

# Meet Drop-in, empowering modern workers to do more

*As part of our quick founder questions series – or QFQs – we spoke to Henry Wilkinson, Co-Founder of Drop-in, about modern workers, workspace and being level headed.*

Temps de lecture : minute

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## What was the catalyst for launching Drop-in?

*Drop-in* was launched out of a frustration at the lack of options for remote workers. And an underlying question that appeared after the pandemic; where do you go when you want to leave your home but not your neighbourhood?

I have a young family, and the pandemic freed me to an entirely new way of working. Suddenly I had flexibility in time, place and space. I could collect my son from nursery, be around to help out at home and ultimately live a much more balanced life. Yet I lacked any real options of where to actually work. I could basically work from my kitchen table or from a coffee shop. At the time I was a Director at WeWork, and had access to over 50 locations across London. Yet my closest location was a 40 minute commute away.

The world of work is moving like never before, but the physical infrastructure remains built for a pre-pandemic way of working. Selfishly, Drop-in is a product for me. Our first club is 5 minutes from where I live and allows me to access a productive place to work without ever leaving my neighborhood.

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

It is our strong belief that everyone should be able to be their most creative and productive self, when at work. Our mission is to empower modern workers to do more by bringing affordable and productive workspace to every neighborhood. We have dreams of helping remote workers do this up and down the country.

The modern consumer lives an on-demand lifestyle at the click of a button. From our taxis to our holidays to our groceries. Everything is accessed instantly and fits around our lives. Yet where we work has been stuck in the past; long commutes and long-term contracts. It took a global pandemic to open our eyes to a new way of work. Whether WFH Friday's or a digital nomad with no fixed office. We have now spoken to thousands of like-minded people and the feedback is universal. Remote flexibility is great. Home is ok, in fact it can be nice some of the time. But not forever. And certainly not always.

Our work clubs are purpose-built for remote workers to level up their workday. We have everything needed to take the stress away from our members work setups, so they can get on with living their life. But more than this, we are in the business of creating human experience for our members. Human experiences that centre around work. We have looked to the hospitality sector for inspiration in how we serve our members. In doing so we have created a new category of workspace. We hope that the local work club becomes as synonymous with work as the gym is with fitness

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

Our first club opened in September 2023 and the first six months have exceeded all expectations. We hit a waitlist after only two months and are now opening our second club within 6 months of the first. This period has reaffirmed our belief that people crave somewhere to work. We exist to take the stress away from work and are laser focused on creating a better working day for our members. And we know to do this we need to keep it super simple; work and coffee.

## Tell us about the working culture at Drop-in

Community is at the core of our company both for our team and for our members. We bring people together from all walks of life, and this starts with our Drop-in team. I am hugely passionate about the potential that a remote work future has and at Drop-in we have a belief that our teams can benefit from this as much as our members. Just because we work in the hospitality sector doesn't mean we cannot bring flexibility to our roles.

## How are you funded

We are funded by a number of angel investors. They have a roster of success across industries from hospitality to real estate to e-commerce. Each brings a unique experience to the company and will be a key part of the team as we build out on our vision.

## What has been your biggest challenge so far

## and how have you overcome this?

Allowing myself to step away from the day-to-day operations in the club and giving the team a full control. Our club teams are, and always will be, the key cog in the business. They are the driving force behind our community and are work day-in-day out to make each member have as seamless a working day as possible. To allow them to thrive they need autonomy to run the club on their own and bring their own personality to the club. As a hands-on founder it requires a level to trust to step back and have faith in the team. This was a challenge at first, but something that I am seeing the benefits of.

## How does Drop-in answer an unmet need?

We are going through a once in a generation shift in the way we work. From working remotely through to AGI. We will look back on the 2020s as a period of unprecedented change to human work. You only need to overhear a conversation in the pub or coffee shop about where and when people bosses let them work to realise that flexible work is here to stay. Over half of Londoners work in a hybrid way, with estimates that over 20% are fully remote. The demand for a third space to work from is unquestionable. When the office is too far, but home is too close. It is our job to meet this demand and to provide genuine options to people. We are matching the supply of productive workspace with the demand.

What's in store for the future?

Our second club opens this month in Richmond. From there we have a vision to grow the company into a national retailer. We will always stay core to our roots, focusing on productive workspace and great coffee. And we believe the mission becomes more exciting the further away from London we go, as the problem solve becomes even greater.

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

The highs are never as good as they seem and the lows are never as bad as they seem. You have to learn to be pretty level headed and to not get too carried away in either direction. Running your own business is a rollercoaster journey and you need to remain fixed on where you are looking to go.

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

Running a business and having two young kids means the concept of routine is debatable. No day or week is the same. But one thing is certain: I carve out times of the day for certain activities and ensure during those periods I am 100% focused on what I am doing. Whether this is work, going for run or bath time. This also means finding the best time for certain tasks. I am a morning person and so I aim to get up before the kids wake at 6am. I use this time for deeper concentration tasks like writing.

Henry Wilkinson is the Co-Founder of *Drop-in*.

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