

Meet PostTag, making deliveries easier, faster and more sustainable

As part of our quick founder questions series - or QFQs - we spoke to Paul Yewman and Keith Lewin, Founders of PostTag about deliveries, reducing CO2 emissions and never giving up.

Temps de lecture : minute

16 April 2024

What was the catalyst for launching PostTag?

[Keith] You could say *PostTag's* birth was fate. I'd travelled the world in a long career in advertising - working everywhere from Australia, New Zealand, and Singapore to France and Germany - but realised one day that for seven years in a row I'd spent fewer than 50 nights a year in my own bed. I was stressed, homesick, and wanted to spend more time with my family - so we all decided to return to the UK.

We got back, but the shipping container carrying all of my family's belongings never did: it was lost at sea. Over a period of months, we had to replace everything from scratch, from furniture and appliances to the contents of our drinks cabinet! We were mainly ordering things online, and to add insult to injury most delivery drivers just couldn't find my house - they'd often end up traipsing around more than a kilometre away trying to find us and complete the delivery. And so the idea for PostTag was born, out of the idea that there must be a way to get drivers to the right place first time.

My career in advertising had taught me a lot about interrogating a

problem - talking and listening to the delivery drivers I met about the issues they faced, and constantly asking “why” to dig through the layers and get to the real root of the issue. My original idea was built on a system that added a unique proprietary three-digit “tag” (hence “PostTag”) to a property’s existing postcode - not too dissimilar to the route that What3Words would later famously go down, as well as Google with its G-codes - but then Paul stepped in...

[Paul] I met Keith while doing some consulting work. I could see that he had a good product, but it was obvious there was too much friction in it - e-commerce customers just weren’t going to make the effort to find their tag, it was going to be a frustrating experience for everyone, and there were going to be dropped baskets. I convinced Keith he needed to make it frictionless, and brought in our CTO, Stephen Kenny - who I’d met in his days as CTO at Betfair and gone on to start my first business (a property investment platform) with in the 2000s - to build that new system.

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

[Keith] My experience when I moved back to the UK was extreme, but we’ve all had problems with delivery drivers or taxis struggling to find our front door, haven’t we? That’s because UK addresses are, on average, 145 metres away from where commonly-used geolocation systems such as Google Maps say they are - the length of one-and-a-half football pitches! As frustrating as that is for us as consumers waiting for a parcel, grocery delivery, or a takeaway, it also means frustration for the drivers and wasted miles, needless delays, increased carbon emissions, and margin-eroding re-delivery costs for the delivery companies.

When an address is entered into a delivery app or e-commerce website,

PostTag's Destination Data Engine invisibly cross-references information from multiple sources - including the Postcode Address File (PAF) and Ordinance Survey, as well as our own proprietary data - and returns an accurate location in milliseconds, all with no additional input or effort required from the customer, delivery company, or driver. In 2023 alone, we've helped our clients save 64 million miles and CO2 emissions equivalent to 2,585 diesel vans circumnavigating the globe.

[Paul] PostTag is a B2B SaaS - or LaaS (Location as a Service) based product. We've developed a sophisticated, proprietary algorithm which seamlessly integrates with delivery and courier systems via an API. We work with customers across lots of different sectors, including Evri, The AA, Addison Lee, Domino's, EasyFood, and Gophr, and 40% of the UK taxi market.

Once we get in front of a customer, the product really does the talking for us. We're seeing delivery customers saving 90 seconds per delivery with PostTag. If a driver has 100 deliveries to make in a day - which is not uncommon - this adds up to two and a half hours of time saved: far fewer wasted miles and more time freed up to complete more deliveries. We also consistently win when we go head-to-head with competitors in 'bake offs' to see who can accurately locate the most troublesome addresses.

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

[Keith] This has been a journey of two halves. The first half was development - the R&D, the testing, constant testing, building the data sets and developing the algorithm. And walking away from the early solutions that had friction points or involved unnecessary keystrokes. That first half was a very long one and very tiring - but we knew we had to be patient and focussed.

