

Time for Change

In 2020, Amber Probyn and Hazel McShane founded PEEQUAL, the UK's first stand alone women's urinal. The two friends came up with the idea while they were studying together for a master's degree at university.



"We saw first hand the problem of long queues at events so the business idea was born out of our own frustration," says Amber.

PEEQUAL's efficient, hygienic hands-free design is the first of its kind in the UK and Amber explains they have ambitious plans for the future: "We wrote a whole dissertation around the subject of structural inequality - for example, you'll often find the women's toilets further away than the male toilets in places like boardrooms where the decisions are being made. We want to challenge more than just the time spent waiting in a queue; we want to challenge wider gender inequality issues and see a behavioral change in valuing a woman's time as equal to a man's."

Unlocking Doors

Shortly after the idea was born, Amber and Hazel created a prototype and began discussions with potential investors to make their business dream a reality. It was during this time that Amber felt she needed more support and a greater understanding of the fundraising process, which is when she found Funding Accelerator: "Having more practice and teaching on forecasting and valuation, in particular, built my confidence up. I felt more comfortable speaking to

investors, knowing I could answer their questions." The forecast section of the programme was pivotal in attracting investment, explains Amber: "One investor told us it was the most detailed and thought-through forecast they had ever seen. They became our biggest investor because the forecast so impressed them. And because we compiled the forecast (rather than getting someone to do it for us) we could handle the questions and due diligence. It was easy to write up our assumptions too."

During the eight-week programme participants work to a structured weekly schedule and have the opportunity to meet other business owners from various backgrounds, something Amber found really valuable: "Working within a small group and learning from each other was so helpful. As a start-up founder you don't really have many people you can relate to, so being part of the community was useful. What I really liked about the programme was that it acted as a safety net that we could come back to with our questions and worries which was a great help."

"Being able to speak the same language as investors has been confidence building."

"Completing Funding Accelerator has given me the confidence to bet on myself more, we're now in a position where we can start investing in the business, building a team and making a profit."

financial model valuation and the homework schedule really kept me accountable ahead of each session. Each week having something that was a continuation from the week before that all linked together was really effective and meant that I was always working proactively towards the goal of speaking more confidently with investors."

A PEEQUAL Future

The programme concluded with a pitch day where

"The forecast section of the programme was pivotal. One investor told us it was the most detailed and thought through forecast they had ever seen.

They became our biggest investor because the forecast so impressed them. And because we compiled the forecast (rather than getting someone to do it for us) we could handle the questions and due diligence.

It was easy to write up our assumptions too."

As any start-up founder knows, running a new business means spare time is limited, so Amber was keen to ensure she got the most out of the time she spent in the programme, using the information gained to close investor discussions: "The way the course is structured gave me the time to actually deep dive into certain areas like the

Amber and Hazel were invited, alongside other business owners, to present their idea to investors and gain feedback they could use moving forward.

As soon as they finished Funding Accelerator they began putting the knowledge into action and just three months on PEEQUAL is going from strength to strength, exceeding their initial funding target of £250,000. And they've started turning their prototype into a working model, created using recycled sea plastics. They're now looking to the future, with potential plans to go international and secure another round of fundraising next year, something Amber says she now feels more empowered to do: "Funding Accelerator has definitely taught me to value my own knowledge more. It's given me the confidence to bet on myself more. We're now in a position where we can start investing in the business, building a team and making a profit."

"Funding Accelerator really helped to unlock some of the conversations we were already having with investors."



Funding Accelerator is an eight week programme designed to make it quicker and easier to raise equity investment

[Find Out More](#)