

Embla, a weight loss journey tailored to you

As part of our quick founder questions series - or QFQs - we spoke to Dr. Nicholas Syhler cofounder and Co-CEO of Embla about creating personalised, holistic programmes for weight-loss, international expansion and the importance of mobilising your team.

Temps de lecture : minute

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As a medical doctor with a background in cardiology I had seen the severe effects of long-term obesity early on in my career. I was working at Novo Nordisk with modern medical treatments for obesity when I realised they had the power to change weight management forever.

I called up my now business partner Laust, who has a science background and a track-record of building medical and patient software solutions used by millions, and we both realised we were thinking about the same problem - how can we prevent disease rather than simply providing sickcare?

That was the catalyst for building Embla, a digital weight loss clinic dedicated to helping people live healthier and more fulfilled lives.

We knew that medication alone wasn't the answer for those embarking on a weight loss journey. It can be a useful support for achieving behavioural health changes - but it is not a replacement. So we built a truly holistic, highly personalised programme that meets people exactly where they are. It covers every area of their life, from nutrition and movement to mental health and the psychological aspects which are so often not

adequately addressed. They are guided step by step by a core team made up of health coaches, doctors, nurses, nutrition and movement experts and psychologists.

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

Embla is a digital weight loss clinic. We exist to challenge the world's reductive approach to weight loss, and reduce the harm to people's health and our health system.

Obesity and weight loss are complicated, because people are. They're tied to genetics, personality, lifestyle, hormones, habits, relationships and psychology, and require multiple personalised interventions.

At Embla, we recognise this which is why we create a safe environment for those looking to lose weight. We work closely with them to develop highly personalised, holistic programmes that fit with their current lifestyle, and we combine this with the integration of short-term, reduced-dose weight loss medication (Semaglutide), if suitable, in order to achieve optimal outcomes. This minimises side effects, avoids life-long drug dependency and reduces costs.

By treating obesity and its root causes, we help prevent diseases like diabetes, arthritis and cardiovascular disease. We launched in 2022 and have so far helped 10,000+ people living with obesity to achieve and sustain a healthy weight, prevent disease, and live a better quality of life. Our long-term goal is to change the narrative, highlighting that obesity is not a character flaw, but an incredibly complex challenge impacted by many factors at both individual and societal level. We seek to improve understanding of these factors, while empowering even more individuals

to take control and make balanced lifestyle changes that will lead to better long term health.

How has the business evolved since its launch?

We launched in Dec 2021 as a team of two, myself and my co-founder Laust. We then raised €400,000 before Christmas and got our first hire between Christmas and the new year. Since then we have helped over ten thousand people sustain a healthy weight, we've raised a total of €14M in VC funding and grown to a team of 60. We've also launched offices in both Denmark and the UK, with our sights set on the USA next.

Our studies show our members are achieving the same average weight loss associated with Wegovy of 17%, but are doing so at a faster rate, while using 60% less of the drug, which proves our distinct approach works.

In particular, we advocate for short-term, reduced-dose Semaglutide for our members, and a significant portion of them taper off GLP-1 treatment within 1-2 years. This goes against the wider industry standardised usage of the medication, but we do this because it delivers optimal results, minimises side effects, avoids life-long drug dependency and reduces costs. We truly believe it is the healthiest and most sustainable application of GLP-1s. It is extremely validating to see our approach delivering these clinically proven results while changing so many lives.

Tell us about the working culture at Embla

We are an open-minded and energetic team all united by our mission - helping people to live healthier and more fulfilled lives. Our commitment to this has a hugely positive impact on our members' outcomes - this is something we consistently hear in the feedback from our customers.

It's very important to us that all perspectives are embraced to find the best solution and each person is empowered to run their own projects their way. We have a lot of fun but don't shy away from making the hard decisions when needed. We are a people-business at the end of the day, so are guided by our empathy and genuine desire to help others.

How are you funded?

We've received a total of €14M in VC funding across three rounds from a number of impressive VCs including Seed Capital, Inovo, VentureFriends, Crowberry Capital, and Founders.

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

Prior to our Series A, we found ourselves in a bit of a tricky spot, as I'm sure most founders can relate to. With a few months of runway left and the numbers not yet where they needed to be, we had a problem on our hands. But the entire team rallied together - it was so inspiring to see everyone play their own part in driving the business forward, and a testament to how much passion we have collectively. This enabled us to raise our Series A round in a very difficult environment, whilst interest rates were increasing.

How does Embla answer an unmet need?

In a weight loss market addicted to false promises and quick fixes, we go against the grain. This is an industry obsessed with over-simplification, misinformation and inauthentic stock photos. The biggest lie in obesity care is that there are easy fixes. This is not true.

Embla exists to empower individuals to take control of their own health,

and make balanced lifestyle changes that will lead to better long term outcomes. Every person is unique and has their own struggles so our offering has been carefully designed to address the root cause of the issue and take our members on a long-term journey. We combine science, compassion and service excellence to offer highly personalised weight loss care that works because it's precisely as complicated as each individual is. We believe this is the only effective and sustainable way to help our members to manage their weight and live healthier and more fulfilled lives.

What's in store for the future?

We're excited to build further on our mission and our goal is to help even more people suffering from obesity across our active markets in both the UK and Denmark, with one eye firmly on the US. We are exploring new ways we can do this, for example, by integrating new technology such as an AI-augmented solution, or working in new ways, such as healthcare payor reimbursement.

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

This is not a one-man show. Mobilise the team to solve difficult problems and take the hard decisions.

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

I run every day. That's my non-negotiable. I also have a big passion for wine and believe it's a fantastic way to taste nature, but I limit consumption especially when the going gets tough.

Dr. Nicholas Syhler is the cofounder and Co-CEO at *Embla*.

Article by Dr. Nicholas Syhler