

# Dyslexic Entrepreneurs Spotlight:

Why Dyslexic Thinking Fuels Entrepreneurship



MADE BY

DYSLEXIA



“Entrepreneurs are the engine of the British economy, and research shows Dyslexic Thinking fuels 1 in 3 of them. To boost growth, create jobs, and move the nation forward, the UK has never needed Dyslexic Thinking more”

Kate Griggs, Founder,  
Made By Dyslexia

## 1 in 3 UK entrepreneurs are dyslexic, and use their Dyslexic Thinking to drive £4.6bn in GDP

5 REASONS DYSLExIC THINKING FUELS ENTREPRENEURSHIP:



**1 Imaginers:** dyslexics instinctively spot gaps in the market and disrupt industries.



**2 Big picture thinkers:** they excel at simplifying products, propositions and messages.



**3 Resilient problem-solvers:** their comfort with failure drives persistence, adaptability and growth.



**4 Passionate questioners:** dyslexics push boundaries and don't accept the status quo.



**5 Leaders, team builders and empathisers:** dyslexics build highly motivated, high-performing teams.

Dyslexic entrepreneurs contribute at least £4.6bn to UK GDP, and even more when you include SMEs, along with the creation of jobs, business activity, and innovation.



“Much of my success as an entrepreneur comes from my Dyslexic Thinking. It's my superpower. Dyslexic people have the ability to think flexibly, creatively and solve really complex problems by thinking differently. Dyslexic Thinking has led me to find new solutions to old problems that businesses were struggling to address. In business, you have to imagine what's possible and just say, “Let's do it!” That mindset drives innovation, and it starts with imagination”

Richard Branson,  
Founder, Virgin Group

## Fresh analysis shows dyslexic entrepreneurs contribute £4.6bn to UK GDP each year

Entrepreneurs are the engine of the UK economy - driving jobs, opportunity, and growth. In 2022 alone, they generated **at least £28.8 billion** in business activity and contributed **more than £14.3 billion** to GDP (Shopify Entrepreneurship Index<sup>1</sup>).

At least **1 in 3 UK entrepreneurs are dyslexic**<sup>2</sup>. New analysis from Made By Dyslexia finds they contribute an estimated **£4.6 billion or more** to GDP<sup>3</sup> each year and support more than **60,000 jobs**.

Taking into account the number of dyslexics who run SME businesses, that figure could be substantially higher. Small businesses make up **99% of UK firms**, employing more than **60% of the private-sector workforce**<sup>4</sup>. They are the cornerstone of national growth, and dyslexic entrepreneurs play a vital role.

Dyslexic Thinking powers some of the world's most iconic brands - from Virgin and Apple to IKEA and Jo Malone. Dyslexic Thinking skills of imagining, simplifying and visualising are more vital than ever for future economic success.



That's why we're supporting **Momentum**, Virgin StartUp's first-of-its-kind business accelerator programme tailored to support dyslexic entrepreneurs as they scale their businesses using their unique Dyslexic Thinking skills.

And Made By Dyslexia's free course: **Entrepreneurs & StartUp Mentality** on DyslexicU, The University of Dyslexic Thinking in partnership with the Open University, is helping teach the world to understand what Dyslexic Thinking skills are, and why these skills shape great entrepreneurs.

“Dyslexia is a different way of seeing the world; a different way of solving problems and coming up with great ideas. The world needs dyslexic entrepreneurs more than ever”

Richard Branson,  
Virgin Group

## What is Dyslexic Thinking?

A distinct set of cognitive skills - including creativity, visualisation, problem-solving, communication, and big-picture thinking - often found in people with dyslexia. These skills fuel dyslexic entrepreneurs to thrive when creating and scaling successful businesses.

Now recognised as a skill on LinkedIn and in the dictionary:

## dyslexic thinking

[ dis-lek-sik thing-king ] ☒ Phonetic (Standard) ☐ IPA

### noun

- 1 an approach to problem solving, assessing information, and learning, often used by people with [dyslexia](#), that involves pattern recognition, spatial reasoning, lateral thinking, and interpersonal communication.

1. <https://www.shopify.com/news/shopify-beta-launches-worlds-first-global-entrepreneurship-index>

2. Forbes: <https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbesbusinesscouncil/2023/06/02/dyslexia-and-entrepreneurship-a-competitive-edge/>

3. Figure calculated using the Shopify Entrepreneurship Index and the prevalence of dyslexic entrepreneurs.

4. <https://www.fsb.org.uk/media-centre/uk-small-business-statistics>

# 1 Imaginers

## Dyslexics spot gaps in the market and disrupt industries

Dyslexic entrepreneurs index highly in creativity, using their Dyslexic Thinking skills of **Imagining** and **Visualising** to see what could be - not just what is.

