The Real Innovation Awards:
Winners and Finalists
2016 to 2018
If At First You Don’t Succeed award

People’s Choice winner: Chen and Zvi Nachum, Livia
Livia uses electric micro-pulses to enable 80% of women with moderate-to-severe menstrual pain to stop taking or significantly reduce pain medication.
mylivia.com

Judge’s Choice winner: Payal Kadakia, ClassPass
ClassPass aggregates all the information out there on every kind of class, so you don’t have to – “Every class with one fitness pass.”
www.classpass.com

Finalist: John H. Gallagher, Clean Bite™
A unique, single-use toothbrush for people with disabilities or anyone who needs to brush their teeth without access to traditional means, Clean Bite™ dissolves and is fully ingested after use.
www.cleanbitetm.com

Finalist: Mariana Costa, Laboratoria
Described by former US President Barack Obama as “remarkable,” Laboratoria is a social enterprise that trains women as software developers and connects them with companies in need of their skills.
www.laboratoria.la/en
Masters of Reinvention award

People’s Choice winner: Enel
The first company in the world to replace traditional meters with smart meters, almost half of Italian energy giant Enel’s power is generated with zero carbon dioxide emission.
www.enel.com

Judge’s Choice winner: WOG
Formerly an oil-trading business, Ukrainian company WOG underwent many radical transformations en route to becoming a one-stop retail shop for fuel, food and coffee.
wog.ua

Finalist: Bayer AG
Life-sciences giant Bayer made innovation the responsibility of all employees by building an agile network of 80 innovation ambassadors and more than 700 coaches – and connecting its 35,000 employees through its online innovation portal.
www.bayer.co.uk

Finalist: Nintendo
The Japanese giant’s strategy of constant innovation continues to appeal to gamers and non-gamers alike, with the Nintendo Switch proving a hit by giving players the ability to play anywhere and any way they choose.
www.nintendo.co.uk

Finalist: Benivo
A world-leading ‘welcome-as-a-service’ company, Benivo provides relocation services to employees of large corporates, easing their transition to a new job in a new country through help on all matters to do with relocation.
www.benivo.com
Best Beats First award

People’s Choice and Judge’s Choice winner: EcoCash
Through a platform interlinked with Zimbabwe's financial service companies, EcoCash embraces the financially marginalised, enabling users to send money to loved ones, buy airtime and pay for goods and services directly from a mobile phone.
www.ecocash.co.zw

Finalist: Airtasker
Sydney-based Airtasker is an online service that matches people who need jobs and tasks doing with people who provide services, opening up an online market to fulfil tasks in a way that people had not previously imagined possible.
www.airtasker.co.uk

Finalist: VHR
VHR is a recruitment company serving the aerospace, aviation, automotive, engineering, defence and marine industries across 45 countries. It’s rapid success stems from a highly proactive strategy which includes partnering with local works councils around the globe.
www.v-hr.com

Finalist: Winnow
Winnow partners with commercial kitchens to reduce waste by measuring and analysing the amount and type of waste in kitchens, enabling them to optimise their forecasting and production process. Chefs use the analytics to make their kitchens run more efficiently, typically cutting waste by 40% to 70%.
www.winnowsolutions.com
George Bernard Shaw Unreasonable Person award

People’s Choice winner: Mohammed Aldhalaan, Noon Academy
Noon Academy is a quality-assured, on-demand, online tutoring platform that matches student demand with tutor supply. An EdTech start-up with more than 1.6 million registered students in Saudi Arabia (and now expanding into Egypt) it is solving “the biggest problem in studying (boredom!”) by making the study experience social. Students learn from their friends, compete with them and access tutors at affordable prices, making top-quality education accessible and affordable for the masses.

www.noonacademy.com

Judge’s Choice winner: Charles Khairallah, Robotics Design Inc.
Robotics Design uses ANAT (Articulated Nimble Adaptable Trunk) proprietary technology in a huge range of industrial applications from manufacturing to cleaning “to build machines to serve humanity”.

