

# Meet SURI, the sonic toothbrush making everyday rituals sustainable rituals

As part of our quick founder questions series – or QFQs – we spoke to Mark Rushmore, cofounder of SURI about the war against single-use plastic, winning design awards and why founders need healthy high energy to do things differently.

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My cofounder and I worked in the personal care industry for over a decade before launching SURI. Here we witnessed a market over-saturated with clunky, unattractive and gimmicky electric toothbrushes made from single-use plastic. After further research, we discovered that in the US alone, one billion toothbrushes are thrown away each year, ending up in landfill – or worse, polluting our oceans. Every toothbrush you’ve ever owned still exists. Think about that for just a moment!

Consumers want to be more sustainable, as seen in the popularity of bamboo toothbrushes, but dentists unanimously recommend using an electric toothbrush to achieve a better clean. We felt there needed to be a sustainable alternative to offer an exceptional clean with a minimal impact on the planet. So we set out to create a beautiful, high-performance toothbrush that lasts a lifetime.

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

SURI is a sustainable wellness brand looking to elevate daily rituals in the self-care and hygiene space. My cofounder, Gyve Safavi and I launched the company in 2022 following a shared belief that the electric toothbrush market was ripe for innovation, especially when we learned about the awful waste issue caused by electric and manual toothbrushes – our estimates are 4 billion toothbrushes end in landfill or oceans annually.

We saw a gap in the market and created our toothbrush for life with the Sustainable Sonic Toothbrush, which we believe is the most sustainable electric toothbrush on the planet and combines best-in-class performance with a sleek and premium design aesthetic.

Unlike other electric toothbrush models, its body is intentionally designed to be easily dismantled for repair or recycling, and it has a long-lasting rechargeable battery that powers the toothbrush for 40-plus days between charges. Additionally, features include a Magnetic Mirror Mount, which allows you to attach the toothbrush to a mirror, freeing up precious sink space and reducing dirt on surfaces, and a UV-C Light Travel Case, which kills 99.9% of harmful bacteria in just one minute. It's also one-third the size of other toothbrushes, making it a perfect travel companion and exemplifies its conscious and versatile approach to design.

## How has the business evolved since its launch?

Evolution has come organically. We've consistently adapted our business strategy based on user feedback and reviews from our growing community (we crowdsourced our latest colour launch based on their feedback) – we're lucky to have become the highest-rated electric toothbrush on Trustpilot with over 1900+ reviews with an average score of 4.8. Becoming B-Corp-certified and being stocked on retail channels such as Amazon and Selfridges has been great for our reach, and our recent launch into Boots stores nationwide is a major milestone moment. Throughout the process, we've learned how to responsibly manage our supply chain to keep our emissions as low as possible while ensuring a regular inventory flow.

Additionally, we've grown to a team of 12 and have a great office in a central London location overlooking the Thames (that acts as a reminder of our core mission)!

## Tell us about the working culture at SURI

We're a team of passionate individuals working hard together to make our daily rituals more joyful and sustainable.

## How are you funded?

Gyve and I invested in creating the concept and launching the product, and then, we were fortunate to secure £2M towards the end of 2022 from Hambro Perks and JamJar Investments, a dream pairing, as well as a series of Angels. We wouldn't have been able to get this far without them!

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

Brand awareness, most people aren't aware there's a problem with toothbrush waste or that a solution like ours could exist.

While we don't have the eye-watering marketing budgets of our competitors, we've found consistent success through customer referral (we're the highest-rated electric toothbrush on Trustpilot), winning awards (Dezeen, Red Dot Design Award, Fast Company Most Innovative Companies 2023, Indy/Best 2023, Sunday Times Earth Fund, Marie Claire Sustainability Award), widespread media coverage, paid social advertising, and recommendations from dental professionals.

## How does SURI answer an unmet need?

Every toothbrush you've ever owned still exists. Our response is a toothbrush for life, which is repairable and comes with recyclable plant-based heads. Purchasing a Sustainable Sonic Toothbrush tackles a gargantuan plastic problem that is widely overlooked, and no other electronic toothbrush on the market offers this. When it comes to sustainability, there always seems to be a compromise. But we want to overhaul consumer expectations and show them you *can* adopt a more eco-friendly lifestyle without compromise. The products you use every day *can* be beautiful, design-led, fairly priced, enjoyable to use, and high-performance – all while having a vastly reduced impact on our planet.

# What's in store for the future?

We want to expand as much as possible, not only from sales but from an educational perspective. This could be growing our presence in the US and Europe and increasing our product range for other self-care essentials. Our target audience is anyone who brushes their teeth, so we have a lot of work to do!

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

Get comfortable with the fact that being an entrepreneur means doing things differently. It's all about finding that right blend between trusting your instincts and following advice.

Prioritise keeping up healthy habits – be those nutrition, exercise, or even just going outside to get some fresh air. It's very easy to work more and more, but our best work comes from having high energy!

# And finally, a more personal question! What's your daily routine and the rules you're living by at the moment?

Making sure I take the time each day to be really, truly present with my two children. No work distractions.

Mark Rushmore is the cofounder of [SURI](#).

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Article by MARK RUSHMORE