

David Bartlett

EdTech Founder & Operator | Advisory for EdTech Startups

Berkshire / London, UK · db@dauidsbartlett.com · dauidsbartlett.com · linkedin.com/in/david-bartlett

£1.2m

ARR at exit

20%

Annual growth

30%

EBITDA

<10%

Churn

Aug 2025

Majority stake sold

PROFILE

I built an EdTech SaaS company from scratch, nearly ran it into the ground, created our second product in six weeks to revenue with the whole team driving towards that goal, and grew it to £1.2m ARR before selling a majority stake in August 2025. I still run it as CEO. I know exactly what it takes to survive and grow in the UK education market: the procurement cycles, the budget politics, the product traps, and the GTM moves that actually work.

I now work with a small number of EdTech founders and operators as a hands-on advisor. Not slideware strategy. Real commercial and product input from someone who has sat in your seat.

WHERE I ADD VALUE

GTМ and early commercial traction

Built all early sales at Purlos with no playbook. I can help you find the right ICP, sharpen your pitch for UK education buyers, and build a repeatable pipeline from scratch before you have the headcount to do it properly.

Product market fit in UK education

I understand what FE colleges, universities, and training providers are actually measured on, how they buy, and why most EdTech products fail to land. I can tell you quickly if your positioning is wrong and what to change.

Fundraising and investor readiness

Raised institutional seed funding at Purlos and navigated a full exit to SPA and completion. I can help you think clearly about what investors in this space want to see, and what a deal actually involves before you are in the room.

WhatsApp, AI and engagement product direction

Purlos was built on WhatsApp-first learner engagement and AI driven automation. If your product touches communications, engagement or workflow automation in education, I can give you operator level input on what works in the real market.

Hiring: senior, commercial and consultants

Hired across functions at Purlos including senior leadership, commercial teams, and external consultants. I know when to hire a consultant versus a full-time employee, how to extract maximum value from short engagements, what good looks like at each stage, and where founders typically get burned by hiring too early, too late, or at the wrong level.

EXPERIENCE

Founder & CEO, Purlos | London, UK

2018 to present (majority stake sold August 2025)

- Built from zero to £1.2m ARR with 20% annual growth, 30% EBITDA, and under 10% churn.
- Created our second product in six weeks to revenue, with the whole team aligned and working towards that goal across product, sales and delivery.
- Designed and shipped three products across the learner journey: **Engage** (WhatsApp enrolment), **Destinations** (automated outcomes tracking), and **Outcore** (outcome management).

- Served FE colleges, universities, training providers and government clients across the UK; reached over 500,000 learners annually.
- Assembled a board and advisory bench including former Pearson and Open University leadership; raised institutional seed funding.
- As CEO: set company vision and long-term direction; owned the growth plan across sales and marketing; drove product alignment with commercial goals; managed costs, financial forecasting and cash planning; designed team structure and led the hiring plan at every stage of growth.
- Navigated a full exit process from initial conversations through to SPA and completion, selling a majority stake in August 2025.

Account Director, QA Learning | London, UK

2017 to 2018

- Sold £100k+ consultancy led digital and tech training programmes into major enterprise accounts including GSK, Oracle, Barclays and the Bank of England.

Senior Business Development Manager, Nursing Times Learning (Ascential PLC)

2013 to 2017

- Ranked #1 salesperson across the entire Ascential PLC group (FTSE 250) in 2015; exceeded targets three years running, delivering over £1m in new revenue.

Business Development Manager, Pareto Law | London, UK

2010 to 2013

- Promoted twice. Company acquired by Randstad during tenure.

HOW ENGAGEMENTS WORK

Advisory retainer

Monthly retained engagement, typically half a day to a day per month. Strategic input on product, commercial, fundraising, or team questions as they arise. The format that gives founders consistent access without over-engineering it.

Focused sprint

A fixed-scope piece of work with a clear output: GTM audit and plan, ICP definition, pitch review, hiring brief, or product positioning. Time-bound, outcome-led.

Board advisor

Formal advisory role with equity. For founders who want a committed voice with skin in the game who understands the UK EdTech market from the inside.

CORE SKILLS

Sector: FE colleges, higher education, training providers, EdTech startups, workforce technology.

Capabilities: GTM strategy, early-stage sales, product market fit, fundraising, WhatsApp and conversational product design, AI advisory, learner engagement, process automation, exit navigation.

Sales methodologies: Challenger Sale, Sandler Selling System, SPIN Selling, Solution Selling, ValueSelling Framework, Miller Heiman Strategic Selling, value based selling. Certified and practised across discovery, solution and strategic frameworks.

Education and development: Oxford Said Business School (2023 to 2024); Northumbria University, Business Management and Entrepreneurship (2013 to 2016); CEO leadership coaching through Management Dynamics (coaches FTSE 100 companies and leading startups).