www.roboticsdesign.qc.ca

Finalist: Anne McNamara, ShineBid Services [now Shine X]
ShineX is a bid management service that has helped clients win many billions of pounds in bids – averaging an 80% win rate – and has greatly increased opportunities, equality and remuneration for women in many industries.

www.shinex.io

Finalist: Daniel Flynn, Thankyou Group
Thankyou is an Australia-based social enterprise that commits 100% of profits from sales of its products (personal care to baby care) to end global poverty, raising millions of dollars to get safe water, toilets and child and maternal health programmes to many thousands of people in need.

thankyou.co

Finalist: Nikos Drandakis, Beat
Originally launched as Taxibeat in Athens in 2010, Beat is an Uber-type, hail-a-ride app that became so successful that Daimler acquired the company in February 2017 for a reported £33.5 million.

www.thebeat.co
Alexander Fleming Serendipity award

People's Choice winner: Tarek Al Emam, Freezmate
Freezmate supplies heating and cooling products for everyday needs, including commuting, exercising and leisure – and has created a special mattress to help refugees around the world beat extreme temperatures all year long.
www.freezmate.com

Judge’s Choice winner: Gerard Vidal, Enigmedia
Enigmedia’s cyber security technology enables data control and real-time secure communications in any industrial communication protocol with negligible delay, bringing the company footholds in markets as diverse as smart manufacturing and oil and gas and winning several awards globally for best cyber security start-up.
www.enigmedia.es

Finalist: Asesh Sarkar, Salary Finance
Salary Finance is an innovative and socially-responsible portfolio of product for employee savings, education and borrowing, with no cost or liability to employers, making it a genuine win-win for businesses and staff who are less stressed and more productive.
www.salaryfinance.com

Finalist: Enoch Li, Bearapy
Bearapy promotes employee wellbeing through playfulness. By helping prevent workplace burnout, stress and depression, it has the potential to save companies billions of pounds in absenteeism, help mental health become a core part of organisational culture, and make the world of work a happier place.
bearapy.me

Finalist: Lovepop
Lovepop produces 3D paper pop-up greeting cards. Designed by naval engineers with cutting-edge software and handcrafted using kirigami, each card is not so much a piece of paper as “an unexpected moment” and thing of beauty.
www.lovepopcards.com
Harnessing the Winds of Change award

People’s Choice winner: Tracy Young, PlanGrid
PlanGrid is a cloud-based mobile app that enables project teams to collaborate across all stages of construction, therefore eliminating high paper costs for blueprints, miscommunication and having to rework extending project timelines. It is improving productivity on more than one million construction projects across almost 100 countries.
www.plangrid.com

Judge’s Choice winner: Improbable
The SpatialOS platform of London-based Improbable is changing the videogames landscape by powering games of unprecedented scale and complexity, allowing developers to push gaming beyond the limits of dedicated-server architecture and create virtual worlds with massive scale and highly detailed immersive levels of simulation.
improbable.io

Finalist: Bulb
Bulb is changing the UK power industry for the better in three ways, making energy simpler, cheaper and greener. Featuring a single tariff for all customers, paperless billing, easy-to-understand and jargon-free bills and contracts, Bulb guarantees to use 100% renewable energy only – and is now Britain’s biggest domestic supplier of renewable energy.
bulb.co.uk

Finalist: iZettle
iZettle’s ingenious device turns smartphones and tablets into card processors by linking them to an inexpensive card reader, so anyone can take card payments and grow their business. With a range of tools to help small businesses get paid, sell smarter and grow, iZettle is now used by hundreds of thousands of traders in 12 countries.
www.izettle.com

Finalist: Revolut
UK fintech Revolut’s all-digital banking service, featuring bank account, transfers and currency exchange in a simple app, sets the digital disrupter apart: users can load funds in seconds and spend in more than 150 currencies – without incurring bank fees.
www.revolut.com
If At First if You Don't Succeed award

**People’s Choice and Judge’s Choice winner:**
Ritesh Agarwal, OYO

OYO is a managed marketplace offering standardised hotel experiences for guests “at prices that no other player in the budget segment offers today”, using pioneering technology behind an app that allows the user to book a room “in just three taps, or within five seconds”. The network currently spans over 200 cities in India, Malaysia and Nepal, with more than 23,000 hotels on offer.

