The Institution of Engineering and Technology

Cambridge Healthcare Networks: Empowering the Patient Revolution

Background:

With an ongoing objective to build a world-class health service, the NHS has declared a commitment to innovation and patient empowerment. As Chairman of the East of England Innovation Council of the NHS and Chairman of Health Enterprise East Ltd – the Regional Innovation Hub serving all health services, Alan Barrell has been involved in a variety of web-based projects supporting the Government and NHS policy of patient empowerment. After meeting entrepreneur and engineer Dawson King, Barrell enlisted King onto the Innovation Council to create a new service that would meet these objectives. Through this collaboration, Cambridge Healthcare Ltd was born.

Dawson King

In just over a year, the start up has achieved great success through the development of what has been positioned as the new social network for healthcare. **www.howareyou.com** encapsulated the objectives of involving patients in their care decisions and management. It was recognised for its revolutionary step forward in Information Technology and Communication, by the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET), at the 2011 Innovation Awards.

Development:

With a thorough understanding of both the objectives of the NHS and patient needs, King was able to create an e-portal which featured the world's first healthcare application store. howareyou.com was designed to support patients as they take on more responsibility for their personal health and well being. Through sharing information effectively with doctors, nurses, care workers and other patients as well as family and friends, howareyou.com connects patients with each other and all those involved in every aspect of their care, while remaining in control of any decision that is made.

Although in partnership with the NHS, the innovation attracted instant commercial attention, raising a total of £200,000 in funding through business angels. The first product was developed in six months and has since continued to evolve into the product that it is today.

Three months after the product was made available, howareyou.com underwent a pilot programme within specific regional Trusts in the UK. Soon after, general interest came from a number of different sources including a host of different charities dealing with multiple sclerosis, cystic fibrosis and arthritis care.

> "It is encouraging to see the portal gaining interest from a variety of groups particularly those campaigning for patient empowerment. There are over 3,000 websites and portals relating to the NHS, however ours aimed to be more focused. While anyone is free to use it, the site is probably more relevant to those patients with long term conditions interested in learning more extensively about their health and how to manage it on a daily basis,"
>
> says Barrell.

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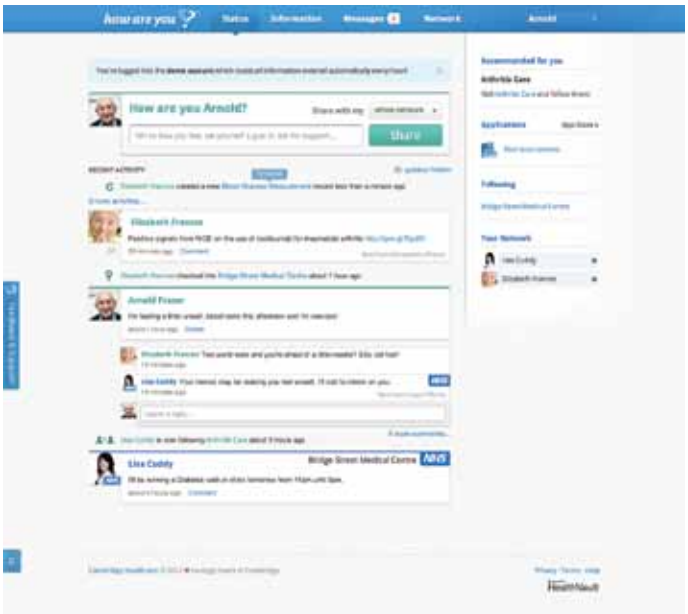
Results:

While the company has had no technical problems, it did experience problems with finding developers with the right skills and experience to fulfil the requirements of the portal. Despite this, howareyou.com was well received in the marketplace and was well publicised regionally, making it a worthy submission for the IET Innovation Awards.

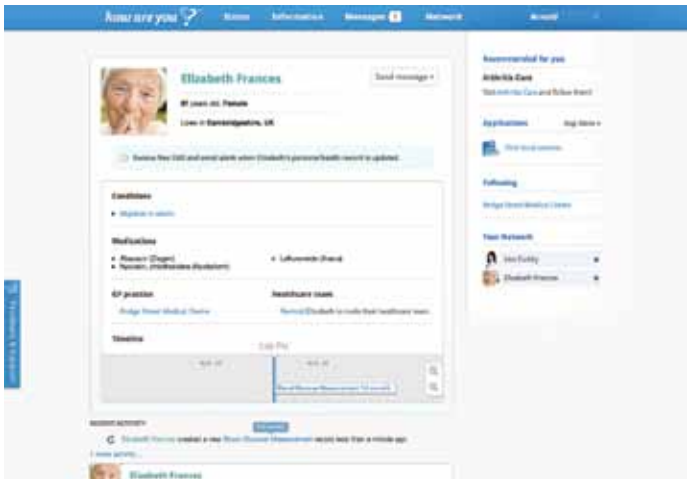
Following Cambridge Healthcare Ltd's success at the awards, the company was approached by Microsoft to discuss creating a repository of apps.

Following the IET Innovation Awards, Cambridge Healthcare Ltd has been declared IT Innovator of the Year 2012 at the Health Investor Awards and has since raised an additional £1m.

> "The recognition gained at the IET Innovation Awards provided us with significant leverage and allowed us to interact with new contacts associated with the institution. The kudos and prestige that comes with this award, allows you to be noticed by large companies and by those overseas, which has been invaluable,"
> says Barrell.



howareyou.com screen shot of activity feed



howareyou.com screen shot of patient care profile

The Future:

Cambridge Healthcare Ltd's ability to meet the objectives originally laid out by the Innovation Council and the Government has led to the creation of a strong public-private partnership which will bring enormous benefits to NHS patients and practitioners; an improvement in efficiency and productivity; and the generation of significant cost savings without sacrificing on the standards of care. It will continue to explore the opportunities and trusted engineering resources available through the IET's Information and Communications Sector, as the company looks to raise the number of users from thousands to millions. By using its newly established position in the IET community, Cambridge Healthcare Ltd will benefit from the wide network of contacts and intelligence to help facilitate the company's steps towards international success.

> "We are keen to make the most of the IET's impressive network to tap into its engineering professionals and its engineering intelligence resources to help our company develop to the next stage. With great ambitions to catapult this start-up to even greater heights, the IET will be invaluable in providing us with the network of services, contacts and support to help develop our product to empower even more patients,"
> concludes Barrell.

www.**theiet**.org/info-comms

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