

Meet Rightcharge, the startup making smart charging your electric car easier

As part of our quick fire questions series – or QFQs – we spoke to Charlie Cook, founder of Rightcharge, about helping customers understand smart charging, getting the business off the ground and how the startup is answering an unmet need in the world of electric vehicles.

What was the catalyst for launching Rightcharge?

I was working at Octopus Energy on electric vehicle charging tariffs, products and services. This gave me a great insight into the early days of the electric vehicle and energy sectors, and it quickly became obvious that ‘smart charging’ would be critical for both EV drivers and the UK as a country.

A driver can ‘smart charge’ by switching to an electricity tariff with off-peak pricing overnight (very common in EV-branded tariffs from energy suppliers) and use a smart charge point to schedule their charge for those hours. This simple strategy can cut the average driver’s energy bills by over £400 per

year. Plus, a little known secret is that electricity consumed overnight is cleaner – it comes from sources that generate 25% less CO₂ compared to electricity consumed during the evening.

However, a lack of clear customer guidance means that smart charging isn't widely understood and therefore, unsurprisingly, hasn't been adopted by most EV drivers. In fact, the majority of mainstream drivers switching to an electric car don't know where to start!

Rightcharge was born out of a desire to make sure every new EV driver is aware of the benefits of smart charging and help them get set up with the best tariff and charge point for their needs. We want to make it easier and more affordable than ever to charge at home, helping more drivers go electric.

What is Rightcharge?

We're a UK based startup that gives drivers a simple way to sort their EV charging and save money.

We find them the right charge point and energy tariff combination for their home or business via our easy-to-use online platform. It asks drivers a few questions, recommends their perfect charge point, and matches them with a trusted pro for the installation.

Drivers can also find an energy tariff that cuts their bills – we've built a comparison tool from scratch that considers the car as well as the home, unlike all the traditional comparison sites. We know how complex all of this can feel to new EV drivers, so we offer our customers 1-2-1 support at every step of their journey, helping them avoid common pitfalls along the way.

One of the most effective ways we reach customers is through partnerships with automotive dealerships that sell or lease EVs. We help them assist their customers who want to go electric and need the right charge point and energy tariffs to power their EVs. To date we have partnered with the likes of Perrys, Leasing.com and Lookers with lots more in the pipeline.

How has the business evolved since its launch?

I launched Rightcharge in late 2019. Since then, we've grown rapidly, raised funds, built out the team, and formed more partnerships with dealerships, charge point installers and energy suppliers.

Rightcharge has been born and grown through COVID-19, the energy crisis and now war in Europe. However, the unstoppable momentum of the electric vehicle transition has meant that we've been able to progress quickly through what would otherwise be difficult times.

We've evolved from just me working at home in the early days to a team of 18 (including our part-time team members) working from our co-working office in Kings Cross.

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How are you funded?

When I launched Rightcharge I had saved up £20k and I continued to work two-days per week for 12 months while I started the business, which kept enough salary coming in to pay rent and food.

In 2020, we raised £100k from friends, family and angels and in 2021 we raised a further £700k in a fully subscribed seed funding round. Investors included Link Venture Capital (a Norwegian cleantech VC), and a host of Angel investors such as James Hind (founder of carwow), Mike Allen (Zeus Capital and early investor in carwow), Stuart Dyble (cofounder of Influence emobility and former board member at Jaguar Land Rover) and Julia Stent (former Commercial Director at uSwitch).

We're now preparing for our next raise to accelerate the partnership growth that we've achieved over the last 12 months.

What has been your biggest challenge so far?

At the start, absolutely everything was undetermined – the name, the logo, the business model, and so on. It was an exciting time but also difficult to know where to focus.

Getting the business up and running was also a big challenge. I tested the idea by talking to a lot of people before I had even built anything. I then launched a very simple version of what I had in mind and continued to adapt and develop it as I went.

The benefit of this strategy is that you can start without much money at all. This means you don't have to go out and try to raise money until you know you have something that works well enough, and it saves you giving away too

much of your business too soon to investors.

How does Rightcharge answer an unmet need?

Where other EV service sites fail to give drivers a joined-up view of charge points and tariffs, Rightcharge pulls the full picture together. The two products form the basis of smart charging – but having one without the other is like a lock without a key.

Our independent nature means we can deliver the latest, unbiased advice on all things charge-point and tariff related, giving drivers access to exactly the right solution for their specific requirements.

EV drivers leave Rightcharge knowing they've selected the best charge point for their home, found a reputable installation business to install it, and switched to the most cost-effective EV-friendly home energy tariff. This is more important than ever as the cost of living has skyrocketed, leaving people scrambling to find new ways to keep their home energy bills under control. We know we're doing OK because customers have rated us 4.9/5.0 on Trustpilot.

What's in store for the future?

In the next five years, I want to look back and see that we've made switching to an electric car easier for the general public. We've also got big plans to go beyond EVs – ultimately we want to help every household go green by breaking down barriers in their way. This means getting to the point where we're helping homeowners to easily reduce their bills and carbon footprint by giving them a simple buying journey for solar panels, heat pumps, battery storage and home insulation. And we hope to do that as soon as possible in other markets, too, starting with the USA and Europe and then elsewhere.

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

Go ahead and give it a go if you have an idea. Transition gradually if you need to and earn a salary on the side while you experiment with the first product or service. Even minimum wage can keep the need for funding away for a long time.

Try to avoid needing funding until you absolutely need it. This means using

tools like Squarespace, Wix, WordPress, Zapier, Airtable and others to build the first version of your product before you spend any money on bespoke code.

Charlie Cook is founder at [Rightcharge](#).

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