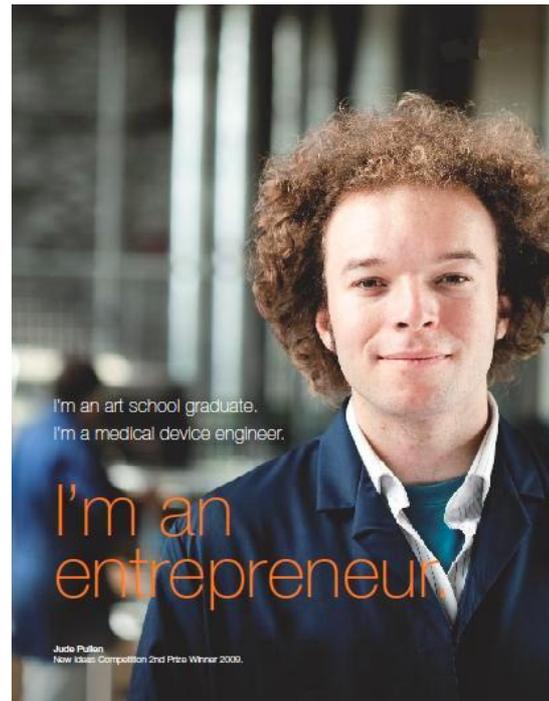


I'm an entrepreneur :

Jude Pullen

Jude Pullen graduated with a joint degree in Product Design Engineering from Glasgow School of Art and the University of Glasgow. As part of his degree, he designed a medical device that will help the patient breathe when under anaesthetic during operation.

He won First Prize in the SIE New Ideas Competition 2008 and began working for Dyson, while continuing to work on his product.



The following interview was conducted in 2009 and printed in the SIE newsletter *Ignite*.

How did you get started down the path of 'entrepreneurship'?

I started the product design engineering course after a background in chemistry, as I didn't feel that was really 'me'. Chemistry had insight into how the world worked but not the creativity. The course felt very accommodating, and I was attracted to it as it retained the rigour of sciences and engineering but clearly offered a higher degree of creativity, combining my passions.

My parents have been self-employed most of their life, and I was very keen to work with real companies as opposed to grounding myself in academic pursuits. When confronted with something like design, to me it seemed fruitless being absorbed and in pursuit of something that you would like in the world, rather than what other people would like or need. I'm very passionate about the potential to design something that makes a difference to other people.

Where did the idea for your product come from?

When working on a design project during my degree, I was attracted to medicine, as I saw myself as a failed biologist. I haven't got the memory that can retain, for example, amino acids but I've always been fascinated by nature. I think the experience that inspired the idea was when I was in an operating theatre witnessing an operation with the patient under anaesthetic. I'd never worked with anything that was as meaningful as preserving life.

The problem that I discovered was that the current method used when putting a patient under anaesthetic is that there is a small risk that it can be incorrectly entered into the airway and can actually bruise or split the trachea. The device I developed is engineering to avoid this entirely.

What would you say was your 'eureka' moment?

'Eureka' moments are rather romanticised, and I'd say they come out of being able to brainstorm things. In design, the term "immersion" is quite appropriate. It was by immersing myself in the medical process so heavily that helped. It isn't a case of anyone could see the problem, or solution, from a distance. It had to be in it to see it. And all design also includes patience, the idea doesn't come in full over night.

And at what point did you realised your product could be taken from a design course and used in the real world?

I'd say quite early on the product became useable in the real world. I was very keen to create something that could be validated. Yorkhill Children's Hospital in Glasgow contacted the University looking for student project work, which coincided with me asking my tutors about any opportunities within the medical world. The Hospital was keen to use the student's creativity as they're free, they're enthusiastic, and whilst they do lack experience and can make mistakes, they also do have new ideas. I think they realised it could become a real product when they realised how serious I was about delivery it.

Yorkhill are a partner in the proposal of the patent fund application, and they own a share in the outcome of the project.

What was it that made you want to take the product further, and pursue entrepreneurship?

Motivation is a tough thing, you have good days and you have bad day. The motivation is feeling your engaged with a product that has value, and not just financial value. If you know you're there you'll tolerate the things that are momentarily hard or confusing. The people around me have always been important, such as friends, family and even people in the industry who I respect, like SIE or NESTA.

So I took lots of little jumps, like "let's try and manufacture the product" and then "let's try and raise £10,000 do it properly", lots of little things. It's difficult for people starting out when sometimes they think they have to do everything at first. Truth is, it's not. It's lots of little stages, and there are people who will help you out, and go through it with you. So I don't think it was a conscious decision to say "let's do this!" but it happened step-by-step.

A common thing connected to launching a new product or business is risk: coming from the 'security' of a University degree, would you say you've taken any risks?

For me, risk was self-belief and trying to believe that I was doing things to the best of my ability. Designers are their own worst enemies, they're never happy with what they've done and feel they could have done a better job. I felt I wanted to understand risk better, and manage it, so that was basically managing my own fears and doubts.

SIE and NESTA were great at helping me with that. If you are interested in being in an atmosphere with people who want to take something seriously, I feel sometimes it can be a bit stifling if you're not someone who immediately thinks of looking at money, at networking, at sales, at economics. These are dirty words and concepts in the art scene. Whereas NESTA allowed me to look at these alongside the creativity of my idea.

Would you define yourself as an 'entrepreneur'?

The word has so much confusion around it at the minute, I guess this is what happens when you feel you're an individual and aren't keen on any words that pins you down. I suppose I have entrepreneurial qualities, but to be hones the thing that motivates me the most is human

interaction. I don't think a word has been coined for someone who consistently wants to meet people and work with them, as well as for them.

But I would say that having an understanding of the word "entrepreneur" and the concept before you leave University gives you the opportunity not to have a cliff edge of aspirations. It builds your bridge out of University, not just financially but emotionally and in terms of personal belief. If you try and develop entrepreneurial skills, the transition from University to whatever you want to do is going to be the better for it. I would urge anyone in their final year not to worry solely about their final grades, but to be enthusiastic about their passions and to use University as a great opportunity to understand yourself and what you want to achieve beyond University.

I still stand behind the concept of figuring out who you are, and how you want to apply yourself to create some sort of value, be it financially or emotional. For me, I want to continue learning, and keep working with people in every sense of the word. It doesn't matter when I'm self employed or working within a team, I just want to feel that however I'm doing it, I'm doing it with an awareness of who I am and what I'm doing it for.