



David Harden

Automotive & Telematics
Product Manager

Ennis & Co Investment team

SKILLS

- Product management
- Pricing
- Product development
- Product marketing
- Strategic planning

EDUCATION

6 Sigma

Green belt

Brunel University London

B.Sc (Hons) Management & Technology (2:1)

Ennis & Co Group are delighted to welcome David Harden as an Associate.

David has over twenty years' experience in product planning and management, new product development and commercialisation of new and emerging technologies.

Having worked as an Interim Manager/ Project Contractor for global brands including Vodafone Telematics, Indra Renewable Technologies, LEVC & Geely Group, David will form part of our Ennis & Co Investment team to support start-ups, restart-ups and established companies when bringing their new innovations to market.

The automotive industry has already seen great change with the introduction of new technologies, how has this impacted your career?

The automotive industry has changed a great deal, and although when I first started in automotive we did have basic technologies, it was really just the start of digital and new innovations were still very much analogue.

This transition has been positive for me during my career, with two main benefits standing out. The first is how technology has improved the speed in which you can bring new ideas to market, allowing companies and individuals to develop ideas so much quicker, and removing onerous and non-productive tasks.

Secondly, looking back to the beginning of my career, technology seemed to be very siloed. You would develop your idea and produce your end product and that was it. Whereas the new digital world, with its emerging technologies has broadened opportunities, which means a single, first concept can develop during the product development process into 10 new spin-off ideas or even reach out to 10 new markets.

Additionally, this broader approach can mitigate risk by having more product variation and commercial opportunities and thereby improving the likelihood of success.

An example of this is during my time at Vodafone Telematics was when we developed a very specific product, in layman's terms a tracking device meant for a car which could

not be detected by would-be thieves. The spin off from it was that we managed to put it into the packaging of high value phone handsets which were tracked and recovered if stolen. I think that's the great thing for me about new technology; you can just keep taking it and pushing it further and further while only being limited by your imagination.

What would you say is the greatest challenge in today's market for small & medium businesses when launching new innovations?

I think the biggest challenge at the moment is funding, these days funders and investors are getting wiser to the fact that there are so many possibilities with technologically driven, great innovative ideas. However, many are being sold to investors as just that – a great idea. Some ideas can lack substance and so, in economically harder times, investors are more demanding.

Whilst investors will accept risk, it's about mitigation of that risk and actually knowing fully what that risk will entail. So, as well as having some credibility behind an idea, start-ups need to have a good, tangible product and not just smoke and mirrors.

Another challenge for small and medium organisations launching new innovations is, given the rate of change in the market and technology, predicting where it's going to be in five years, and understanding the challenges and risks this will mean for your business is nearly impossible. But it's important to be mindful and honest about that.

When reviewing investment opportunities which attributes will stand out to you?

A big thing for me when reviewing investment opportunities is how open a company is to new ideas and ways of working.

Although it is expected that founders might be precious over their business idea, equally we want to be able to provide support and ultimately help as much as we can via an open and honest relationship.

Understanding your market and being able to

demonstrate how your idea will add value to your customer, not just an investor, will prove its true potential for growth.

What advice would you give to start-ups, what do you feel can make or break their business strategy?

In short, share your vision with us, be honest, realistic and imaginative but clear about your short and medium term objectives.

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