

New Zealand Founders taking on the world.

How Two Kiwi Founders Built Global Brands



LET'S DIVE IN



A Founder's Journey

Most founders don't start with a polished plan. They start with a problem they've felt firsthand and navigate the challenges as they come.

Few people know that SwipedOn was born at sea. CEO and Founder Hadleigh first came up with the idea when realising that everything was automated and high-tech on a superyacht, apart from the visitors' book. Now, SwipedOn is used by over 9,000 workplaces in over 70 countries. In May 2025, SwipedOn was acquired (for the second time) by Sign-In Solutions.

Peter McCormick's dad founded Shot Darts in 1970, and they have been making world-class competition darts and dartboards ever since. With a roster of famous dart players, Shot Darts the equipment of choice for competitions – all from their factory in Katikati.

We spoke to both on the B2B Inspired podcast, where we learned that resilience, resourcefulness, and a willingness to rethink everything when things don't go to plan.

Here's what stood out.

1. Start where you are. Even if that means Google.

With no background in tech or business, Hadleigh used his week-on, week-off schedule as a harbour pilot to start building a digital visitor book. He found a local dev team on Google and got to work. It wasn't perfect, but it was live, and that mattered more than anything.

*"You have to be in love with the process.
If you're only in it for the result, you'll quit
before you get there."*

2. Persistence is more important than perfection.

It took two years before SwipedOn showed real traction. Hadleigh admits he nearly gave up multiple times, but belief in the product and the wins they had along the way, like landing his first customer, Steven Spielberg's superyacht.

Hadleigh Ford

Founder
SwipedOn

swipedon
by Sign In App



3. Competition can't touch authentic storytelling.

Peter isn't manufacturing darts, he's building identity. Every product Shot puts out carries a piece of heritage, from bold designs (Viking leather finish, anyone?) to athlete collabs.

The brand is proudly New Zealand, and unapologetically personal. This storytelling gives the brand a heartbeat and global pull. Peter ensures every dart has a story, which he attributes to the product's success.

Peter also took advantage of NZTE and their beachhead advisors at critical points in their export journey.

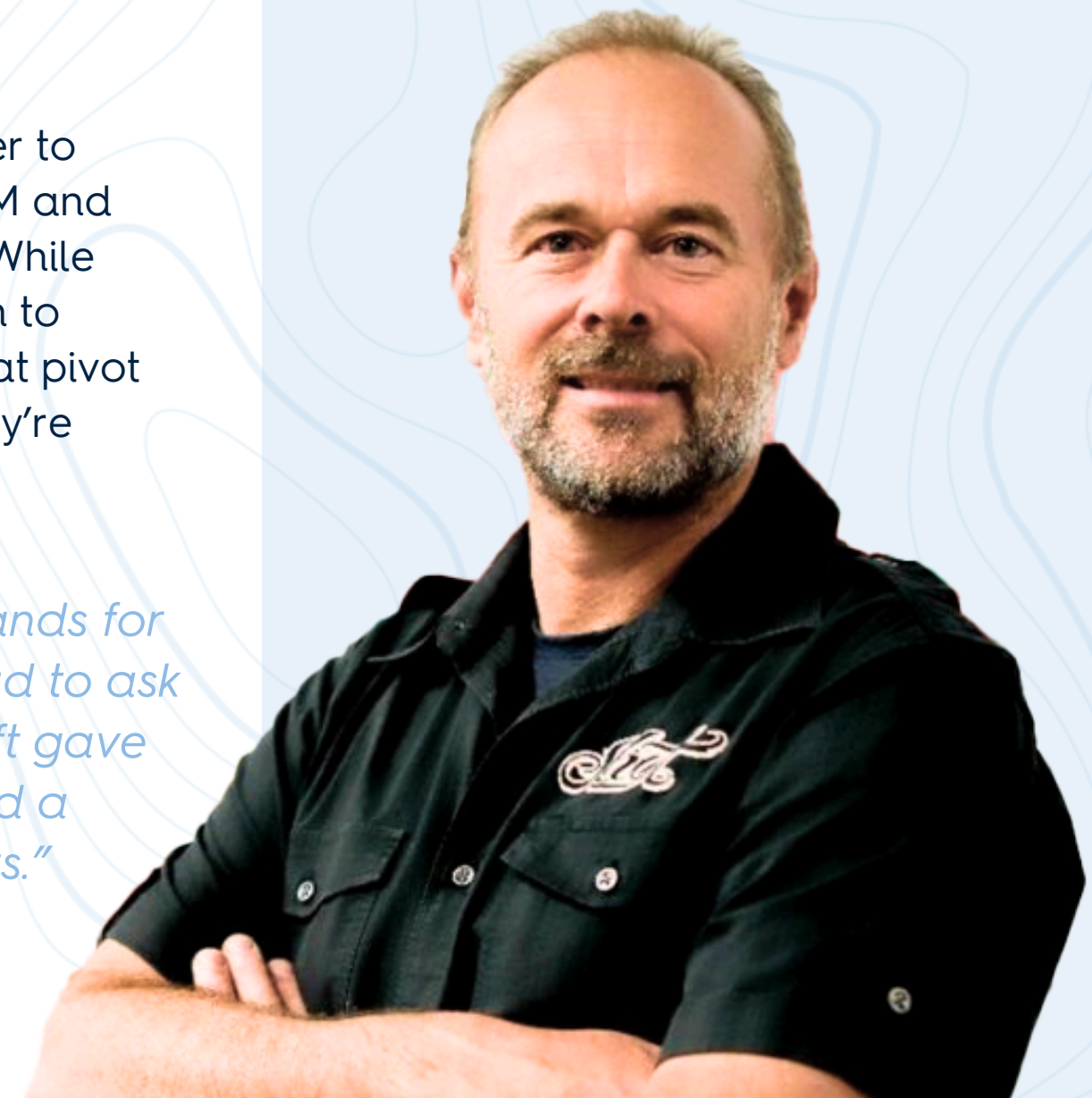
4. A pivot can be the beginning of great things.

Losing brand rights from Puma forced Peter to make the decision to move away from OEM and into creating their own brand, Shot Darts. While initially a tough decision, this allowed them to focus on high-value branded products. That pivot helped unlock the international growth they're known for today.

"We'd been making darts for other brands for years. But after the legal battle, we had to ask –why not put our name on it? That shift gave us creative control, better margins, and a stronger connection with our customers."

Peter McCormick

Founder
Shot Darts



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Hadleigh and Peter had much more to say about their journeys as founders in New Zealand, including some great stories.

Tune into the B2B Inspired podcast to hear Hadleigh and Peter share their unfiltered founder experiences—challenges, pivots, and all.



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