

Meet Flox, the startup driving engagement in physical and virtual events

As part of our quick fire questions series – or QFQs – we spoke to Alistair Bryan, cofounder of Flox about meaningful engagement and social connection in the hybrid world, sustainability, digital twins and a team built on diversity of talent.

Flox is a revolutionary and intuitive metaverse event platform. It helps to drive more engagement in virtual and hybrid (physical and virtual) events.

Having worked in physical real life events and seen the first virtual event platforms that came out we could see there was a need to create something new. Flox came from the idea of a murmuration of birds. The idea that the individual powers the collective experience. So we focussed on the individual user experience to create a far more creative collective one.

There was a great quote from Richard Branson “The best thing that can be said about webinars is they give you the sensation of being in a coma without the worry or inconvenience”. That’s the problem we wanted to solve: the 2D gallery view user interface and passive viewing. So we set out to create an active state with meaningful engagement and participation.

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

We want to create the most human and engaging virtual and hybrid events. Harnessing the ideas and creativity of each individual to fuel the power and progress of the collective. To do this, being present in the same space with other people is important – regardless of whether they can be there physically or not.

Indeed, being there virtually is often more sustainable as well as more inclusive, particularly when you think about how many people are excluded from meetings and events due to parenting commitments or because they're not senior enough to merit a travel expense budget. Additionally, gleaning data digitally from those interactions is crucial.

Our clients tend to be household name brands, organisations and institutions, including global drinks giant, Molson Coors. In terms of target buyer, it's anyone that puts on a live event or experience – CMO's, CXO, event management, HR directors to name a few.

They want connection and collaboration that comes with social interaction, but also the digital sharing, recording and analysis that their organisation needs. They might additionally have a sustainability or cost-saving agenda, so prefer a purely virtual platform instead of a virtual-physical hybrid.

How has the business evolved since its launch? When was this?

Well our first event, in August 2022, for a global food and drinks brand had around 3,000 attendees. Already we are load tested to 25,000 concurrent users and aim to be up to 100,000 within six months. The tech is evolving quickly, with our first avatars being designed and the latest ones already having a 3D image of the user themselves, to make it easier to recognise real life colleagues and contacts.

Tell us about the working culture at Flox

Flat, inclusive and integrated. We wanted to build a business where the diversity of talent allowed all opinions and sector expertise to be heard and make us better for it. We meet regularly as collectives and have time to chat outside of just the actual doing so we are listening, learning and growing as a group. And as a fast growth startup, we're of course an entrepreneurial team.

How are you funded?

We currently have £1.2M pre-seed capital from private investors who are some of the most exciting names in digital innovation and marketing. They include Phil Chambers (founder of employee engagement platform, Peakon, which recently sold to Workday) and Matt Kingdon (founder of innovation consultancy WhatIf?).

What has been your biggest challenge so far and how have you overcome this?

It's never easy starting a business, but we had a clear idea of what we wanted to achieve. Money and investment are always the difficult moments, but we were lucky enough to raise £1.2M quickly with investors who could see the market was growing and we had the experience to deliver. Then getting the first client was a big challenge, but we launched with a Fortune 500 global brand and then others, including two more Fortune 500 companies, came afterwards.

How does Flox answer an unmet need?

Social connection is at the heart of Flox and has been built into our core product, with movement around virtual space and artificial intelligence helping users find and connect with the right people.

Flox's metaverse offer is far superior to 2D digital alternatives by offering an experience that's as close to in-person as you can get digitally. Attendees move their digital avatars (personalised to their face with scanning technology) around a defined space, with active intention and more freedom than you would ever get in a video conference.

Increased calls for an environmentally responsible approach to events, as well as the need for the advantages of digital (including instant translation,

conversation transcribing, data capture and limitless space) are driving demand for digital events. Flox's metaverse offer is far superior to 2D digital alternatives by offering an experience that's as close to in-person as you can get digitally. Attendees move their digital avatars (personalised to their face with scanning technology) around a defined space, with active intention and more freedom than you would ever get in a video conference.

Beyond live events and experiences, our customer could be anyone building a 'digital twin' – an exact replica of a corporate headquarters, a retail environment or pop-up, a university campus, lab or surgery to make collaboration and education accessible and immediate.

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The trends within the Metaverse that investors and entrepreneurs should know about

What's in store for the future?

There are three things I'd like to have achieved in the next five years:

1. People – a culture-rich and world-renowned integrated family of talent
2. Products – a suite of creative applications targeting Learning, Retail and Entertainment
3. Planet – reduced the CO2 impact of 10,000's of events and be NETZERO

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

Don't compromise – on the vision, your team and your purpose.

And finally, a more personal question!
What's your daily routine and the rules

you're living by at the moment?

I get up about 6am. I don't function without a cup of tea so the kettle is the first point of call. I usually start messaging my business partner and cofounder Jaie about 7am. I get the kids off to school and then a dog walk or run (depending on the day) to collect my thoughts on the day ahead. We have a team stand up in the morning to check in on product, development, clients, prospects and the team. Then it's a mixture of demos, client meetings and team meetings afterwards. We are cloud-based so we make time to schedule calls – without meaning – to just catch up with the team and check in. We are opening up in the US so the afternoon tends to be more focussed on the calls with the West Coast. Then I finish the day with a check with Jaie and an understanding of what needs to be done next.

Alistair Bryan is the cofounder of *Flox*.

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