



Founder Insight Guide

EDITION ONE

50 insights from
recruitment
business founders

Contents

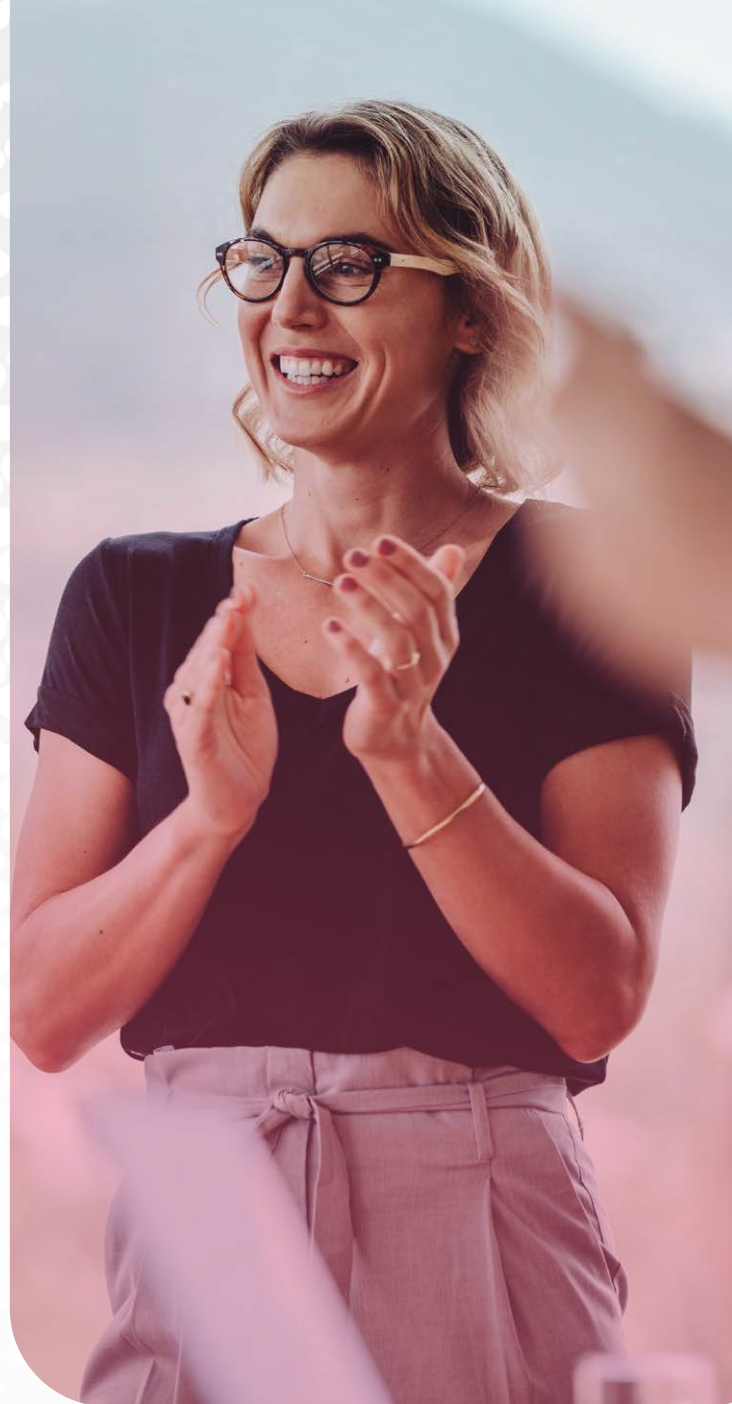
Introduction

Insight from leading startup founders

- **GS Solutions**
- **James Simpson**
- **Limitless**
- **Aspiron Search**
- **Dataworks**
- **Hampton North**
- **Orbition**
- **CHR Life Sciences**

About RecruitHub

Get in touch



“Be super-mindful of the old Japanese proverb: The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is today. I regret not doing this sooner. It’s a fairly low risk situation.

