

# Meet Footium, the competitive and social multiplayer football management game

As part of our quick fire questions series – or QFQs – we spoke to George Benton, Jordan Lord & James O'Leary, cofounders of Footium about their debut as a hackathon project, their growing community and how they are changing the future of football gaming.

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*Footium* is a web3 football management game, allowing players to own and manage their very own football club. Compete against other clubs every day to win matches, earn prizes and move up the divisions!

## What was the catalyst for launching the product?

Footium was born out of a desire for a multiplayer football management game. Currently, there are fantastic single-player football management games that are highly addictive and widely played. However, multiplayer football management games have not seen the same levels of success, and we believe that is because it is hard to prevent players from creating multiple teams and funnelling their best players and assets to one club, therefore unfairly

dominating their league.

Footium utilises web3 to disincentivize this threat through creating a real economy with a limited supply of clubs, ensuring that nothing can be gained from taking this approach. Therefore, a truly competitive and social multiplayer football management game can be created!

## Tell me about the product – what it is, what it aims to achieve, who you work with, how you reach customers, USP and so on?

*What it is* – The product so far is reminiscent of an early-stage football management game. As a club owner, you build a team from your starting squad of 20, your club academy and players you've acquired on the transfer market. You can set the tactics, play-style and formation of your squad before each match, and then make in-game changes during your match each day. Our game engine simulates the matches and produces a text-based summary of the key events and statistics.

*What it aims to achieve* – We're creating a virtual world of football, where people can own football clubs, build a fanbase and social media presence, and guide their team to victory!

*Who you work with* – We work with our community very closely, who provide fantastic ideas and feedback on the game through our beta. We also have several notable club owners such as football players (Shaun Wright-Phillips, Nigel de Jong, Chris Smalling) and content creators (ReevHD, TomFM, NepentheZ). Several football + NFT communities also own Footium clubs and run them as a collective which is awesome for us to see!

*How you reach customers* – We've had a very organic customer engagement strategy, building relationships with projects and communities with shared interests in web3 gaming and football particularly. Most of our growth has come through word of mouth, largely because this is a product a lot of our community members want to see launched!

*USP* – Our strongest USP is our ecosystem and community. Their involvement and passion since the very start has created an amazing environment, where many side-projects such as: a metaverse Footium studio for talkshows, a score-prediction game in the old-school style of teletext, a Footium-notification bot on discord and more have been created!

There are already over 300 Footium club twitter accounts that are constantly creating content including line-up graphics, transfer news and banter between clubs!

## How has the business evolved since its launch?

The business has accelerated since inception. Having started as a hackathon project in June 2020 it has gone from strength to strength since then. We initially spent a lot of time building in our spare time, gathering enough momentum to secure pre-seed funding Summer 2021.

This allowed the founders to go full-time on the project, hire a few more team members and launch the initial Club sale in November 2021, which sold out in 23 minutes. Following this and further development of the game, we raised a Seed Round in early 2022 and launched our Public beta in March.

## What is your favourite thing about being a founder?

[George] One aspect of being a founder that I enjoy the most is all of the amazing people you get to meet. This ranges from potential employees when hiring, accomplished founders when collaborating with their projects and professional athletes when raising investment and forming partnerships. The

lessons you can learn from these people are invaluable!

[James] I enjoy the scope of the role. You necessarily have to have a high-level awareness of all the aspects of the business. I've worked on software development, before moving towards a more strategic-focused role. I've enjoyed making strategic decisions which translate into low level operations, and being able to get a sense of the business at all these different levels.

[Jordan] Similar to James, I enjoy the scope of the role. Previously I was a software engineer behind a screen that didn't really talk to anyone. But now I get to talk to many different people with a wide range of skill-sets – I love the pace of having to upskill and learn new things. The thing I love most about being a founder though is pursuing a dream of mine. Footium as a concept/idea, although changed a lot since the founding of this instance of the game, has been one of my dreams for a long time.

## Which founders or businesses do you see as being the most inspirational?

[James] I find people who execute on massive dreams extremely inspirational. People like Lee Kuan Yew, the founder of modern Singapore. Executing a vision of such scale and complexity is something to behold.

## Which other figures in your life inspire you?

[George] Generally I am often inspired by people that have broken the mould and made a lasting change in their industry. Musicians such as Kanye West and Yung Lean, Entrepreneurs such as Steve Jobs and Bill Gates, and sports personalities such as Marcelo Bielsa and Arsene Wenger.

## What has been your biggest business fail?

[George] In high school myself and some friends participated in a scheme that involved us setting up and running our own business. We decided to make themed boxes with gifts for different times of the year, such as Christmas, valentines and halloween. To save costs, I decided to order the cheapest boxes we could find, which turned out to be super low-quality.

Despite the items inside the box being great, the box itself turned away a lot of customers and we ended up losing money despite trying really hard to sell them. I quickly learned to never underestimate the importance of a quality product!

## What are the things you're really good at as a leader?

[George] I hope that my perpetual optimism inspires other team members to keep going, even when the going gets tough. For me, being this optimistic is second nature with a vision and product such as Footium, that I truly believe will change the future of football gaming.

[James] I feel like I'm good at recognising people in their displays of competency and passion is important. Understanding when people have gone above and beyond for something.

## Which areas do you need to improve on?

[George] Trying to keep many plates spinning at once (as you often have to as a founder) for me is quite difficult, and it often results in some tasks not getting as much attention as they need. I'm working on prioritising just a few key areas and ensuring they are done efficiently and effectively, before moving on to tasks that are on the backburner

[James] Being clear about what I can do in a limited amount of time. As a founder I feel an obligation to many aspects of the business and sometimes I try to take ownership for more than makes sense. Having the privilege to work in such an exceptional team I feel increasingly comfortable with other people taking ownership over their parts.

## What's in store for the future of the business?

Our full game launch is planned before the end of 2022, so that is our next major milestone. We have been hiring over the last few months and have now built a very strong team with a good range of experiences, which has now put us in a good position to execute on our vision!

# What advice would you give to other founders or future founders?

[George] Always connect with other founders, even those that aren't in the same industry as you. 90% of the problems you face will have also been faced (and sometimes solved) by other founders, so utilising their wisdom can often prevent you from making too many mistakes.

[James] Curiosity and openness are super important, being narrow focused undermines your ability to see the bigger picture. They're valuable characteristics more generally, helping you acquire an understanding of the wider world, connect with people and build meaningful relationships.

## And finally, a more personal question! We like to ask everyone we interview about their daily routine and the rules they live by. Is it up at 4am for yoga, or something a little more traditional?

[George] My main rule for life is to have fun and make an impact in whatever you do!

No matter how busy I am, I always try to find a little time for gaming each day as it helps me relax and de-stress, be it Rocket League, Age of Empires, League of Legends, Fifa, and of course Footium!

George Benton, Jordan Lord & James O'Leary are the cofounders of *Footium*.