New models for knowledge transfer

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About me

Mark Mann

Mark Mann OÜ was founded in 2021 to provide strategic innovation services to technology transfer offices, corporations and institutions wishing to expand and diversify their impact offering. Its founder, Dr Mark Mann, developed a reputation for being a leader in the field whilst working at the University of Oxford, where he:

• Vastly accelerated Oxford’s Humanities and Social Sciences pipeline by developing new template spinout models.
• Developed templates for Oxford’s new social venture spinouts.
Adam Stoten (former COO of OUI)
Licensed the new COVID vaccine from the University of Oxford to AstraZeneca in early 2020.

From licensing it at the beginning of the pandemic (March 2020), it was injected into my arm March 2021. By November 2021 it had been injected into 3 billion arms.
The mechanisms

Note: this is not what you do, but what a contract at a particular stage of a project might look like

- Partnership
- Policy Engagement Project
- Public Engagement Project
- Commercialisation
  - Consultancy
  - Service Agreement or Licence
  - Franchise
  - Mainstream Spinout
  - Social Enterprise / Non-profit organisation
Mechanisms and processes are important but...
Why do we not focus on mechanisms?

Example from the University of Oxford: SOPHIA Oxford UK

- Research into poverty: index created (the value).
- Used as a **policy** tool for government.
- A bank requested a **partnership** to develop a tool to measure poverty for itself with the University and a locally-based social enterprise.
- The partnership was a success. The social enterprise wanted to roll it out in its own country. This was done through a **franchise**.
- Organisations in other countries wanted to take a franchise as well. A **social enterprise spinout** was set up to manage the franchises.
- The work generated a lot of new data which was passed on to the **research** group to gain more insights.
- They developed a data model for investment in poor communities to alleviate poverty (new value). This was **licensed** to the social enterprise spinout, which the **spun out a new for-profit company** from itself to provide this data to banks and government so that they can develop social bonds.
- The new “**spinout of a spinout**” is **partnering** with the department to change government **policy** with the insights from the data.

“Impact at scale”
Be creative

Consultancy for quality control

Data +
Online platform

Social Enterprise Spinout

Technology Transfer Office

licence

data

Consultancy for quality control

University

charity

funds

Data +
Online platform

Online Platform

franchise

accreditation

accreditation + platform

Company 1

service

Businesses

Company 2

service

Have now spun out a spinout out of the spinout.

Data to be used to develop financial investment into social bonds with demonstrable results that alleviate poverty
Wise Responder's groundbreaking, scientific methodology brings the power of quantifiable metrics for SDG 1, No Poverty, application to where it's most needed: the financial and business community, in emerging and developed markets, for use by financial institutions, corporations, and institutional investors eager to create and broaden access to sustainability-linked financing and investment.
Impact first not IP protection
The project chooses the mechanism

“The wand chooses the wizard, Mr Potter.”
1. A motivated researcher?

- Research
- Grant Applications
- Paper writing
- Line management
- Committee Work
- ...
- ....
However, if a researcher does want to make a wider impact...

A passion, a mission, a lifetime's work – this is the most important factor in success.
2. Are you solving a problem for someone or something?

- Is the project already engaged with partners outside the Institution?
- Is there a need, a want, or is this project a “nice to have?”
- Are there organisations out there looking for a solution to this problem?
**Good signs**

1. **Need**
2. **Want**
3. **Nice to have**

The more organisations you have in 1 and 2 above, the better your prospects are.

- You are already speaking to organisations or groups of people outside the Institution.
- There is a clear need for what you are doing.
- You have evidence that you have the solution.
- You see that this could spread far beyond your current interactions.
3. Wider considerations?

Your own organisation’s impact thesis. Is the project aligned?
KT³

A methodology for working out what impact you can have with a new idea.
KT³ _ Methodology to turn research into a benefit.

I. TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION

What is the research | result | competence about?

II. TARGET GROUPS [STAKEHOLDERS & BENEFICIARIES]

Who would be interested in the research outcome?

III. HOW (MUCH)?

How might the research support target groups?

Value Proposition
## Health (1/3)

### Nutrition
- Any person under 70 years of age for whom there is nutritional information is **undernourished**.

### Child mortality
- A child **under 18 has died** in the household in the five-year period preceding the survey.

## Education (1/3)

### Years of schooling
- No eligible household member has completed **six years of schooling**.

### School attendance
- Any school-aged child is **not attending** school up to the age at which he/she would complete **class 8**.

## Living Standards (1/3)

### Cooking fuel
- A household cooks using **solid fuel**, such as dung, agricultural crop, shrubs, wood, charcoal, or coal.

### Sanitation
- The household has **unimproved** or no sanitation **facility** or it is improved but **shared** with other households.

### Drinking water
- The household's source of **drinking water** is **not safe** or safe drinking water is a 30-minute or longer walk from home, roundtrip.

### Electricity
- The household has **no electricity**.

### Housing
- The household has **inadequate** housing materials in any of the three components: **floor, roof, or walls**.

### Assets
- The household does not own more than one of these **assets**: radio, TV, telephone, computer, animal cart, bicycle, motorbike, or refrigerator, and does not own a car or truck.

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**SOPHIA Oxford: WHAT?**

It's a measurement. An index which can measure countries, and an adapted index which can measure the businesses within it.
SOPHIA Oxford: WHO?

Businesses and Government
You have a measurement system that can measure poverty.

1. A bank has asked to be measured. Why do they want to be measured?
   1. What value does the measurement have for them?
   2. What value does it have for their employees?
   3. What would the bank want to do with the results?

2. What would happen if their biggest competitor was measured as well?
   1. What would happen if each bank knew each other’s score?
   2. What would it mean for the employees of either bank?

3. What would happen if all companies in a country were measured?
   1. Why would the government be interested in helping to get every company measured?
   4. What is valuable about all of this?
Core to the methodology is identifying the key value.

Value is not the same as IP. Value is quantified by the effect your innovation has on its target group.

If you focus on value, not IP, by pursuing who cares most, the target group that values it most, you will find the money to make a sustainable impact.

Protection is, of course, often key to optimizing success, but...

If you are more concerned with positive impact your IP strategy should not dictate the direction you take, and yes, this does sometimes mean you leave yourselves exposed; you take risks.

Belief in your own brand and worth is key.
Key to the beginnings of a successful transfer project

1. You need to be motivated to do it.
2. You need to be solving a problem for someone or something, and...
3. A nice-to-have is being aligned with a much wider agenda.

BUT...

You need targeted translational funding to bridge the gap with partners.
Bridging the gap: London

Mark Mann OÜ put together a consortium of universities from across London and successfully bid for €1.8m to:

- Combine, classify and accelerate the social enterprise pipelines from universities across London.

- To solve the market failure in social enterprise in London by
  - Bringing together buyers from the public sector in London
  - Bringing together corporate suppliers to the public sector
  - Combining the corporate suppliers with the social enterprise and translational funding so that they can bid for contracts in the public sector together.

- This first pilot scheme gets the new social enterprise businesses the access to market they need to grow and develop.

- Data gathered will demonstrate success and serve as a model for further first pilot funding and seed funding for the next phase of social enterprise growth.
In conclusion

- For a successful knowledge transfer you need:
  - A strong desire to make it a success from all involved.
  - To find mechanisms to optimize the project rather than trying to fit the project into a transfer model you already have.
  - You need targeted translational funding that addresses a need with a partner. Never fund a project without validating the market with external partners first.
  - Have the courage to take risks at all levels – I had lots of disasters learning what not to do which gave valuable background for the projects that were successful. I had strong backing from management throughout.
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