If you’re an exceptional recruiter, back yourself.”



STUART MITCHELL
FOUNDER,

HAMPTON NORTH
(US - CYBERSECURITY)



Introduction

Every month, over 1,000 recruitment professionals across the UK and US start building their dream.

If you're reading this ebook, there's a strong chance that you're thinking about being one of the many who choose to start their own business.

It's likely...

- You've mastered your craft and have lots of transferable experience
- You're incredibly knowledgeable about your specialism
- You've built well developed networks
- You're questioning why you're not taking home more commission
- You have core values that you want to shape your company culture around
- You've decided that you want to "take on the world" or enjoy a certain lifestyle

You've decided you want more...

And the market conditions are perfect...

- The US and UK are top 3 global staffing markets, generating a combined \$250bn in fee revenue.
- Both markets are largely comprised of small businesses, owing to the increased demand for recruiters who are 100% specialised in a niche.
- Recruiters are an invaluable resource in bull or bear markets. Businesses want to mitigate risk and how better to do this than to partner with experts.

So, to help provide insight, inspiration and reassurance that taking the first step is more than achievable, we spoke to a few founders of businesses launched on RecruitHub.

Billing a combined \$12m across the UK, US and mainland Europe in 2022, we reveal their top tips, what to avoid and why they decided to start building their dream.



**“We did our
first deal before
the end of the
first week”**





**Joe Seabright
Kieran Goodchild**
FOUNDERS




Joe Seabright and Kieran Goodchild founded IT services and transformation focused GS Solutions. With a strong track-record, Joe and Kieran hit the ground running, billing in week one and scaling the team quickly.

 MARKET
United Kingdom

 SECTOR
IT Services & Transformation

 FOUNDERS
**Joe Seabright
Kieran Goodchild**

 TEAM SIZE
7

YOUR TOP TIP FOR SOMEONE PREPARING TO START UP?

Focus on your niche and don't deviate or allow yourself to be distracted. It can be tempting to expand beyond what you know and do best - but reality is you will spend more time and energy focusing on the wrong things. Better to go inch-wide, mile deep.

Create strong QTR and H1/2 plans, trust your process and stick to it.

KEY THINGS TO FOCUS ON TO MAXIMISE EARLY TRACTION?

Sounds obvious, but be consistent with your BD, whether it's new client acquisition or client penetration. Build your marketing strategy around your specialism - areas to explore are creating and engaging with LinkedIn content and building targeted sales / pitch decks.

MISTAKES TO AVOID MAKING EARLY ON?

Don't be distracted.

"The motivation is always to focus on doing deals - if you do that, the earning and brand equity will take care of itself."

WAYS TO STAY MOTIVATED AS A START-UP FOUNDER?

My motivation for being a founder was to increase my earning potential and build a scalable and valued asset. The motivation is always to focus on doing deals - if you do that, the earning and brand equity will take care of itself.

WHAT EVENTUALLY PUSHED YOU TO MAKE THE MOVE TO START YOUR BUSINESS?

I always wanted to run my own business. Once I had gained enough experience and confidence in my skillset - the transition from biller to owner who takes the lion share was easy to make.



**“We wanted to
become the
people we know
we can be.”**





**Paris Abbas
Romone Alexander-Simpson**
FOUNDERS




Romone and Paris followed their shared dream to build a business that is 100% inclusive - creating wealth and progression opportunities for all. Facing covenant periods, the founders trusted their experience and skills to launch James Simpson in a new geo and market. With a strong pipeline and placements made in under two months, the duo are meticulously planning to grow revenue to £1m in the next 12 months.

 MARKET
UK & Germany

 SECTOR
**Cybersecurity Sales,
Pre-Sales & Customer
Success professionals**

 FOUNDERS
**Romone
Alexander-Simpson
Paris Abbas**

 TEAM SIZE
2

YOUR TOP TIP FOR SOMEONE PREPARING TO START UP?

