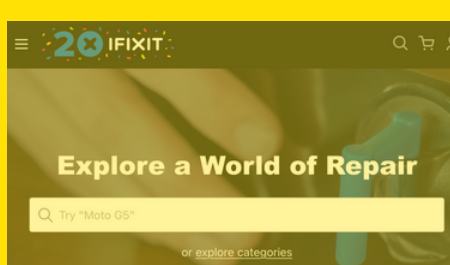
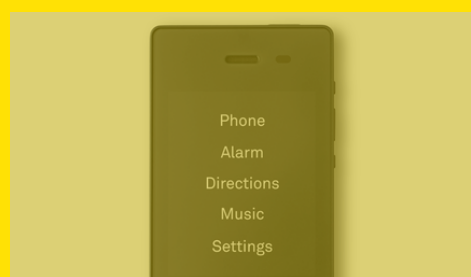


11 LIGHTWEIGHT CASE STUDIES OF NON-CAPITALISTIC BUSINESS



THE FOR-PROFIT EDITION



THE 11 FOR PROFIT COMPANIES

- 1 BearMade
- 2 Light Phone
- 3 Fairphone
- 4 Ifixit
- 5 Swapfiets
- 6 Slow
- 7 Open Collective
- 8 Kaffe Bueno
- 9 Planetary Impact Ventures
- 10 Mud Jeans
- 11 Kruse Vask

While reading, keep 3 things in mind

1: No case is perfect (though some are pretty close).

2: Therefore, we look at non-capitalistic and sustainability elements of the business and ask questions.

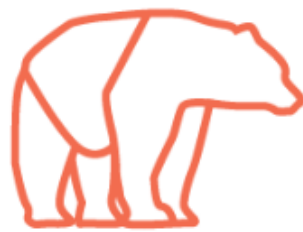
3: Each case consists of

- (a) an introduction,
- (b) a review of non-capitalistic elements,
- (c) open questions/critique, and
- (d) financial numbers.



01

BearMade



bags for wildish people

Shop all

For Profit · UK-based · Bags

1a · Introduction

**Bearmade makes bags
focusing on longevity,
using GOTS-certified
organic dry-waxed cotton
canvas.**

1b - What's non-capitalistic?

Limit to growth: Capped its
production to **max. 25**
bags per week.

1b - What's non-capitalistic?

Product longevity: Bags are **guaranteed for life, made to repair**, and they take bags back in exchange for a credit.

1b - What's non-capitalistic?

Grounded locally and
helping people get outdoors:

**Started the non-profit
Wildish Club to help
people get out into the
wild in Yorkshire.**

BearMade helps fund it.

1b - What's non-capitalistic?

Open source: It aims to help local bag makers worldwide make and sell similar bags from local materials and methods. And they "**will personally know everyone who makes our bags.**" So, if you buy a bag, it is made in your country.

big bags



Jorvik Backpack - 25-30L
★★★★★ (3)



Gouthwaite Backpack - 18-23L
★★★★★ (86)



Gouthwaite Backpack - 18-23L
★★★★★ (86)



Gouthwaite Backpack - 13-15L
★★★★★ (31)



who cares wins

Whilst we love making great bags, we think there is a lot more we can do with our platform and profits. So we started The Wildish Club. A movement that brings awesome people together to do interesting stuff outdoors.

[learn more](#)



1c - Open questions

**Does the world need
more outdoor bags, gear,
and apparel?**

1c - Open questions

One could argue 'no'
because manufacturers
already produce billions of
pieces of clothing yearly

(as a reference, Adidas
made 900M shoes, apparel,
and accessories).

1c - Open questions

One could also argue 'yes' because we need clothing, gear, etc., that can last for generations with the proper care and repair.

1c - Open questions

The problem with most of what is being **produced today** is that **it is of such a poor quality that it won't last**, despite you trying to take care of it.

1c - Open questions

This is an open question and the answer requires a more in-depth review, but taking (1) their slow growth, (2) focus on Wildish Club and (3) production cap into consideration, **we are not too worried.**

1c - Open questions

The question of whether the world needs more or not isn't only relevant for BearMade. In future cases, we will refer to this question as **"Does the world need more?"**



1d - Key numbers

Revenue '22:

