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“When you create a start-up in the healthcare sector, you impact peoples’ lives by solving their problems.”

Roberto Ascione, CEO of Healthware International
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Roberto Ascione is CEO of [Healthware International](#) [3], a healthcare consultancy offering advisory and creative services, combined with innovation and technology capabilities.

Trained as a medical doctor with a love of computer science, Ascione is committed to spreading digital health and well-being. He was recognized as *Best Industry Leader at The Health 2.0 - 10 Year Global Retrospective Awards*.

About 20 years ago, I realized that there was very little that was digital in medicine. Either you were a computer scientist or a physician – but it seemed to me that there was no bridge between the two. So suddenly I realized that if a doctor has suitable software, he or she can reach more people. I became very passionate about this, and found myself trying to combine these two elements. Consequently, I founded [Healthware](#) [3] as a healthcare software company.

I’m happy to say we enjoyed success almost from the start. Something I learned early on is that it’s a mistake to design or create things without direct participation from the end users. Not every entrepreneur does this, but it’s absolutely essential in this industry. If we want to solve problems of physicians, we have to talk to them, to find out their pain points and what we could improve. What’s also unique in the healthcare sector is that it’s incredibly personal and human. What is more important to people than their health? When you create a start-up in the healthcare sector, you impact peoples’ lives by solving their problems.

Today, thanks to technology, we have more opportunities than ever to reach more people - particularly in emerging economies. One of the big promises of digital health is that we can improve access to care, and distribute better care to more people at a much lower cost. In some regions, start-ups don’t have the same infrastructure as in hotspots like the San Francisco Bay area. Fortunately, the differences in access to the digital healthcare market are not as great as they once were.

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As an entrepreneur in the digital health field, what should motivate you to win is having a relevant problem to solve. Identify that problem, hold onto your vision and go after it with passion. If you do, investors will provide the tools you need to be successful. Curiosity is essential, too, because it's important to stay up to speed and keep growing with your company. You must be constantly learning, asking questions, being out there, listening and reading.

As in any competition, in Sandoz HAcK, you are surrounded by like-minded people with whom you can discuss, share ideas and get inspiration. That's why taking part is everything, and you are a winner even if you are not victorious. I'm always passionate about meeting people on a path to creating their own thing and who are tapping into this issue of access, because there is always something new I can learn. The Sandoz HAcK is a great opportunity for every participant to do that, and I'm excited to see the positive change it can create. After all, the HAcK idea is very closely connected to my original vision: If you can spread access, you can have more impact.

The **Sandoz HAcK** – Healthcare Access Challenge – is a global competition to help tackle pressing healthcare access problems. Nearly 150 entrants from around the world have suggested innovative ways to use mobile technology to connect people to better health. The finalists come from the **Philippines, Pakistan (2), Ghana**, as well as **South Africa, Pakistan, Maldives**. Three winners will be chosen at the [WIREDHealth](#) [4] conference in London on March 9, 2017.

The Sandoz HAcK judging panel includes:

From Sandoz

Richard Francis: Division Head and CEO of Sandoz since 2014, Richard is a member of the Executive Committee of Novartis. He joined Novartis from Biogen Idec, where he held global and country leadership positions during his 13-year career with the company. Most recently, he was senior vice president of the company's United States commercial organization. From 1998 to 2001, he was at Sanofi in the United Kingdom, and held various marketing roles across the company's urology, analgesics and cardiovascular products. He also held sales and marketing positions at Lorex Synthélabo and Wyeth. "The HAcK competition is supporting people who are trying to tackle the same challenges we are – helping provide access to medicine, medical information and sustainable healthcare. But these entrepreneurs do it from the bottom up."

Harald Nusser: Head of Novartis Social Business, a unit that includes Novartis Access, the Novartis Malaria Initiative and the Novartis Healthy Family programs. Together, Novartis Social Business supports expanded access to medicines in low- and lower-middle income countries. The unit is operationally managed by Sandoz.

External Judges

Roberto Ascione: Roberto is a serial entrepreneur and global thought leader in digital health. He had 20 years of experience focusing on marketing and communications, business transformation and innovation in health and wellness. He is passionate for medicine, computer science, and human-technology interactions. He believes strongly that digital innovations and technologies will be the most impactful drivers of change in the healthcare industry.

Fredrik Debong: In 1984, Fredrik was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes, which led him to become one of the cofounders of mySugr, with the goal of making diabetes therapy more fun and engaging. The diabetes

management system he helped develop is one of the first apps in the AppStore that is a stand-alone "medical device." mySugr carries the CE mark and has been developed in accordance to European and US medical device guidelines and laws.

Rowland Manthorpe: Health Editor at *Wired* magazine, his writing has been published in *The Guardian*, *The Observer*, *The Sunday Telegraph*, *The Atlantic* and *The Spectator*. Rowland studied History at Cambridge and Political Theory at the London School of Economics, and has been awarded the Ben Pimlott Prize for Political Writing by *The Guardian* and the Fabian Society.

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