Tyze Personal Networks

Canada

Emma Cochrane

Organization type: for profit

Budget: $250,000 - $500,000

Website: http://www.tyze.com

- Aging
- Disability
- Citizen participation
- Community development
- Health care
- Mental health
- Vulnerable populations

Project Summary

Elevator Pitch

Concise Summary: Help us pitch this solution! Provide an explanation within 3-4 short sentences.

Tyze is an online service that creates secure, private, personal networks of support that address the isolation frequently experienced by people facing mental health challenges. Tyze networks intentionally create and strengthen community ties and provide practical tools for friends, families, and neighbours to connect and care for one another.

About Project

Problem: What problem is this project trying to address?

Despite our global interconnectedness, many of our citizens are increasingly isolated from friends and family, and therefore more reliant on formal systems of care. These formal systems are facing shrinking budgets and are often forced to focus on basic medical and safety issues, with little time or money left over to ensure that people are living a good life. It is estimated that 80% of social services are provided by friends and families. When there are friends and family members in an individual’s life, social services agencies need ways to collaborate with these informal caregivers. In cases when a person does not have friends and family, agencies are looking for ways to help them build the connections they need. It is the knowledge that organizations, care providers, friends, and families WANT to work together that led us to create Tyze. Tyze makes it easy for formal and informal systems of care to work together in support of the people who need them.

About You

Organization:
Tyze Personal Networks Ltd.

Section 1: About You

First Name
Vickie

Last Name
Cammack

Email
vickie@tyze.com

Website URL
http://www.tyze.com

Country
Section 2: About Your Organization

Organization Name
Tyze Personal Networks Ltd.

Organization Phone
604-628-9594

Organization Address
128 West 8th Ave, Vancouver, BC. V5Y 1N2.

Your idea

Country your work focuses on

Innovation

What makes your idea unique?

Tyze combines social networking technology with knowledge accumulated through 20 years of hands on experience creating ‘circles of friends’ for people vulnerable to isolation. We have discovered that often the biggest issue facing people who have been marginalized due to age, ability, health challenges, etc., is their isolation, and that no disability or challenge precludes relationships.

Intentional social networks have the power and potential to change lives. We created Tyze to distribute our knowledge of how to create these networks. In our experience, resilient social networks have a purpose, are hospitable, make it easy for everyone to contribute and have someone who takes the lead in organizing the network. Tyze reflects these principles.

Do you have a patent for this idea?

Impact

What impact have you had?

We have 1600 users and six community organizations that are providing Tyze networks for the people they support. Our user surveys indicate that Tyze helps network members to plan events, strengthen connections and feel their contributions are valued.

Here is just one of the many stories we hear from our network members:

Over the holidays, Terry had another round of hospitalizations, and Tyze became a way to let folks know where to call and visit. By now, most of us had made being with Terry a part of our lives, because she made us feel like we were part of something special.

A recent message on Tyze was lamenting the fact that Terry had undergone so many tests in the last month, and no one seemed to be able to find the problem. She and I were talking about how we wished we could find our own Dr. House (that irreverent TV doctor who has no problem breaking a few rules in order to make a good diagnosis and save a life.) And like magic, Terry’s network started looking around for doctors with more experience and a series of recommendations for second opinions poured in.

I told Terry I was going to be writing a story about her network and Tyze, and I asked her for a quote. She said, “Tyze has opened up many doors that I thought were closed in this area – the support I’ve received since it started has been wonderful, remarkable and truly unbelievable.”

Actions

We are focusing our energies on the three core areas that we believe will make Tyze successful:

1) CONTENT:
We’re developing unique training and help materials, that build on our experience on-boarding and animating networks. We’re also marketing our expertise with new content-rich tools such as podcast interviews and articles that appear in third-party publications.

2) TECHNOLOGY:
We’re currently in the final stages of development of a significant upgrade to the Tyze platform. Our updated software will allow for significant scale, security and user content management compared to our current beta version. We continue to focus on simple, well-designed tools that make it easy for people to create and animate networks for people who are often late-adopters of technology.

3) SUPPORT:
We are training network connectors (on line equivalent of community developers) and providing coaching, technical support, and network animation services that are valued and well used by our users.

Results

By focusing on the steps outlined above Tyze will achieve greater impact, durability and scale. In order to achieve its mission of providing secure, online personal networks of support that result in better health outcomes and full lives for people experiencing life challenges Tyze will:

- Make it easier for more friends, families, and community members to care for each other.
- Help organizations to collaborate and stay in touch with the friends and families of people in their care. Make our online, personal networks available to an international audience.
- Create enduring social value and deliver financial returns to our founding organization, our investors and our partners.

What will it take for your project to be successful over the next three years? Please address each year separately, if possible.
YEAR ONE:
In year one we must achieve our early sales and distribution targets, implement our content-based marketing plan, continue the steady growth of
our team with a focus on senior level capacity, ensure the retention of our current Tyze users, develop investors for a second round of funding, get
the legal building blocks in place for international dissemination, and continue to evaluate our success through surveys and member feedback.
Additionally we will create online training tools so that we can deliver at scale, explore new business models, make our technology fully accessible
and conduct a first evaluation of our organizational structure and practices to ensure Tyze is focused on both the mission and the profitability of
the company.

YEAR TWO:
In year two we will significantly increase our sales capacity and volume, continue to focus on evaluation and member input, secure a second round
of funding, partner with a large technology company such as Cisco, expand our business model to include individual subscriptions, white labeling,
and mobile applications, ensure that our technology keeps pace with touch screen and other emerging 'usability' features, focus on HR growth and
retention, and finally complete a second annual evaluation of organizational structure and practices to ensure Tyze is focused on both the mission
and the profitability of the company.