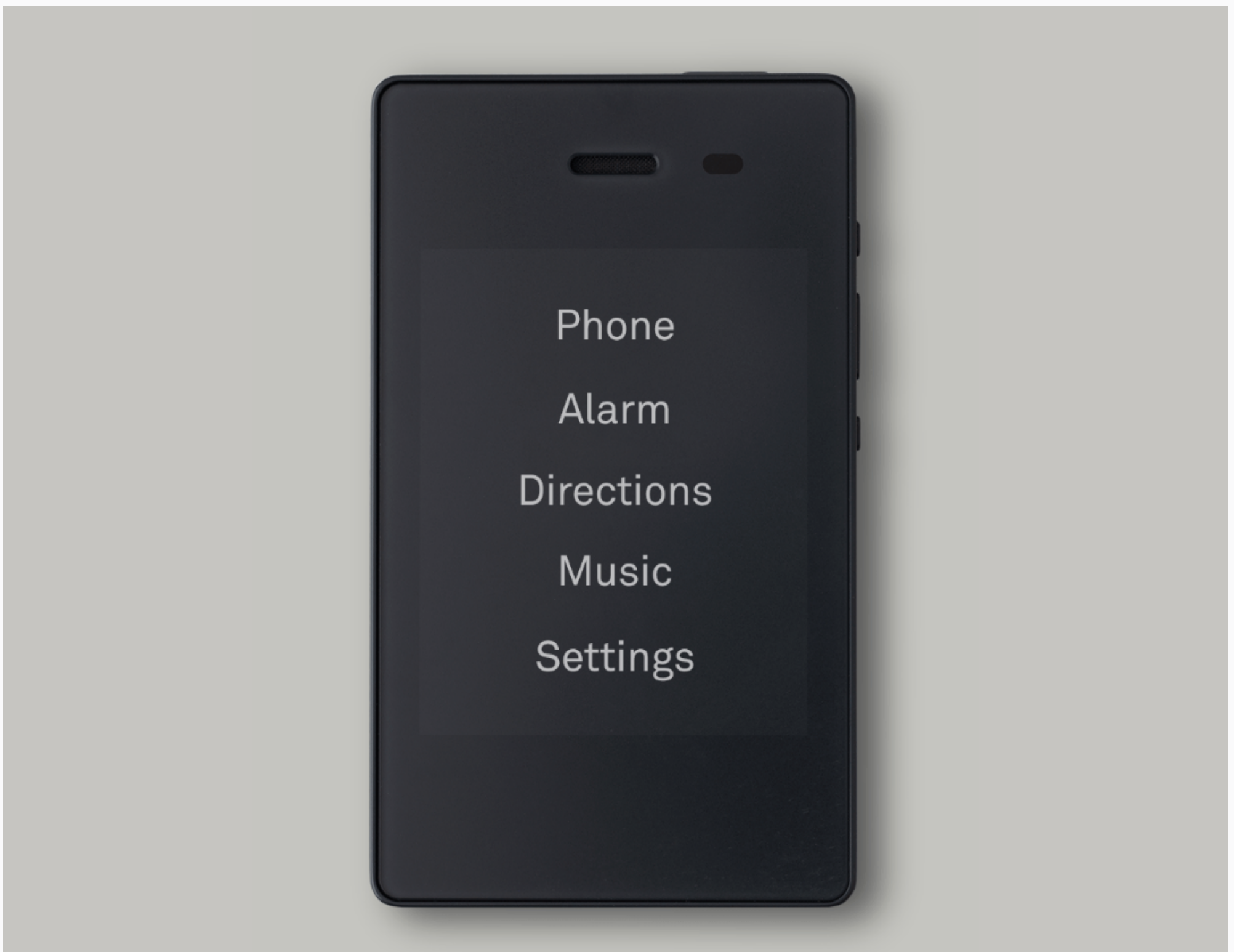
Approx. £100K

Limited production:

Max. 25 bags per week

02

Light Phone



For Profit · US-based · Phones

2a · Introduction

Light makes **simple phones**, called Light Phones, designed to be **used as little as possible.**

2a · Introduction

No data is collected, no social media, email, or even internet browsing is possible. Only calling, texting, navigating, and listening to music/podcasts.

2b - What's non-capitalistic?

It is designed to minimize over-consumption by (1) removing all the browsing and scrolling of content that makes you want to buy stuff and (2) removing the data collection, which helps companies sell more stuff you don't need.

2b · What's non-capitalistic?

It is designed to increase well-being by removing the highly addictive and attention-grabbing social media.



light



2c · Open questions

Will Light integrate repairability and modularity to help increase the longevity of its devices? Light is "unfortunately not very repairable.", according to themselves.

2c - Open questions

**Will Light Phones
replace smartphones, or
will they be an addition?**

There are reports of both.
And, being an 'extra phone'
will limit its positive impact
significantly.

2c - Open questions

In future cases, we will refer to that question as "Will the product add to or replace the conventional alternative?"

2c · Open questions

**To what degree can it
reduce over-
consumption? We would
love to see the results of
such a study.**

2c - Open questions

With no legal barriers to eventually selling out or watering down its product or exploiting people or nature in pursuit of more growth or profit, the question is: Can Light keep its integrity as it grows and will it ever impose a limit to its growth?

2c · Open questions

We are not saying that Light is on the path to doing so, only that in the absence of legal constraints, it's an open question.

2c · Open questions

In future cases, we will refer to that question as **"Will the for-profit business eventually sell out?"**



Hey!

q w e r t y u i o p
a s d f g h j k l
z x c v b n m
~ 1 2 3

2d - Key numbers

Using crowdfunding, **Light Phone 1 raised \$400K, selling 15,000 phones at \$150** before the founders had to put a stop on orders. **50,000 people** joined the waiting list.