[www.oyorooms.com](http://www.oyorooms.com)

**Finalist: Scottish Bioenergy**

Originally intended as a community co-op to make rapeseed oil, today Scottish Bioenergy cultivates and markets ScotBio Blue™, a natural blue food colourant which can be used in confectionery, cake icing, ice cream, juices and sports drinks, propelled by a commitment to develop “an ethical, socially responsible business.”

[www.scotbio.com](http://www.scotbio.com)

**Finalist: Achal Bakeri, Symphony Ltd**

Headquartered in India, Symphony Ltd manufactures air-coolers that feature attractive design and are quiet and safe to use. Today the Bombay Stock Exchange-listed company is the world’s biggest producer of air coolers, selling 1.2 million units annually in 60 countries.

[www.symphonyletimated.com](http://www.symphonyletimated.com)

**Finalist: Kathryn Minshew, The Muse**

The Muse is an employment website that “strives to make work more human” by creating in-depth profiles of companies seeking talent, showcasing their brand through behind-the-scenes videos of the office and team culture, interviews with employees, and current job openings. Founded in 2011 in New York, it is now a trusted resource for millions of users.

[www.themuse.com](http://www.themuse.com)
Masters of Reinvention award

People’s Choice winner: CaratLane
India’s largest omni-channel jewellery brand, CaratLane’s mission is to democratise jewellery by making it “accessible, affordable and forever wearable”. The company has effectively reinvented the entire existing jewellery business model from design to point of sale experience and is renowned today for style, quality and accessibility.
www.caratlane.com

Judge’s Choice winner: Ørsted
Founded in the early 1970s by the Danish government, Dansk Naturgas managed oil and gas resources in the waters around Denmark. Now known as Ørsted, the company embarked on a mission to develop “energy systems that are green, independent and economically viable.” Renamed Ørsted in October 2017, the Danish giant is transformed, with a 100% focus on green energy and three-quarters of its total capital employed in wind power.
orsted.com/en

Finalist: Clockjack
Founded as a restaurant in 2012, Clockjack pivoted its entire business from retail to wholesale due to the astronomical rental costs for a restaurant in central London, instead becoming a kitchen producing delivery-only rotisserie roast chickens and yielding much higher revenues than a 50-seater restaurant (sadly, not high enough to cope with London business rental rates: the company was liquidated in November 2018).

Finalist: Foursquare
Launched in 2009 as a social gaming mobile app incorporating location-sharing, check-ins and gamification, Foursquare evolved to include several enterprise and advertising products based on location intelligence, with Places API powering location data for Apple, Samsung, Microsoft, Twitter, Uber, Airbnb and 100,000 other developers and enabling brands to understand and connect with targeted audiences, as well as measure foot traffic and advertising success.
foursquare.com

Finalist: National Geographic Society
With the digital revolution threatening the National Geographic Society’s grant-funded business model as print sales declined and cable TV channels faced competition from streaming services, in 2015 the Society entered a non-profit joint venture with 21st Century Fox to oversee National Geographic media that provided it with a US$1.2 billion endowment and a revenue stream from its share in the venture. Today, the Society is concentrating on its core mission, investing in a focused, international grants programme and reaching new generations with educational programmes.
www.nationalgeographic.org
**Best Beats First award**

**People’s Choice winner: CREATE Fertility**
CREATE Fertility has innovated in vitro fertilisation (IVF) by increasing the chances of conception through milder, less harsh methods. Using fewer drugs and promoting natural treatment that is more friendly to the body, the approach is focused on producing high-quality eggs and embryos, which is safer than conventional, high stimulation methods – and more affordable.

www.createfertility.co.uk

**Judge’s Choice winner: Vivino**
Vivino is the world’s largest online wine marketplace, powered by a community of wine drinkers who use the Vivino app to scan and rate more than 500,000 wines every day. With more than 25 million registered users, 25 million consumer reviews and 75 million ratings on 12 million wines, the app has quickly come to dominate the space.

