

Fighting Food



INSPIRE

INNOVATE

INVEST

INDULGE

ith so many organisations now broadcasting the steps they're taking to become environmentally friendly, it can be challenging to differentiate between those genuinely committed to sustainability and those that are merely painting their businesses with a generous coating of greenwash.

WORDS **JENNA LORGE** • 5-MIN READ

That's why it's so refreshing to see a business with sustainability at its very core finding success and, at the

same time, providing an inspiring example of what a genuine environmentally friendly organisation looks

like. Peita Pini is the founder of Veggie Saver, an Australian company born with the mission to not only be a sustainable business but to also make the lives of their customers more sustainable.

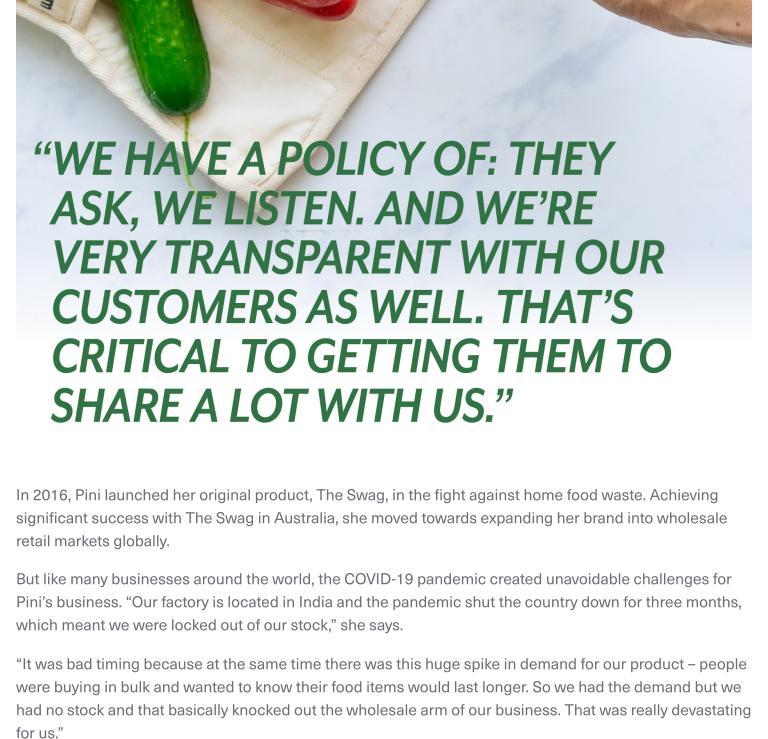
"I grew up on acreage where I had a very sustainable existence; my parents were waste-free warriors and

had a worm farm," Pini tells The CEO Magazine. "How I grew up has always had me watching my own habits in the home when it came to food waste."

When Pini became a mother and witnessed the amount of rotting fruits and vegetables produced by just her family alone, she became concerned. "I could see the produce was suffocating and sweating in the

plastic that I was keeping it in," she recalls. "So, I was not only throwing out copious amounts of rotting produce but also the plastic that was wrapped around it as well." **LEAVING A LEGACY**

Pini knew there had to be a safer and kinder way to store fruit and vegetables to keep them fresher for longer and it became her mission to find a solution. "I want to leave a legacy behind. And the only thing that you can really leave is what mark you leave on the planet. I made it my mission to reduce food waste and plastic pollution," she says.



FINDING NEW PATHWAYS

Instead of allowing these setbacks to halt her mission to reduce food waste, Pini used it as an opportunity

"During the pandemic, we assessed the insights we'd gathered over a period of time from our wholesalers, when The Swag was in retail markets globally," she explains. "We really took their pulse and found out what the challenges were for the product. The Swag was taking up a lot of shelf space, it wasn't packaged and there was a huge amount of choice in size and colour, which was a bit overwhelming for the customer.

to gather information about her product and customers.

BUSINESSES TO HAVE A PURPOSE,

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"So we just took it and created a one-size-fits-all product, The Veggie Saver, which makes it easy for us to scale manufacturing so there's no downtime in our factories. It's just powering through on one stockkeeping unit and is beautifully packaged, so it sells itself at the point of purchase." In Australia, the product is currently available in selected Woolworths stores as one of the supermarket's plastic-free initiatives and, according to Pini, it's selling "incredibly well". As for The Swag, Pini says it's not going anywhere because it's the ideal product for the already ecoconscious consumer. The Veggie Saver, on the other hand, is a discoverable product that can be easily marketed and picked up by the general consumer in the supermarket. "The Veggie Saver is critical to helping families reduce food waste and can save consumers up to

US\$1,100 a year by dramatically reducing food waste in the home," she says. "And it's all made from natural

fibres. So at the end of its very long life, it's fully compostable so doesn't have an impact on the planet."

experienced during the pandemic to listening closely to consumers. "We have a policy of: they ask, we listen. And we're very transparent with our customers as well. That's critical to getting them to share a lot

A WASTE-FREE FUTURE

After launching in November 2021, The Veggie Saver is now stocked by more than 200 outlets in Australia

Pini chalks up her ability to stay agile and come back even stronger from the blows her business

with us," she says.



expect to be seeing large volume orders by the end of the year, which is exciting, she says. "We're also looking at a number of other international markets as well, and this is stepping us towards our

mission of helping one billion people live waste and plastic free by 2030."

STEPS TO SUCCESS Pini has some sage advice for any CEOs who are finding themselves in the same position that she was in.

"Hire talent, not staff," she says. "Get them really excited about being agile in the business. A lot of people within a team might be really fearful of change, but if you flip it around and also get them putting forward their ideas, they then become drivers and are not being dragged along."

that helps differentiate those businesses that really are doing something to have a positive impact on the planet, or whatever cause they associate themselves with, as opposed to just chugging along and earning money. "I just don't think that that's the be-all and end-all anymore."

She also believes it's importance for leaders to remain authentically purpose-driven. "I think it's really critical for businesses to have a purpose, and a very clearly defined purpose that is really genuine," she says. "Customers can sense a fake a mile away and they vote with their dollars. For me, that's exciting because