



WOMEN ENTREPRENEUR SERIES

“To secure SBIR funding you need to think like a business person as well as a researcher.”

Dr. Samantha Scott
CEO
JuneBrain, Inc.

JuneBrain Inc. was founded to give patients more control of their health, specifically by empowering the ophthalmology and neurology communities through remote monitoring of eye and brain health. The name came about because June is Brain Awareness Month but also because the founder, Dr. Samantha Scott, was raised in the south with the June Bug.

There are more than 500 million individuals around the world who suffer from retinal and neurological disease. In fact, someone in the United States is diagnosed with Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD) or Macular Degeneration (MD) every two minutes.

The mission of JuneBrain is to hone the technology to address the needs of patients with AMD; Diabetic Retinopathy; Glaucoma; Multiple Sclerosis (MS); Alzheimer's and Parkinson's Disease.

The company is the “brainchild” of Samantha Scott, who initially saw how she could take an existing ophthalmology technology and use it for a purpose close to Samantha's heart: helping to monitor neurological disease and retinal macular degeneration remotely. This would provide continual monitoring where the data could be automatically read and analyzed.

That would give medical professionals the ability to detect any significant changes occurring in the eye so they could follow up immediately. And it could be done from the patient's home where they would be wearing a wireless headset device that would supply the data.

“We've redesigned how the technology works so it's more accessible and far less costly than what is currently being used in clinics,” said Scott.

The company has already received SBIR Phase I funding from National Science Foundation, and recently secured \$1million in Phase II funding. That is helping them build JuneBrain to be market-ready.

“But that SBIR funding would not have happened — at least not as smoothly — if we had not worked with BBCetc,” said Scott. “They guided us through the SBIR maze.”

Scott wrote the first drafts of the SBIR proposal and sent it to her consultant at BBCetc. The response was “Great that you got this out of your system. Now let’s get down to work.” BBCetc helped Scott appreciate the difference between promoting how exceptional the technology was and what an exceptional marketing opportunity it provided.

“NSF reviewers are looking for market potential,” acknowledged Scott, “and our consultants at BBCetc helped keep us from being overwhelmed by things like ‘customer discovery’ and ‘business plans’. They showed us how to write our proposal like a business person rather than a researcher to make sure the NSF reviewers could see why our technology would succeed.”

JuneBrain’s plan is to officially go to market by fall of 2022. They still need to receive full FDA clearance and they will first provide the technology to researchers for clinical study. In the meantime, JuneBrain has been named one of the 50 winners of the Washington Business Journal and DC Inno Fire Awards of 2021.