www.vivino.com

**Finalist: Chobani**
Hamdi Ulukaya only launched Chobani in 2007, yet within 10 years it had become America’s leading Greek yogurt brand, thanks to the delicious, nutritious yoghurt that uses only natural, non-GMO ingredients with no artificial preservatives or sweeteners.

www.chobani.com

**Finalist: Monzo**
Monzo was founded in 2015 as a revolutionary new kind of bank offerings instant payment notifications, built-in budgeting and fee-free travel. In keeping with its light-speed technology, it quickly evolved from a mobile app and pre-paid debit card to a fully-fledged current account, attracting many thousands more new customers.

monzo.com
People’s Choice winner: Sanjeev Gupta, Liberty House
Faced with losses of almost £1 million a day in 2016, Tata Steel announced plans to sell or close operations, so entrepreneur Sanjeev Gupta bought a big chunk of its UK operations and, through an audacious “green steel” plan, dramatically reduced costs of production by controlling the supply chain, recycling domestically sourced scrap and using renewable energy.

www.libertyhousegroup.com

Judge’s Choice joint winner: Martha Silcott, FabLittleBag
Every manufacturer said Martha Silcott’s invention was impossible to produce and the lawyers said the design couldn’t be protected, but FabLittleBag is revolutionising women’s experience of tampon disposal in hugely positive ways through an opaque, biodegradable, disposal bag that can be opened and sealed one-handed closed.

www.fablittlebag.com

Judge’s Choice joint winner: Mitsuru Izumo, euglena Co. ltd.
Mitsuru Izumo came across euglena – an algae containing 59 key elements of nutrition necessary for the human body – while researching alternative nutrients to address global malnutrition problems. In 2005, after years of experimentation and failure, he and his colleague succeeded in establishing the world’s first mass outdoor cultivation of euglena. Their mission: 'Saving the World with Euglena'.

www.euglena.jp

Finalist: Herman Mashaba, Black Like Me
One of South Africa’s foremost entrepreneurs, Herman Mashaba built the iconic hair brand Black Like Me from scratch during the restrictive apartheid regime. Today, Black Like Me markets to 10 countries across Africa and is exporting to countries outside the continent. An entrepreneur turned politician, Herman is determined to improve the lives of marginalised South Africans and continues to challenge political and social boundaries.

www.blacklikeme.co.za

Finalist: Ian Locker, ZephIR Lidar
Wind turbines need accurate wind measurement, collected and analysed in real-time from remote locations, to work effectively – a huge technical challenge that ZephIR Lidar’s managing director, Ian Locker, has been working on for the last 15 years. Using the laser equivalent of radar to produce highly accurate wind data, ZephIR devices are used in the assessment of windfarm sites and to improve the efficiency of wind turbines, and ZephIR Lidars have now been deployed on more than 3,000 measurement campaigns in more than 50 countries.

www.zxlidars.com
People’s Choice winner: Hire Space

Hire Space began life as the go-to venue sourcing company that is fast making inroads into the UK’s £40 billion events business – and a way to help austerity-hit community centres and schools draw in extra income through events. It’s ease of use is what sets Hire Space apart: customers get the same (or better) price as going direct, and the site is supported by venues that pay for the bookings they confirm via the platform.

hirespace.com

Judge’s Choice joint winner: Jeffry Weers, TOBI Podhaler

For many years, treatments for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) were through often-ineffective nebulisers or dry powder inhalers, so Jeffry Weers applied the idea of the ‘curve ball’ in baseball to drug development, developing porous drug particles that would ‘curve’ along the respiratory tract. After many experiments over 20 years, Jeffry successfully commercialised the TOBI Podhaler (used in the treatment of cystic fibrosis) and two subsequent products using the same technology to treat COPD.

www.tobipodhaler.com

Finalist: Petcube

A remote camera device, a mobile app and a laser are the key elements of Petcube, a family of interactive technologies to help owners remotely monitor the health and safety of their pets. You can control your Petcube through a mobile app, recording up to 30 days of video history with a cloud recording subscription, and share your pet’s best moments on Petcube’s growing community of pet-lovers. Ahhhh....