2d - Key numbers

Light Phone 2 raised \$3.5M
in crowdfunding.

Additionally, Light has
received \$8.4M in seed
funding.

03

Fairphone



For Profit · NL-based · Phones

3a - Introduction

Fairphone makes modular smartphones designed to last.

3b - What's non-capitalistic?

Product longevity: Produced for durability, guaranteed software support for min. 5 years (and the aim is higher, but that's a long story), and **the phone is modular and therefore easy to repair and upgrade.**

3b · What's non-capitalistic?

Take-back program: A reward-based take-back program to take benefit of recycling.



3c - Open questions

Will Fairphone eventually
sell out?

3c - Open questions

With physical and economic **limits to the potential of recycling**, we are still to see: How much of a phone will be recycled?

The latest study from 2018 found it to be 30%;
hopefully, it's more now)

3c - Open questions

In future cases, we will refer to that question as "**How will the business tackle the limits to recycling?**"

3c - Open questions

As long as Fairphone can **replace less durable smartphones** (whenever they break down for good, of course) and manage to **increase the number of years its products are in use**, we will cheer for them.



3d - Key numbers

Fairphones are currently 'in use' for 4.5 - 5 years (compared to the industry average of 1.5-2 years).

3d - Key numbers

Keeping a Fairphone for 5
years **cuts the yearly
impact of CO2
emissions by 1/3.**

3d - Key numbers

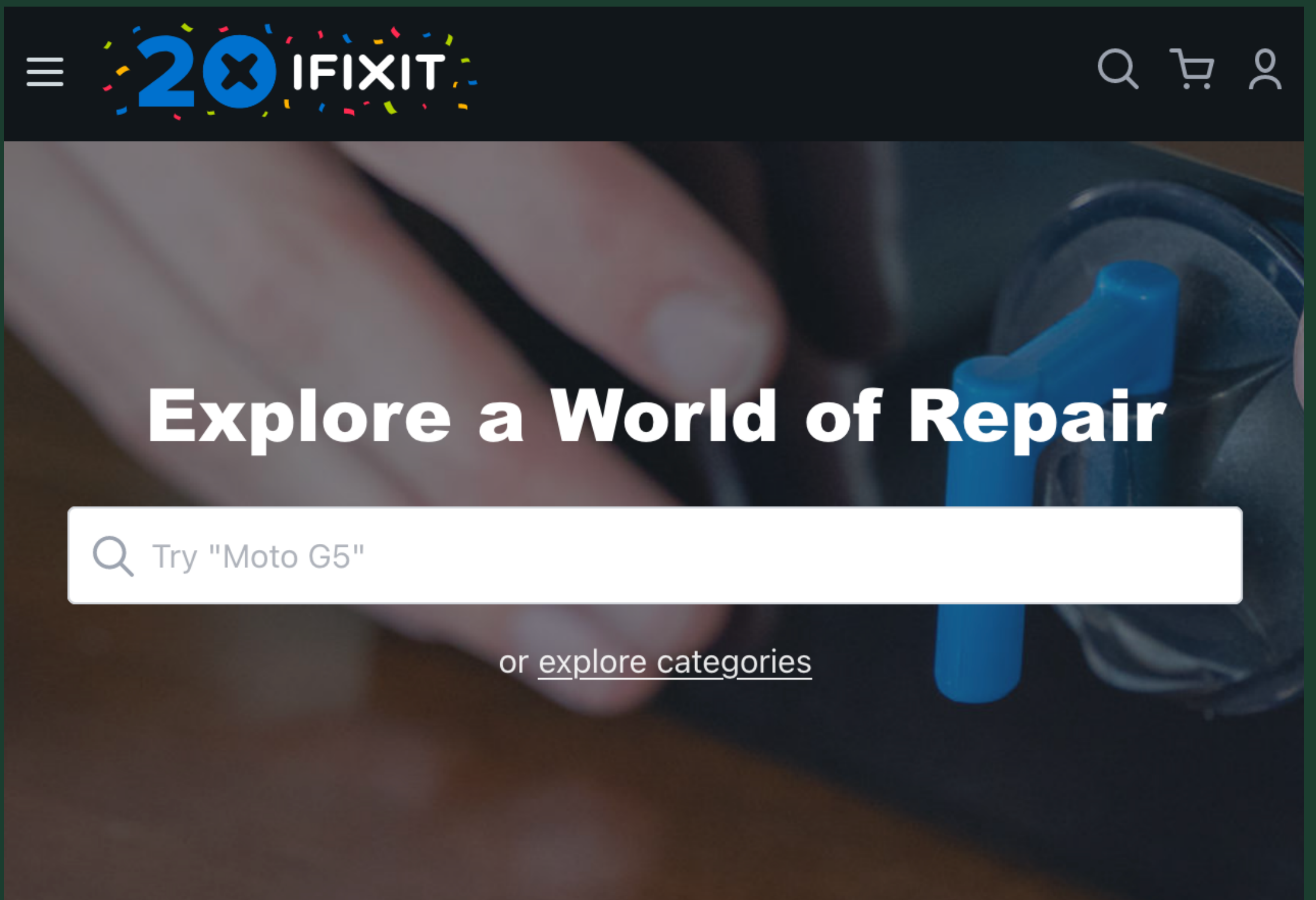
It sold around 120,000 devices in 2022 — up from about 88,000 in 2021 and 23,000 in 2018.

