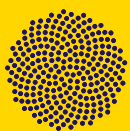


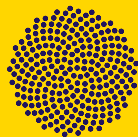
Ireland Where Digital Health Thrives



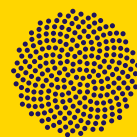
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Helping indigenous companies go global

David Byrne, Manager of the Digital Technologies Department, Enterprise Ireland speaks about overcoming challenges in the healthcare industry through digital transformation and the importance of supports for Irish companies to bring their innovations forward.



“The digital health sector is a global phenomenon and provides a huge opportunity,” says David Byrne. “What we’re seeing is a convergence of technology, medtech, pharma and healthcare, to deliver value through data harnessing and analysis for healthcare providers and clinicians, all the way through to manufacturers.”

And David says Ireland is a centre of excellence in both pharma and Information and Communications Technology (ICT). “We are very well-placed because of our pre-existing knowledge, expertise and performance to-date in both of those sectors.”

Overcoming challenges

While there are challenges to overcome in the healthcare industry, the recent pandemic has brought about opportunity. “There are long-term challenges such as an ever-increasing ageing population, and the complexity and expense of medical treatments that are rising all the time. People are living longer with more complex healthcare needs and the funding models are struggling to keep pace.

“There’s a real need to meet the supply-and-demand challenge and digital transformation is driving significant transformation across all of that.”

David continues, “The challenges are obviously compounded by the urgency in terms of what’s going on with the global pandemic, so that’s taking immediate attention. However, there has been a lot of success in that Irish companies have been innovating leading technologies to address some of the challenges.”

Covid-19 has demonstrated the ability of the Irish industry to innovate. “For companies to be able to respond with a fully approved medical device – which would normally have taken years to approve – in a matter of weeks or months is impressive.

“For example, NearForm, an Irish company in Waterford, developed an app for Covid-19 tracing. It’s being used across Ireland, in Scotland, in Gibraltar and it’s being looked at in other countries.”

David adds that Covid-19 has also demonstrated the opportunity for remote engagement, “Be that in the provision of healthcare in the home, including remote consultation from doctors and so on. People are developing innovative solutions, so that patients can get the healthcare they need in a safer, more efficient way, but without encountering the risks.” “You can also see these kinds of tools that the Irish have companies innovated persisting into the future.”

Partnership and support

When it comes to being a global leader in the development and deployment of digital health solutions and products, partnership right across the value chain is the only way forward.

“It’s a complex environment. There’s a range of expertise and knowledge involved, everything from the innovation to the technology. Then, you have to think about how the innovation is supported and how it’s engaged with the potential end customer.

“All of these are very complex steps and companies need to form partnerships in order to bring in the expertise they lack. This will ensure the route to market is maximised and that companies have the greatest possible impact and the greatest potential for growth.”

Supporting the digital health ecosystem is vital, “The Government is committed to supporting innovation, as are Ibec and Enterprise Ireland. Enterprise Ireland has the supports to help our companies take their innovative solutions from the concept stage, right through to the marketplace.

“There’s a very supportive environment in Ireland, and ways to ensure that innovative ideas get every opportunity to develop and succeed.”

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