



**Venture -
Here We Flo Ltd**

Institution - London School of Economics

Social science

discipline - Business & Management Science

Sector - Healthcare

Route-to-market - Start-up

**Empowering women
with planet-friendly
feminine care**



Tara Chandra

Role -

Co-Founder and CEO

Degree -

Executive Global Masters in Management, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE); BA Economics, Columbia University, New York

Tara grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area of California and finished university early to move to Los Angeles for her music career, signing to European and Asian indie labels. After three years of touring and some career highlights, Tara moved to London to continue to work on her music while attending LSE. In 2015, she graduated from the Executive Global Masters in Management programme and was named a C200 Scholar.



Susan C. Allen Augustin

Role -

Co-Founder and COO

Degree -

Executive Global Masters in Management, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)


Susan is a British American who has spent her career working in non-for-profit/public sector spaces including the President's Office. Susan manages the operational aspects of Flo whilst working as Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Unit at Open Society Foundations. She is social impact, mission driven and believes that non-for-profit organisations can engage with the private sector, learning systems which will enable them to create change from the inside.



**A social start-up
bringing organic
feminine hygiene
products to the
mass market in the
UK**




In the UK women use an average of 11,000 disposable menstrual products during their reproductive lifetime, resulting in more than 200,000 tonnes of waste per year (The Evening Standard, 2019). Mainstream feminine hygiene products are made of synthetic fibres that can shed and be left internally, causing irritation and healthcare issues.




Here we Flo provides a new generation of feminine hygiene products, made from natural plant-based materials. Founders, Tara Chandra and Susan C. Allen Augustin met on the LSE Executive Global Masters in Management (EGMiM) programme and together developed the idea for the venture during a conversation about the lack of accessible, attractive, organic period products on the market. The social entrepreneurs decided it was time for organic cotton feminine hygiene products to be sold in major retailer stores.

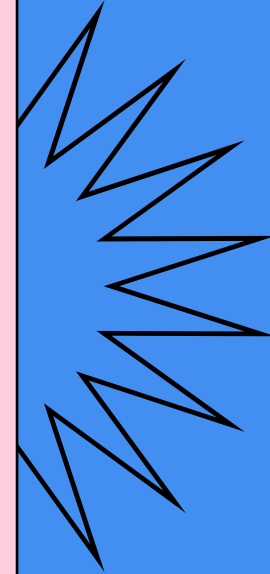
Tara conducted primary consumer research as part of her EGMiM thesis, which proved key data on the target market and informed key business decisions including pricing strategies and innovative packaging. They discovered that period products are a convenience driven purchase for women, usually buying the top branded products during a regular supermarket shop or by running to the nearest store when their period arrives, with minimal thought about the product itself. Two key drivers for the business model were formed because of this social science research 1) the need for affordable, accessible organic products and 2) stocking the organic products in large retailers would be key to changing existing consumer habits.

Social impact is built into Here we Flo's mission, which is to deliver 'healthier, eco-friendlier, adorable personal care' that gives back to society. The founders have worked with their manufacturers to seek eco-friendly materials, resulting in their tampon applicator being made from sugar cane.





““ The EGMiM programme is strongly underpinned with social sciences methods, which helped us to move into entrepreneurship. Whilst most traditional MBAs focus on teaching students how to solve specific problems and therefore develop leadership qualities, the LSE programme teaches how to find underlying causes and provide a solution. The programme and the thesis research taught us not only how to frame product and strategy but important social science concepts around how consumer behaviour is likely to change. From this we developed an infrastructure for the business which could adapt and change to new demands. ””



Tara Chandra, Here We Flo Ltd

T H E I M P A C T

In 3 years Here We Flo has grown from selling one product in 35 shops to having 3 product lines – consisting of 12 products in total covering period care, sensitive bladder care and sexual wellbeing.



The products are sold in thousands of stores across the world, with large retailers including Ocado, Boots, Urban Outfitters, Costco, Monoprix in France plus 700 stores in Netherlands.



Ensuring their business ‘gives back’ 5% of all profits are donated to girls and women in need. 3% of that goes to the Orchid project. They also regularly donate products to charities/schools/hospitals.



First business partner of ‘Bloody Good Period’ charity to donate products, Here We Flo provides a monthly product or financial donation.

The start-up journey

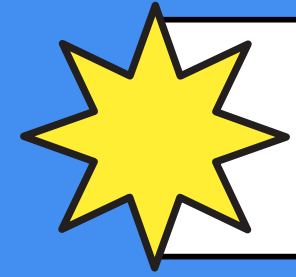
LSE has been incredibly supportive throughout the co-founders' studies. LSE Generate sponsored Tara for her Graduate Entrepreneur Visa, which gave her two years post-graduation to work on the business. LSE Generate also nominated her for the Committee of 200 Scholar Award, a global award for female MBA candidates, which was awarded to Tara in December 2015. Finally, Here We Flo was a winner in the LSE Generate start-up funding competition in December 2016. The guidance and support from Laura-Jane Silverman and all at LSE Generate really helped and played a huge part in their entrepreneurship journeys. They also credit the support of their EGMiM cohort which was made up of a wide variety of ethnic and industry backgrounds. They pitched the business idea to their fellow students and gained valuable feedback to develop the idea further, with one student also becoming the first investor.

“Great product - (pads) extremely comfortable and sustainable! You don't have to compromise, and I love the company's commitment to both the planet and those in need. I definitely won't be going back to the bigger brands.”

KIMI – Consumer Testimonial

Some key advice :-

- ◆ Never underestimate the value of extensive market research – talk to friends, work out your target demographics, read market research reports.
- ◆ Find the underlying causes of a problem and create a solution which addresses them. Paying attention to consumer behaviour and market research will help you do this – this is where social sciences research methods can really help you develop a business, as you conduct deep research into the target users.
- ◆ Build a community of customers around your product, both individual consumers and retailers and organically grow a community of supporters for your products/business, it will give you a power that can't be bought/recreated.
- ◆ Consider the location of your market e.g. in the US, due to its size you can develop a varied product as there are so many stores and people. In Europe there is less space, smaller populations and smaller sized stores, with less appetite for variations in products.



What's next for Here We Flo?

Since COVID-19 there's been a dramatic shift to online purchasing and the company has had to pivot its business model, moving to ecommerce. Although they previously had an online store, their focus had been on instore purchases due to the pre-Covid consumer behaviours. With COVID-19 forcing large UK retailers to stop ordering from 60% of suppliers the start-up developed its online presence and launched a US version, where there has been a high demand for the products.

The company managed to stay afloat and maintain their top revenue growth during the first few months of the pandemic through their European and US exports. Here We Flo are now reviewing and developing their export strategies. The company will expand their product range increasing their sensitive bladder and sexual wellness lines.