petcube.com

Finalist: Sofar Sounds

The fruit of a random conversation, Sofar (songs from a room) is revolutionising the live music experience by transforming everyday spaces like a living room or retail shop into a captivating venue for secret live shows, creating an immersive experience that brings guests and artists closer together. Each Sofar event is small, typically featuring three diverse acts, with no headliner. By early 2017 Sofar Sounds had hosted more than 3,000 gigs in 200 different cities and had become a flourishing international business with investment from Virgin Group and a partnership with Airbnb.

www.sofarsounds.com
Harnessing The Winds of Change award

People’s Choice winner: Paul Villiger, Villiger Entsorgungssysteme
Recognising the growing need for efficient waste collection and storage in his rapidly urbanising town, in 1991 Paul Villiger pivoted his arm machinery business towards comprehensive waste solutions. Today the company makes and installs fully integrated waste collection systems, which include underground storage facilities and automated collection trucks. The underground systems are unobtrusive, control odour and blend into the urban environment.

villiger.com/en

Judge’s Choice winner: Fever-Tree
Founded in 2005 by Charles Rolls and Tim Warrillow, Fever-Tree – named after the colloquial term for the cinchona tree, which produces quinine (the vital ingredient of tonic) – is a mixer that is designed to enhance the flavour of spirits, rather than mask them. By perfectly complementing the surge in interest in premium gins, Fever-Tree has today achieved a market cap of just over £2.5 billion while expanding its product range, which is now available in 65 markets globally.

fever-tree.com

Finalist: Deep Mind
London-based artificial intelligence company DeepMind develops learning algorithms to help tackle some of the world’s most pressing challenges. The systems are having positive environmental impact by learning how to use less energy in Google’s data centres and the company is collaborating with clinicians in the UK National Health Service to deliver better care for conditions that affect millions of people. The company was acquired by Google in its largest-ever European acquisition in 2014 and is now part of the Alphabet group.

deepmind.com

Finalist: FlixBus
Long distance mobility provider FlixBus offers a convenient and green way to travel for every budget, with a clever business model and innovative technology that has seen it become Europe’s largest intercity bus network in less than four years. FlixBus’s nimble tech-start-up approach, fast e-commerce-platform and go-ahead transportation planning efficiently manages network planning, customer service, quality management, marketing and sales, as well as ticketing, pricing and business development.

www.flixbus.co.uk

Finalist: Jack Dorsey, Square Inc.
Based partly on his experience as CEO of Twitter, Jack Dorsey saw how mobile usage would change the world of payments and exploited recent innovations to revolutionise the payment services industry with Square, a mobile payment and point-of-sale device and software company. Unlike the vast majority of competitor solutions, Square enables vendors to use a single, centralised system in place of the typical patchwork of structures. It caught the mobile wave to gain a widespread user base among small business owners and has seen tremendous growth, with a market valuation of US$30 billion today.

squareup.com
2016

If At First You Don’t Succeed award

People’s Choice winner: Paul Ostergaard, Norwood Systems

Paul Ostergaard struck gold with the international calling app World Phone, which offers inexpensive international calling at home and abroad. Norwood Systems now provides voice, messaging and data services to consumers, enterprises and carriers globally, leveraging its federated telecommunications services network partnerships to deliver end-user communications apps that streamline and simplify how users around the world can access affordable, high-quality telecommunications services – anywhere, anytime.

norwoodsystems.com/world-phone

Judge’s Choice joint winner: Dubsmash

Dubsmash is an app that allows users to record themselves lip-syncing over famous quotes, songs and movie clips and share the ‘dubs’ with friends. Founders Jonas Drüppel, Roland Grenke and Daniel Taschlik tried several prototypes before launching the easier-to-use Dubsmash in November 2014. It became Germany’s top seller within a week and has now been downloaded by 100 million people in 78 countries.

dubsmash.com

Judge’s Choice joint winner: Hertfordshire Independent Living Service (HILS)

