

Zen Educate, the platform for teachers to find work in schools without the agency fees

As part of our quick founder questions series - or QFQs - we spoke to Slava Kremerman, cofounder and CEO of Zen Educate about harnessing technology to solve the workforce challenges faced by schools, recent investment and the desire to win.

Temps de lecture : minute

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What was the catalyst for launching Zen Educate?

I had a family member who worked as a supply teacher, and I was shocked by how outdated the system was. It relied entirely on analogue, paper-based methods, with a network of thousands of agents working their way down phone trees to make decisions without considering obvious factors like availability, proximity, skillset, or feedback.

It made me realise the potential technology had to streamline this entire process. Zen Educate was created to offer a modern, algorithm-based solution that directly connects schools with the right teachers for the job. Educators working through the Zen Educate platform have delivered over two million hours of education in the past 12 months, saving the education system millions that would have been wasted on agency fees through its cost-effective approach all while having a better experience for arranging and managing their work.

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

We've been on a mission to solve schools' workforce challenges. Zen is an online platform that seamlessly connects schools with educators looking to cover temporary staff absences. We are live in the US and UK, growing at triple digits, with a global team of over 300.

Our platform allows teachers and schools to create profiles and match based on proximity, skills, and experience. This results in faster and more accurate matches, reducing hiring costs and enabling educational institutions to allocate resources more effectively. We're not only facilitating seamless connections but also positively impacting the lives of millions of students and hundreds of thousands of educators.

How has the business evolved since its launch?

We launched in 2017, where we started as a small team. We're now a multi-national company making a profound impact on the education system in the US and UK by offering an otherwise unavailable service to educational establishments and temporary staff.

We acquired Opus Education in February 2023 and, more recently, Aquinas Education which was co-owned by television presenter and former footballer Jermaine Jenas, who is now on board as our brand ambassador.

We recently secured a \$37M Series B funding led by Round2 Capital, which will support our expansion plans, including several key acquisitions in both the UK and the US.

Tell us about the working culture at Zen Educate

We're like an elite sports team - we love winning, we hold each other to high standards, people who want to continue to grow in their trade do best here. Our team also has a common thread of being passionate about education and wanting to make a positive difference in the world while also having a fun time at work.

How are you funded?

We are venture-backed. Our recent Series B funding round was led by Round2 Capital, with support from existing investors Adjuvo, Brighteye Ventures, FJ Labs, Ascension Ventures, and prominent angels, including Octopus founder and CEO Simon Rogerson.

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

Like many other businesses, Covid created a huge hurdle for us. Our industry was in and out of lockdowns, with schools migrating to and from homeschooling. The inconsistency made it a real challenge to continue working the way we had previously. However, we used this time as an opportunity to launch a new vertical, whilst continuing to serve our customers through the most challenging period of many of their professional lives.

How does Zen Educate answer an unmet need?

We provide a legally required, statutory service that helps schools to

provide skilled and qualified staff to cater for the educational needs of their students. Compared to traditional recruitment agencies, our software provides more efficient and accurate matches between absent staff and teachers. We excel in both match quality and fill speed and offer far better value for money, so teachers earn more and schools pay less!

Zen Educate provides a simple, fast and effective way to solve the school staffing crisis affecting the UK and US education systems.

What's in store for the future?

We want to grow the business another five times in the next 24 months alone!

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

There's never a perfect time to be an entrepreneur. It's easy to rationalise why it would be better to wait and try at another time, but it's never the right time. Just jump in and get started!

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

I always make time to start the day by having breakfast with my family, as I have two young children, both under five. Family meal times are essential for me, which does mean I end up working after the children's bedtime most evenings, but family time is irreplaceable.

Slava Kremerman is the cofounder and CEO of [*Zen Educate*](#).



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