

Q&A with Teun



What is your favourite way to tell people about how Stoov® started?

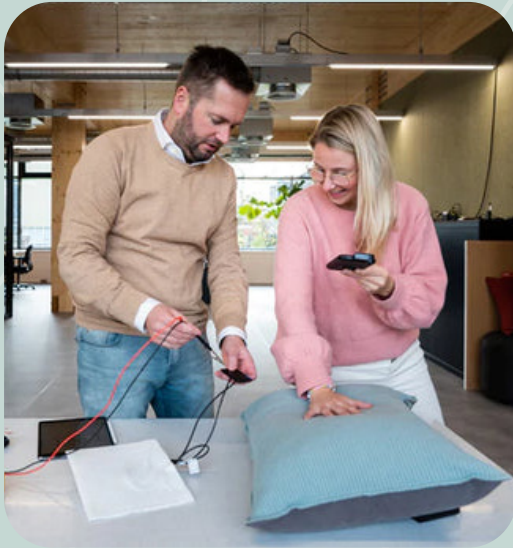
Usually, I kick off the story with the heated seat of my car, which is where it all started back in 2005. I took the seat heating apart and it surprised me that the smart and fun technology which I found there, was not being implemented anywhere else. When I moved to a new home in 2012, I wanted to heat the sofa in the garden for my pregnant wife. Suddenly, I remembered the heated seat of my car... and so the idea was born.

However, this was not immediately the start of Stoov®. After leaving my job at a bank in 2014, I first tried to buy myself into a company, but this did not work out. Eventually, I told my wife: I am going to get started with the heated cushions no matter what. That was the moment that I ordered the first materials, started producing prototypes and developed a business plan.

Have you always wanted to found your own company?

Yes, this has always been a dream of mine, which came to exist when I learned that I am thriving in an entrepreneurial environment. Therefore, I designed my life preparing to start my own enterprise some day, including saving up for this moment. Fun fact: I already had a taste of entrepreneurship during my studies when I organised raves.

Nonetheless, once I started Stoov®, I was not immediately living my dream. When it was still a one-man business, I had to work very hard and it happened at least four times that I came home and told my wife that if it would not take off now, I would quit. Luckily I did not.



What ignites your passion for Stoov®?

The answer is short and simple: saving energy. My mother is from Brabant, a rural province in the south of the Netherlands, where you have the well-known saying “we do not warm the birds”. This saying is used when someone leaves the door of their house open, the heat escapes and the only ones taking advantage of the warmth are the birds. This saying, combined with my trait to be driven by efficiency, forms Stoov®’s main purpose: to warm people, not the planet.

What inspires you?

Overall, I am a curious person who enjoys technology. Most of my inspiration comes from people and their behaviour: I love talking and listening. I can really lose myself in conversations. At the same time I can spend nights tinkering by myself to figure things out.

Generally, I believe that life is too short to not do what you love, which I learned the hard way when my brother died in an accident at a young age. That is what gave me the “carpe diem”-spirit which drives me and makes me challenge everything. For example, you should know why you do the things you do, and you should not implement new technologies just because you can, but only when it truly adds value.

In 2024, Stoov® is celebrating its 10th anniversary - what are the most important lessons learned during these 10 years?

I am always shouting flexibility, flexibility, and flexibility: within your mindset but also within the way you conduct business. Flexibility has brought us where we are today, and it is truly embedded in our DNA: we listen to our customers, we adapt to them, we make sure not to have too many products in stock, and we manage to keep our costs flexible. Moreover, when it comes to our people and processes, we believe in fast learning, which includes failing being answered by a rapid recovery.

In line with this, even our production is organised flexibly. Meaning that the different parts of the product come separately: the battery comes separately, the cover as well, and even the electronics are attached with just one single screw. Therefore, when our products reach the end of their lifecycle, this allows us to take every bit apart and recycle the different components. In addition, if demand for specific products increases or decreases, we can easily use the components for other products since they are generally interchangeable.

What makes you particularly proud?

I am proud of daring to found my own company with all the risks this entails. In 2014 I quit my secure job to found Stoov®, I designed every product and I screwed every single screw myself. Whereas Stoov® started out with a focus on B2B sales in the hospitality industry, the company quickly had to change direction when this strategy failed. Besides, I am proud of not quitting when things were rough at the start, and of turning Stoov® into the successful company it is today. And last but not least, I am proud to work with brilliant minds / inspiring colleagues and learn from them every day.

What are your plans for the future?

I want to take Stoov®'s sustainability to the next level and make sure that Stoov® has the best, most beautifully designed, and most innovative heating products out there. Especially in a world that has had a wake-up call regarding climate change, I want Stoov® to be at the forefront of sustainable innovations.

Business-wise, we want to become an even more established brand in the Netherlands and Germany and enter new markets across Europe. Throughout this process, we do not only want to double our revenue, but also the number of people that we warm and bring joy with our products. This requires giving our products a touch-up, and constantly implementing the newest and smartest technologies.