

Unravel, the video-led discovery travel platform

Creating a startup is always challenging. Founding one during a tech downturn, cost of living crisis and recession seems near impossible. However, with risk comes reward and many of the world's most successful companies were founded during times of economic uncertainty. As part of a series with Antler, Maddyness has interviewed founders hoping to become the entrepreneurial success stories to emerge from this time of crisis. This week, Maddyness spoke to Abhimanyu Dasgupta, co-founder of Unravel

Temps de lecture : minute

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What was the catalyst for launching Unravel?

Our spouses of course! They travel extensively and of late, their choices were deeply inspired by Tiktok and Instagram - to relive those experiences themselves, and capture them on their own handles to garner as much social media love as possible.

That's when it hit us - most of us (97%) weren't travelling to experience a new culture, we were on the lookout for our next viral social media post. We all secretly want to be social media stars! Even those on a digital detox getaway make it a point to tell their followers what they're doing.

But no travel platform inspires us with video-led discovery or helps us envision our next big social media post. They're simply transactional.

And that's what we wanted to change with Unravel.

Can you share your elevator pitch?

Unravel is a shoppable video platform of the world's most instagrammable experiences. Think Tiktok meets Expedia. From inspiration to a fully booked itinerary in less than 2 minutes!

Can you tell our readers about your engagement with Antler?

We met Antler through an Angel investor of ours, and since that day they've championed Unravel. One of the UK Partners, Jed Rose, led the discussion with us and what excited him was the world of possibilities with Unravel. Video-inspired and AI assisted shopping for travel is easily extendable to any lifestyle category!

Since then, being a part of the Antler family has been outstanding - the office hours with top operators, the VC round tables, every event is an opportunity for us to gain significantly from. It feels like an unfair advantage.

Tell us about the working culture at Unravel?

At Unravel, we embody the spirit of a champion sports team, where smart, driven individuals from diverse backgrounds come together to pursue collective brilliance. We operate with a rapid experimentation mindset, unafraid of failure and almost always launch early. Most importantly, we value and celebrate every voice and ensure every team member is equally invested and feels strongly about every product release.

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

The biggest challenge for any consumer tech startup is acquisition. Rather than build a community from scratch, which would have been hugely expensive and time consuming, we decided to go where they were already present by white-labeling our platform to enterprises who were looking to engage and monetize a million plus customers on their own digital assets. This approach has worked brilliantly for us (8 marquee brands in less than a year), for the enterprises (DAU for some has increased 4X) and of course for the end customer (repeat bookings over 35%).

What's in store for the future?

We aspire to be the world's go-to platform for every lifestyle need. In the immediate future, we're heavily investing to enhance our existing Gen AI capabilities to position Unravel as the ultimate AI assistant for lifestyle that starts with video discovery.

How has the cost of living crisis and the tech downturn impacted your experience building Unravel?

Admittedly less directly because our team's spread across the UK, India, Singapore and Indonesia. It did indirectly affect the investment atmosphere but with backers like Antler, we closed a seed round in difficult times.

How can we make entrepreneurship more accessible in the UK?

Though the UK has taken steps with forums for angel investment, seed funding, and public-private partnerships, I believe there's room for growth. These initiatives are promising but still budding, urging us to nurture them further to truly rival the vibrant ecosystem of Silicon Valley, especially in providing access to capital and networking opportunities for entrepreneurs.

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

Like Reid Hoffman says, always be recruiting. I'd like to add by saying always be recruiting brilliant talent across the company, and ideally people smarter than you.

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

It's something I've learnt from a close friend (the most successful entrepreneur I know) and my co-founders - our mental wellbeing and ability to give Unravel 150% everyday is fully correlated with our family's wellbeing. While I didn't necessarily do this earlier, I now consciously strive to ensure they're happy doing their thing. Then I'm free to give it all to Unravel.

Abhimanyu Dasgupta is the co-founder of [Unravel](#).

[Antler](#) is one of the world's most active early-stage investors. With 1,000

portfolio companies in 27 countries, they have a global community of early-stage founders addressing the world's biggest challenges.

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