

CASE STUDY

RESQ CLUB



Company Name

RESQ Club

Category

Food waste reduction / Digital marketplace

Location

Helsinki, Finland

Website

<https://www.resq-club.com/>

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“Fighting food waste through surplus food redistribution”.

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RESQ
CLUB

Introduction & Origins

RESQ Club was founded in 2015 in Finland by Jaakko Nevanperä in response to the large volumes of edible food being wasted daily by restaurants, cafés, hotels and grocery retailers. The founder recognised that much of this waste was not caused by poor quality, but by forecasting errors, fluctuating demand and rigid operational routines within the food service industry. At the same time, consumers were seeking more affordable food options and environmentally responsible choices. To address this disconnect, RESQ Club developed a mobile-based digital marketplace that allows food businesses to sell surplus meals and products at reduced prices to nearby consumers. This simple yet scalable solution transformed food waste from a cost burden into a recoverable resource, laying the foundation for RESQ Club's growth as one of Europe's leading food waste reduction platforms.

Creative Bootstrapping: Building a Community Movement

In its early stages, RESQ Club relied on grassroots engagement rather than heavy marketing investment. Growth was driven through direct outreach to local restaurants, partnerships with municipalities, and word-of-mouth promotion among environmentally conscious consumers. The platform positioned itself not merely as a discount app, but as a community-led movement that empowered businesses and individuals to participate in waste reduction. Messaging focused on shared responsibility and everyday impact—highlighting that small actions, such as purchasing surplus meals, could collectively create meaningful environmental change. This community-centred approach reflects research suggesting that mission-driven ventures gain traction more effectively when users feel personally involved in solving the problem (Dapena-Barón et al., 2022).

Early Traction and Growth Insights

RESQ Club's growth accelerated as it began to track and communicate measurable impact data, including meals saved and emissions avoided. These metrics allowed users and partners to clearly see the outcomes of their participation, reinforcing trust and engagement. Transparency in impact reporting helped differentiate RESQ Club from traditional food delivery platforms, positioning it firmly within the social enterprise space. The platform successfully scaled beyond Finland into several European markets, demonstrating that the surplus-food model was adaptable across different cultural and regulatory contexts. By maintaining a simple user experience and clear value proposition, RESQ Club transitioned from a local startup to an internationally operating SME.

Pitching with Clarity & Authenticity

RESQ Club's pitch is effective because it communicates the problem of food waste and the proposed solution with clarity and relatability. The company frames food waste as an avoidable inefficiency, perfectly good food being discarded while consumers seek affordable meals and businesses absorb unnecessary losses.

Rather than presenting itself solely as a technology company, RESQ Club positions itself as an enabler of behavioural change, supporting businesses in reducing waste and empowering consumers to make sustainable choices. This authentic framing aligns with research highlighting the importance of credibility and purpose-driven narratives in entrepreneurial pitching (Collins & Porras, 1996; Denning, 2005).

Clarity of the Problem and Solution

RESQ Club simplifies a complex systemic issue into an easily understood challenge: surplus food exists because supply and demand rarely align perfectly in food service operations. The solution, a digital marketplace that redistributes surplus in real time, addresses this inefficiency without requiring major changes to existing business models. By focusing on usability and accessibility, the platform allows food businesses to upload surplus items quickly, while consumers can discover nearby offers with minimal friction. This clarity enables investors, partners and users to quickly understand both the societal value and commercial logic of the model.



Authenticity Through Personal Storytelling

The origins of RESQ Club are rooted in lived experience and direct observation of waste within the hospitality industry. Founder-led storytelling has played a key role in establishing authenticity, as the venture emerged from witnessing the routine disposal of edible food rather than abstract environmental concern. By sharing stories from participating restaurants and satisfied users, RESQ Club reinforces its identity as a practical, solution-oriented enterprise. This mirrors successful entrepreneurial narratives, such as Airbnb's early storytelling, where personal experience validated both the problem and the solution (Dapena-Barón et al., 2022).

Evidence and Early Traction

RESQ Club strengthens its narrative with quantifiable evidence of impact, reporting millions of meals rescued from waste and corresponding reductions in environmental harm. These outcomes provide tangible proof that the platform delivers real-world benefits rather than symbolic sustainability claims. The company's expansion across multiple European countries and onboarding of thousands of food businesses demonstrates strong market validation. High levels of repeat usage indicate sustained engagement from both supply and demand sides of the platform, confirming product-market fit and long-term viability. This balance of mission and metrics aligns with Gallagher's (2017) findings on persuasive, evidence-based communication.

Presence and Delivery Style

RESQ Club communicates with a delivery style that is clear, optimistic and solution-focused. Visual branding and platform design emphasise simplicity and accessibility, reinforcing the idea that reducing food waste can be integrated seamlessly into everyday life. By avoiding guilt-based messaging and instead highlighting positive impact, the company fosters trust and approachability. This presence enhances memorability and credibility, supporting effective engagement with consumers, partners and institutional stakeholders.

Lessons for Learners

RESQ Club demonstrates that impactful entrepreneurial pitches combine clear problem framing, authentic storytelling and measurable evidence. By addressing food waste as both an environmental and economic challenge, the company shows how SMEs can create shared value while scaling across borders. For learners, RESQ Club illustrates the importance of simplicity in solution design, transparency in impact reporting and consistency between mission and operations. Its journey highlights how digital platforms can mobilise collective action and transform systemic inefficiencies into sustainable business opportunities.

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