Romone: Make sure you're mentally and structurally prepared; align your financial forecasting for the transition from employee to founder. Focus on upskilling and developing your knowledge to run a business - listen to podcasts, watch videos and read books.

KEY THINGS TO FOCUS ON TO MAXIMISE EARLY TRACTION?

Romone: Key objective is to get money on the board. Work backwards to ensure you do all the right things to make this happen; Map your market, build your database, maximise your LinkedIn connections, be proactive with your BD, forecast and work your conversion metrics, run structured and strategic marketing campaigns - focusing on your differentiation and your value adds.

Romone: Create a short-term goal plan using specific milestones such as x positive responses from your email campaign, x candidate connections. Breaking down the milestones into smaller chunks helps to keep you focused and the little wins keep you motivated.

Paris: First stage is to make sure you're winning new business, beyond that you want to focus on specialising and tailoring your messages to be very personal.

MISTAKES TO AVOID MAKING EARLY ON?

Don't be afraid to make mistakes. As long as you are learning, it's never a failure. Additionally, although it's unlikely, don't allow yourself to be complacent - be strong in your mindset and commitment to work harder than before.



“Don’t be afraid to make mistakes. As long as you are learning, it’s never a failure.”

WAYS TO STAY MOTIVATED AS A START-UP FOUNDER?

I have a passion to be successful and see how I can continually improve my skills, but the biggest motivator is my family - I want to build something for them and make them see that the sky’s the limit.

Networking and being around similar minded people. Ensuring that my expectations are realistic, especially in the first 6 months is key. I also want to treat the business like my newborn baby - I want to provide solid foundations and help it grow with strong values.

WHAT EVENTUALLY PUSHED YOU TO MAKE THE MOVE TO START YOUR BUSINESS?

Romone: It’s always been a personal goal to become my own boss. I wanted to become the person I know I can be. I knew I could translate my performance from team-leader and manager to owner.

Paris: It’s always been a goal to build something for myself. Having built out and managed the SaaS team with Romone, we’d gained a lot of experience that we could translate into our new business. My goal is to build an inclusive company that gives people a platform to be successful. Helping people and giving back to the community is equally, if not more important, than simply making money.

BUSINESS OBJECTIVES, 2023 OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS?

We’re focusing on growing office space, hiring 2-4 new members into the team, and building our US business. The target we’re setting for 2023 is £1m with a five year plan set at £5m and 10 heads - all with clear progression plans. To achieve our objectives it’s really important to use the first 6 months to understand where we can double down and where we can improve. Focus is to reinvest the revenue to hire great talent to help us achieve the targets.



KEY MILESTONES

- ✓ **3x offers in the first 2 months**
- ✓ **Building a business from scratch in a new market - focusing on sales and CX roles in Cybersecurity across UK and Germany.**
- ✓ **Growing key brand and sales metrics**
- ✓ **Working 6-8 live roles**
- ✓ **Lots of positive conversations in the next 12 months**




“The moment your work and pay doesn’t excite you, you need to jump out of your comfort zone immediately! Take the plunge.”





Francis Harwood
FOUNDER




Founded by Francis Harwood, Limitless builds and scales software engineering teams for ambitious tech focused companies in the US.

 MARKET
US

 SECTOR
**Software engineering,
UX/UI Product & Design**

 FOUNDERS
Francis Harwood

 TEAM SIZE
1

MILESTONE
**First placement within
20 days**

YOUR TOP TIP FOR SOMEONE PREPARING TO START UP?

No time is better than the present. Approach the preparation ahead of launch diligently, ensuring that you prepare realistically.

KEY THINGS TO FOCUS ON TO MAXIMISE EARLY TRACTION?

Focus on your brand and what you do differently to any other agency.

“No time is better than the present. Approach the preparation ahead of launch diligently, ensuring that you prepare realistically.”

MISTAKES TO AVOID MAKING EARLY ON?

Ensure that you put a plan in place for your vertical and geography to ensure this isn't an area you are stepping on (not worth the headache at the start).

WAYS TO STAY MOTIVATED AS A START-UP FOUNDER?