They view markets differently, spot gaps others miss, and solve problems in new ways. Where others see obstacles, they see opportunity.

That ability to reimagine the world helps them disrupt industries, challenge the status quo, and deliver better solutions for customers.

“My dyslexia is an ability to think differently. We’ve learned how to see around walls and spot the potential in something others don’t”  
Jo Malone

### 3 key points



Dyslexic Thinking skills help dyslexic entrepreneurs dream big and imagine new possibilities



They spot gaps in the market, see problems as opportunities to disrupt industries, finding ways to offer customers a better service



They act fearlessly - testing, learning, and building as they go

## CASE STUDY:



**Alex Wright, Co-Founder, DASH Water**

Alex used his Dyslexic Thinking to disrupt the drinks market by turning wonky fruit into a best-selling soft drink brand.

Up to 40% of farm-grown fruit is rejected by supermarkets - and wasted. But Alex saw an opportunity to think differently.

Using wonky fruit and fresh spring water, he created a flavoured drink with no sugar or sweeteners. Today, DASH is one of the UK's best-selling soft drink brands, selling 50m cans in 2025 across 20 countries.

“We saw shelves stuffed with sugary, artificial drinks. So we thought, why not take wonky fruit and fuse it with spring water to create a healthy and delicious soft drink?”



Hear how Alex Wright used his Dyslexic Thinking to disrupt the drinks industry:



## 2 Big picture thinkers

### Dyslexics excel at simplifying products, propositions and messages

Dyslexic entrepreneurs are hard-wired to simplify complexity. Using their Dyslexic Thinking skill of **Reasoning**, they instinctively zoom out to see the bigger picture - helping them cut through detail, clarify problems, and create simple, strategic solutions.

9 in 10 dyslexics say they “see past the detail to gain a strategic view,” and neuroscience confirms it: MRI scans show dyslexic brains are wired for big-picture thinking.

This allows them to simplify products, propositions and messages. Simple propositions explained clearly are the secret of many dyslexic entrepreneurs’ success.

“Simple can be harder than complex. But once you get there, you can move mountains”

Steve Jobs

### CASE STUDY:



**Pip Murray, Founder, Pip & Nut**

In 2013, Pip was running marathons, but running out of energy. Nut butters should have been her perfect training partner, but all the options were crammed with palm oil and additives. She decided to simplify the ingredients and build a natural proposition using purely nuts and a sprinkle of sea salt.

Pip & Nut became the UK’s fastest growing and number two nut butter brand, stocked in all the major retailers, and will deliver over £35 million retail sales in 2025.

“I’m dyslexic - while my spelling might be sketchy, it fuels my creativity and gives me a unique perspective that’s been invaluable in both life and work”



Hear how Pip used her Dyslexic Thinking to simplify the ingredients in nut butter:



### 3 key points



Dyslexic brains are wired to see the bigger picture



They instinctively step back from the detail and take a helicopter view of situations, markets or ideas



This clarity drives successful, scalable products and messaging

### 3 Resilient problem-solvers

#### Dyslexics are not afraid to fail, making them resilient and persistent

Starting your own business and running it successfully is never a straight path - dyslexic or not. But dyslexic entrepreneurs stand out as they are not afraid to fail. And when it happens, they are good at bouncing back fast, seeing their failures as an opportunity to learn.

This willingness to fail means they build up a high level of resilience quickly and become skilled at finding workarounds to problems when they face them.

“If you don’t know how to fail and get back up, you don’t move ahead in anything”

Barbara Corcoran

#### 3 key points



Dyslexic entrepreneurs embrace failure and learn from it



They bounce back quickly, adapt fast, and find creative workarounds



They are keen and impatient; they lean in and get started, learn by doing and adapt as they go

#### CASE STUDY:



**Rob Law,**  
Creator, Trunki

Rob, entrepreneur and founder of Trunki (the ride-on suitcase that transformed how kids travel) is no stranger to setbacks.

Despite being rejected on Dragons’ Den, and being told his company was worthless, he went on to sell 5 million suitcases in over 100 countries and won more than 120 awards. In 2022, he sold the company for more than £12 million.

