

# Q&A: Going international with your subscription-based D2C brand

Article

Roderick Morris

Co-Founder of Lovevery



Roderick Morris co-founded **Lovevery** to provide parents with a subscription-based model of toys that evolve with children as they develop. He spoke with Insider Intelligence about

expanding the subscription business internationally, providing parents with proper data to make purchasing decisions for their children, and more.

### **Insider Intelligence: What was your strategy behind launching internationally?**

**Roderick Morris:** One of the major steps we took to launch in Europe and the UK was creating our own proprietary, mobile-centric subscription platform designed by our in-house team—about a quarter of our team works on software. Most subscription-based companies can't launch internationally because they lack the digital capabilities. This was a necessary step for us to optimize business operations and better meet the unique needs of our subscribers around the world.

Cultures are different, but the needs of children and babies around development are fairly universal worldwide. For example, in the US, tummy time comes up a lot with parents of younger children. Whereas in France, tummy time is not so much a thing, so we alter what content and materials are being presented.

The nature of our business means that every subscription is unique to each child based on their stage, development, and other needs. Custom software is necessary to support our business model as we continue to add new physical and digital products, currencies, and other components. As we grow Lovevery's presence in international markets, these enhancements will allow us to operate at scale and drive greater efficiencies across the business.

### **II: Why launch your product as a subscription-based model?**

**RM:** Our core customer, the family unit, has two components. It's the caregivers or parents and the child. The child is constantly evolving, and the parents' needs are evolving, too—that's different from a razor subscription, for example, where I'm getting the same razor every six weeks, and my fundamental need to shave my beard is not changing from month to month. With a baby, what they need is fundamentally different three months later than at a particular point in time then with a toddler.

We saw an opportunity to help parents access all the science around child development in a way that was much more accessible than anything that they'd had put before them. We can put together play kits with products that we design and content that we write for parents and produce videos based on what their child needs at that time and what the parents need to take care of them.

Our customers often stay with us for three or more years. The most popular play kit is the one for newborns—more than **20%** of our customers start there. After a year of subscribing, more than **70%** of these customers are still active. After two years, more than **50%** are still active.

**II: How have consumer demands shifted when they are making decisions on what products to buy for their children?**

**RM:** Parents want to raise children in a way that fits their particular lifestyle, their needs, and they're hungry for a nerdy edge to the products. Today's parents have more information available to them than any other generation before, which is a double-edged sword. It can make you really sophisticated about what you want, whether you're talking about a developmental angle you want to assist your child with or a particular set of materials you want your products made with. But you can also be incredibly overwhelmed because there's so much information out there.

We've done our best to try solving for that by giving parents sophisticated, nerdy edge materials, but in a way that's super accessible and not overwhelming or judgmental.

**II: How do your digital educational offerings align with your subscription-based products?**

**RM:** It is important for us to amp up funnels with content that's truly of service to parents and is mission-aligned. We want to produce the best content that we can for our mobile app, email lists, and organic social channels. We've brought in a number of outside experts over the past year, and we're going to continue investing in those content funnels and capabilities, even as we diversify our paid and organic media.

We put together play kits with products, and produce content for parents in conjunction with each product through booklets, videos on our website, blog posts, and courses. We include insight from a variety of experts—ranging from neuroscientists to pediatricians to speech language pathologists to academics—who provide insight on each developmental stage. As a result, subscriptions make a ton of sense because as a parent, you don't have to Google or shop a retail aisle and piece together what you need every month.