Podcasts, meet-ups, co-working office. Create personal goals outside of the business e.g. gym, diet etc – these all play a HUGE part in your early success.

WHAT WAS THE KEY REASON BEHIND STARTING YOUR OWN BUSINESS?

Was in the pipeline for a long time and always knew I wanted to set up a business in recruitment from the beginning. The moment your work and fundamentally pay doesn't excite you, you need to jump out of your comfort zone immediately! Take the plunge.



**“We wish we
had done this
years ago”**



**Joseph Cooper
Oliver Legg**
FOUNDERS




Founded by Joseph Cooper and Oliver Legg, the decision to build a business in the US was driven by restrictive covenants. The decision to back their instincts and experience has paid off, with the team growing revenue to over \$1m+ inside 12 months.

 MARKET
US

 SECTOR
Cybersecurity

 FOUNDERS
Joseph Cooper
Oliver Legg

 TEAM SIZE
7

“Don’t place emphasis on timing: If it’s a question of “is it the right time or not” the right answer is never going to come. You always find a reason to say no.”

WHAT WAS THE KEY REASON BEHIND STARTING YOUR OWN BUSINESS?

The ability to control work life and personal life and wealth creation. We both had young families and it opened our eyes to the flexibility available, we wanted to do things our way without answering to anyone else.


Proving that we can take what we do as independent billers and scale the process. If the business works, it’s down to you, that’s hugely exciting, you’re the master of your destiny.

TOP TIPS FOR SOMEONE PREPARING TO START-UP?

Don’t place emphasis on timing: If it’s a question of “is it the right time or not” the right answer is never going to come. You always find a reason to say no.

Trust your experience and skills: Essentially, you’re scaling what you do today. If you back yourself as someone who can generate business and do 360 without anyone else, then do it. What’s stopping you?

KEY MILESTONES

 **Reached \$1m+ revenue inside 12 months**

 **Deal in first week of trading**

 **Hiring into team within 8 months**



“It still blows me away that a lot of really good, solid billers don’t have the confidence in their own ability to do it on their own.”




**Alex Hutchings
Wesley Taupin**
FOUNDERS




Co-founders Alex Hutchings and Wesley Taupin launched Dataworks in early summer 2021, with extensive backgrounds as specialist international recruiters.

 MARKET
US

 SECTOR
Data - science, engineering and business intelligence

 FOUNDERS
**Alex Hutchings
Wesley Taupin**

 TEAM SIZE
5

KEY MILESTONES

-  **Working roles on day two**
-  **Placing in the US in the first three months**
-  **Exceeded forecasts in first QTR trading**

WHAT WAS THE KEY REASON BEHIND STARTING YOUR OWN BUSINESS?

FLEXIBILITY: ensuring our business supported what we wanted to do in life, we didn't want to regret not trying.

AUTONOMY: what has been the most fun has been making decisions that impact what we're doing, from territories to making hires and offices. We're not needing validation or authorisation from someone else, we're effectively saying "we can do this".

ALLOWING US TO FOCUS SALES: want to ensure that our focus is on the thing we love, which is selling. We've done the operational side before and found it quite boring, it's not going to help us make more money.

BEING ABLE TO REALISE OUR SHARED VISION: We want to build a completely entrepreneur, autonomous environment where you can be very niche and very focused. We want to offer genuine flexibility and investment into wellbeing. There's a "no questions asked" policy on personal appointments and engagements.

MISTAKES TO AVOID MAKING EARLY ON?

BACK YOURSELF: If you're billing any figure north of £100-150k for your current employer, I guarantee you're going to make 3-4x more for yourself and you can manage your week.

BE FOCUSED: we recruit in two cities in the world, that's all we do. That's going to help us become really well known for being really good in a niche area. We've not got any aspiration to be a 200-300 headcount business.

HEADCOUNT AND PERFORMANCE DRIVEN: link NFI to headcount and performance, so you can scale your business in a lean way.