3d - Key numbers

Raised \$53M in funding in
Jan 2023.

04

iFixit



For Profit · US-based · Repair

4a · Introduction
















Ifixit is a **free digital repair manual** with mainly user-generated manuals. Revenue is generated by selling spare parts and repair kits.

4b · What's non-capitalistic?

Product longevity: Helping people increase the lifetime of their stuff (anything from electronics to lawnmowers) with the main product (the manuals) being free.

Repair guides for every thing, written by everyone.

We help thousands of people repair their things every day. Every time you fix something, you help the planet.

	Apparel		Appliance		Camera		Car and Truck
	Computer Hardware		Electronics		Game Console		Household
	Mac		Medical Device		PC		Phone
	Skills		Tablet		Vehicle		

4c - Open questions

There really isn't much negative to say, but if we had to, we could ask the classic for-profit question:

Will Ifixit eventually sell out?

4c - Open questions

As long as the co-founders, Kyle and Luke, are able to and want to run the business, as they have done for 20 years, integrity should be in place. **The question is for how long that is and who is going to replace them.**



An old image of iFixit co-founders
Kyle Wiens (left) and Luke Soules (right).

4d - Key numbers

95,527 manuals in 12 languages, $\frac{2}{3}$ of them made by the community, covering 36,000 devices.

4d - Key numbers

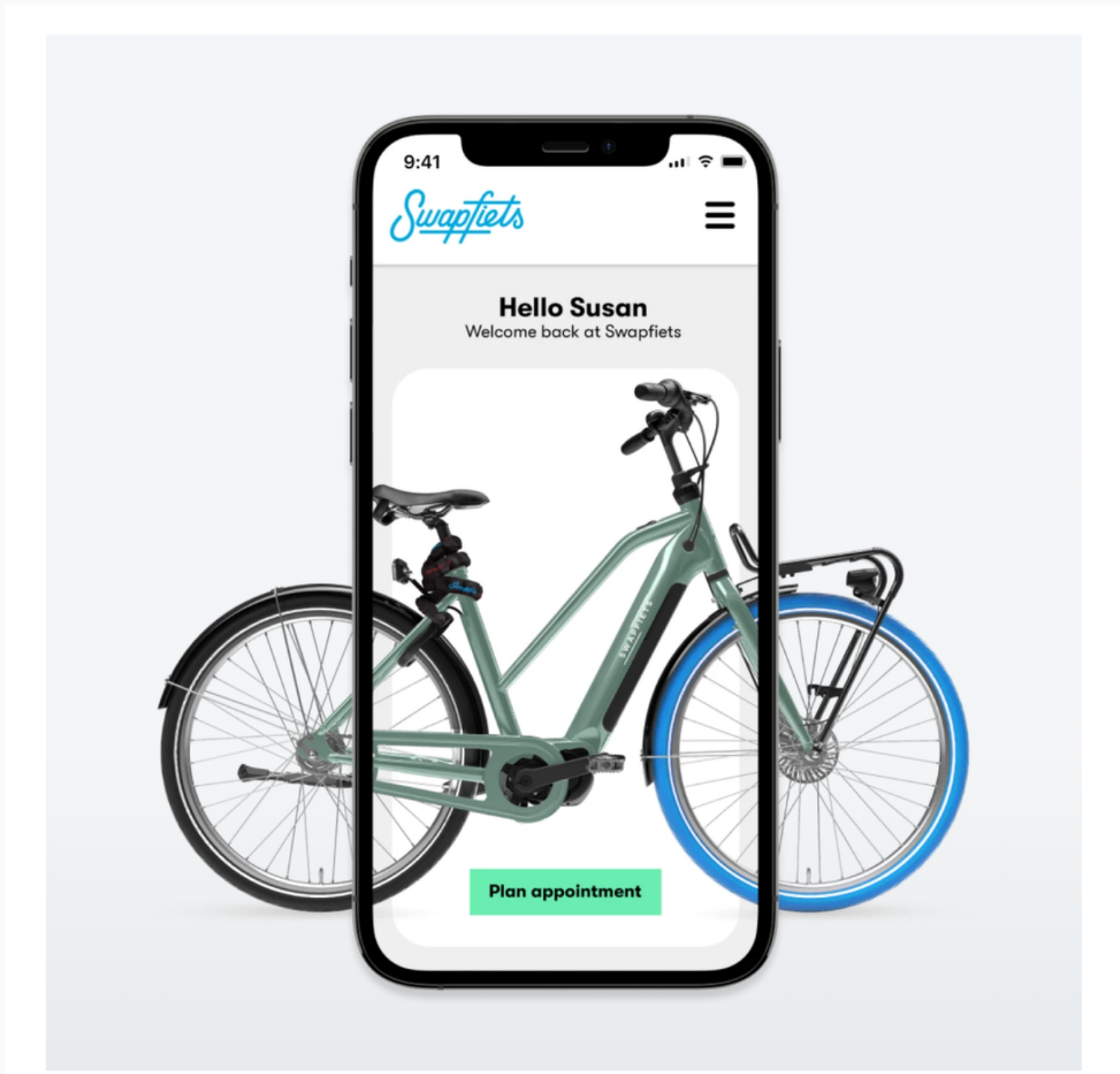
Ifixit doesn't disclose revenue anymore, **but in 2016 it had \$21M in revenue**, and they claim to have kept growing since.

