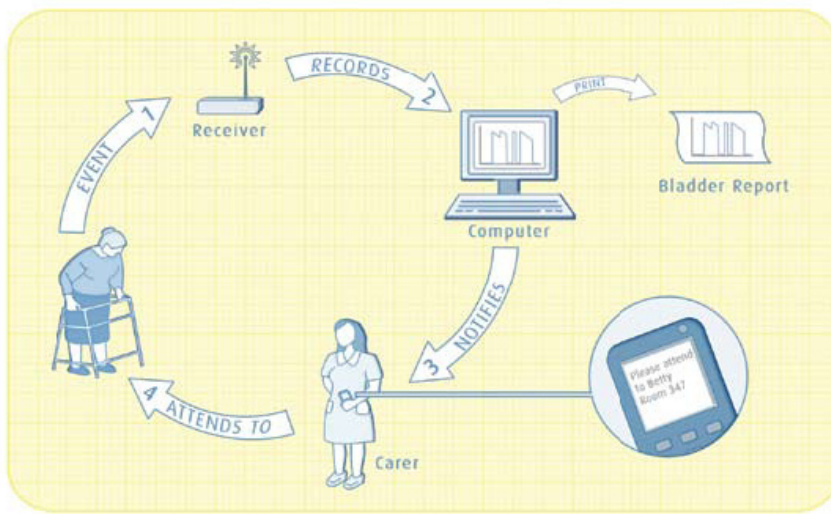




Australian Institute
for Commercialisation



Case Study: Fred Bergman Healthcare



Fast Facts

- The AIC assisted FBH to understand and plan for commercialisation requirements
- Identified appropriate development partners
- Helped FBH to negotiate commercial arrangements
- New product to be launched in December 2008.



The Company

Melbourne-based Fred Bergman Healthcare Pty Ltd (FBH) was one of the first companies to join the AIC's TechFast® program in Victoria. FBH is a Melbourne-based company specialising in products that improve the quality and cost of clinical and community care. It does this through the introduction of technologies that implement patient-centred care practices, helping carers and clinicians monitor and evaluate the patient's condition and provide information to assist in delivering optimal care and attention. The company is named after its founder Dr Fred Bergman, an inspirational, visionary and compassionate man who was dedicated to improving the quality of aged care and who conceived and developed the first product to the verge of its first clinical trial. Even though Dr Bergman died suddenly in 2005, he left behind a dedicated team of individuals, committed to his vision and ready to continue to move towards its realisation.

The Opportunity

The company focused its initial efforts in the areas of aged care and incontinence. Its first product, the SIMPAD™ system, addresses the assessment and management of urinary continence for residential aged care facilities. The SIMPAD™ technology incorporates disposable sensors that communicate through wireless technologies with a central data management system to analyse and interpret signals from the sensor. This then provides an accurate assessment of the continence event and alerts the carer when the patient requires attention. As a start-up company, FBH had limited resources and skills to allocate to critical project activities. Consequently, FBH was a willing recipient of the support offered by the TechFast® program, requiring assistance to assess their technology, its market potential and the intellectual property position of the SIMPAD™ product. They also needed help identifying R&D partners and formalising effective commercial relationships with these collaborators.

The Australian Institute for Commercialisation (AIC) is a leading service organisation helping innovators achieve commercial success. Around Australia, the AIC helps business, research organisations and governments convert their ideas into successful outcomes.

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The company had previously had difficulty reaching a commercially attractive research agreement with a research provider. TechFast[®] helped FBH find appropriate expertise and quickly negotiate a three party research agreement between FBH, CRC Smartprint and Nanotechnology Victoria. The negotiations were fruitful and all parties were satisfied with the outcomes.

The Outcome

Before entering the TechFast[®] program, FBH was focused on running a clinical trial of the SIMPAD[™] in an aged care facility and developing an improved prototype of the product. TechFast[®] helped FBH to understand the full breadth of commercial activities that would be required to maximise the successful commercial uptake of the SIMPAD[™] technology. TechFast[®] then provided FBH with assistance in finding and selecting a patent attorney and law firm who provided expert advice and support to help them better understand their intellectual property position, their target markets and the dynamics of those markets and competing clinical solutions.

The business plan, IP strategy and market research supported by TechFast[®] all formed the foundation for the next stage of development for the company.

In particular, this vital information gave the company perspective on certain issues. Most importantly, it helped FBH realise that the directors had:

- unrealistic expectations of what the technology and the business would be able to achieve and the timeframes involved
- a simplistic view of the real protection that could be provided by the existing patents.

The IP review supported through the TechFast[®] program helped FBH find a patent attorney with the right skills and knowledge for their technology, leading to a much deeper understanding of what was possible and the development of a strategy for the protection of future inventions and know-how.

David Barda, Chief Executive Officer of FBH said "having the ear of someone experienced in technology transfer and commercialisation

opened our eyes and helped us realise that we didn't have to invent everything ourselves – but that we could find existing know-how and gain access to it through commercial agreements".

David was initially engaged as a TechFast[®] funded commercialisation consultant to assist FBH but has now joined the company as its CEO to lead the company through the next stage of its growth.

Following on from the TechFast[®] program, FBH was able to raise additional capital and continues to develop the SIMPAD[™] technology.

The Simpad[™] system is planned for release by mid 2008 with significant market interest already identified.

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