

60 SECONDS WITH AN ENTREPRENEUR...

DR EVE HANKS

Role: Chief Executive Officer

Company Name: MI:RNA

Sector: Biotech and Deeptech

Base: Edinburgh

Purpose: Revolutionising
Veterinary Diagnostics.



Tell us a bit about your business? At MI:RNA, we are on a mission to drive forward a much needed change in veterinary diagnostics. We are a team of digital nomads from across the globe and have come together because we are passionate about making a difference. The business focuses on providing tangible solutions to vets, farmers and owners to improve the life of animals and let us spend more precious time with our pets whilst protecting welfare of our farm animals too.

How did you come up with your business idea? After my PhD in immunology I was working in diagnostic testing and the two clicked into place. It just made sense to bring the novel science I had been working on into the diagnostic sector.

How did you come up with your company name? That isn't a fascinating story.. microRNAs are our biomarker of choice and the short hand is miRNA, so MI:RNA was born.

What's been your biggest challenge to date? Never having enough runway, that was really hard in the early days and no investor ever wants to take the first plunge!

How has SE (or any other support organisation in the Scottish ecosystem) helped you on your journey? SE have been like an extension of our team with advice, networking, support and funding. It's been a real boost to us as we grow.

What's been the highlight of the last year for you? Becoming part of the Leap Cohort. This means that we are part of THE most sought after Pet accelerator in the world and we can now say we are backed by Mars Petcare as the accelerator comes with investment from their Companion fund. That means that our little start up can count the largest player in the Pet and Vet space as one of our team!

Is there anything on your business bucket list? Yes absolutely, I'd love to have a really great team building weekend somewhere really exotic!

What's your favourite thing about being an entrepreneur? The flexibility and the unexpected, there is genuinely no way to predict what happens next and I do enjoy that ride.

What's the best thing about being an entrepreneur in Scotland? I think the support and networks available for early-stage companies. Everyone is open, helpful and interested in your journey.

What's the best piece of advice you ever received? That no decision is the wrong decision, you just make your best judgement based on what you know at the time.

What advice do you wish you hadn't listened to? A lot of people are negative about a new business and the prospects, I wish I'd been stronger and been able to say I didn't want to hear that.

What has been your proudest achievement since starting your businesses? Signing the first employment contract, then the second, then the third and finally my own!

Who's been your biggest supporter? My dog, closely followed by my early team which included my brother and a childhood friend.

How do you care for each other's wellbeing at work? Literally we just talk about how we are doing. We all practice different things, I like meditation and protected time away from work but everyone is different and we can all reach out at any time to each other, that's really special.

How do you start your day? With coffee! I have protected time until 10am French time (as that's where I live at the moment) so I enjoy some exercise or maybe read, journal, walk the dog etc.

What do you do for fun after a busy week? See my friends, run, walk, eat cake whenever I can find some and every now and then I grab the tent and disappear for a couple of days.

What's the best business book you've read? *Feel the fear and do it anyway* by Susan Jeffers.

Any office pets? Yes, I have a dog, Rob (CTO) famously has a cat that joins us most team meetings and Dan in Ops has a cat now too, a newer recruit and very cute.

Do you have a favourite TED Talk? Yes – the one about letting happiness sink in. That was really important to consider for me, the idea that we spend too much of our time focused on the negative and not enough time enjoying the good things that happen.

What's your best tip for achieving a good work/life balance? Just do it, now. Don't wait until you have achieved something, reached a goal, raised more money. Just balance things now and you will be more effective in work than you are without this balance.

What would you say is the secret to success? I think being aware that we are already successful in all that we have achieved and taking a moment to acknowledge that. The secret is to notice it.

Any recommendations for entrepreneurship/leadership/sustainability/ climate/generally inspirational Instagram or Twitter accounts to follow, podcasts to listen to or programmes to watch? I like *Diary of a CEO* podcast and there are some really good books out there. Then my podcast list becomes all about true crime. If, like me, you like a good mystery then *Counter Clock* is insanely good.

What's your big dream? This, my life now is like a dream, I couldn't be happier or more satisfied.

How would you like to be remembered? With a smile.

Where can we find out more about your business? www.mirna-diagnostics.com /@MIRNA_Diag