The second half was acting the proud parents and showing off our newborn to the world. That's when you have to learn an entirely different language, hire sales people and grow the entire team to scale. We've built the rocket, now we need to fuel it.

Tell us about the working culture at PostTag

[Keith] My favourite phrase is 'call the baby ugly' - which translates quite well into the culture here at PostTag, in so far as everyone has a voice and is not afraid to express their views. It leads to some interesting 'discussions' at times but, because it is all done from the mutual desire to succeed, has proven to be very constructive. Plus we all get on - which helps!

How are you funded?

[Paul] So far we've raised £4M in funding from family offices. We're looking to raise more funding later this year, which would enable us to expand the Sales team and invest in broadening the tech - we have some compelling opportunities as a result of our machine learning and carbon reporting capacities. In June we plan to launch our paid mobile Scheduler app, following on the success of our Address Finder app which, unpromoted, gained 25,000 users in just three months.

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

[Paul] One of the biggest challenges we're up against is apathy among delivery companies - the idea that "near enough is good enough" and it's just not worth the investment to improve the situation. We discovered early on in our journey that a lot of the industry is very resistant to change - even though the results speak for themselves, we've had a bit of

a task on our hands trying to show clients that the benefits of using PostTag are worth the perceived inconvenience of making the change. In reality, it's as simple as swapping out an API. Most companies are using an address lookup service anyway - but they don't actually tell you *where* that property is. It's so frustrating for the drivers, who hate wasting time having to search for addresses. Drivers are a valuable asset to a company and they should be looked after. Reducing their stress is not only important, it's a retention tool. With PostTag you can solve the last-mile with the first click - it's that simple.

We come up against a lot of clients who think that PostTag sounds too good to be true - or that there must be a catch. There's a misconception that if a solution was going to transform the industry in the way PostTag does, it would already be in use by all the major delivery and taxi companies. We're changing attitudes one client at a time - and we're proud to work with a lot of the major delivery and taxi players already - but as with any industry transformation, this mindset shift takes time.

How does PostTag answer an unmet need?

[Keith] Other solutions that claim to solve the problem of bad location data and wasted miles just aren't good enough. They either re-sell data from a single source (which doesn't do anything to improve the accuracy problem) or they require drivers and customers to learn, look up, and work with proprietary numerical codes or combinations of words. This is effectively asking the customer to do the work for you, and it just adds friction.

We cross-reference multiple databases and use machine learning to interrogate the data and overcome inconsistencies. We're also committed to updating our own database with user-submitted location information. This means we correctly locate the hardest-to-find addresses, without customers even knowing - no other product out there ticks both of these

boxes.

What's in store for the future?

[Paul] We already have a free consumer-facing PostTag app which enables people to find hard-to-find addresses across the UK. We're seeing high organic growth there, with 25,000 users and a 10% user growth each month, and that's before we've even added important features such as route planning. As I mentioned earlier, we're about to launch a feature-rich paid driver app which will make PostTag available directly to drivers - it's a bottom-up strategy.

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

[Keith] Don't give up. If you believe in it enough, others will see it too. Just make sure you have more energy than anyone else because you'll need it.

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

[Paul] I could give you the typical answer of 'up at 4.30am for an hour's session at the gym followed by meditation and a highly nutritious kale smoothie before reading the combined works of John-Paul Sartre and being at my desk for 7.30am to absolutely kill the day' but....

The reality is taking the dogs for a walk in the morning gives me the all important 'headspace' to organise my thoughts away from my desk and phone before 'crushing it' for the remainder of the day.

Never underestimate the impact of speaking to the team on a daily basis: just a quick call to make sure they are all doing well is a great way to gauge the current mood within the business, especially as we work remotely for the majority of the week.

[Keith] Sleep is the most important commodity and is easily overlooked. As I consider it, my working day starts when I go to bed at night. That's where I recharge my batteries, sort my head out and ensure I'm physically fit and mentally tuned for the day ahead.

Talk to the team - every one of them if you can. And stop putting off going to the gym (sorry Paul!).

Paul Yewman and Keith Lewin are the Founders of *PostTag*.

Article by Paul Yewman & Keith Lewin