



COMPANY OVERVIEW

Applying Game Thinking to Falls Prevention

Founded by Paul Dewick and Emma Stanmore

Academic staff members in Alliance Manchester Business School, Faculty of Humanities and Health Sciences, Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health

Funding Received: AMBS RSF, ESRC IAA and MAHSN

Three words to describe your journey so far... Collaborative, Uncertain, Exciting!



Above: Paul Dewick

Below: Emma Stanmore



Tell us a little bit about yourself, the Enterprise and your journey so far. In 2015, I had been exploring whether gamification could help change people's behaviours to reduce their environmental impact. I was contacted by Dr David Hoyle from New Charter Group, a sheltered housing provider in Greater Manchester, to see whether the approach might be applied to reducing falls among the over 65s. David put me in touch with Emma Stanmore from the School of Health Sciences and with a small grant from Alliance Manchester Business School Research Support Fund (AMBS RSF) we undertook a scoping exercise. This scoping work spelled out clearly the need for a new solution to an increasingly costly problem:

- Falls are the largest cause of accidental death in older people across Europe with 30% of people aged 65 and older falling at least once per year
- The direct and indirect annual costs of falls are substantial, reported to be over £2.3bn in the UK in 2013 (not including the high social and psychological costs), and increasing as the population ages
- There is good evidence that exercises aimed at improving balance, muscle strength and power – if intensive, progressive and continued – can reduce falls, but there is low adoption and adherence to exercises in the home
- Improved awareness of home hazards and modifications has also been found to reduce falls, particularly in those with a history of falls

How was your idea conceived? Our scoping study revealed that there was nothing on the market capable of widespread diffusion that used gamification ideas to motivate people to undertake exercise that reduces falls, and that engage people in learning about fall prevention. Our idea was born.

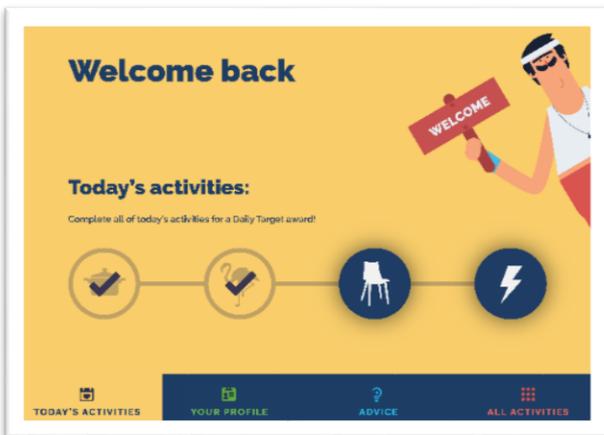
What is your company mission? We're developing an application for a tablet, suitable for widespread adoption, that combines game thinking with theories of behavioural change and evidence about falls prevention to (1) motivate users to exercise regularly and (2) improve their awareness of preventative/therapeutic interventions to reduce falls. We aim to improve the lives of older people and reduce the high

economic, social and psychological costs associated with falls.

At what point, did you realise that the idea had commercial potential? The scoping study revealed a gap in the market, but it wasn't until we started talking to stakeholders and successfully obtained funding that we began to think there was commercial potential. As we moved forward with the co-development we realised that what set us apart from the other approaches is that our innovation is needs-led, evidence based and developed with and for older people. This gives us a Unique Selling Point in the market.

What approaches did you first employ to develop the idea?

After the scoping study, we applied to the Economic and Social Research Council Impact Accelerator Account (ESRC IAA). We both had the interdisciplinary research expertise, we had collaboration from users at New Charter; but we needed funding to work with a digital creative agency to help turn our ideas into an easy to use, engaging product. We secured the funding allowing us to procure the services of Reason Digital, a Manchester based human-centred, design-led digital agency working exclusively towards social impact, who responded to the competitive tender. Before we started working collaboratively with New Charter and Reason Digital on the co-development, Emma and I enrolled on the Innovation Optimiser.



How did you get involved with the Innovation Optimiser?

When putting together the proposal to the ESRC IAA we approached UMIP for assistance with the Intellectual Property (IP) implications. Sally Mead at UMIP helped us with the IP and recommended we enrolled on the Innovation Optimiser course. She introduced us to Laura and Ellie who told us about the Roadmap sessions which could help us develop a business plan for the idea.

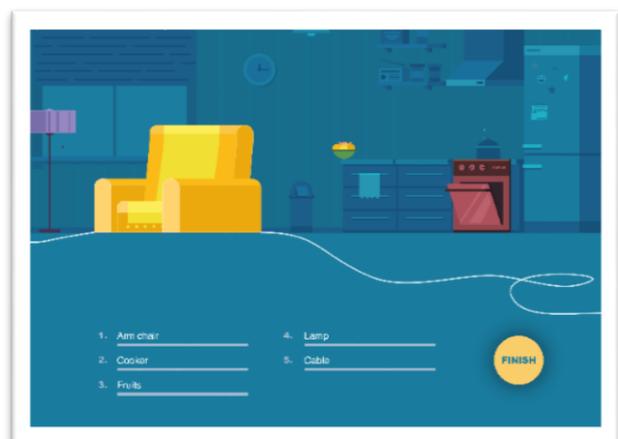
How did this engagement help you? The Roadmap sessions helped us articulate our vision for the product, identify market entry opportunities, and effectively pitch our idea to key stakeholders. The learning we gained from the Innovation Optimiser and the Roadmap sessions helped us obtain a grant from Greater Manchester Academic Health Sciences Network (GMAHSN) where we pitched our idea in front of a panel of practitioners and venture capitalists.

How has being involved with entrepreneurial activity benefitted you? Entrepreneurial activity is essential in taking research into practice. We would not have achieved all we have in the last eighteen months without going on an

entrepreneurial journey. We've not found it easy: what we lacked in entrepreneurial experience we made up for with enthusiasm and determination to get our idea 'out there', supported strongly by UMIP, the University's Directorate of Research and Business Engagement Support Services, and our own Research Services.



What future support are you looking for to progress your business? The ESRC IAA funding allowed us to co-develop and feasibility test a working prototype. With funding from the GMAHSN we are continuing our innovation journey with the same partners, developing the app further in response to the feedback from users. We've applied for additional funding from the Innovation Fund Denmark to formally test the product in 2018 in a random controlled trial. We'll explore other funding opportunities in 2017 and consider alternative routes to market. We continue to need support with collaborative agreements between the three parties, which will become more important as we move closer to market.



Would you encourage other staff, academics and research students to seek support for their ideas through the Innovation Optimiser? I'd encourage anyone to attend the Roadmap sessions. It provides a supportive, critically constructive process that helps reveal if the idea actually has potential.