



ST JOHN'S INNOVATION CENTRE

St John's Innovation Centre Tenant Spotlight: Greg Berman and Tony Bedford from Kinneir Dufort

St John's Innovation Centre is delighted to have had the opportunity to interview Greg Berman and Tony Bedford from Kinneir Dufort, who recently won the Queen's award for Enterprise. Kinneir Dufort is an integrated research, innovation, and design and product development company based at St John's Innovation Centre, the leading early stage business incubator in Cambridge.



Greg Berman, Head of Medical at Kinneir Dufort and Tony Bedford, Head of Medical Business Development, discuss their experience of the Cambridge design and development scene and how the industry is changing with international competition.

What is unique about your business?

We are in a competitive business where we excel by putting user experience at the heart of everything we do. Drawing upon our user-centric design heritage means we are a market leader and our work is represented by some of the world's largest-selling medical devices used on a daily basis by millions of patients around the world. This is especially important within the medical device sector where the end-user is often not the specifier or purchaser of the product – understanding the nuances between these stakeholders can be the difference between a winning product and an also-ran.

What drew you to the sector you currently work in?

Greg was attracted to the sector by a job advertisement in the New Scientist in 1990, was successful and stayed ever since. Tony spent a couple of years working on rather more diverse projects, including spinning machines for cotton, novel beer bottle closures and tracking systems for racehorses before successfully running a medical device development from concept to launch – and has also stayed in the sector ever since.

How do you and your team stay on top of industry trends?

Success in this sector requires a level of understanding of the industry in which we are working, which typically comes from building relationships and trust with our clients and peers. We do this through project work, sales meetings and conferences and of course it's never perfect – there's a fair degree of opinion and subjectivity in this business.



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How has your life experience contributed to where you are today?

Both of us have extensive experience of the Cambridge design and development scene. Greg Berman started out in the biotech industry working as the first person in a company called Therapeutic Antibodies, which was listed on the London Stock Exchange as Protherics and subsequently acquired by BTG. Greg notes: “two of the projects I started resulted in products marketed by BTG.

After many years working for Cambridge-based design and development companies, I wanted to get back into a start-up environment and the opportunity to employ the skills acquired throughout my career. Kinneir Dufort is in the privileged position of being a growth company building a new team in a prestigious location – a bit like a start-up company but integrated within a successful organisation.”

How do you see your industry developing in the next 5 years?

Cambridge has a unique classic industry cluster of medical design, technology and biochemistry which until recently was not replicated anywhere else in the world. There is now increasing competition from US-based companies and some very intriguing industry alliances are forming – for example McKinsey, the renowned Management Consultancy, has just acquired Lunar – a pure design consultancy. 20 years ago, most medical interventions were purely chemical (eg drugs), mechanical (e.g. implants) or electrical (e.g. pacemakers), but increasingly we are seeing technologies converge into complex medical devices and this is a sweet spot for multi-disciplinary consultancies like Kinneir Dufort.

Have you ever turned down an opportunity/a client?

Yes!

What characteristics do you see as important for success?

In design and development consultancy, there are two primary elements that define our success: firstly, selling work in a highly competitive marketplace and secondly, executing it to a very high standard. Both of these require a number of skills, from relationship building and the ability to listen to having faith in your delivery team's expertise and diligence. If either of these components fail, you are instantly on the back foot.

What does your average workday consist of?

We have a very varied schedule of work – one day it may be reviewing CVs or interviewing recruits; the next day may be writing a proposal for a complex development programme and the next might be spent visiting clients. We are just back from 4 days of hard labour on the Cote d'Azur attending the industry-leading inhaled drug delivery conference.

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