SHIL

Innovation and Collaboration - a powerful combination

Product Forge Hackathons

A NEW APPROACH TO INNOVATION

Author: Dr Robert Rea,
Head of Business Development, SHIL

"The calibre of work and innovative thinking on display was extremely high"

Graham Watson, Chairman, SHIL

The Scottish Government's 2020 vision supports new approaches to making our NHS even better, now and into the future. It endorses doing new things, doing some things differently and working across NHS Scotland and with partners to achieve objectives. SHIL adds value to NHS Scotland as a dedicated team working with healthcare professionals across the country to accelerate the development of ideas and innovations to improve patient care. In a new approach to solving healthcare challenges, Scottish Health Innovations Ltd (SHIL) teamed up with Product Forge - an organisation delivering open innovation by connecting partners to early stage technology entrepreneurs, technologists and entrepreneurially minded designers.

"Hackathons are a fairly new approach to innovation in Scotland and SHIL are delighted to be supporting them. Through years of experience in developing and commercialising products we bring skills to the process that help assess the technical and commercial feasibility of an idea. It has been great to see the enthusiasm for developing new, innovative solutions and the general approach to collaboration. We have a wealth of talent in Scotland and I look forward to seeing how these and future ideas develop"

Dr Robert Rea, Head of Business Development, SHIL

"SHIL share our passion for nurturing entrepreneurial talent and working collaboratively towards a brighter future in health innovation. The team have added valuable insight, expertise and experience to our hackathon weekends and matched our enthusiasm for testing new approaches to healthcare challenges."

Allan Lloyds, Founder & Managing Director at Product Forge

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- Harness talent from within our health service
- Combine developer, creative, product design and engineering skills
- Interface with key stakeholders across NHS, academia and industry
- Enable rapid incubation of ideas
- Assess the viability of ideas, potential scale, and technical feasibility.
- Demonstrate commitment to innovation and use of technology
- Access to new perspectives otherwise not possible
- Provide support from mentors who have real world commercial experience.

METHODOLOGY

Supporting two hackathon weekends – Medical Visualisation (November 2017) and Public Health II (January 2018) health experts collaborated with creatives, developers and entrepreneurs, to work on healthcare innovations across areas as diverse as precision medicine, medical visualisation, mental health, obesity, and substance abuse. Specifically, SHIL collaborated with Product Forge to:

- Support promotion, participation in, and delivery of the events, alongside other partners – including NHS NSS, Canon Medical Research Europe, IHDP Scotland, DHI Scotland, and others
- Provide mentors to guide participants through product development, advise on IP, technical feasibility, commercialisation
- Participate on judging panel providing constructive feedback and selecting most innovative idea.

OUTCOMES AND RESULTS

- Successful collaboration of clinicians and experts
- This partnership led to new ideas being brought from concept to prototype during the weekends, including **ViaLact,** a free app that helps women to find breastfeeding-friendly places, so they can feel safe, confident and supported to breastfeed wherever they are and **Docmetrics,** a system providing real-time hyper-local health data for General Practice
- Creation of strong relationship between SHIL, Product Forge, and other key stakeholders across Scotland
- Strengthened the role of SHIL as key player in the health innovation landscape.

CONCLUSION

Translating innovative ideas into viable products and services requires a range of skills and expertise, Our partnership with Product Forge has allowed us to explore new approaches to innovation, nurture entrepreneurial talent and build collaborations with key stakeholders across Scotland, all committed to driving improvements in healthcare.

REFERENCES
The Scottish Government, Achieving Sustainable Quality in Scotland's Healthcare: A 2020 Vision, gov.scot (2012)
Scottish Health Innovations Ltd., 'Digital remedies for public health challenges' article, shil.co.uk (2018)
Scottish Health Innovations Ltd., 'SHIL partners with Product Forge to drive healthcare innovation' article, shil.co.uk (2017)