“Being an entrepreneur, you’ve got to be passionate, but also thick-skinned, driven, and determined”



Watch Rob talk about the dyslexic superpower of resilience:





## 4 Passionate questioners

### Dyslexics push boundaries and don't accept the status quo

Dyslexic entrepreneurs are passionate questioners. They challenge the status quo by asking 'why?' and 'why not?' They build businesses with purpose, lead with passion, and surround themselves with people who support their challenges. Using the Dyslexic Thinking skill of **Exploring**, they question market norms to ask 'why' and reimagine what's possible.

This instinct to challenge, rethink, and do things differently fuels progress - not just for their businesses, but for their industries. Their passion doesn't just motivate them; it inspires their teams to go further and deliver the best service or product.

“You've got to get your four Ps in order: be passionate, have great people, and a great product - then profit follows. Dyslexia helps with that”

Nick Jones, Founder, Soho House

### 3 key points



Dyslexic entrepreneurs get their 4 Ps in the right order: Passion, People, Product – knowing Profit will follow



Their curiosity drives innovation by asking 'why?' or 'why not?'



They disrupt industries, delivering a better service or product for the customer

### CASE STUDY:



**Daniel Singer,**  
Founder, Filthy Foods

There are 700 varieties of olive, and Daniel Singer has tried 230 of them in his search for the perfect cocktail olive. His company, Filthy Foods, revolutionised the cocktail market by providing an alternative to chemically cured, poor quality cocktail garnishes.

Filthy Foods offers naturally cured olives and cherries along with mixes for cocktails like Martinis, Bloody Marys and Margaritas. Its products are now served in top bars, restaurants and hotels worldwide.

“Empathy and curiosity are part of being a Dyslexic Thinker. You see what people need - and want to give it to them”



Watch Daniel explain why empathy and curiosity are his dyslexic superpowers:



## 5 Leaders, team builders, and empathisers

**Dyslexics build motivated, high-performing teams that grow companies faster**

Dyslexic entrepreneurs are natural leaders, team builders, and empathisers. Their businesses grow faster because of their ability to connect with people. Rooted in the Dyslexic Thinking skill of **Connecting** and supported by heightened emotional intelligence, dyslexic entrepreneurs lead with empathy, clarity, and purpose.

They know their strengths and limits, making them expert delegators. They focus on what they do best and empower their teams to do the same. That trust and clarity creates motivated, high-impact cultures that scale faster and grow. Their ability to connect helps them build brands that resonate, creating products and businesses that understand what people need.

“Dyslexia gives you the ability to lead, pick the right people, and motivate them. You might not be great with books or numbers, but you can hire for that”

Barbara Corcoran

### CASE STUDY:



**Richard Branson,**  
Founder, Virgin Group

Richard Branson credits his dyslexia for helping him build one of the world's most recognisable brands. More than 50 years on, Virgin has nearly 50 businesses across 34 countries.

Richard attributes his success to surrounding himself with a brilliant team, who allow him to lean into his strengths of creativity and imagining, while delegating the most challenging tasks.

He encourages his teams to do the same: focus on what they do best. It's a leadership style rooted in self-awareness, empathy, and trust, and it's helped Virgin grow faster, stronger, and smarter.

“Dyslexics are great at surrounding themselves with good people. We're better listeners and better at drawing on others, and that makes us better leaders”



**Listen to Richard explain why dyslexics make great leaders:**



### 3 key points



Dyslexics are great delegators and brilliant at surrounding themselves with the right people



Their ability to lean into their own strengths, and empower their teams to do the same, creates motivated, empowered cultures



They understand what customers need, and this builds great, authentic businesses



# Social entrepreneurs

## Using Dyslexic Thinking as an entrepreneurial force for good

Many dyslexics use their passion to become social entrepreneurs; righting wrongs and using their entrepreneurial skills to create positive change in the world.

It's the reason social entrepreneur, Josh Turner, started his sock business, Stand4 Socks. It's also the reason social entrepreneur, Kate Griggs, started the revolutionary global charity, Made By Dyslexia.

Also, dyslexic social entrepreneur, Jean Oelwang, co-founded Virgin Unite with Richard Branson, using her Dyslexic Thinking to drive change and tackle global challenges with "radical impatience."

### CASE STUDY:



**Jean Oelwang,  
Founding CEO &  
President, Virgin Unite**

Dyslexic social entrepreneur, Jean Oelwang, helped found charity, Virgin Unite, along with Richard Branson in 2003. Their aim was to use an entrepreneurial approach, driven by their Dyslexic Thinking, to think big and drive change - at speed - with what she calls "radical impatience". By not focusing on one issue and using a radically different approach, they created huge impact across issues as diverse as health, planet, social justice and equality.

