

# Employment background checking software to supercharge the capabilities of hiring teams

*As part of our quick founder questions series – or QFQs – we spoke to Charlotte Lucy Hall, Co-founder and CMO of Zinc about redefining background checks, outdated processes in recruitment and the power of perseverance.*

Temps de lecture : minute

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Zinc is a candidate-centric, technology-driven solution that redefines how background checks are done. In a world where hiring delays can cost businesses time and top talent, we believe that technology is what gives HR and talent professionals back what matters most: their time. What sets Zinc apart – and makes us a game-changer – is our commitment to transforming a historically frustrating process into one that’s fast, transparent, and empowering for everyone involved.

The Zinc solution is tailored to each customer and their individual culture and goals, and the red string that runs through every customer is easing the workload of HR teams, and any potential stress that new hires face when it comes to background checks. Our customers range from early-stage startups like Marshmallow to fintech giants like Revolut, and household names like John Lewis.

Our product’s intuitive design has helped us reach a broad audience, largely through referrals, word-of-mouth, and those who complete a reference on the Zinc platform and become interested in learning more.

Additionally, we participate in various HR and tech events across the UK each year, and enjoy showcasing the Zinc brand and our team's culture on social media.

## What was the catalyst for launching Zinc?

Our backgrounds in recruitment exposed us to the challenges of reference and background checking, where inefficiency, bias, and a lack of transparency have long plagued the industry. These outdated processes stand in stark contrast to today's tech-driven world. Recognising this gap, we seized the opportunity to build a better process.

We were also motivated by entrepreneurial friends who encouraged us to take the leap. My experience as one of the first employees at Superscript gave me insight into building a business from the ground up. It's a thrilling journey, albeit not for everyone, but immensely rewarding. Luke brings his own entrepreneurial experience, growing three startups and appearing on Dragons' Den.

With our shared experiences and a passion for addressing a clear market need, launching Zinc together felt like the logical next step.

## How has the business evolved since its launch?

Zinc was founded in a small flat in South East London, by Luke and I. With Luke being an ex-recruiter and aspiring engineer, initial versions of Zinc were crafted in evenings and weekends in 2018 after coming home from all long days running a recruiting firm.

Since our launch, Zinc has evolved significantly. Initially, as mentioned, we focused on alleviating the burden of traditional referencing, then expanded our vision to address the broader challenges within the

background-checking industry.

In 2021, we secured our seed funding from Seedcamp, which fueled our early growth and product development. Building on this momentum, we raised £5M in a Series A round led by AVP in 2023, allowing us to scale further and continue innovating the product.

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

One key piece of advice for other founders or aspiring entrepreneurs is to be prepared for the challenges of securing funding. It's a critical moment that often determines how the corporate world perceives your business. For us, the journey was particularly tough. We began our outreach during an economic downturn, right as the tech bubble burst, and SVB collapsed. With valuations dropping and investors being cautious, as first-time founders seeking Series A funding, we faced significant hurdles that were made more difficult with a tightened due diligence process.

On a personal level, Luke and I were dealing with a difficult fertility journey, balancing the need to present our best selves to potential investors while feeling emotionally drained was daunting. We faced multiple rejections, partly due to our lack of traditional credentials—neither of us attended Oxbridge or worked at a FANG company, putting us at a disadvantage from the start. Then I faced the unnecessary stress of choosing the right time to tell investors I was pregnant, which is unfortunately still an issue that pregnant founders have to navigate when fundraising!

Looking back, that time taught me the importance of resilience and the power of perseverance through personal and professional challenges. Despite the setbacks, we remained committed to our vision and each other, and I'm incredibly proud of what we have achieved in the last few

years. In 2023 alone, we raised £5M, welcomed a baby, and moved houses—all at once! I wouldn't recommend tackling it all simultaneously, but we survived, and it was worth it.

## What's in store for the future?

Looking ahead, we, at Zinc, are committed to further revolutionising the world of background checking. We are also aiming to increase brand awareness so more people recognise who we are and the value we bring. Staying close to our customers through a tight feedback loop remains essential, ensuring we continue to develop a product that truly simplifies life for both customers and candidates. Additionally, we are hoping to double our team over the next 12 months, we're also gearing up for potential expansion into a larger office space to support our growing ambitions.

## Tell us about the working culture at Zinc?

Luke & I believe that success comes when people feel their best at work, and so we've designed an environment that makes that possible. We've built a culture where we wholeheartedly trust and empower employees to back themselves as subject matter experts and use their skills to work together to solve a really interesting and exciting challenge, while having a great time doing so! No idea is too silly, hierarchies are out the window and doors are always open (not literally as we've been asked to keep doors closed at our co-working space as we have too much fun!).

We're a fast-moving and growing company which means our amazing and talented people are encouraged to try new things, feel comfortable with failures and learnings, and can craft their roles into what they want and grow their career in a way that works for them. It really does feel like people bring their best selves to work every day, which is what makes us a force to be reckoned with.

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

My daily routine starts with making the bed—it's a simple habit, but it helps me feel grounded and organised for the day ahead, especially with a one year old at home. I like to keep the house as clean as possible; for me, a cluttered house can lead to a cluttered mind.

As a founder, burnout is always a risk, so I'm trying to prioritise self-care. When I can, I schedule a monthly massage when it fits the budget! I also love making time for creative activities away from work, like pottery and painting, which I hope to pick up again soon. One rule I'm living by is to take care of myself amidst the chaos.

Communication is another big one for me. When things get tough, it's essential to communicate openly with colleagues, my partner, family, and friends. It's too easy to feel isolated or try to shoulder everything alone, but sharing concerns can really lighten the load.

Charlotte Lucy Hall is the cofounder and CMO of [Zinc](#).



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Article by Charlotte Lucy Hall