Hertfordshire Community Meals Ltd, founded in 2007 to deliver meals-on-wheels in Hertfordshire, was weeks from collapse when a catastrophic £250k trading deficit was revealed following the death of its CEO in 2010. Renamed and reinvented as Hertfordshire Independent Living Service (HILS), it is now the largest community meal service in the country and an innovative sector leader, providing 500,000 meals per annum, 365 days a year and employing 200 people (many facing employment barriers). It also provides independent living services to over 10,000 vulnerable people in their homes.

hertsindependentliving.org

Finalist: OLIST

Brazilian entrepreneur Tiago Dalvi created the e-commerce platform OLIS in 2015, an online site that connects merchants and their products to the main marketplaces of Brazil. Now the first choice for store owners looking to grow profits by offering their products online, by the end of 2015 OLIST was on track to reach 2,000 merchants and 100,000 products in the next 12 months.

olist.com/
People’s Choice winner: Schibsted Media Group

In 1995 Schibsted was a Norwegian newspaper company with 3.5 billion Kroner in revenue. Today, as an early mover in digital and following 15 years of double-digit growth, it operates in 30 countries and has revenues of 15 billion Kroner, mostly from digital services. It is now a global leader, investing heavily in technology and with a young, digitally-savvy workforce delivering high-quality user experiences and ad solutions to its audience.

schibsted.com

Judge’s Choice winner: Steve McGuirk/Greater Manchester Fire Service

Greater Manchester Chief Fire Officer Steve McGuirk had to adapt to big reductions in spending and changing global risks in the 2000s. His innovation was to refocus his force away from its traditional firefighting role towards safety and prevention. The approach was enormously successful, with dramatic reductions in workforce and numbers of fires. In recent years, McGuirk has led changes in the use of technology to make firefighting safer and in increased co-operation between the fire and ambulance services to speed up responses to falls, cardiac arrests and other emergencies.

www.manchesterfire.gov.uk

Finalist: AutoTrader

In the mid-1990s Auto Trader was one of the top-selling magazines in the UK, with a print circulation of almost 400,000 and revenues of £220 million. While many magazines were driven out of business by the internet, Auto Trader reinvented itself as a digital company, launching its first website in 1996 and aggressively pushing its online offerings. In 2013 the company went fully digital and in 2015, as the largest digital automotive marketplace, made an operating profit of £133 million on revenue of £255 million, floating on the London Stock Exchange and entering the FTSE 250.

www.autotrader.co.uk

Finalist: ING Bank

Dutch banking giant ING went through massive restructuring after the 2008 financial crisis, selling off product lines and rethinking its business model. In an ambitious transformation programme – streamlining internal processes and making a strategic push into digital banking – it threw out its traditional hierarchical structure in favour of an agile approach more typical of a start-up. The new model quickly paid dividends, with substantial improvements in customer service, cost-efficiency, employee engagement and innovation.

www.ing.com
Best Beats First award

People’s Choice winner: Grab
Founded in 2012 as a taxi-hailing app, in four years Grab grew into Southeast Asia’s largest mobile internet company, continuously disrupting itself to provide safe, accessible and affordable transport throughout the region. It now offers the most transport services at different price points in 30 cities, with world-firsts such as cross-border rides-haring, taxi and car-pooling and innovative safety features. Grab improves lives in local communities – driver incomes have increased 30% and 80% of women feel safer taking a Grab taxi.
www.grab.com

Judge’s Choice winner: Deliveroo
Founded in 2013 by William Shu and Greg Orlowski, Deliveroo works with over 16,000 restaurants to provide “the best food delivery experience in the world”, built on a core routing algorithm that tells a restaurant precisely when to expect a pick-up. Headquartered in London, Deliveroo has more than 800 employees in offices around the world and more than 20,000 riders, growing at 25% a month and raising nearly US$200 million to date.
deliveroo.co.uk

Finalist: Citymapper
Founded in London in 2011 by Azmat Yusuf, Citymapper is a revolutionary mobile navigation app. Combining public transport data with its own routing technology and design, Citymapper integrates all public transport route options, giving comparisons of various private and public transportation options at a level of detail hitherto unavailable from a single source – and even suggests pedestrian and bike-friendly routes.Growing fast, it’s now available in 34 cities and urban areas in 17 countries, and remains free to use.
citymapper.com