**“We didn't just want to treat symptoms, we wanted to change systems and issues for good. That meant taking an entrepreneurial approach to social impact. And that's where Dyslexic Thinking comes in”**



**Watch Jean describe how Dyslexic Thinking fuels Virgin Unite's approach:**



### CASE STUDY:



**Josh Turner, Founder, Stand4 Socks**

Can socks change the world? Dyslexic entrepreneur Josh Turner thinks so.

Using his Dyslexic Thinking to spot a simple but powerful solution, Josh founded Stand4 Socks, a social impact business that donates a pair of socks for every pair sold.

So far, he's donated over half a million pairs to homeless people across the UK, Europe, and to vulnerable communities in Ukraine. His Dyslexic Thinking skills help him solve problems creatively and build a best-in-class social enterprise, one that's good for people and the planet.

**“If we could give every single pair of socks a social purpose... is it crazy to think socks could change the world?”**



**Watch Josh explain how Dyslexic Thinking built a business and helped the homeless:**



**CASE STUDY:**

## Kate Griggs, Founder, Made By Dyslexia

Kate Griggs is a social entrepreneur on a mission to change the way the world sees dyslexia. And she's making it happen.

In just 8 years, Kate Griggs has built Made By Dyslexia into a global movement to redefine how the world sees dyslexia, challenging the status quo. Under her leadership, Made By Dyslexia has driven worldwide change through powerful partnerships, society-shifting campaigns and transformative events, building the world's largest community of dyslexic people and their allies:

- Dyslexic Thinking is now a searchable skill on LinkedIn
- It's also a noun in the dictionary
- You can learn Dyslexic Thinking for free, online at DyslexicU, the University of Dyslexic Thinking, on the Open University.

Through her podcasts, books and free training for schools and workplaces, Kate is teaching the world the brilliance of Dyslexic Thinking.

### 3 key points



Dyslexic social entrepreneurs use their Dyslexic Thinking to do things differently and create positive change



Driven by a passion to right a wrong, they challenge the status quo to create a fairer world



Seeing the big picture, they develop simple and compelling solutions and unite people to drive change

“ The same Dyslexic Thinking skills that help entrepreneurs build successful businesses help social entrepreneurs drive change. Seeing the big picture, simplifying, creating and communicating a big bold vision, and then building teams to help you drive that vision forward ”

Kate Griggs, Founder, Made By Dyslexia



Hear how Kate describes the power of Dyslexic Thinking on DyslexicU:



## Young entrepreneurs

Many dyslexics find their skills early, and use them to create real-world value from a young age.

Their innovative thinking, coupled with a passion for problem-solving, drives them to turn ideas into impactful ventures.

From ground-breaking products to global movements, these entrepreneurs are shaping the future with their creativity, resilience, and Dyslexic Thinking.



**1 in 3 entrepreneurs are dyslexic**

Search Virgin 1 in 3 Founders



**1 in 3 entrepreneurs are dyslexic**

Search Virgin 1 in 3 Founders



### CASE STUDY:



**Omari McQueen,**  
Vegan chef, TV star  
and entrepreneur

By 12 years old, Omari had already become CEO of his own company, Dipilicious, opened a pop-up restaurant, created a cookbook and hosted his own TV cooking show on the BBC. Now, he has two successful TV shows, more than 50,000 YouTube subscribers and a brand new family cookery book. Plus, he was named one of the top 25 entrepreneurs aged 25.

“At first, I thought I had a disability. But it’s a learning difficulty. From then on, I’ve been using my dyslexia as a superpower”



Watch Omari explain how he’s used his Dyslexic Thinking as a chef and entrepreneur:



## Take action:

# Learn how to harness the power of your Dyslexic Thinking:

Dyslexic Thinking is already shaping the future of entrepreneurship - powering new ideas, bold businesses, and a stronger economy.



### Sign up

for Virgin StartUp's  
Momentum  
programme -  
supported by  
Made By Dyslexia



### Take

the free course:  
Entrepreneurs  
& StartUp  
Mentality  
on DyslexicU



### Join

the Entrepreneurs  
community at  
Virgin StartUp,  
which includes a  
dedicated Dyslexic  
Thinking Space



### Listen

to Lessons In Dyslexic Thinking  
podcast with inspirational  
dyslexic entrepreneurs: Richard  
Branson, Alex Wright,  
Rob Law, Daniel Singer,  
Josh Turner, Tom Vernon,  
Barbara Corcoran



### Share

the knowledge  
with others in  
your network to  
inspire other dyslexic  
entrepreneurs

