

Meet Onedash, the platform democratising cybersecurity

As part of our quick founder questions series - or QFQs - we spoke to Luís Pereira, CEO & Founder of Onedash, about cybersecurity, SMEs security, resilience and adaptability.

What was the catalyst for launching Onedash?

The catalyst for launching Onedash was primarily the recognition of a significant gap in cybersecurity capabilities between large organisations and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). As a cybersecurity leader with extensive experience across different scales of enterprises, I observed firsthand the challenges SMEs faced due to limited budgets and access to specialised cybersecurity personnel, making them more vulnerable to cyber threats compared to their larger counterparts.

This cybersecurity gap led me to the idea of creating a solution specifically tailored to the needs of SMEs. The vision is to democratise cybersecurity, making it affordable and accessible to businesses of all sizes, with a focus on providing straightforward, affordable and scalable solutions. This approach aims to empower SMEs to navigate the complexities of cybersecurity confidently, ensuring robust protection against digital threats and fostering a secure business environment. The objective was not just to equip SMEs with defensive tools but to embed a proactive cybersecurity mindset, shifting from a

reactive to a proactive defense strategy and ensuring SMEs have the resources and support they need to protect their digital assets.

And the Digital MBA at Porto Business School, turned out as the incubator to mature this entrepreneurial project. The support and encouragement of the peers was great. And, in addition, the feedback and powerful insights of our amazing and experienced professors was decisive.

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

Onedash is a cybersecurity platform specifically designed to meet the needs of SMEs by offering affordable, accessible, and scalable cybersecurity solutions. The core of Onedash's service is a cutting-edge cybersecurity SaaS platform that provides SMEs with a comprehensive suite of tools to fortify their digital infrastructure. It includes a powerful security posture assessment module that evaluates both cloud-based and on-premises infrastructures, an AI module that enriches security insights with business data to offer tailored security recommendations aligned with company objectives and the unique risks associated with their industry, size, and operation; and a security compliance module, ensuring that the security practices compliant with current standards. The platform also features an interactive dashboard that provides real-time insights into the SME's security posture, enabling quick identification of vulnerabilities and tracking of improvement over time, together with a variety of educational resources to help businesses understand and manage cybersecurity risks more effectively.

Onedash is initially focused on startups and scaleups as its primary customer segment, leveraging the extensive startup community, and fostering organic growth starting from Porto. The strategy is specifically tailored to resonate with cloud-native startups and scaleups, focusing on their particular cybersecurity needs. This bottom-up approach is crucial for building trust and understanding the evolving needs of these companies, allowing Onedash to refine and adapt its offerings in real-time. Moreover, this community-focused strategy facilitates word-of-mouth marketing, a powerful tool to further amplifying Onedash's reach and impact.

Onedash offers its platform through a multi-tier subscription model, which includes a free version for businesses starting their cybersecurity journey, a standard subscription priced at €250 per month for scaling businesses, and a

premium tier with custom pricing for those needing advanced security features at large scale. This pricing structure ensures scalability and affordability, catering to a wide range of business needs.

Which are the next steps for Onedash (funding, starting the business)?

For Onedash, the roadmap to success and impact involves a multi-faceted approach centered on securing additional funding, continuously enhancing the platform's capabilities, expanding market presence, and fostering a loyal customer base.

Currently in the phase of developing its Minimum Viable Product (MVP), Onedash is gearing up to introduce its innovative platform to the market in the Q2 2024. With a handful of customers already engaging with the closed beta version of the platform, the feedback received has been overwhelmingly positive, highlighting the intuitive nature of the interface, the effectiveness of the security posture assessment tools, and the platform's ability to offer tailored security recommendations.

Parallel to the MVP development, Onedash is preparing a pre-seed funding round aimed at propelling the next phase of development and scaling our operations. This funding round is a crucial step for Onedash, as it seeks to secure the financial backing needed to accelerate product enhancement, expand its market reach, and strengthen its infrastructure to support a growing user base.

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

Addressing the balancing a comprehensive, feature-rich cybersecurity platform with accessibility and usability for SMEs has been a significant challenge for Onedash. This balance is critical for ensuring the platform's adoption and its effectiveness in improving SMEs' cybersecurity defenses.

Rooted in a user-centric design philosophy, Onedash has made the platform's interface intuitive, simplifying complex cybersecurity tasks to ensure ease of use for SMEs with varying levels of technical expertise. This commitment to simplicity and clarity has been achieved through continuous user testing and feedback loops, ensuring that the platform remains navigable and effective for

its target users. By systematically collecting, analysing, and acting on the insights provided by early adopters, Onedash ensures that its solutions evolve to meet the real-world needs of SMEs.

How does Onedash answer an unmet need?

