



## COMPANY OVERVIEW

### Otterly

Founded by Rishabh Jindal

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Funding Received: £10,000 Venture Further Business Plan Competition

**Three words to describe your journey so far...** Onward, Sideward, Upward!



Tell us a little bit about yourself, the Enterprise and your journey so far. My name is RJ, and I'm a Masters student studying Development Economics here at The University of Manchester. I am fascinated with the role of small enterprises in the economy. My enterprise, Otterly, enables SMEs in eateries to take advantage of the digital era. Otterly brings your favourite eateries into the 21st century, so you can simply walk in and place an order on your mobile, or have your order ready just in time for your arrival. There is no need to stand in queues, carry multiple loyalty cards, be frustrated by incomplete menu information, or wait for the waiter. It is a mobile platform that lets the customer place an order directly on their smartphone and the eatery can notify them when the order is ready. Otterly also lets the eateries engage with customers in a more meaningful way by providing them with targeted discounts, loyalty schemes, and promotions – all integrated in a hassle-free way.

**How was your idea conceived?** The idea was conceived after my constant struggle to beat the queues and place an order at my favourite eatery during lunchtime. It is quite apparent that smaller businesses do not possess the technical knowledge or capital to make this process more streamlined. My studies at the University gave me insights into the workings of the small business economy and mathematical tools to solve their challenges.

**What is your company mission?** My mission is to bring back hospitality into the eating sector in a cost-effective and sustainable manner. I am to make ordering food from your favourite eatery hassle-free and quick.

**At what point, did you realise that the idea had commercial potential?** Right from the start. Working with smaller businesses means being a part of them and I quickly learnt that they were in need of something like this. Being part of the Manchester Enterprise Centre (MEC) Venture Further Business plan competition also gave me some validation for the idea as I won first prize and secured £10,000 to develop the business.



**What approaches did you first employ to develop the idea?**

The first step was to approach small eateries and understand their issues in detail. This was inspired by the lean startup methodology that I probably would not have learned if it was not for the MEC, and the Roadmap series.

**How did you get involved with the Innovation Optimiser?**

It all started with my participation in the Venture Further

competition run by the University. Since this event, the University has been a constant help and putting me in touch with relevant programs and support. This support has been instrumental in allowing me to take this idea forward.

**How did this engagement help you?** I have been able to discover and dig deeper into the problems surrounding my business idea and progressively solve them. I also made some great connections with other participants who have helped me through their own experiences and networks. Now that I've taken part in the Roadmap sessions, I am certainly in a much better position to construct and present my idea to people.

**What have been your major milestones and achievements so far?** Undoubtedly, the first accomplishment was to build enough confidence and get out of my comfort-zone. Managing studies and developing my business idea at the same time is a jolly feeling. Winning the Venture Further competition was also an important initiating milestone, giving me the funding to progress the idea but also it validated the concept. The journey only got better from there.



**How has being involved with entrepreneurial activity benefitted you?** Oh, it has benefited all aspects of my life tremendously! People tend to believe that entrepreneurial activity will disrupt their norm – they will pay less attention to their surroundings, lose friends and affection of loved ones. The truth could not be further from this. Since I made an attempt, everyone has given me a helping hand, providing me with lots of support and encouragement. I was certain that I would do poorly in my academic work because of so much work on the side, but somehow, I did better than I have ever done.

**What future support are you looking for to progress your business?** There are countless next steps. However, the only ones that matter at this moment are to develop a Minimum Viable Product (progressing), enter the market, test the response, and refine this. I have a great mentor with experience in technology, but I would also love another member to join my advisory board who has more experience in retail food service and hospitality sector. If you are an interested mentor or investor, do get in touch.



**Would you encourage other staff, academics and research students to seek support for their ideas through the Innovation Optimiser?** It is a no-brainer. Firstly, you will have a reason to get out of the building (which, people say, is the most important bit about starting a business). Secondly, you will have more people behind you than ever. Thirdly, you will slowly unjumble the jargon in your mind. By discussing your thoughts, you will be able to understand them better. Trust me; it is different than discussing with your Mum or friends, no matter how clever they are. Finally, there is an absolutely brilliant and lovely team running the Roadmap programme. Quality support for free? You would be crazy to say no to that.

