

Digital Catapult helps SenSat secure an Innovate UK grant and extend its customer base by nearly 200%.

SenSat uses autonomous mapping drones to digitally replicate areas up to 12,000 times faster and safer than traditional means. Its revolutionary cloud based technology, Mapp®, allows teams to quickly and accurately measure areas in real-time to plan, build and manage large scale construction projects. The company has won numerous awards including 'Innovation of the Year' and 'Tech Start-up of the Year' and is currently the only company in the UK that's licensed to fly autonomous drones Beyond Visual Line of Sight (up to 200 kilometres away) over major motorways.

The challenge

In May 2015, the founder of SenSat, James Dean, developed a revolutionary new 3D mapping application for use on autonomous drones. This set a new standard for the planning, building and managing of construction projects. As revolutionary as the product was, to really get it off the ground, the company had to improve the way it was projected, secure financial backing and extend its network exposure to include larger scale corporate customers.

The solution

To help SenSat succeed, Digital Catapult invited it to participate in the 2016 Autumn Showcase. This created a stage for the company to demonstrate its revolutionary solution to potential investors and customers alike and was just the start of Digital Catapult's extensive support that proved instrumental in helping SenSat really get its 3D mapping technology off the ground.

Results

Due to their association with Digital Catapult, SenSat:

£420k

Secured grants worth £420,000 from Innovate UK.

1 to 16

Grew the business from 1 to 16 people in a single year.

Tier one

Extended their tier one customers from 9 to 26 in a single year.

£Seed

Secured a substantial seed round of investment.

SenSat⁴

SenSat subsequently engaged with major companies such as Swiss Re and Thales. Thales met the company through a Digital Catapult Pit Stop, a highly focused open innovation activity designed to accelerate the growth of new ideas. This meeting helped SenSat secure pathfinder status, the regulatory support required to allow its autonomous drones to fly Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS). An important milestone that enabled SenSat to capture more data efficiently and make the company more accessible to its customers.

The results

Through its association with Digital Catapult, and after working with the organisations that Digital Catapult introduced it to, SenSat was able to:

- Secure grants worth £420,000 from Innovate UK to develop its 3D mapping technology.
- Grow the team from 1 to 16 people in a single year to handle the increased demand for use of its application on large scale projects.
- Extend its tier one customers from 9 to 26 in a single year.
- Secure a substantial seed round of investment to increase production and unlock new markets.

SenSat's growing team has also benefitted from a further £500,000 in funding that gave the company the financial shot in the arm to start mapping out the total area of the M4 in just one single flight. A project that will help Highways England build another smart motorway for a fraction of the cost of traditional data capture methods.

Based on the success of the business so far and in a drive to further develop their application, SenSat have been invited to an upcoming Digital Catapult Showcase where it will be able to shine a spotlight on the evolution of its 3D mapping products to a fairly large contingent of interested companies.

“ Digital Catapult was critical to our early growth. It provided a special environment to facilitate expansion and allowed us to flourish by connecting the 'doers' of the tech industry, ourselves, to the people who needed our technology. Today when I look back, I can directly attribute key opportunities to the good work of the Digital Catapult team.”

James Dean

Founder and Director, SenSat

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Digital Catapult

Digital Catapult is a technology innovation centre that unlocks digital growth in the UK economy. It works with companies of all sizes to transform their businesses by accelerating the practical application of digital innovation. We bridge the gap between research and industry, finding the right technologies to solve problems, increase productivity and unearth new opportunities.

For more information on Digital Catapult, please visit:
www.digicatapult.org.uk