

Meet our female founders....

CLARE HANSON

Clare Hanson is the Co-Founder of The Children's Furniture Company. Clare founded the company with her husband in 2012 in Milton Keynes. Foresight invested in the company in 2018 to allow the company to expand their product range.

What did you do before starting your company?

Before starting *The Children's Furniture Company (TCFC)*, I had a career in marketing and over the years held positions at GSK, The Telegraph and Mercedes.

What led you to found *The Children's Furniture Company*?

The idea started to formulate when our eldest daughter, aged two, was ready to move out of her cot and into a bed. We found that the options available to us varied from extremely expensive to not built to last. We wanted something that was good quality without breaking the bank and when we couldn't find that, we thought other parents may be having the same dilemma and *The Children's Furniture Company* was formed.

What has been the highlight of your career?

The thing that motivates me the most is seeing all the incredible reviews from happy customers. It can be very easy to focus on the few negative comments and I think it is so important to recognise all of the positive feedback we get. We often print out the great reviews to give staff a boost and remind everyone why we work as hard as we do.

What is the most challenging thing about being a female founder?

Like many women, whether they are a business owner or a mother working full time, striking the right home/work balance can be difficult. I have two young girls and in a job like mine, I don't get to leave work behind at the end of the day.

What advice would you give to another aspiring female entrepreneur?

My number one piece of advice is to go with your gut. You can talk yourself out of anything if you want to. If you have done your research and you can see potential, follow your intuition and take the risk. Even if you fail, ensure you learn from it and don't repeat your mistakes.



What is a defining moment of your career that brought you to where you are now?

Whilst working at Mercedes, I was lucky enough to have a mentor who told me that in your career you need to make the choice to specialise in a function or an industry. His advice always stuck with me and I went on to work in marketing in a variety of different industries which has enabled me to explore different aspects of marketing that you don't typically get if you stay in one industry.

What do you wish you had known before starting out?

I wish I had started the company knowing and accepting that it isn't going to be a 9 to 5 job. Starting a business was almost like having another child in that it requires so much attention and perseverance. In my experience, the more you put in to a business, the more you get out.

How do you think investment firms can contribute to closing the gap in VC funding for female and male entrepreneurs?

Seeking and securing investment can be an intimidating process. You have to be prepared to answer tough questions about the business you have put your heart and soul into creating. In meetings I was frequently the only woman present, so by design the meetings were male dominated and at times aggressive in tone. Having more females as part of the team would have changed the dynamic and has the potential to make the process more inclusive for aspiring female entrepreneurs.

To find out more about *The Children's Furniture Company*, visit:
www.thechildrensfurniturecompany.com