providing society with the infrastructural backbone to transition to a sustainable and circular post-fossil carbon economy.

What's in store for the future?

A more sustainable relationship with carbon in the long term. We're looking to rapidly deploy our technology and bring costs down in the immediate term.

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

Usually, in this kind of activity, you are at the forefront. No one has the answers — you have to figure them out yourself. Be kind to yourself, what you're doing is really hard.

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

by at the moment?

My daughter wakes me up like clockwork at 6am most mornings - i'm not a morning person. I get her ready for nursery, drop her off around 7.30am, and I'm usually on emails by 8am. I try to be in the office/available from 9am. No day is the same, which is exhausting and fun. I always make sure to be home for 6pm to catchup with my daughter at the end of day and put her to bed. I then try where possible to have the evening with my wife for some down time. My one rule is usually just to get a decent amount of sleep each night, and not kick myself or hold myself to external standards.

Dr Nicholas Chadwick is the co-founder & CEO *Mission Zero Technologies*.

Article by Dr Nicholas Chadwick