



**NAME**

**JOHN HUGHES**

**COMPANY**

**INSULCHECK**

**TITLE**

**CO-FOUNDER AND  
MANAGING DIRECTOR**

**WEBSITE**

**WWW.INSULCHECK.COM**



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**PROFILE JOHN HUGHES**



Inspiration for an innovative idea can often develop from a significant or life-changing event. For serial entrepreneur John Hughes, a fatal overdose of insulin was the trigger.

For almost 20 years, John has had type 1 diabetes and is required to inject insulin four times per day. On an ordinary day when he set out for a walk in the park, John inadvertently took an extra shot, having forgotten that he had already injected. As a result of this mistake, John collapsed in a coma without warning and was rushed to hospital.

While recovering, John began to think about how he could make sure he and fellow patients with diabetes would not find themselves in this position again. And so the concept for InsulCheck was born. Along with his engineering colleague, William Cirillo, John began researching and looked to develop a simple solution.

*"Our research identified approximately 50 million insulin-users worldwide who live with the double-injection threat every day. More than 30,000 of those are in Ireland alone. They use a pen-like injection device, and short of taking a note of the time they inject, there was no failsafe way for them to remember if and when they have taken their insulin."*

With a little help from a diabetes Professor, John and William designed, prototyped, tested and patented a device in 2009. The device, now known as the InsulCheck clips onto most insulin pens in seconds and automatically detects when an injection is completed. It then constantly displays the time since the last injection.

John advises other entrepreneurs to focus on their market research when they are first setting up. "For those looking to turn their idea into a viable business venture, they need to ensure their product or service is appropriate to their customer base – is it necessary, will it solve a problem and will people buy it?"

During the R&D stage, the company was included as one of Enterprise Ireland's High Potential Start-Up's (HPSU). Receiving support from EI helped to ensure the product was piloted carefully.

*"We didn't want to make any big mistakes. I used InsulCheck myself for several months as part of our user trials and it really solved the problem for me. Even now, I can pick up my insulin pen at any time and it tells me for certain whether I have or have not injected."*

InsulCheck removes the doubt for insulin pen users while offering their care team an extra level of security as their patients deal with their complex condition. John believes that InsulCheck has ensured people with diabetes and their families can now have peace-of-mind like never before. *"The objective of InsulCheck is to decrease the number of double injection incidents and provide reassurance to diabetes patients by providing the information they need to improve their safety and compliance. Studies have shown that approximately 40% of patients admit to having difficulty remembering whether or not they had in fact injected their insulin."*

Halo Business Angel Partnership (HBAP) has helped InsulCheck secure €350,000 in investment capital after matching the company with investors who have expertise in medical sales, marketing and distribution. With the support of its angel investors, the company has partnered with the main insulin pen producers to ensure the device is compatible with all the most common pen designs.

A serial entrepreneur, John feels the experience he gained from his previous start-ups has been fundamental in setting up InsulCheck. In 1984, John founded one of Ireland's first IT Training Companies, *The Company Learning Centre*, where he employed 15 staff. Later he built an e-learning software development company that grew to over 30 people operating in Ireland and the USA. *"Once you successfully start up, you are constantly facing obstacles as you plan to grow and expand. Having been here before, I feel I have an advantage and I'm looking forward to facing the challenges that lie ahead."*

Since its launch in March 2012, InsulCheck has received interest from people with diabetes all over the world, including those in the US, Australia, South Africa and across Europe. John attended a diabetic conference in the UK, where he demonstrated InsulCheck and couldn't believe the positive reaction from the delegates. The company's target markets are currently in Ireland and the UK, but it plans to expand into other European countries and markets further afield over the coming two years. As a serial entrepreneur, John is well placed to work with potential distributors and customers throughout the world.

**STARTING & PARTNERING**

**INVESTING & ACQUIRING**

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