

Mixtons, Classic cocktails with a twist of flavour and innovation

As part of our quick founder questions series – or QFQs – we spoke to Xavier Craine, cofounder of Mixtons about building a business during a pandemic, innovating with flavours and delivering new products.

Temps de lecture : minute

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Mixtons was born because we all had prior businesses that were severely affected by covid and essentially got shut down. At the peak of the pandemic our friendship group came together to socialise on zoom calls every week. We added a bit of alcohol into the mix occasionally and at the the time Ready-to-drinks were a new thing, but we soon realised there was a very limited amount out there. It was pretty much five flavours available, the same old choice week in week out. My co-founder Ranj's background was in the drinks industry and he knew a fair amount about cocktails! We knew we could do something more exciting and decided it's to launch our own cocktail brand!

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

Part of what makes cocktails special is that special moment when you discover a new flavour and want to share it with your friends. Currently that isn't reflected in Ready-to-Drink options and we want to give people that "*Mixtons*" moment. We've added exciting ingredients like dragon fruit, yuzu and chilli to cocktails that you already know - for example the

Pornstar Martini and Mojito - to give them a more exciting twist without taking them into unfamiliar territory.

How has the business evolved since its launch?

When we launched in October of 2020 our brand was called Knocktails and we operated out of our co-founder Sim's kitchen, (much to his flatmates dismay). After six months we outgrew the kitchen, as we were making and filling over 700 cocktails for 70 orders per day. We ended up getting a small thousand square foot unit in Woking that allowed us to scale our production. A few months in we received a cease letter from Europe's largest IPO law firm telling us they had a client who trademarked the name Knocktails and we had two weeks to change our name or they would close us down. On the eve of the deadline we decided to take inspiration from the managing partner Mr Dixon and rebranded to Mixtons. Since then we've gone on to be stocked at the O2 to sponsor key events across the country like Winter Wonderland, Boardmasters, Victorious and 20 other festivals and are now launching into two retailers in May of 2024. It's been busy!



Tell us about the working culture at Mixtons

We have 5 values at Mixtons

- Be You
- Own It
- Believe in Yourself
- Make Moves
- Expect More.

Each of these are geared towards internal and external worlds in which we all operate and our motto is 'Will it make the boat go faster?' (after the fantastic book written by Harriet Beveridge & Ben Hunt-Davis). We're really proud of the culture we've built and to me personally, it's our biggest achievement.

How are you funded?

We're privately funded by over 30 angel investors to date. Around 10 of these were actually customers who decided to back us after we sent an email out to our tiny database back in 2021! It was a huge validation to us that people loved our product.

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

Cash flow is really difficult to juggle when you're a product led business facing increased costs and decreased consumer spending due to cost of living. We've done exceptionally well to reach this point, but it's been a tough market to navigate.

How does Mixtons answer an unmet need?

It's rather simple; There is ZERO flavour innovation happening in a product category that is literally designed to deliver flavour discovery.

What's in store for the future?

Lots of New Product Development... you'll have to keep an eye out!

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

Start earlier. Don't be afraid to f*ck up. No-one gives a sh*t about you or your product.

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

Routines change daily, but rules are simple; 8 hours sleep, eat well, communicate well, exercise and focus on the biggest challenge. The rest falls into place.

Xavier Craine is the cofounder of Mixtons.