

Easy to use health records on the go



By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

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We know that when it comes to your health information, you need your data on hand, as well as that of the ones you love, and so Noleen Mariappen created MedInfoFiles, a platform that gives you greater control over your health records and healthcare in a well organised, easy-to-use way.



Noleen Mariappen

With a business portfolio ranging from luxury perfume to motorcycles, solar technology and more recently mobile apps, Noleen Mariappen shares more on her latest entrepreneurial journey of MedInfoFiles.

Can you tell us a bit about your business ventures?

There are a few overseas and international business ventures that I could talk about, but the one that I'm most excited about in South Africa is MedInfoFiles, which is a patient-driven record-keeping platform that enables users to save their health records including symptoms, doctors, tests, diagnosis and prescriptions, and more, in one secure place.

It also allows for the setting of reminders for vaccinations, prescriptions and appointments. The user is always in control of the information held and is able to share with trusted third parties. It allows for time to be saved on consultations and allows healthcare providers the opportunity to review all relevant health information and medical history with ease, improving chances of better outcomes in consultations and emergencies.

We are currently in discussions for licencing the platform to other countries and also working on options to offer the service on an outreach basis, with support, allowing for those in rural areas and with limited access to technology to see the benefits too.

■ ***When, how and why did you get started?***

Very sadly, one of my business partners mum was diagnosed with cancer and underwent months of treatment. Between different consultants, prescriptions, test types, results and more, the family found it near impossible to keep track of her medical history as it unfolded.

At the final stages of her life, while she was still well enough to travel, she wanted to travel to Switzerland, which was one of the places she loved most and felt at peace.

The main reason that she didn't, was because of her concern that should she need urgent care abroad, there was no quick way of getting all her records to the healthcare professional she saw. It was difficult enough when trying to get doctors at different clinics and hospitals up to speed in the same country, so between countries would be even more so.

It was from recognising this pain point as being something that most people experience when they see a doctor and have to think of their medical history, and from wanting to be able to introduce a solution, that the company was founded.

■ ***What is the core function of MedInfoFiles?***

It is a patient-driven record-keeping platform that enables users to save their health records including symptoms, doctors, tests, diagnosis and prescriptions, and more, in one secure place. It enables the user to share their records with trusted third parties and to be reminded of important appointments, repeat prescriptions, and vaccinations.

■ ***What are some of the obstacles you've had to overcome since starting out?***

It is one that is common to all entrepreneurs who offer a solution that is different and new to market. That obstacle is the 'market's' mindset. As the platform is patient-driven, the mindset of corporates and public institutions is that it should be left to the individual user to access the service. We feel that aside from the obvious benefit to patients, one of the greatest positive outcomes will be to institutions like healthcare service providers.

By being able to access the most relevant information, time with diagnoses will be saved, with reminders less appointments will be missed, and medication will be taken more routinely as required particularly by patients with chronic illnesses. Like healthcare provision, we feel it is a 'perk' that corporates would be well placed to offer their staff.

■ ***What advice would you give to other aspiring entrepreneurs?***

I'd say key advice would be to keep your 'why' at the forefront of your mind, be willing to learn and take advice, know your value, know your weaknesses - work on overcoming them and get people on board who can offset them, take the time to get to know people, and partner with the people who are right for you and your business, and while quitting is not an option, continually re-assess and recognise that choosing to move on from a venture is not quitting, but simply learning and moving on from a more solid foundation.

■ ***What has been your proudest achievement thus far?***

I think on a professional front, getting to a point where my business ventures were on track enough for me to be able to focus on launching a community-interest initiative – Inspiration For Good, that supports other non-profits and community projects. There are some amazing projects now underway that will benefit so many globally!

■ ***What does the future of entrepreneurship look like to you?***

I believe that moving forward it is all about finding not just new solutions, but new ways of implementing solutions. It is moving toward exploring the realms of probability as much as a possibility, and I believe that social entrepreneurship is the future.

■ ***What do you think is the importance of startup accelerator/incubator programs?***

I have been involved in one accelerator program myself, and have supported entrepreneurs on others. When organised well and draw in the right resources, they are invaluable in their ability to give the entrepreneur access to a support network of fellow starters, as well as expertise and insight from those who have walked the walk, and very importantly, situates them, and gives them access to the support required to take the practical and strategic steps beyond just purely academic constructs, and see their business progress and succeed.

■ ***What would you like to see changed in the South African startup landscape?***

I've got businesses based in the UK, the US and SA and I've noticed that with an ever increasing number of people moving toward self-employment or embarking on the entrepreneurial journey, there's been an increase in the myriad of support and access to information for startups.

What I would really like to see however, is better support for social enterprises. By support, I don't just mean project funding, but instead, for social enterprises to be seen in view of their full potential, and to gain access to the right kinds of networks, expertise, and of course investment to enable them to achieve all they are capable of.

I have seen government initiatives, for example in the UK offer significant tax benefits to individuals who invest in the startups who fulfil certain criteria, and yet the benefit when investing in social enterprises are much less. This disincentivises businesses which want to be profitable, while at the same time do more for society.

Interestingly, donations to charities can also be written off, but this 'benefit' doesn't apply to social enterprises.

■ ***What do you believe are the traits an entrepreneur needs in order to succeed?***

Determination, action-oriented drive, self-motivation, a desire to learn, and a will to succeed that outweighs and overcomes any fear of failure.

■ ***Tell us about your biggest struggles as an entrepreneur, as well as some major highlights.***

Some of the greatest struggles that I've experienced have not always been specific to what was happening in business at the time, but instead the experience at the time. These have all led to great learnings though!

Amongst these was the loneliness of the journey when you feel that you are all alone in bearing the responsibility of both success and failure, and the sole person driving it all forward. Coupled with this is facing a lack of understanding from those closest when things aren't going to plan, who in their loving way, offer advice like 'why don't you just get a job.'

Knowing who to trust in partnerships, and becoming comfortable with a process of fully vetting people even when my natural inclination is to trust implicitly.

In one of the first businesses I started, not knowing when to let go because I had become so invested and had to make it work when with hindsight, it was clear quite early on that it was one endeavour that wasn't going to.

Making peace with the reality that it isn't true that just because a product or service is of exceptional quality and delivered with integrity that it will prove itself to be such and be a success.

Some major highlights include doing what I love. One of the first companies that I started, I was able to develop and sell in less than six months.

Expanding my business portfolio to one that spans across countries and industries; from luxury perfume oils, solar tech, apps, motorcycles, and consulting.

Being in a position to launch a community interest initiative, and support those in need.

Finally being able to re-work and re-launch our motorcycle company (Beverly Hills Choppers), as one that is female-led, with women involved in design, engineering, and manufacture leads.

■ ***Would you encourage someone to become an entrepreneur? Why?***

The entrepreneurial journey is definitely not for everyone. You know that you're an entrepreneur at heart when you face countless setbacks, have no absolute certainty of where things will go, but have endless hope, an overflowing amount of determination and can't think of doing anything else.

If this is you, then I'd say that this is your calling and you should persevere, as long as you embark on this path with your eyes open, and you're willing to work hard, and get the network, support and advice you need to put yourself in the best possible position for success.

■ ***Where would you like to see MedInfoFiles in the next five years?***

I would like to see the company become a household name in numerous countries, while simultaneously supporting health initiatives that benefit those in need of extra care and support.

ABOUT EVAN-LEE COURIE

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