BE CLEAR ON WHAT TYPE OF BUSINESS YOU ARE BUILDING: We didn't want the business to be a lifestyle vehicle. We secured investment purely with the objective of growth. This enabled us to hire quickly and hit the ground running.

SET MILESTONES: We've very focused on headcount and NFI (net fee income). Aiming to be at 6 heads in year one and double this growth in year year two with offices in UK & Europe

HAMPTON NORTH

CYBER SECURITY SEARCH SIMPLIFIED


“I regret not doing this sooner. Looking back, I was probably ready two years ago.”




Stuart Mitchell
FOUNDER


HAMPTON NORTH

With experience of both the UK and US market, million dollar biller Stuart Mitchell formed Hampton North, to tackle the biggest problem in cyber security; the talent shortage.

 MARKET
US

 SECTOR
Cybersecurity

 FOUNDERS
Stuart Mitchell

 TEAM SIZE
2

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU?

- ▶ Having control over the direction my career is heading
- ▶ Being able to build a business in my vision
- ▶ I want to have fun - love to be able to control my own destiny
- ▶ Thrive on challenging myself
- ▶ Creating flexibility for me and the team. I get to do bathtime with my daughter every night

WHAT EXCITES YOU ABOUT BUILDING YOUR BUSINESS?

Hiring people who are better than you. I'm super excited for the cybersecurity industry to go "Wow, like Stewart is not messing around; he's getting the best person from this company, and the best person from this company, and owning that.

TOP TIP THEY'D HAVE FOR SOMEONE PREPARING TO START UP

Be super-mindful of the old Japanese proverb: The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is today. I regret not doing this sooner. It's a fairly low risk situation. If you're an exceptional recruiter, so back yourself.

KEY THINGS TO FOCUS ON TO MAXIMISE EARLY TRACTION

Get the foundational pieces in play and then bring people together to create the vision.
Having access to the best tools.



WHAT IS YOUR ASPIRATION FOR THE BUSINESS?

I'm super excited to create the best cybersecurity recruiting team in the industry, and I truly believe I can do that. I want to get to five principals or above to be in the team within 12 months in the US. Want to hire great people and get out of the way - let them run with it.

“Around a year ago, I came to the realisation that to create true change and do things that I wanted to do I would have to go out there and own it.”

WHAT WAS THE KEY REASON BEHIND STARTING YOUR OWN BUSINESS?

I'd achieved everything I possibly could (Top biller in US, most promoted person in Stott and May's history, Setup their California operation, ran a seven figure EBIT team) and ultimately wanted to do things my way. Around a year ago, I came to the realisation that to create true change and do things that I wanted to do I would have to go out there and own it.

HAMPTON NORTH

KEY MILESTONES

- ✓ Invoicing in first two weeks with 2 different clients
- ✓ Won a big retainer in the first 2 months.
- ✓ First hire in month 3



“If I had looked at options to start my business earlier in my career, I’d probably have launched much earlier”







Kyle Winterbottom
FOUNDER






ORBITION

DATA, ANALYTICS & AI TALENT

In just over a year, Orbiton has established a retained search first model within the data & analytics sector. Placing throughout the UK, US and Europe, a key value-add and brand building channel is Orbiton's industry-leading podcast, Driven by Data, with more than 8,000 listeners globally.

-  MARKET
UK, Europe, USA
-  SECTOR
Data, Analytics & Artificial Intelligence
-  FOUNDERS
Kyle Winterbottom
-  TEAM SIZE
8

KEY MILESTONES

-  **First placement in month three**
-  **First hire in month 8**
-  **100% of revenue within first 12 months from exclusively retained work to build entire teams with household names**

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU?

To continue growing my personal brand in the market. I've always viewed this as a long-term pursuit and I've been working on developing this over a number of years.

I want to cultivate a high-performance culture that is focused on results. I want to build an autonomous environment where people are rewarded by success.

To become the most recognised brand with Data & Analytics recruitment. Focus on geographic growth, not sector growth. Launch international offices in the US and Germany in the next 18 months.

