

Jude, bringing better bladder care into the mainstream

As part of our quick founder questions series - or QFQs - we spoke to Peony Li, founder and CEO of Jude about breaking bladder related taboos with stakeholders, recent investment and US expansion.

The catalyst was simply sharing time with and getting inspired by people in their 50s. During the pandemic, I distributed more than 6 million pieces of PPE all across the UK and I got a chance to work with business owners who don't look like people I usually work with in startups - it's refreshing. This group of people are so confident, self-assured and vibrant, and this reminds me of my parents.

Whilst we see so many millennials' self care startups being funded and founded every month, so little attention has turned to health issues (like bladder problems suffered by 2.3 billion people globally) that hold this demographic back. I believe it's my responsibility to think and act differently, to fill the void, create value and products that haven't existed before.

Tell me about the business - what it is, what it aims to achieve, who you work

with, how you reach customers and so on?

Jude is bringing better bladder care into the mainstream, from symptoms to solutions, we look to improve the entire clinical pathway and offer science backed solutions to people experiencing bladder issues.

We reach customers directly online right now, and will soon be partnering up with major retailers to offer our products on the shelves.

How has the business evolved since its launch?

We launched in January 2022, and since 18 months ago:

- We served 8x more customers with a 700% revenue growth

- We are working with Southampton University Hospital, West Suffolk NHS trust and dozens of practices across the country

- Beyond products, we launched a full personalised bladder health plan accessible online and on the phone

- Our community grew 7x with local ambassadors championing our mission

Tell us about the working culture at Jude

Fun, fast and fully informed. It's hard work but it's rewarding. Every other minute of our day is translated directly to the impact we see in our customers' lives.

How are you funded?

The starting ideation phase was bootstrapped by myself. And since, we raised more than \$7.3M in funding in total with venture capitalists and angels experienced in consumer and healthcare.

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

My biggest challenge has been finding ways to break the taboo with different stakeholders. Everyone needs a bit of warm up before deep diving into bladder talk. I saw too many jaws dropping when I started talking about “pee”. I overcame it by honing in my pitch and introduction, emphasising the scale of the issue and relatable examples to bring people in.

How does Jude answer an unmet need?

2.3 billion people globally suffer from bladder issues. The solutions and products are very limited – on one hand you have Tena pads dominating the market, on the other, you have invasive surgery. There is nothing in between to treat incontinence and overactive bladder.

What’s in store for the future?

With the new round of funding:

We set out to improve the entire clinical pathway from symptom to solution, adding online prescription and digital services, enabling millions to access personalised treatment plans

We are partnering up with brick and mortar retailers who never had a bladder care treatment on their shelves

We are also expanding our offering to the 75 million people experiencing bladder issues in the US.

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

Your business model can change, your products can be different, the vision can be refined, but your belief in what you are creating through your business should never fade away. That’s the one thing that keeps me going!

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

You are always going to be on a learning curve, and you will always feel uncomfortable – so make sure to eat well, exercise regularly and through that you will develop mental discipline and resilience.

Peony Li is the founder and CEO of Jude.

Article by PEONY LI