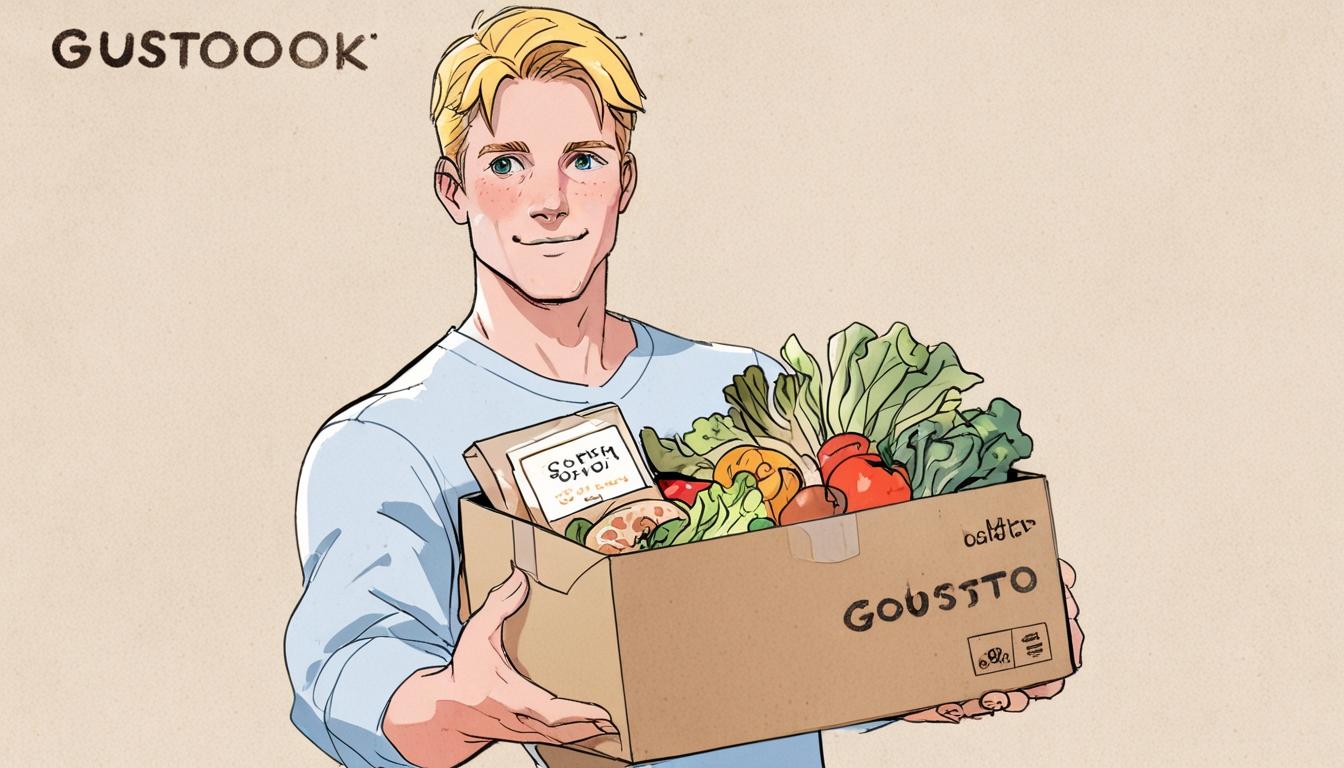
# How Timo Boldt’s Gousto bounced back from billion-pound slump with AI-driven innovation



At 26, Timo Boldt made a pivotal decision to leave his finance career behind in the City to embark on a venture that would redefine the way British consumers approach cooking and eating. He founded Gousto, a meal kit delivery service that offers a diverse array of pre-portioned ingredients and easy-to-follow recipes, with up to 200 options available every week. This choice was fuelled by a desire to address food waste and promote healthier eating habits—issues he deeply resonates with, particularly given the growing prevalence of ultra-processed foods in the UK diet.

Boldt's entrepreneurial journey began in earnest in 2012 and, over the years, Gousto gained significant traction, particularly during the pandemic when demand surged dramatically, leading to the company's first full-year profit of £18.2 million in the financial year 2020. However, as inflation began to bite and consumer confidence waned, Gousto faced tougher times, resulting in job cuts and a staggering decline in valuation from £1.4 billion to just £250 million by early 2023. In response, the company augmented its operations with artificial intelligence to tailor meal suggestions and enhance overall efficiency, ultimately helping it return to profitability in December 2023.

The need for innovation in the meal kit sector, particularly post-pandemic, has been highlighted as critical by industry observers. Providers like Gousto have adapted their business strategies to capture changing consumer habits and sustain market interest amidst ongoing economic pressures. Indeed, as Boldt envisions for the future, about two million Britons are expected to enjoy a Gousto meal by 2025, indicating a robust rebound strategy.

Boldt’s educational journey was not without twists; he moved from Berlin to the United States as a teenager, where his passion for food entrepreneurship was sparked by his family's ventures, particularly those of his godmother. He initially entered the finance sector because of his aptitude for numbers and a desire for security, but ultimately realised that true fulfilment lay in following his passion for food.

His reflections on earning and investment underscore a profound shift in philosophy—moving away from the financial metrics of success defined by society. Boldt believes in "creating memory dividends," valuing experiences over mere financial returns. His approach to well-being is aligned with his familial experiences, as he advocates for accessible, healthier food choices amidst the cost-of-living crisis afflicting many in the UK. Gousto aims to be a solution for families struggling with the balance between health and convenience in food preparation.

When discussing his investments, Boldt asserts a long-term vision, favouring diversified ETFs while maintaining a keen interest in the generative AI sector, which he believes is crucial for the future. His forward-thinking approach reflects a broader trend towards technology integration in business operations, essential for sustaining competitive advantage.

The company has also garnered attention for its employee-focused model, with 95% of workers owning shares, a testament to Gousto's commitment to sustainability and shared success. Such initiatives underscore a trend where businesses are not merely profit-seeking entities, but also stewards of well-being, both for their employees and the environment.

As Boldt looks ahead, he does so with a vision of continual growth, with Gousto acting as a key pillar in his long-term plans. His ambition to work into his nineties speaks to his passion and commitment to making a difference through food, health, and community-centric initiatives. With an eye on global issues, Boldt advocates for systemic change in how society approaches economic structures, suggesting fiscal strategies that could ultimately lessen the burden on public services.

In a world where financial success is often equated with personal worth, Boldt’s philosophy offers an alternative narrative—one that prioritises health, quality of life, and social responsibility as instruments of true success. As Gousto continues to evolve, it stands as a beacon for preserving these values amidst an ever-changing landscape.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1-2: Lead Article
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6. Paragraph 7: Summaries 5
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