Finalist: Clearwater
Investing heavily in research and development, John Risley’s Ocean Nutrition Canada (ONC) was the first company to commercialise Omega-3 fish oil successfully and become the leading producer. Risley sold ONC in 2012 but kept a prolific algal strain his team had discovered, initially focusing on biofuel – then the team found the strain had significant health properties if fermented for longer. Risley has just partnered with Cargill to open a food-grade algal oil factory in Liverpool that promises significant market potential.
clearwater.eu.com

Finalist: King Digital Entertainment
King originally distributed its digital games on its own site and through partners such as Yahoo!, but in 2009 the company experienced a massive drop-off in traffic as players migrated to Facebook. King knew it had to innovate, so it focused on six different experiments. By January 2013, King’s Candy Crush made it the number one Facebook game developer, ahead of EA and Disney, and by 2016 it had 463 million monthly active users, making it the clear market leader.
discover.king.com
George Bernard Shaw Unreasonable Person award

People’s Choice winner: David Helgason / Unity Technologies
Icelandic entrepreneur David Helgason founded Unity Technologies, who created the game engine Unity that is now used to build more than a third of mobile games and almost all virtual-reality games. Founded in 2003, Unity’s vision was to “democratize game development” and today it is one of the few European software companies with international impact and capable of competing on the global stage.

unity.com

Judge’s Choice winner: Jane Chen, Embrace Innovations
Embrace Innovations makes low-cost infant incubators for developing countries at 1% of the cost of traditional incubators. The revolutionary technology consists of a sleeping bag design incorporating a wax-like substance with a melting point of 37 degrees Celsius. One melted, the wax maintains its temperature for up to eight hours, regulating the newborn’s temperature. Embrace works with governments, NGOs and private clinics to distribute its products, which have helped incubate more than 200,000 babies across 20 countries.

www.embraceinnovations.com

Finalist: Danae Ringelmann / Indiegogo
Having seen her parents struggle to get capital to scale their business, Danae Ringelmann was inspired to reinvent start-up funding and co-founded crowdfunding platform Indiegogo in 2007, initially to fund independent filmmakers in exchange for products or perks. Danae and her partners were rejected by 90 investors but finally won their first US$1.5m round of financing in 2011 and Indiegogo has since hosted more than 680,000 campaigns in 224 countries and territories.

entrepreneur.indiegogo.com

Finalist: Fernando Fischmann / Crystal Lagoons
Renowned scientist and entrepreneur Fernando Fischmann developed an environmentally friendly technology that can create unlimited-size, crystal-clear lagoons, surrounded by beaches, anywhere in the world. The lagoons use just 2% of the energy required by conventional pool technologies and 100 times fewer chemicals. The technological breakthrough is being applied to a wide variety of industrial applications and being used to solve some of the greatest challenges confronting humanity: water, energy scarcity and pollution.

www.crystal-lagoons.com
People’s Choice winner: Empatica

In 2007 MIT Professor Rosalind Picard and her team designed iCalm, a range of wearables that detect stress in autistic people by measuring electrodermal activity. Some years later Picard detected a huge peak in an epileptic patient’s data that indicated a seizure: she had serendipitously invented a device that could save lives by monitoring epilepsy. Launched in 2011, Empatica provides human body data analytics to researchers and patients; its latest product, Embrace, a revolutionary wearable that provides alerts for seizures and stress.

www.empatica.com

Judge’s Choice winner: Barrnone

The eureka moment for Cumbrian boutique engineering services provider Barrnone was MD Andy Barr’s realisation that its high-end scallop trawling gear could be repurposed to recover stratified waste from radioactive sludge ponds. Barrnone quickly prototyped a purpose-built system and demonstrated it to the UK’s Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, winning a contract to continue development. The company has subsequently developed a suite of tools designed to meet the exacting standards of the nuclear clean-up industry and has won contracts in the USA and Japan, as well as the UK.

