

60 SECONDS WITH AN ENTREPRENEUR...

HILDE FRYDNES

Role: Co-Founder & Chief Customer Officer

Company Name: This is Unfolded

Sector: Retail

Base: Edinburgh

Purpose We make sustainable, affordable, waste-free clothes that make a long-term positive impact on the world by supporting children in education, paying workers higher wages and offering great sustainable fashion at an affordable price.



Tell us a bit about your business? We produce limited collections of sustainable, affordable clothes, eliminating overproduction, cutting the waste and investing the savings in fair wages for workers and creating long term change by supporting children in education. All our clothes are designed in collaboration with our community of shoppers, who love the ethos of sustainable clothing that makes a positive impact on the world.

How did you come up with your business idea? We've worked with fashion retail for years at our previous company, Mallzee, trying to help brands make better decisions. Right at the start of the pandemic we launched Lost Stock, a short term mystery box to help factory workers. Our experience from that led us to create a new way of shopping, turning the traditional fashion model on its head. We cut waste and eliminate over-production as we only produce clothes after we take orders. This is our response to the fast fashion industry destroying the planet, and our way to combat climate change and inequality by making a positive impact on the world.

How did you come up with your business name? A team brainstorm, where we looked at various ideas of doing fashion differently. We were just coming out of the pandemic.

What's been your biggest challenge to date? There's been several! Starting a sustainable fashion brand with a completely different model, from scratch' means learning a lot of new things. There's bound to be challenges in the whole critical path - from logistics and deliveries to communicating our story. We're always learning, and making improvements every collection.

What's been the highlight of the last year for you? There are several highlights - despite the last few years being particularly difficult, with a pandemic, climate change, global displacement of people, war in Europe and a cost of living crisis, it's great to look at the positives and doing what we can to tackle the global problems!

What's your favourite thing about being an entrepreneur? Being able to shape our journey as we go. We keep learning - from customers, from partners and from others in the industry, and I love that there's not a set way forward, but that we get to keep moving forward making decisions about how we can keep improving and create the biggest impact.

What's the best thing about being an entrepreneur in Scotland? The Scottish startup eco-system is pretty great, with lots of opportunities for connection and collaboration with others.

What's the best piece of advice you ever received? "Do you really need to do it that way?" Taking a step back to look at our processes and how we do things is an ongoing piece of advice that helps us improve on everything we do.

What advice do you wish you hadn't listened to? That you have to get everything "perfect" before you can get something out there. To be honest, we probably didn't even listen to it that much - but the temptation is always there just to make it a little bit better before you bring it in front of people. I think it's actually much better to get early feedback from the right audiences, whether that is internally, friendly customers and early adopters, or putting it out to groups of people to find out what works well and what needs more work.

What has been your proudest achievement since starting your businesses? Being able to support over 3000 children in education in the communities near where we make our clothes is pretty humbling. And I also love seeing the reviews and comments from people who really believe in what we are doing and how we're doing it.

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Is there anything on your business bucket list? I'd love to talk about This is Unfolded and how we are changing the future of fashion on stage at an international sustainability conference- and next year, hopefully I'll be able to share some of our lessons learnt at Turing Fest, one of the highlights in the Scottish startup calendar.

Who's been your biggest supporter? I feel super lucky that I've got plenty of support, both personal and professional. My partner Niall makes life run as smoothly as it can, and an amazing network of people I can get advice from and lean on, from former Skyscanner friends and colleagues, to fellow entrepreneurs and startup peers is crucial.

How do you care for each other's wellbeing at work? We try to look after each other in multiple ways - being flexible to allow people to deal with life when they need to, regular check-ins to make sure everyone is OK and things are going well, team socials on Zoom, getting together in person when we can, sending a little surprise on birthdays and work anniversaries - and a lot of laughs, puns and banter!

How do you start your day? I haven't used an alarm clock since having a baby... Being woken up by a toddler for some cuddles and playtime before breakfast is actually quite nice! And when she's off to nursery, I get set up for the day in the home office (we're all still working remotely, with the occasional get-together for bigger projects). I'll get my coffee, run through morning stand-ups with my team, set the priorities for the day, a bit of banter, and then it's all go, go, go.

What do you do for fun after a busy week? Something outside! I love taking our 2 year old to play outside, whether that's on a (short...!) hike, at the beach, to a park or playpark, or just hanging in the hammock in the garden.

What's the best business book you've read? ReWork by Jason Fried and David Heinemeier Hanson. It's still one of the best ways to think differently about how we work.

Any office pets? When we were in an office, shared with fellow entrepreneurs at Appointedd, we had several office dogs, including our soft-hair developer Coco. We're an animal loving bunch, and pets are still a recurring feature on team calls and Slack chats!

Do you have a favourite TED Talk? I love Hans Rosling's talks on stats; presenting data and information in such a compelling way is a brilliant skill. (I also highly recommend his book Factfulness!)

What's your best tip for achieving a good life/work balance? Optimise, optimise, optimise. It's not always easy to do, but understanding how you can be as effective as possible, seeing where you're less productive or you get less enjoyment and when you just need to change up how you approach things, means you can (hopefully) get through what you need to, and find time for the things you want to. And it's also a hard one to follow in practice, but trying to be all-in the thing you're doing (whether that is work or fun) rather than thinking about everything else at the same time makes you do it better. I'm also a fan of making it work for you - if you're able to, taking the opportunity to go out on an adventure when the sun is shining and doing your work when the kids are in bed, or taking your laptop to the park or the hammock.

What would you say is the secret to success? Always look at where you can make things better. Talk to - and listen to! - your customers. Get input from various sources. Don't just do what someone tells you to do. And never get caught up in the 'it's how things have always been done'.

What's your big dream? Business-wise, being able to make a real difference to the way the fashion industry works is going to be so important for our shared future. We haven't got all the answers, but turning the model on its head and making a positive impact, and to invest in a better future both for the people who make our clothes and for the children who will continue to power change is the goal. My personal pipe-dream is to cross Greenland on skis (before it's too late!) and to sail to Antarctica- I'm quite far from achieving either, but I love having dreams to stretch towards!

How would you like to be remembered? As someone who cared, made the world a bit better & helped others do the same.

Where can we find out more about your business? www.thisisunfolded.com / [instagram.com/thisisunfolded](https://www.instagram.com/thisisunfolded)