

VALD—A Measured Success

Andrew Leech

Abstract: VALD is a QUT-based company internationally known for its development of human measurement technology, including screening, monitoring, rehabilitating, and training athletes. It's main products include the NordBord, ForceDecks, HumanTrak, and Airbands.

Keywords: VALD, NordBord, athletes, screening.

1. The success story—VALD

VALD Performance is a world leader in the development of human measurement technology for screening, monitoring, rehabilitating, and training athletes. Their first product, the NordBord, was revolutionary in that it delivered a precise measurement of the hamstring strength as a method for predicting and avoiding muscle injury. VALD's success builds on a suite of products that are trusted by elite Australian and international sporting teams, research institutions, and allied health professionals.



Figure 1. An athlete performing a Nordic Hamstring Curl. Most of NordBord's research on hamstring strength as it relates to hamstring injuries focuses on eccentric strength displayed during this exercise.

2. Where did it start and the motivation?

VALD was Founded in 2014 at the Queensland University of Technology by an initial team of three best mates working out of a kitchen bench.

The initial success was marked by the commercial launch of the NordBord hamstring testing system in 2016; then after, VALD rapidly gathered momentum, acquiring, developing, and launching multiple other products, such as the ForceDecks dual force plate system, the HumanTrak movement analysis system, and the AirBands wireless blood flow restriction cuffs.



Figure 2. The NordBord measures approximately 3 feet by 2 feet, with much of its surface covered by a pad for athletes to kneel on. Positioning is easy, with athletes slipping their ankles into the padded, ergonomic ankle hooks.

3. The journey so far

Today, the company has grown to form an international network of more than 70 offices all around the world. Within five years of the commercial launch, the company had scaled up to sixty staff. The bond between the initial team was pivotal in promoting such a development—each member of the team brought their own complementary skills, and their pre-existing friendship allowed them to push through difficult times and complex problems. This was further stressed by the CEO and co-founder, Laurie Malone—"We would've had limited results with just one of us, some success with two, but could only truly be where we are at now with all three."

The key to VALD's growth was the support from funding grants. Specifically, the Advance Queensland Business Development Fund, Brisbane Lord Mayor's Global Entrepreneur Grant, and Austrade's Export Market Development Grants were some of the crucial early pieces that helped VALD gain momentum.

VALD was also one of the first companies to be part of QUT's Bluebox's accelerator. It was here that co-founder Sam James made the pivotal early connection with the inventor of the NordBord. Bluebox was fundamental in facilitating the initial meeting and helped leverage it into the business VALD is today.

4. Look into the future

VALD is further expanding its team to recruit 24 new staff globally, with over half being based in their Brisbane HQ. This extra talent will help with the additional development of their end-to-end human measurement platform. They are also preparing for a series A round of funding.

The company



Vald Health Pty Ltd

Brisbane

QLD 4006

Australia

<https://www.valdhealth.com>

References

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Dr **Andrew Leech** is the Director of Industry Engagement at QUT and has extensive experience in the commercialisation and licensing of early-stage technologies, having held executive management and commercialisation positions in several Australian universities and Australian companies. He has transacted on a multitude of licenses in healthcare and has served on the Board of several start-ups in the biotech and medtech sectors.

Andrew is a registered Patent and Trademark Attorney; he holds a PhD in Biochemistry from the University of Queensland and a Masters Industrial Property Law from the University of Technology Sydney. Andrew has served as the CEO for QUT Bluebox Pty Ltd and SmartArm Pty Ltd and has an excellent track record of licensing and capital raising at several Australian universities and medical research institutes.

Recent successes include an eight-figure Series A for a cancer therapeutic company, licensing of a 3D-printed bone implant technology to an ASX-listed company, and a Series A for an innovative filter mask technology, all in 2020.

