

# How to power sustainable mobility

# Pon

## Case Study

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**Gone are the days of business-as-usual.**



In a rapidly evolving environment like the mobility industry, for organizations to become, and remain, future-proof, they must proactively create the new normal. Gone are the days of business-as-usual.

Industry shifts including sustainability challenges, the rise of autonomous driving and the sharing economy, to name a few, have created a new playing field. With disruptions coming from multiple angles, it's essential to explore new business models and opportunities. To stay ahead of the pack, innovation is key.

# The start

For an international mobility leader headquartered in The Netherlands, innovation was indeed the path forward. Pon had already defined six potential growth areas focused on current and future industry shifts to further explore within its internal innovation hub.

One of these six areas was the charging infrastructure for electric vehicles — an essential component of the electrification of the transport grid. A growing market, EV charging proved to be a viable option for future growth.

But, they knew they couldn't go it alone. Corporate innovation is a difficult



process and to succeed, it can be valuable to bring in an external partner. To help go from ideas to ideation to a revenue-generating business, they turned to corporate innovation studio Aimforthemoon (hence: Aim).

"I had been climbing Pon's corporate ladder for 9 years, but I felt a growing need to create my own venture. I discussed this with my mentor. Soon after that he calls: "We have a project that needs an intrapreneur. Are you interested?" I didn't have to think twice and joined the project."

*Rutger Bosch*



# Plan

Starting in July 2019, Pon and Aim have been moving through Aim's tried-and-tested innovation process.

- ✔ The first step in the process was for Pon and Aim to set the strategic boundaries that formed the fundamentals of the collaboration: To create a new business model within the EV infrastructure space.
- ✔ This forced the organization to ask the question: "How might we add value to our customers, who are fully engaged with electric driving, with our business lines Automotive and Power?"
- ✔ The next step was for Pon to bring in one of their internal talents and mobility industry expert Rutger Bosch onto the team as an intrapreneur and cofounder.



# The Team

**Before kick-starting any innovation journey, it's essential to have a strong team in place.**

But for corporate innovation projects to have the greatest chances for success, this team must be a delicate balance of internal and external talent. Internal talent brings in the industry skills and knowledge to navigate key stakeholders. External talent brings unique, fresh ideas to the table.

- ✔ To lead the team through the innovation process, Aim appointed Innovation Strategy Lead Bas Wenneker as the team's innovation coach.
- ✔ To find the right external candidate, Aimforthemoon reached out to its innovation community of vetted entrepreneurs and corporate innovation experts. Then, Aim's Community Team began a recruitment process to find the right co-founder for Rutger.
- ✔ Following a rigid selection process on a number of criteria including corporate innovation experience, relevant industry experience, experience working with Aimforthemoon and the extent to which the candidate was excited about the moonshot and personality type, Aim invited the candidates to Matching Day workshop for the client and candidates find a mutual click.
- ✔ One of the participants, Jeroen van de Ven, who had recently wrapped up another project for Aim, joined the Matching Day and Rutger and Jeroen instantly clicked. After a few formalities, Jeroen joined the team as co-founder.



**A problem worth solving**

With the goal of delivering a validated customer problem and multiple potential solutions, the team commenced on the next step in Aim's innovation journey: The "Scan Phase".

- ✔ Armed with their moonshot and guided by their innovation coach, the team began to reach out to companies whose employees may experience pain points regarding the EV driving experience process.
- ✔ Over the course of 7 weeks, the team conducted 46 interviews with potential clients to find the greatest customer pains.
- ✔ In parallel, Rutger and Jeroen perform a market and technology analysis with the aim of validating a technical solution.

Although this was Rutger's first step into the innovation process, having the support of an experienced co-founder and the backing of a proven innovation methodology created a safety net for the team to evolve:

"Many times, I told Rutger to 'trust the Aim process', which he did. In the first phases he



relied on me, Bas, Leonard and his manager at Pon's innovation lab. I've seen his grow tremendously. Now, he has the tools and mindset of an entrepreneur."

*Jeroen van de Ven*



# Testing

**Based on the interviews, the team identified a valid customer problem: A need for more electric vehicle (EV) charging stations at company parking stations in The Netherlands.**

Next, the team set out to define how to turn that problem into a value proposition.

- ✓ In the test phase, the team asked the question, how their specific product would improve their customer's situation and what specific benefits they could bring to the table.
- ✓ With the answer, they then drew up multiple concepts which could make the bare bones of the first version of the product and began validating each solution, seeing if each could attract and activate customers or even make money.
- ✓ To determine their target market, the team needed to find out who their ideal paying customer was. However, while every user group — the real estate owners, tenants (whose employees drive EVs) and the employees themselves — wanted more charging capacity, nobody was able or willing to invest in the upfront costs of the stations.
- ✓ This challenge, however, helped to define their solution and in turn, validate their business model: To begin financing the costs of the stations up front. Using the subscription business model, the team could reduce upfront costs and lower barriers to entry.
- ✓ In parallel, the team chose their new name — Revolt — and began to create the actual charging station infrastructure with the help of an external supplier.