YEAR THREE:
In year three we will expand the company internationally, building on our existing customer-base in both the US and the UK. We will translate our
materials into other languages, refine our model for large scale partnerships, secure new partners, continue to grow our user and customer base,
track network member retention and address any emerging issues, and conduct a third annual evaluation of organizational structure and practices
to ensure Tyze is focused on both the mission and the profitability of the company.

What would prevent your project from being a success?
We have identified three primary risks for Tyze as follows:

1) The greatest challenge in developing any social network is promoting adoption of the tool. Given our particular focus on building personal
networks for people with disabilities, and other groups who may be late adopters of technology, it is critical that Tyze continue to provide the
support and training necessary to ensure seamless and simple adoption of our networks.

2) As our larger customers request more connections between their formal systems of care, and the informal networks of friends and families on
Tyze, privacy and security concerns will become increasingly prevalent. Our ability to build connections between formal and informal systems is
one of our greatest strengths and competitive advantages, however, in forging these new relationships we must continue to invest in the best
 technological developments to manage risk.

3) Another risk when it comes to building strong personal networks that endure, is the possibility that network members will lose interest and no
longer contribute to and sustain their networks. Tyze has a number of training programs and pricing strategies that are already proving to be
successful ways of mitigating this risk.

How many people will your project serve annually?
More than 10,000

What is the average monthly household income in your target community, in US Dollars?
Less than $50

Does your project seek to have an impact on public policy?
Yes

Sustainability
What stage is your project in?
Operating for 1-5 years

In what country?
Is your initiative connected to an established organization?
Yes

If yes, provide organization name.
PLAN Institute for Caring Citizenship

How long has this organization been operating?
More than 5 years

Does your organization have a Board of Directors or an Advisory Board?
Yes

Does your organization have any non-monetary partnerships with NGOs?
Yes

Does your organization have any non-monetary partnerships with businesses?
Yes

Does your organization have any non-monetary partnerships with government?
Yes
Please tell us more about how these partnerships are critical to the success of your innovation.

These partnerships are the heartbeat of our organization. They provide us with knowledge, expertise and connections to an ever broader network of Tyze users, supporters and customers.

One example is our long-standing partnership with the Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion. BACI has provided innovative supports and services to children, youth and adults with developmental disabilities and their families for over 50 years, and has worked closely with us throughout our development.

In addition to becoming our first Canadian customer, and delivering Tyze support networks to the people in their care, the BACI executive team has supported us with countless opportunities to test innovations, products and programs over the years. They have provided testimonials and video interviews for our marketing materials, and has also hosted learning exchanges in both the US and Canada that have provided us with opportunities to connect with other organizations who serve people with mental health challenges.

What are the three most important actions needed to grow your initiative or organization?

Without a doubt, the three actions that are most critical to the growth of Tyze are:

1) Cultivation of passionate, committed and highly skilled staff and leadership team that is driven by our mission to make it easy for friends, family, neighbours and communities to care for one another.

2) Continuous innovation that responds to users, adapts to evolving external contexts and creates new bridges for our formal and informal systems of care to collaborate.

3) Wide spread dissemination of the stories and certain knowledge that affirm we are all better together.

The Story

What was the defining moment that led you to this innovation?

In 2007 we attended a retreat for social entrepreneurs where we delivered a presentation on sustainability and social innovation. We used our work at PLAN as a case study and shared our vision of getting the values and processes of PLAN ‘into the water supply.’ We shared six patterns we had observed in creating social innovations that have impact, durability and scale. One of these patterns is about communication and distribution of the innovation. We call this pattern ‘making it easy for people to do the right thing.’

After the presentation three young, brilliant, social media pioneers came up, excited to offer their ideas about communication and distribution. It opened a whole new world of possibility that eventually led to the blending of our knowledge about creating intentional personal networks with the tools of the social web.

Tell us about the social innovator behind this idea.

Vickie Cammack, Founder and CEO

Vickie is someone who finds and implements innovative solutions in the social sector. As the founding director of PLAN Institute for Caring Citizenship and CEO of Tyze, she is a recognized Canadian source of inspiration and demonstrable solutions related to social networks, social innovation, citizenship and disability.

Vickie is a co-founder of Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network (PLAN), a pioneer social enterprise supporting families plan for the safety and well being of their family member with a disability. She created PLAN's Personal Network program, a unique response to the isolation and loneliness experienced by people with disabilities. She is the recipient of the Meritorious Service Medal of Canada, the Community Living Institute's Leadership Award, the and along with her husband, Al Etmanski, Simon Fraser University President's Club Distinguished Community Leadership Award. She co-led a Canadian exploration on sustainability and social innovation, and is a Fellow with Social Innovation Generation, a partnership between the University of Waterloo, MaRS, and J.W. McConnell Family Foundation. In 2008, the Women's Executive Network named Vickie one of Canada's Top 100 Most Powerful Women.

As Executive Director of PLAN Institute she mentored the spread of grass roots PLAN groups in 40 locations globally. As the CEO of Tyze, she is focusing her attention on how best to deliver personal support networks online to people facing life challenges. She spearheaded the development of the Tyze platform, built the team that is now driving Tyze, and is playing the leading role in creating the connections and partnerships that will take Tyze to scale.

Vickie is the founding director of the Family Support Institute and has taught and designed curriculum for colleges and universities. She writes, consults and lectures internationally on social networks, organizational transformation and scaling social innovation and is co-author of ‘Safe and Secure - Six Steps to Creating a Personal Future Plan for People with Disabilities.’

How did you first hear about Changemakers?

Personal contact at Changemakers

If through another, please provide the name of the organization or company