

Resourcify

Gary Lewis

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Connecting matters



“We have a linear culture, and the problem of waste is one that no one really likes to think about,” Lewis says. “We want to make recycling easier than it is to throw it away, and fundamentally change our concept of waste entirely.”

Making recycling easier

The cloud-based platform aims to overcome the often-siloed nature of the waste value chain and allow stakeholders to work more effectively together, and ultimately aid society’s transition to a fully circular economy. It’s a sector that Lewis believes is ripe for digitisation, with the company’s technology stack offering users real-time information to understand and manage their recycling performance.

Recycling rates across the European Union as a whole are approximately 50%, but this varies considerably by region and sector, with plastic and electronic waste as low as 41%. This relative paucity of recycling is reflected in the shocking statistic that just 12% of material resources used in the EU in 2016 came from either recycled or recovered materials.

Not only does this have significant environmental consequences, it also has economic consequences as the value tied up in waste materials is unused. Indeed, the Royal Statistical Society suggested the value of this waste was over \$7 trillion.

It’s a problem that German start-up, Resourcify, is doing its bit to solve. The concept for the business was born when CEO and co-founder, Gary Lewis, worked on cruise ships and saw first-hand how important it was to process as much waste as possible. This then germinated in the frantic environs of a Startup Weekend event in Hamburg, where Lewis teamed up with several other participants to rapidly prototype the concept for what would become Resourcify.

Resourcify has managed to connect approximately 130 recyclers across six European countries, and Lewis believes that these kinds of serious, societal problems are both what European innovators are good at, and what they should focus on.

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“We wouldn’t be here without support from across Europe, and I have strong opinions on this. Let the Americans work on their social networks and advertising businesses; Europe is a continent full of big thinkers working on really important societal issues,” he says. “We’re working on the real issues here in Europe, and I’m proud to be part of that.”

Indeed, Lewis believes that having this over-riding societal purpose is crucial for any entrepreneur, and



Website:
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he urges those looking to flex their entrepreneurial muscles to look beyond creating yet another app and look instead at tackling some of the major challenges facing society today.

This transformative mission is something that membership of EIT RawMaterials has helped to make reality. The company originally partnered with the EIT via EIT Climate KIC, who helped them to take the basic concept formed during the Startup Weekend and turn it into a viable business case. The company then partnered with EIT RawMaterials to bring the solution to market.

Given the traditional nature of the industry, membership of the EIT has given the company the credibility to open

doors and enter into productive conversations with stakeholders across the sector.

“Whenever start-ups from any sector go into a space with a large incumbent, it’s really important that you’re taken seriously,” Lewis explains. “Being able to put the EIT RawMaterials logo on our pitch gave us the credibility to get our foot in the door.”

Teenage activist Greta Thunberg famously asked delegates at the UN Climate Change COP24 to imagine looking back in 50 years’ time and ask what you did to make the planet a more sustainable place. At Resourcify, they believe that now is the time to act and build a truly circular economy.