4d - Key numbers

220 employees across the
US and Europe.

05

Swapfiets



For Profit · NL-based · Bikes

5a · Introduction

Swapfiets offers a bike membership. That means for a fixed monthly fee, you get a Swapfiets bike.

Swapfiets will repair or swap it for a new one if it breaks.

5b · What's non-capitalistic?

IPCC and degrowth
scholars, like Julia
Steinberger, continuously
**praise the bike as the
most resource-light and
efficient way of
transporting humans.**

5b · What's non-capitalistic?

Electric bikes, as well, as they can replace cars in many instances, in combination with public transportation.

5b · What's non-capitalistic?

And Swapfiets does make it **easy to choose and use a bike**. As it 'owns' the bikes, it has every **incentive to increase longevity** in terms of durability, repairability, and aesthetics.

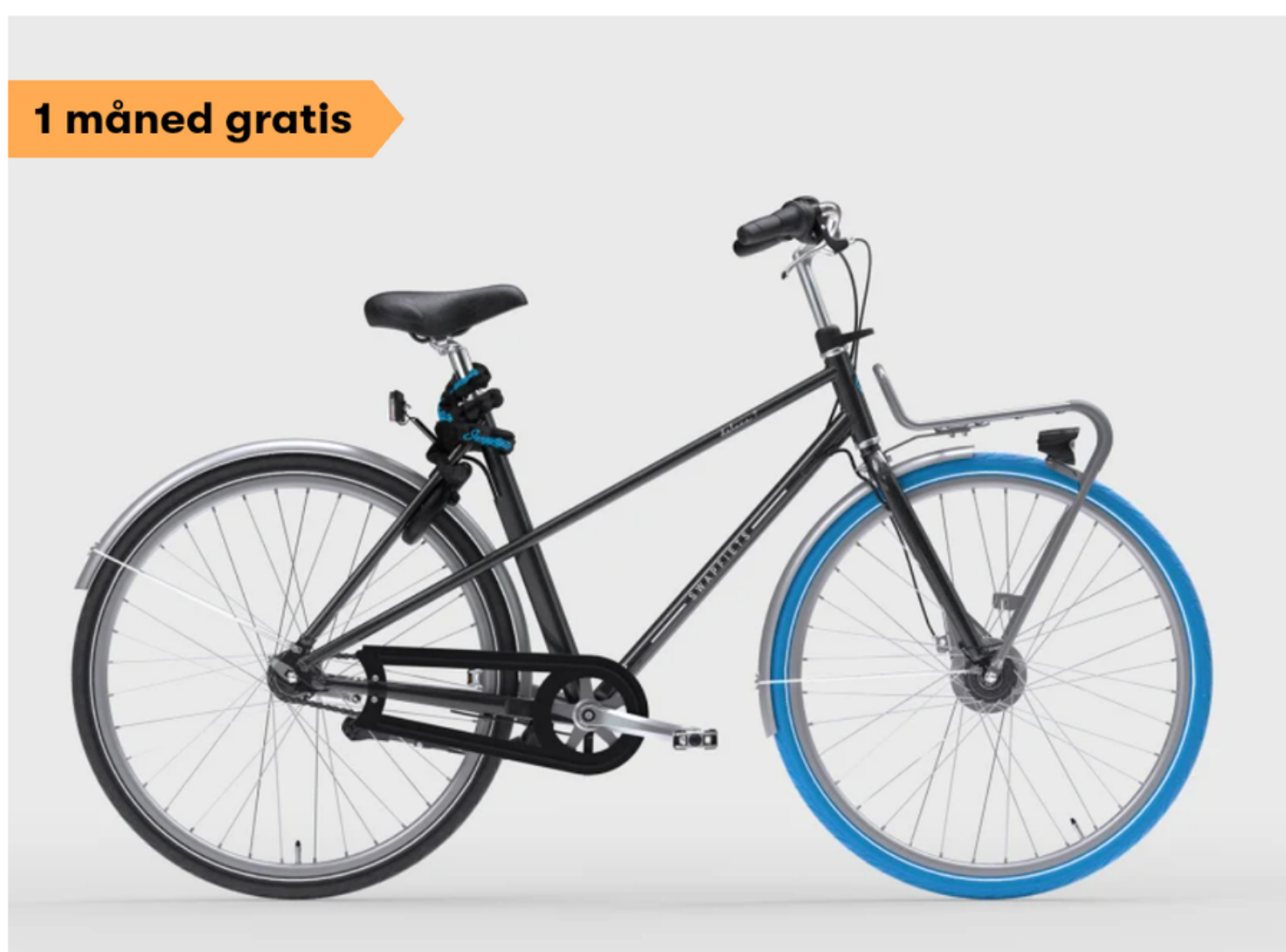
Power 7

 Elektrisk



Deluxe 7

 1 måned gratis



5c · Open questions

Renting/leasing creates the right incentive for companies to produce goods that last, **but on the customer side, it has the potential to do the opposite.**

