

Meet TaskHer, the platform connecting homeowners with tradeswomen

As part of our quick founder questions series – or QFQs – we spoke to Anna Moynihan, co-founder of TaskHer, about the need for tradeswomen, opportunities, and the gender gap.

Temps de lecture : minute

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What was the catalyst for launching the TaskHer?

TaskHer was born out of my frustration during a home renovation project. Despite the task of finding skilled tradespeople falling to me the tradesmen I hired would direct all their questions to my husband, Paul. During my search for tradeswomen, I couldn't find a platform promoting their services. I then discovered that only 5% of tradespeople in the UK were women – a gender gap which persists today.

Additionally, the UK currently faces a shortage of 166,000 tradespeople, with vacancy levels for many trades close to record highs. There's currently not enough (and there hasn't been enough) of a recruitment drive to encourage more people (especially women) to embark on a career within the industry or showcase the benefits of working in the skilled trade industry, which has undoubtedly led to the shortfall.

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

TaskHer's offering is twofold.

The company is an online platform that enables homeowners to book verified, and qualified tradeswomen and receive instant quotes, in just a few clicks.

In addition, TaskHer also helps tradeswomen access confirmed bookings from customers who want to support women in trade. The platform is free for them to use and they need to share their proof of their qualifications, insurance and ID before we add their profile to the platform. We also ensure TaskHer tradeswomen stay safe by requiring those who book through the platform to submit their address, contact and payment details, and encourage all of our tradeswomen to leave the premises should they feel uncomfortable.

Our wider mission is to see plumbing, electrics, and other trades become more welcoming and attractive career options for girls and women. It's estimated that less than 0.5% of gas engineers and 2% of electricians and plumbers are women. As a result, women are missing out on accessing high-paying careers, and in many cases, being funnelled into low-paying work like childcare and hairdressing as a result of gender bias.

We want to make the trade industry safe, secure and fully equal in terms of opportunity, conditions and pay.

How has the business evolved since its

launch? When was this?

Founded in July 2022, we're proud that TaskHer has since grown to represent 50 tradeswomen and completed over 1800 jobs across London. Additionally, when we first began we had 200 jobs, we now offer over 500 jobs which are completely bookable online.

One thing that sets us apart from other sites is that we offer bespoke estimates which are available instantly. We've recently introduced estimates for now available for larger or more complex jobs which can help the customer to get an idea of how much something will cost without the lengthy process of someone having to come round and price it up.

One issue we see a lot when customers are booking tradespeople is not knowing what type of tradesperson they need for a specific job. This inspired a new feature that we're currently working on for TaskHer, which is an AI version of our booking platform enabling customers to triage their jobs and work out what type of tradesperson they will need if they aren't sure.

To support and champion our community of tradeswomen, we also hold virtual events, workshops and partnerships. These are designed to help tradeswomen network with each other and help them with every aspect of their career as a tradie.

Currently, we're exploring partnerships with housing associations and women's refugees to help them embark on careers as tradeswomen.

Tell us about the working culture at TaskHer

As a start-up, our team is small but mighty! We are a three-person team - myself, Paul my co-founder, and our customer service manager Clair. Everyone else we work with is a freelancer which works fantastically well

for us. Everything from product development, paid social, content writing, SEO and web design is outsourced, meaning that we get to work with incredibly talented people.

Our culture is one of moving quickly, keeping our integrity and keeping the focus of the purpose of our business at the forefront of all our decision-making.

How are you funded?

We've raised a pre-seed round of circa £500K which we closed in December 2023. This was funded by institutional investors including Bethnal Green Ventures, Ufi Ventures and Resolution Ventures as well as a number of angels.

This funding has helped us develop the platform, and build our brand presence with a view to increase the trades we offer.

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

For me, not coming from a trade background was a challenge we faced. We have marketing and business growth skills but we started with basically zero understanding of the trades other than knowing and seeing tradeswomen should be normalised.

We spoke to a huge number of tradeswomen when researching our business plan and created an amazing panel of women who helped us build our booking platform - everything from what's a fair hourly rate of pay for a specific trade, to all the individual jobs we offer on our booking platform.

How does TaskHer answer an unmet need?

TaskHer enables homeowners to book verified, qualified tradeswomen online and gives tradeswomen access to confirmed bookings from customers free of charge. TaskHer is the only site that marries these two propositions to present a truly unique offering.

We are also one of the few sites that provide customers with instant quotes, unlike sites like Checkatrade or TrustATrader.

To reflect our commitment to making the skilled trades industry more inclusive and creating fairer opportunities for tradeswomen, all of the jobs through the platform are free to receive to the tradeswomen who sign up. We're also conscious that women in trades tend to undervalue themselves so we always make sure they're getting paid a fair rate for the work they do.

Do you think technology will pave the way to gender equality in the workplace?

We currently use technology to do just that! Our platform enables tradeswomen to access confirmed bookings from customers looking for a female tradesperson and is helping us to normalise being a woman in trade.

The fact that we offer this free of charge means they can build their businesses, fill their diaries and also work around caring responsibilities adding flexibility that women are lacking in so many workplaces still.

What's in store for the future?

We're currently in talks with some London councils about working together to bring tradeswomen into schools during careers weeks to give

young women an example of what it could look like if they worked in the trades. A lot of TaskHer tradeswomen are young, and into make-up, hair, and nails but also work a manual job and TaskHer wants to show young women they can be both things.

Two of our biggest goals for the future are to scale the business outside of London and increase the trades we offer. We've been very successful in London, so we'd like to launch in different cities across the UK in the next few years. Our other priority goal is to increase the trades we offer to include painters and decorators, handywomen, carpenters, tilers and more, so that our site can offer every trade our customer may need.

Long-term, one of our main goals is to normalise women in trade. We want people to Google 'female electrician', we want kids to draw women holding power tools, we want it to be normal to see a woman turn up at your door when you've booked a tradesperson. It's a big goal - as it's essentially overturning unconscious (and conscious) bias - but we believe we can achieve it.

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

The biggest lesson I've learned in business is that it's okay to pivot.

We've not actually pivoted TaskHer - but understanding and knowing that it's a viable and smart option should we agree we need to have made being an entrepreneur significantly less stressful and more exciting than it was before I had the realisation after taking part in a day course at London Business School.

Embracing change is not only acceptable but often necessary for growth and success within a startup environment. Initially, the idea of pivoting might seem daunting or like you've failed. It involves shifting away from a

path you've invested time, energy, and resources into.

However, pivoting is actually a powerful strategy that fosters innovation and resilience. It allows you to respond to market demands, technological advancements, and evolving customer needs with agility and speed that larger more established businesses simply can't do because of rigid frameworks.

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

We've got two young children who are 2 and 4 so my daily routine is very much dictated by their wants, needs and mood swings.

Having kids and being a founder is actually something I'm incredibly grateful for. We have to be strict about working hours and burnout. We can't regularly pull a 3 am shift to get stuff done, because we have two shouty little children who will let it be known that they need us. It makes prioritising easy because they have to be the priority.

We work out of a shared workspace close to home, meaning there's limited travel time and we can be in the office for 8:30, leave at 5:30 and have managed our workloads pretty well. I try to keep meetings to a Monday if I can, because founders work so remotely so much of the time we are always desperate for contact - but meetings can be a real distraction.

I'll check in with our tradeswomen community most days with updates and customer feedback, and the core TaskHer team will meet once a week to catch up. I spend a lot of time on social media because it's a huge part of our marketing funnel, and currently, I fail at switching that off in the evenings because that's when all our followers are online.

Anna Moynihan is the co-founder of *TaskHer*.

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