www.barrnon.com

Finalist: Innis & Gunn

In 2002 a whisky distiller asked master beer brewer Dougal Gunn Sharp to season its oak casks with the character of a full-flavoured beer, resulting in a greatly admired dram. Then, instead of pouring the beer away after its time in casks, some inquisitive distillery workers decided to sample the beer – and the taste had been transformed by the oak into an unusually refined brew. Dougal launched his Original oak-aged beer and Innis & Gunn have gone on to become one of the UK’s most successful international craft beer businesses, selling over 23 million bottles of beer globally.

www.innisandgunn.com

Finalist: Morphsuits

The Morphsuit was developed after a stag party, where Brothers Fraser and Ali Smeaton and friend Greg Lawson noticed one man attracting great attention for his bright-blue, head-to-toe, skin-tight spandex bodysuit. Inspired, they wore similar costumes on a ski trip to Canada and attracted similar levels of attention. Refining the design, they launched Morphsuits (the costume makes wearers “morph into a more fun version of themselves”) and have sold more than 2.5 million suits to date.

www.morphsuits.co.uk

Finalist: Yamli

Lebanese entrepreneur Habib Haddad co-founded Yamli with Imad Jureidini in 2007 in the wake of the 2006 Lebanon war. The company’s mission is to empower Arabic users on the web; its products aimed at people with no access to an Arabic keyboard who want to send or receive information in Arabic. The Yamli smart keyboard allows users to type in Arabic using a standard Qwerty keyboard by spelling their words phonetically. Yamli Arabic Search is a search engine enabling people to quickly find Arabic-language content.

www.yamli.com
Harnessing the Winds of Change award

People’s Choice winner: Protean Electric

Launched in 2009, Protean Electric designs, develops and manufactures Protean Drive® in-wheel motors, a fully integrated in-wheel drive solution. Enabling the most efficient electric drive solution, the technology offers the packaging and performance advantages of in-wheel motors, combined with cost savings. The company’s successful and timely innovations have enabled it to grow fast in a strongly emerging industry, with operations in the UK, China and the US, and a manufacturing plant in Tianjin, China.

www.proteanelectric.com

Judge’s Choice winner: BlaBlaCar

Co-founded by Frédéric Mazzella, Nicolas Brusson and Francis Nappé, BlaBlaCar is the world’s leading long-distance ridesharing platform. The site and mobile apps connect people looking to travel long distances with drivers going the same way, so they can travel together and share the cost. The platform is a secure, trust-based community with declared identities and full member profiles. One of the few European ‘unicorns’, it now has 30 million users in 22 countries.

www.blablacar.co.uk

Finalist: Babylon Health

Instead of waiting days or weeks for a doctor’s appointment, Babylon Health offers on-demand health consultations via a mobile phone app, so users can consult a doctor on their smartphone within minutes. CEO Ali Parsa applied the Uber/Netflix business model to healthcare, enabling patients to connect to doctors quickly and affordably. Parsa aims to “put an accessible and affordable health service into the hands of every person on earth.” The company already has 350,000 customers in the UK and Ireland, with plans to expand to Rwanda.

www.babylonhealth.com

Finalist: M-KOPA

The world’s leading off-grid, pay-as-you-go energy provider, Kenya-based M-KOPA combines solar and mobile technology to provide lighting, charging and entertainment for less than the cost of traditional kerosene. Its core system drives a mobile phone charger, lighting and a radio. As of January 2018, M-KOPA had connected over 600,000 Kenyan homes to affordable solar power, with 500 new homes being added every day. Customers will make projected savings of US$450 million over the next four years and enjoy 75 million hours of kerosene-free lighting every month.

www.m-kopa.com

Finalist: Waze

Real-time, community-based traffic and navigation app Waze began life in Israel in 2006 when Ehud Shabtai invited people to help create a free digital map using data from drivers’ PDAs and local knowledge. Spotting the potential of crowd-sourcing and smartphone-based GPS apps, Shabtai and his co-founders expanded without marketing or advertising, attracting early adopters and volunteer map editors in cities around the world. Today Waze is an innovative force in mobility, tackling traffic congestion and aging infrastructure globally. With more than 50 million active users, Google acquired the company for US$1.3 billion in June 2013.

www.waze.com