5c - Open questions

When you don't own the bike, **you will be more likely to want to swap it out faster than if you owned it** - unless there are other significant changing costs.

5c - Open questions

How Swapfiets challenges this paradox will determine the magnitude of its positive impact.

5c · Open questions

If, for example, it **can swap around the same fleet of bikes without producing new ones**, that could work in theory, though in real life, it has serious challenges.

5c · Open questions

In future cases, we will refer to this question as "**Will renting/leasing increase or decrease over-consumption?**"

5c - Open questions

And then, we have the classic for-profit question:

Will Swapfiets eventually sell out?



5d - Key numbers

250,000 users (2021).

1100 employees.

65 cities across 9 countries.

06

Slow



For Profit · DK-based · Coffee

6a - Introduction

Slow makes forest coffee
and helps improve farmers'
livelihoods.

6b · What's non-capitalistic?

**Agroforestry binds CO2
and improves soil
health and biodiversity.**

All the opposite goes for the
traditional monoculture way
of cultivating coffee.

6b - What's non-capitalistic?

Slow's agroforestry has a 20% lower yield per hectare, so Slow has cut out middlemen (on avg. 15 middlemen) to pay farmers well and keep prices competitive. Moreover, other crops can grow in the forest, giving other revenue streams.

6b · What's non-capitalistic?

On top of that, they have 2x mechanisms that help improve farmers' livelihoods.

6b - What's non-capitalistic?

(1) Buying up to, but no more than 75% of a farmer's harvest at a premium price and across the quality of beans (and yes, not all beans are of the same quality), and

6b · What's non-capitalistic?

(2) **paying farmers in advance** to ensure farmers more stability in their economy and support them in not having to sell ripe cherries, but fully processed green beans (that has a 6x higher value than ripe cherries).

6b - What's non-capitalistic?

Lastly, Slow open sources its value chain and operations to help competitors follow suit.



A value-driven force

Nurturing people and nature



Livelihood

Ensuring farmers earn a living income that is sustainable, fair and equitable.



Biodiversity

Promoting biodiversity on our coffee farms by growing and protecting native plants and trees.



Carbon binding

Capturing more carbon in our agroforests than we emit in our entire production chain.



6c - Open questions

As with many other cases here, it is hard to **question Slow**, but as with other for-profits, we can ask the hypothetical: Will Slow eventually sell out?



**We emphasize
livelihood.**

6d - Key numbers

In 2022, Slow announced that they, in collaboration **with WWF, will expand with 1000 farmers** in Laos, Indonesia, and Vietnam.

At that point, Slow had between 150-200 farmers in Laos.

6d - Key numbers

Revenue in 2021: €670K

07

Open Collective

Raise money with full transparency

We do the paperwork so you can focus on your mission.



For Profit · US-based · Funding

7a · Introduction

Open Collective is an open financial platform for **grassroots groups to raise money transparently.**

7b · What's non-capitalistic?

Open Collective makes capital a part of the solution by giving grassroots groups a **legal and financial toolbox to raise and share finances in complete transparency.**

7b · What's non-capitalistic?


They are working towards
Exit to Community,
figuring out their legal
structure and governance
model as a global
community.

Budget ⓘ

Transparent and open finances.

All Expenses Transactions


[See all transactions →](#)

 **Financial contribution to Collective** **+ \$500 USD** ↑
Credit from **Thomas Anderson** to **Collective** • March 23, 2022 Payment Processing Fee - \$19.80
COMPLETED

CONTRIBUTION [Close Details ^](#)


TRANSACTION DETAILS
\$500.00 - \$19.80 (payment processor fee)
This transaction includes \$50.00 host fees

FISCAL HOST
[Open Collective](#)


PAID WITH
 Credit card

 **Development and support (February 2022)** **-\$7,182.00 USD** ↓
By **Thomas Anderson** • March 12, 2022 Payment Processing Fee €3.31
PAID ↓

INVOICE #2642 open source design

 **Financial contribution** **+ \$2,682.72 USD** ↑
From **Gretchen Curtis** to **Collective** • March 23, 2022 Payment Processing Fee - \$1.00
COMPLETED

CONTRIBUTION [View Details v](#)

 **Office equipment** **+ \$2,682.72 USD** ↓
From **Jaylon Saris** to **Accountable** • March 23, 2022 Payment Processing Fee €3.31
PAID ↓

REIMBURSEMENT #2642 furniture

\$ TODAY'S BALANCE

\$54,830.00 USD

~ TOTAL RAISED

\$183,628.86 USD

~ TOTAL DISBURSED

\$128,798.86 USD

~ ESTIMATED ANNUAL BUDGET

~ \$92,304.62 USD



7c - Open questions

Will Open Collective eventually sell out (instead of exiting to its community)?

