

5 Questions with...Fit4D

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This post is part of a special “5 Questions with...” series, featuring Q&As with the semi-finalists in the Merck | Heritage Provider Network Innovation Challenge.



David Weingard is the CEO and Founder of Fit4D – a personalized program that synthesizes workflow, data capture, device integration, and reporting-enabling personalized service delivery via coaches within its network. He has experienced first-hand the complexities of living life with diabetes and its challenges. Fit4D is one of five semi-finalists in the [Merck | Heritage Provider Network Innovation Challenge](#) competing for a \$100,000 award. Learn more about Fit4D by tuning in to Demo Day on January 23rd.

1. What is your concept? Tell us about it in two sentences or less.

Fit4D solves for patients with poorly managed diabetes. We use technology to make a personal diabetes educator (CDE) coach scalable and affordable.

2. How did you hear about the Challenge and what prompted you to enter?

We learned about the challenge through Luminary Labs and appreciate the ‘real world’ approach they take to healthcare. We entered as part of our mission to improve the lives of people with diabetes — it is our passion and reason for being.

3. What have been your biggest successes and challenges in the last year?

Fit4D started with telephonic coaching, similar to a call center model. We learned quickly that this method doesn’t scale. We began to search for alternate ways to help patients including mobile or web-based apps. Although there are some very cutting-edge apps we found that they worked for the motivated patients, though they are not the problem. It is important to use a real person to help motivate people, by

building a therapeutic alliance, especially for those people who are not motivated or feeling very overwhelmed by their diabetes.

This is where the personal CDE coach comes in! On to the amazing part; technology is at a point where we use it to scale our CDEs and reach more people. And, we communicate in the way patients want to communicate – across mediums such as email, text, online support groups, webinars, phone, Skype and our web platform. This optimized mix of human and electronic touch points enable us to engage patients (the motivated and the unmotivated) and improve their health.

In the past year we've improved the way we measure results by integrating the data from payers/PBMs (e.g. for medication adherence) and medical devices (e.g. A1C kits, blood glucose meters). Robust tracking and reporting on this data ensures that we deliver on key performance metrics and provides immediate validation. It's a true comprehensive patient support program.

4. What is the main problem you are looking to solve with your solution?

We are solving for those having the biggest challenges with diabetes self-care, and giving them a helping hand when they need motivation or hit a bump in the road. Ultimately giving a patient a much needed 'high five' when they stay on that path or providing personalized support that motivates them to overcome challenges. (e.g. taking their medication). Diabetes is hard; it's an everyday thing, everyday! Everyone with diabetes is different; not only coming from different social-economic and cultural backgrounds but also facing different hurdles – so the interventions must be personalized.

In addition to supporting patients getting healthier, we're reducing healthcare costs, improving patient / provider communication, increasing medication adherence and overall improving the lives of those living with diabetes. 40% of the cost of diabetes is associated with those patients with A1C values above 9. These high A1Cs put a patient at higher risk for heart attacks, strokes, kidney disease, neuropathy and circulation problems. All expensive to treat complications.

5. Your team has entered into the Virtual Accelerator period, which includes a design, prototyping, and business modeling Boot Camp. What is the biggest insight you uncovered during Boot Camp?

The boot camp, especially the focus groups, reinforced how everyone with diabetes is different and that personal interventions will provide an immediate impact on the patient. The virtual accelerator has helped us recognize our individual assets as a team and how to leverage them in many ways.