

Meet the cofounder of Blink, the communication app for frontline workers

As part of our quick fire questions series – or QFQs – we spoke to Sean Nolan, CEO and cofounder at Blink, about the importance of providing digital communication tools to frontline workers and overcoming hurdles along the way.

What was the catalyst for launching Blink?

Blink was founded to radically improve the daily lives of millions of frontline workers by providing digital access – from communications, applications, people and processes – through one app on their personal phones.

Frontline workers make up 50% of the global workforce, doing some of the most demanding jobs in the world, but while the modernisation of work over the past 30 years has benefitted desk workers, it left frontline workers behind. As a result, most frontline workers are digitally disconnected (no email address, work phone or laptop) and must rely on ineffective tools like paper and noticeboards. This means they lack access to accurate information, real-time communication and tools they need to thrive at work. That's where Blink comes in.

What is Blink?

We work with industries that form the backbone of the economy: transport, logistics, manufacturing, construction, retail and healthcare, to name a few. For workers in these industries, Blink gives instant, one-place access to everything they need to do (and enjoy) their jobs.

They can get their payslips instantly, swap shifts, train, access information, give feedback, chat to colleagues, and receive recognition for good work, making their daily lives a little better.

How has the business evolved since its launch?

In 2019, we launched to 21,000 Stagecoach bus drivers and since then, we've expanded into over a dozen new industries – anywhere employees don't sit behind a desk. We've grown three times bigger year-on-year and have opened offices across the globe. Today, our largest market is North America, and our largest customer base is healthcare.

How are you funded?

We raised \$20M Series A at the end of 2021 which was led by Next47. Before that, we raised a seed round which was led by Partech. We've also had very active support from a group of prominent angel investors.

What has been your biggest challenge so far?

We have pretty much ran out of cash a couple of times! It took a few years to build the technology and find product-market fit, so our angel investors and Partech led a few seed extension rounds to keep us going! I will always be incredibly grateful for their support during the tough times as well as the good times.

How does Blink answer an unmet need?

There's an assumption that the same technology and approach that works for desk-based workers for HR, e-learning, scheduling or communication will also

work for frontline workers. But it's just not true. The average frontline worker is incredibly frustrated with the digital experience at work; it's very difficult to access enterprise applications for these workers. Blink solves that in one app, which no one else is offering at the moment.

What's in store for the future?

We want to connect every frontline worker, whilst helping our customers modernise and digitise their frontline operations. Desk-free workers make up 50% of the workforce in the UK and US, and 80% globally. Our goal is to reach them all.

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

Find a big and meaningful problem, then partner with some great people to tackle it! And then don't quit.

Sean Nolan is CEO and cofounder at [*Blink*](#).