Traditionally, the cybersecurity landscape has been dominated by solutions designed for larger organisations, which often come with high costs, complex management requirements, and a one-size-fits-all approach. This leaves SMEs vulnerable, as they struggle with limited budgets, lack specialized IT security teams, and face distinct threats that differ from those of larger entities. Onedash's approach is transformative, making cybersecurity accessible to businesses of all sizes and capacities.

Understanding that SMEs operate in diverse industries and face specific challenges, Onedash offers customisable and scalable solutions that can adjust to the size of the business, the nature of the data handled, or the specific risks associated with a particular industry.

Onedash goes beyond providing tools by emphasising education and empowerment for SMEs. Through a wealth of educational resources, the platform enables businesses to better understand cybersecurity risks and adopt best practices, fostering a proactive security culture within the organization. This educational component is crucial for empowering SMEs to take charge of their cybersecurity, reducing vulnerabilities, and enhancing resilience against attacks.

Furthermore, Onedash aids SMEs in navigating the intricate regulations and standards that govern cybersecurity, providing features that assist in maintaining compliance. This not only protects businesses from potential legal repercussions but also strengthens their overall security posture.

By holistically addressing these previously unmet needs, Onedash is not only enhancing the cybersecurity landscape for smaller businesses but also ensuring that they can thrive securely in an increasingly interconnected world.

What's in store for the future?

Looking towards the future, Onedash is poised to redefine the cybersecurity landscape for SMEs globally. At the heart of its vision is the integration of advanced technology, such as AI and ML, to enhance threat detection and response capabilities. This technological evolution aims to provide SMEs with

proactive and predictive security measures, ensuring they stay ahead of cyber threats. Onedash's ambitions extend beyond its current market, with plans for global expansion that will make its innovative cybersecurity solutions accessible to SMEs worldwide. This will involve adapting the platform to meet the diverse cybersecurity needs and compliance requirements of different regions, establishing Onedash as a global leader in the field.

Strategic partnerships will play a crucial role in Onedash's growth, as collaborations with technology providers will enable the integration of complementary services, broadening market access, and co-creating innovative solutions. Furthermore, Onedash is committed to fostering a robust community and ecosystem around its platform, encouraging knowledge sharing and collaborative problem-solving among SMEs, cybersecurity experts, and technology partners. This community-driven approach is aimed at enhancing the collective cybersecurity posture of the SME sector.

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

For founders and future founders navigating the complex journey of entrepreneurship, one piece of advice stands out: embrace resilience and adaptability. The path to building and growing a successful startup is filled with uncertainties, challenges, and setbacks. Markets evolve, technologies advance, and what works today may not work tomorrow. Resilience allows you to weather the storms, to stand back up after failures, and learn from them. Adaptability enables you to pivot when necessary, to see change not as a threat but as an opportunity to innovate and stay relevant.

In the context of Onedash, this advice is reflected in the continuous evolution of its platform to meet the ever-changing cybersecurity needs of SMEs, the strategic shifts to embrace global markets, and the ability to adapt offerings based on user feedback and technological advancements. Founders should foster a culture that values resilience and adaptability within their teams, encouraging open-mindedness, continuous learning, and flexibility. This mindset can transform challenges into opportunities for growth, innovation, and long-term success.

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

you're living by at the moment?

My day starts early, while the family is still asleep. It's a moment of clarity where I can reflect in absolute silence, setting intentions for what lies ahead. This is usually followed by a reading session until the family awakes. Currently reading *Supercommunicators* by Charles Duhigg. After the family routine, the day continues with planning the day by reviewing tasks and setting clear goals, ensuring a focused work, with time blocking allocated for the different tasks, enhancing productivity and minimising distractions.

I like to tackle the most challenging (sometimes boring) tasks first while my mind is fresh. Then I follow with the most exciting tasks around strategic planning, brainstorming, prospecting customers and investors. Lunch time is a great opportunity to connect with my network, having lunch with customers, partners, and former academic or professional colleagues. After lunch, whenever possible I take 30 min for a power nap, a midday break and a mental reset, preparing me for the afternoon's tasks. The latter part of the workday I enjoy doing collaborative work with the team. During this time, I make it a point to be available for my team, addressing concerns, and navigating challenges together.

As the workday winds down, I dedicate time to review what was accomplished and what could be improved. This reflection is not only about acknowledging successes but also about identifying learning opportunities and areas for growth.

After work I usually unwind, engaging in family activities or personal hobbies, spending quality time on activities that contribute to overall well-being and happiness.

Before bedtime, I often engage in a light reading session or mentally preparing for the next day, jotting down a few key tasks or setting out priorities, easing into the next morning with a clear direction.

Luís Pereira is the CEO and Founder of *Onedash*.