Get to know Sleepwave, the motion-sensing sleep tracker, smart alarm and relaxation app

As part of our quick fire questions series – or QFQs – we spoke to Jules Goldberg, founder and CEO at Sleepwave, about founding his first business, helping people wake up better, and creating a new technology.

What was the catalyst for launching Sleepwave?

My first app, SnoreLab, achieved millions of downloads helping people with snoring problems, but to improve our sleep tracking technology, we needed to solve a specific problem – how to detect movements from a phone beside a bed.

Motion detection is essential for accurate sleep tracking as the amount we move in bed indicates how awake we are. In 2019, we began exploring some exciting new ideas: using the phone's speaker to transmit a "silent sound wave" and sensing movements by listening for reflections.

We made some breakthrough discoveries in this area, leading to multiple patent filings, and decided to launch the technology in the context of a

completely new app: Sleepwave.

What is Sleepwave?

Sleepwave is a next-generation sleep tracking app that addresses an area of sleep health that has been frequently overlooked: the quality of our morning wake up.

Many people are woken in the morning by harsh, fixed-time alarms that can sound at a bad moment for our brains, resulting in feelings of grogginess and difficulty getting up.

Sleepwave's unique technology senses your movements and wakes you gently at a great moment when you are naturally awakening. By connecting the alarm to our body movements, we can transform the quality of our wake up and give you a better start to the day.

The audience we hope to reach is a vast one – anyone who needs an alarm to wake up in the morning.

How has the business evolved since its launch?

Sleepwave launched on iOS in February 2022, with Android expected to launch in the summer. One of the challenges that we've had is that the app is so packed full of innovative features, from motion-sensing visualisations to its gentle awakening feature, it can be difficult to convey all of this to users.

Although the motion-sensing visualisations "wavescapes" are an incredible demonstration of the technology with wide applications beyond sleep tracking, we have decided to focus primarily on the smart alarm as the key feature during its launch phase as this has an immediate and tangible benefit for users.

We've had very encouraging feedback from early users on this feature, with 78% of testers reporting that the quality of their wake up had improved.

How are you funded?

Sleepwave has been entirely funded by the proceeds of SnoreLab, which I first created in 2012. I consider myself more of an inventor than I am an entrepreneur, and bootstrapping has given me the freedom to focus on the inventive process rather than spending my time pitching to investors. I am proud of the company's independence and what we have achieved to date without external funding.

What has been your biggest challenge so far?

The flip side of not having raised lots of money is that we are still quite a small team, which creates challenges as to how to focus our efforts. We simply don't have the resources to pursue every opportunity and so we need to prioritise and keep some exciting prospects on the back burner.

How does Sleepwave answer an unmet need?

Whilst there are many apps that focus on helping people fall asleep, relatively few focus on improving how we wake up. This is not an easy problem to solve as doing it properly requires technology to detect how deeply we are sleeping.

We wanted to transform the accuracy of sleep tracking from a phone beside your bed in an accessible and easy-to-use way.

Rather than relying on sound recognition or requiring you to wear a smartwatch to detect movements, our contactless motion-sensing technology gives a detailed motion signal from a phone beside your bed.

What's in store for the future?

We are full of ideas but one of our main goals will be integrating Sleepwave's technology into SnoreLab. Sleepwave's motion-sensing technology will be crucial for developing advanced capabilities such as detecting irregular breathing.

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

Remember the magic! I loved magic tricks as a child and I try to bring that element of surprise and excitement to whatever I do.

For Sleepwave, we have unique interactive visualisations – called Wavescapes – that respond to your movement. Most people assume that they must be using the camera but in fact they are powered by silent sound reflections! It is a truly magical experience that defies our expectations.

When you're creating something, always think about how you can have a memorable and meaningful impact on the person using your product.

Jules Goldberg is founder and CEO at *Sleepwave*.

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