And a network of fiscal hosts that enable over 15,000 collectives around the world to spend and raise \$35M a year.



7d - Key numbers

Open Collective became self-sustaining in 2020.

7d - Key numbers

Has helped 600+ nonprofits support 15.000+ groups to raise and spend \$35 million each year with full transparency

08

Kaffe Bueno



For Profit · DK-based · Coffee Bio-Refinery

8a · Introduction

Kaffe Bueno turns coffee grounds into ingredients for Personal Care, Nutraceuticals, and Functional Foods & Beverages.

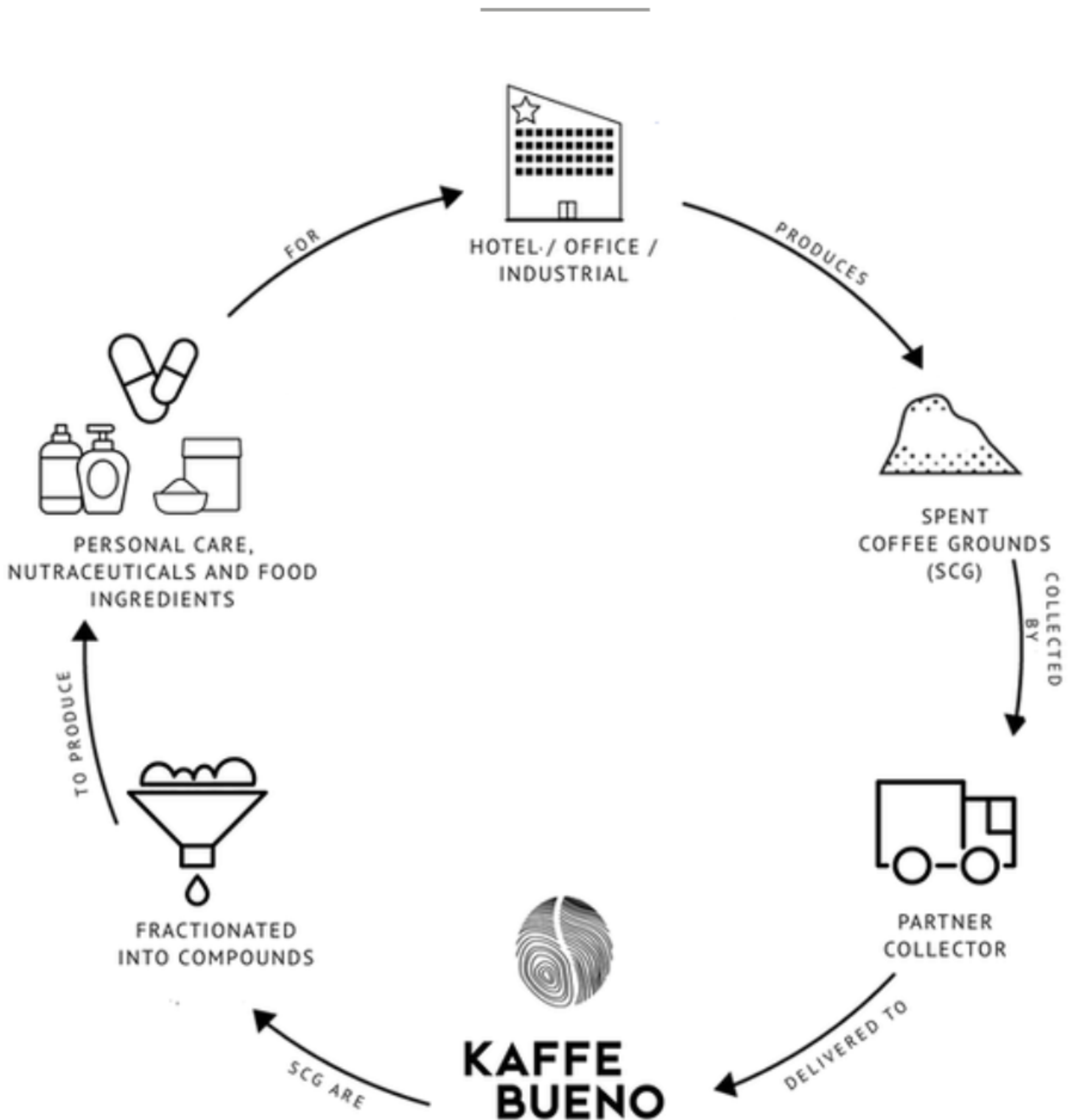
8b - What's non-capitalistic?

Coffee is one of the most consumed plants on Earth, yet it has historically been underutilized. **Tapping into this resource stream can help reduce the use of other more polluting resources.**

8b - What's non-capitalistic?

