

# COVID-19: Interview with Izak Ben Aharon, Founder and CEO of 8Tev

Maddyness spoke to Izak Ben Aharon, the founder of 8Tev and the managing director of Scootin - the first electric scooter shop and electric scooter engineering workshop in the UK - to understand how the company is coping during the COVID-19 pandemic and to see what the future holds.

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Scootin opened almost two years ago - when there was almost no spotlight on electric scooters - on the Euston Road in London, as the sole distributor of Inokim, a leading player in the electric scooter game. Since then, Izak has founded 8Tev, an electric scooter manufactured with Piaggio that is being distributed globally.

Scootin was closed for the first month of the pandemic but when Boris Johnson announced in March that essential businesses could remain open, Scootin's manager said: "We are an essential business, we cannot close".

Open through the peak of the pandemic, sales skyrocketed and the workshop was busier than ever before. People started realizing the necessity of an alternative method of transport. Here's what Izak tells us about its journey through COVID-19.

## [Maddyness] What have been the biggest professional challenges during lockdown?

[Izak] As the world slowed down, our reality sped up as people started realising they could no longer get the tube or the bus and they desperately needed an alternative method of transport. Our workshop, sales, shop and pre-orders almost doubled throughout the pandemic and it was really difficult at first as we had many people coming in and out of the shop but we needed to protect the staff.

We tried to create a chain barrier so clients did not come into the back where the workshop is. In the end, we decided to close as travelling into London seemed a challenge and then... Our amazing manager said that we are an essential service so we cannot close – she risked the tube and the mechanics scooted in.

## What have been the biggest personal challenges during lockdown?

Making sure we were making the right decisions by our staff and our clients. Our incredible manager (as mentioned above) and mechanic(s) were going in to work day in day out during the pandemic, which was. We have been so busy and made great sales so there have been silver linings. COVID-19 has seen a surge in electric scooter sales here in the UK, even though they remain illegal.

Electric scooters have very much been in the news and the topic of conversation from the Department of Transport. I don't have the exact statistic on the electric scooter sales during the pandemic but bicycle sales increased in the UK by 300%.

## Was remote working a new thing for you and if so will you be adapting your work to allow more of it?

Our HQs are in London and Tel Aviv, our factory is in China, so I am used to remote working. I attended trade shows across Europe and North America, I would say the only difference is the virtual attendance, that is new. Attending micro-mobility conferences online, being a part of zoom shows... it's the virtual

attendance that is new and has made me realise that I don't need to be present at every event if I can be there virtually.

## How have you been keeping your employees happy?

Sending them Deliveroos! Thank you Deliveroo and all your team of drivers!

## As a leader, have you successfully managed your (and your teams) mental resilience through lockdown?

I hope so. I have tried to check in emotionally but it is hard to strike a balance and not intrude too much.

## What changes have you made to keep your business running?

Thankfully we have not reduced our staff at all as we are essential for so many.

## What have you implemented to stay competitive?

We took different strategic initiatives: price reductions, quick turnaround on orders and any fixes required. Our biggest issue has been delivery delays.

## What do you think of the support packages for startups offered by the government

We're grateful for them. Let's hope the companies using them and the UK government can afford them and we SMEs don't suffer at the other end with higher taxes.

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Article by MADDYNESS