Continue to develop the Orbiton brand. Our objective is to be credible and value-added differentiation is the key to achieving credibility in the mind of a hirer or candidate

"I want to build an autonomous environment where people are rewarded by success."

TOP TIPS FOR SOMEONE PREPARING TO START-UP?

EXPLORE YOUR OPTIONS: If I had looked at options to start my business earlier in my career, I'd probably have launched much earlier.

DON'T LET COVENANTS PUT YOU OFF DOING THIS: they absolutely can be daunting but we've built Orbiton from a standing start (had a 12 month covenant) and we've been financially very successful.

BE CREATIVE WITH YOUR MARKETING: we host numerous events and run a podcast which is exclusively for the market we work in, with 8,000 followers in 85 countries.

SCRATCH THE ITCH: If you're considering launching a business the itch is never going to go away. It never went away for me. Even when I was doing really well and enjoying roles in previous businesses there was always something in the back of my mind that was saying "one day i'll do this myself" - you've to go to explore that feeling.



**“Not just owning
the business, but
owning my time,
owning the results
and owning the
financial benefits
of that”**



**Haseena Mooney
Chris Carey**
FOUNDERS



Co-founders Haseena Mooncey and Chris Carey and of CHR Life Sciences both had very successful careers delivering perm and contract recruitment solutions to high-growth Life Sciences market before making the transition into entrepreneurship.

MARKET
UK

SECTOR
Life Sciences

FOUNDERS
**Haseena Mooncey,
Chris Carey**

TEAM SIZE
2

TOP TIP THEY'D HAVE FOR SOMEONE PREPARING TO START UP:

GET FEEDBACK: speak to founders of businesses that fit in your personal or shared vision - whether this is a lifestyle business or you want to grow and scale for maximum value at exit. Tapping into views is very helpful to shape your thoughts.

USE THE BEST RECRUITMENT TOOLS: Make sure you get maximise using the right technology and tools to streamline your operation and scale quickly

THINK BIG, BUT BREAK YOUR VISION INTO REALISTIC GOALS. Recruitment is a 3-way relationship. Control what you can, but also be prepared for people to change their minds - it's not always going to go your way.

MILESTONES

✓ **First deal in under 12 weeks**

PERSONAL OBJECTIVES

✓ **Freedom to control the direction we can take the business in.**

BUSINESS OBJECTIVES

✓ **Scaling the team and building out the business**

✓ **Celebrating success - every QTR, H1/H2**

✓ **Developing the brand so that everyone can buy into this - clients, candidates and future employees**

“Speak to founders of businesses that fit in your personal or shared vision - whether this is a lifestyle business or you want to grow and scale for maximum value at exit.”



About RecruitHub

RecruitHub is the leading BaaS (business-as-a-service) accelerator for startup recruitment businesses in the UK and US.

Founded by a former UK and US recruitment business owner and a hedge-fund manager, we combine deep-level recruitment and financial knowledge to set your business up for success.

To date, we've helped over 60 entrepreneurs start their own firms, many of them rapidly growing to \$700k+ within 18 months (the fastest to \$1m+ inside 12 months) - but we've also supported plenty of lifestyle recruiters too.

Our approach is simple: we enable you to focus on revenue generating activities from day one.

What we do:



We shape your vision into a business plan - covering key financial, operational and contractual elements.



We then create and integrate your brand onto a world-class tech stack - covering CRM, candidate acquisition, automation, productivity and communication tools.



As soon as your new business is launched, you focus on billing day one and we take care of everything else, from back-office support to accounting, product, customer success, and ongoing advisory.

The RecruitHub Platform



See how RecruitHub works
WATCH VIDEO



UNITED KINGDOM

T: +44 208 057 4757

71-75 Shelton Street
London
WC2H 9JQ



UNITED STATES

T: +1 858 337 1794

31915 Rancho California Rd
Ste 2000317
Temecula, CA

Let's discuss your business idea
Get in touch for a confidential chat today.



SCHEDULE YOUR CALL