Shifting from academia to business was tough but rewarding. It allows you to drive, and ultimately benefit from, commercial applications of your research.

Dr. Ben Panter
University of Edinburgh
CEO, Blackford Analysis

Edinburgh Research and Innovation
A UK leader in commercialising research and entrepreneurship
Interested in starting your own company?

Have you considered starting your own company based on your research? Are you looking for grants and funding to support you? Do you know where to get free support for your potential startup or spin-out?

Companies founded by University of Edinburgh researchers regularly benefit from equity investments, Scottish Enterprise’s High-Growth Spinout Programme (up to £200K), SMART awards (up to £100K) and Royal Society Enterprise Fellowships. We are one of the most entrepreneurial universities in the UK and several companies that originated here have achieved great success.

The Company Formation Service at Edinburgh Research and Innovation offers:

- help in applying for funding to commercialise research
- 1-to-1 business consultancy meetings
- business courses
- mentoring programmes for all staff at the University

Book a meeting with us today to discuss your business idea or opportunity.
Success in numbers
2009 - 2014

£1.2 billion
in research awards

382
Patent applications

849
Invention disclosures

648
Licence agreements

£14 million
Royalty income generated

£167 million
Increased turnover for licensee companies*

180
New companies formed

£275 million
Investment raised

£664 million
Estimated turnover in active spin-outs and start-ups

2,487
Industry partnerships around the world

£79 million
Value of industry partnerships

* The BIGGAR Economic Impact report calculated that licensee companies will be making at least £12 million in increased turnover for every £1 million in royalty income the University receives.
Dr. Andrew Manches
Co-Founder, Pling Ltd.

The Idea

Pling develops educational toys for young children. The company uses technology and physical objects to change how young children learn about maths.

Challenges

“Time, time, time. The relationship between business and research is still not clear, especially in the humanities. I have been given the all clear which helps but not sure the disconnect has still been ‘overcome’.”

“PostDocBiz helped me move from believing I have an idea to believing I have a company.”

Helping the University of Edinburgh inspire, launch and grow businesses
Starting Up as a Postdoc

“We were nervous about external IP issues but had a lot of time and support and feel confident this will not be a problem. Be creative. Play. It is amazing how transferable skills are. Make things – it is the perfect antidote to feelings of ‘what have I actually done’ crisis points in academia.

Going from an idea to a product on sale is an amazing feeling, especially when you get feedback about how it has helped a child learn. For this new company at Edinburgh, our achievements are mainly around getting the support infrastructure we want, and the possibilities open to us - ranging from pitching at St. James’ Palace to a recent successful SMART funding grant.”

The Future

“We would like to be internationally renowned as an ideas lab in the field of educational technology and children. We want to cut across informal and formal settings, keeping strong links with educational research and practice.”

www.plingtoys.com
Blackford Analysis is a supplier of software products that speed up the comparison of medical images, saving the time of healthcare professionals and increasing their productivity.

One of the main differences between being an academic and an entrepreneur is the focus on the product rather than the technology.

“In business there’s a relentless focus on the product proposition and its fit to the customers’ needs, which is of far higher importance than perfecting the technology. In making the transition from academic to entrepreneur, there’s a whole new set of skills to learn. Professional networking, effective delegation, recruitment and management are all essential for a business, but not necessarily what you might know from an academic background.”
The company was spun out from the University by Dr. Panter in 2010, after receiving funding from Scottish Enterprise and US-based angel investors. Four years later and with a second round of funding completed, the company has grown significantly with a presence in both the UK and the US.

Edinburgh Research and Innovation at the University of Edinburgh offers assistance to spin-out companies in a variety of forms, which were very important to Blackford Analysis in its early days.

“The University of Edinburgh has an excellent framework for start-up and spin-out companies in helping them get the assistance that they need. I found that they had huge resources for giving advice to young businesses, and a comprehensive external network of people who could help me, such as investors and mentors.”

The Future

With sales offices now in the UK and the US and plans to further expand their product range over the healthcare sector, it looks to be an exciting few years ahead for Blackford Analysis.

www.blackfordanalysis.com
Edinburgh Research and Innovation helps staff at the University of Edinburgh to inspire, launch and grow businesses. If you have an idea you would like to commercialise, then please contact us. All information is correct as of January 2015.

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