

The Issues faced by Assistive Technology companies

1. Entrepreneurs
2. Government Support
3. Investment
4. Education
5. Clinical Support

ENTREPRENEURS: We need entrepreneurs in the Assistive Technology field and we need them to be successful

- Companies that are good at what they do pay a price. That price is often not seeing the new breakthrough opportunities, because cognitive bandwidth is limited. Focusing hard on one thing often means neglecting others.
- Kodak and Polaroid never adapted to digital photography;
- Nokia was nearly destroyed by the smart phone;
- Amazon succeeded in internet shopping rather than high street retailers; and Twitter and Facebook gave us social media rather than incumbent internet companies.
- “By converting high growth potential into reality our innovative SMEs have the chance to improve quality of life and create a better, more sustainable future for those of us who will develop physical and/or cognitive conditions.”

Jackie Marshall-Cyrus, Innovate UK

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT: Private eHealth companies need to operate in an environment where their efforts are actively supported and encouraged



[Boost for electric and driverless car industry as government drives forward green transport revolution](#)



[Cleaner journeys as government commits £11 million to greener buses](#)



INVESTMENT: The vast majority of Assistive Technology companies need Financial Market support if they are to emerge successfully from the ‘Survival’ phase of growth

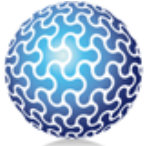
- “We realise that a business cannot thrive on grant funding alone. Most of the small companies I talk to have problems securing investment because their business models are not seen as scalable. It is really a pity when people are forced to take their ideas to the US and elsewhere in order to attract investors.
- Over the past 20 years we have funded a large number of research projects; many of them very good concepts, but we still do not see these ideas in the market today. If we are to attract investment for our European companies and establish scalable markets across Europe we must learn how to exchange knowledge and build capacity to promote best practice in care innovation at home and in the community.
- And in parallel, small companies must also learn to look beyond their local markets in order to succeed.”

Peter Wintlev-Jensen of the European Commission’s DG Connect

EDUCATION: Assistive Technology training and education must be a priority for our healthcare commissioners, and clinical and care providers

- The need for access to training on general digital skills in healthcare is often poorly understood by commissioners and managers. Funding, where it does exist, is limited and training is not prioritised.
- Awareness about available/comparable products and services to meet current and future needs is limited.
- But this is difficult when the wealth of products making their way onto the market to satisfy every possible need in our homes and hospitals is so staggering and where 'system interoperability' makes it difficult to create a seamless service pathway.
- Manufacturers need to embrace the need for interoperability, whether through iOS, Android, proprietary or independent platforms.
- Professional networks are important in overcoming these challenges by agreeing and establishing 'standards'.

CLINICAL SUPPORT: Recognising that digital skills and innovation need to be part of current and new care pathways



protel health

- “Britain’s care industry has “hardly been touched by new technology. Until those who determine health and care provision policies (including governments) are attuned to the idea of business model competition, and are willing to help facilitate innovation, we cannot expect significant progress, even though the generation moving into the ‘high health demand’ phase of their life are much more likely to be ready for the new models.

Naushard Jabir, Founder of Vida, the first care technology platform-powered home care provider to be approved by the Care Quality Commission.

- One of the barriers to progress in this area is that health and care professionals tend to be closely wedded to current practices and consequently resistant to change. For progress to be made, practitioners need to become comfortable with giving up ineffective processes, or de-innovate and commissioners need to be incentivised to promote innovation.
- That said, we should not anticipate an overnight revolution as health and social care are heavily-regulated and safety conscious, which means material changes are subject to rigorous assessment and testing before being considered for application at scale. This can take a number of years.