## How will Revolt generate revenue?

To solve this problem and create a valuable proposition which didn't incur the upfront costs of the charging

stations, the team leveraged the innovative subscription economy's business model.

- ✔ Jeroen and Rutger decided on a **monthly subscription fee per charging station**, to be paid by the real estate owner or the tenant, dramatically lowering the barriers for potential customers.
- ✔ To lower the price-per-month, Revolt began to fit out the charging stations with large digital screens which display paid advertisements, further reducing a potential customer's challenges to the service.
- ✔ Aim's Digital Products team then began to design the visual aspects of the prototype and stayed on as Revolt's design agency.

"The first 12 months of the project were a big learning experience. At times I felt very uncomfortable. The whole way of working is very different from what I was used to. A corporation is focused on making long-term plans, maximizing efficiency and minimizing risk... A startup is the complete opposite. Since you don't know where you're going yet, and you don't know what will work yet, you need to take risks in order to potentially strike gold."

*Rutger Bosch — Co-founder Revolt*



## Building the product and go-to-market

The next step in the journey was to bring the new product to life within a short time frame to keep the momentum moving and find Revolt's first customers.

- ✔ Within 12 weeks, the supplier had already delivered a fully operational prototype.
- ✔ With the prototype, the team validated their value proposition with nine pilot projects which were landed within a 6 week period, including with ANWB Driving School (The Netherlands' Automobile Association).
- ✔ **Nine months after Revolt launched, the first prototype was installed and the first car was charged.**
- ✔ By October 2020, a total of seven charging stations had been installed with even more in the pipeline.

"After 9 months, we knew we were onto something. Many of the big market players wanted to talk to us. To us! We had 7 charging stations, while some of them had 8.000. The fact that they were worried added proof to the potential of our value proposition."

*Rutger Bosch*

# Getting board-level support

Once the solution had been validated and the team had gotten their first big wins on the scoreboard, it was now time to secure a runway for 2021 and beyond from Pon. [Getting senior stakeholders to buy into the solution is one of the more tricky parts of the innovation process]. That's why Aim's stakeholder management philosophy X came in handy.

- ✓ Together with Bas Wenneker and Aim partner Leonard Bukenya, Revolt prepared the pitch for Pon's board to get the funding required to scale up in 2021. The pitch included scaleup metrics which support the roadmap for growth.
- ✓ **Revolt gets funded!** Pon backs Revolt and supports Rutger and Jeroen's wish to turn Revolt into a standalone venture, making them both co-founders and Pon the startup's biggest investor.

"The first 12 months involved a lot of stakeholder management. We needed to get a lot of people on board, from TC executives, middle management to multiple business units. I've become much better at this, and Leonard supported me a lot in this journey."

*Rutger Bosch*

"Funding Revolt and spinning it out has been an incredibly brave move by our client. Especially in these Covid times. Rutger and Jeroen still have a long road ahead of them, but we must applaud them for running such a strong first year. While the five other ventures didn't make it, this team pushed the most and maintained an amazing learning velocity."

*Leonard Bukenya — Aimforthemoon Partner*

# How to organize for growth

Today, **Revolt** offers companies EV-charging solutions via its innovative subscription model. This helps clients to select, install and maintain the charging solution to fit their needs without the up front investment necessary for the majority of other options on the market. While the next steps of the journey are still being written, Aim is helping Revolt with their scaleup journey.

- ✓ Using the Verne Harnish Scaling Up approach, Aim is helping Revolt to scale its company.
- ✓ To expand Revolt's team, they have once again turned to Aim's Community Team, who helped them recruit a Marketing Manager and Account Manager.
- ✓ Aim has implemented a dashboard which tracks all the important KPIs and week by week performance and quarterly progress. This has developed a newfound focus, an overview of products, alignment between pipeline and operation and connecting the startup's activities back to their original moonshot with concrete metrics.
- ✓ Aim is also coaching Revolt on sales and marketing to optimize the sales process. With assumptions about what works and what doesn't, through rapid experimentation it's possible to learn as much as possible in a short period of time. We're currently running campaigns targeting CFOs, fleet managers and facility managers on LinkedIn to understand who responds best to which value proposition.
- ✓ To ensure the continued support from key stakeholders, the dashboard has been a key mechanism to communicate and visualize key progress metrics.
- ✓ Aim's design team is helping Revolt on their website as well as sales presentations, content and marketing assets.





## Want to know more?

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