For example, its product, **KAFFOIL**, can replace palm oil in the food & beverage and personal care industries, **eliminating a big source of deforestation.**

HOW WE DO IT



8c - Open questions

Will Kaffe Bueno eventually
sell out?

8c - Open questions

Will Kaffe Bueno succeed in getting the big companies to use **KAFFOIL** as a **replacement for palm oil?**

THE MAGICAL BEAN



8d - Key numbers

Kaffe Bueno's latest funding:

2020: €1.1M investment

2021: €2.5M EU grant

09

Planetary Impact Ventures



For Profit · DK-based · Venture Capital

9a · Introduction

Planetary Impact Ventures is an **ever-green investment fund** that invests in regenerative businesses and has a long time frame.

9b · What's non-capitalistic?

Planetary invests in regenerative businesses **which aim to give more than they take** (not "just" a neutral net zero at best).

9b - What's non-capitalistic?

One overly simplified example could be a **company that binds more carbon throughout its value chain than it admits, and so it helps regenerate.**

9b · What's non-capitalistic?

It invests with such a long time frame that it **eliminates the need for exponential growth** (in order for startups to be able to pay them back).

9b - What's non-capitalistic?

It is deeply engaged in local activities and businesses surrounding its Krogerup office.

KOMPOST



9c - Open questions

Planetary is still a young and relatively small fund. So the most crucial question here is:

Can it keep finding investors who are **as patient and regenerative-minded** as the ones they have now?

9c - Open questions

**Will its investments
prove to be successful
(in social, economic, and
ecological dimensions) so
that others will follow?**



9d - Key numbers

Planetary started with
€5.3M in 2020.

9d - Key numbers

Its **first investment**, the food upcycling company, Agrain, **has just raised €2.28M** in a new round, proving that Planetary can find companies early and help them move forward.

10

Mud Jeans

Doing jeans differently



For Profit · NL-based · Jeans

10a - Introduction

Mud Jeans makes jeans that it **sells, leases, repairs,** and **eventually takes back** to either be sold as vintage or recycled.

10b - What's non-capitalistic?

Product longevity: Mud Jeans has put **product longevity over growth** since its beginning in terms of materials and craftsmanship, vintage-sales programs, and **since 2022, also repair** by working with Mended.

10b - What's non-capitalistic?

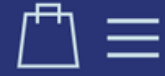
Making quality accessible:
Its leasing model helps
make high-quality, and
therefore more durable,
products **financially**
available for more.

10b - What's non-capitalistic?

You lease them for one year,
paying €9,95 per month,
and **after one year, you
own them.**

10b - What's non-capitalistic?

Whenever a pair is beyond repair, they take it back and recycle it.



Lease A Jeans

Free your mind from owning and experience leasing! You're paying for the performance of your jeans while we make recycling easy for you.

Find out more



Chat with us



10c - Open questions

Will Mud Jeans eventually sell out?

How will Mud Jeans tackle the limits to recycling?

10c - Open questions

Does the world need more?

Will renting/leasing
increase or decrease over-
consumption?



10d - Key numbers

**A pair of jeans from MUD
Jeans emits 66% less
CO₂-eq than a
comparable product
from Levi's. The water
footprint is 80% lower, and
land occupation is 48%
lower.**

10d - Key numbers

15 employees.

Sold 50.000 pairs of jeans in 2021.

Recycled 11.512 old jeans into new jeans.

11

Kruse Vask



For-Profit · DK-based · Laundry

11a · Introduction

Kruse Vask calls itself "**The Small Laundry.**" It has offered laundry services to hotels, restaurants, and industry **since 1962** while remaining small and profitable.

11b · What's non-capitalistic?

Limiting growth for 60 years: It has worked as a local supplier, restraining from growing outside its natural capacity since 1962.

11b · What's non-capitalistic?

Re-use and upcycling beyond current demand: For example, when two white tablecloths are done, they turn them into 1 chef jacket. One colored tablecloth is turned into one apron, etc.

11b · What's non-capitalistic?

Ambitious resource efficiency: Reduce water consumption for laundry by 80% and heating for laundry by 50% in 2023.



11c - Open questions

Will Kruse Vask eventually sell out? We have to ask this open question, but we will also point out that it has restrained from exponential growth and outside capital since 1962 and is still family-owned. It seems unlikely it will sell out.



11d - Key numbers

Existed since 1962.

A small yearly profit between
\$100-150K for the past 7
years.

30 employees.

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2 · Become a member and gain access to exclusive resources and get a say in how Post Growth Guide should develop.

Credits and sources:

Thank you, **Giovanniedoardo Chiesa**, for tipping us about BearMade and Light Phone.

All images were sourced from the case websites.

Credits and sources:

We have only **talked to Slow, Planetary, and BearMade.** All other information we sourced from newspaper articles, podcasts, websites, etc. A full source list will soon be uploaded to Post Growth Guide.

Donation Disclosure

We have not worked with or received any donations from the case companies.

Thank you

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