

Elvie Transforms Women’s Healthcare with Smart Technology Innovations

Jabil’s Digital Healthcare and Consumer Electronics Capabilities Support Delivery of Groundbreaking Women’s Health Products

elvie



COMPANY

Elvie

INDUSTRY

Women’s Health

COUNTRY

United Kingdom

EMPLOYEES

100

WEBSITE

elvie.com

CHALLENGES

- Women’s health startup sought a manufacturing partner with consumer electronics, digital healthcare and regulatory expertise
- Groundbreaking products required rethinking designs and leveraging emerging technology from different fields
- Rapid growth trajectory necessitated innovation acceleration, fast production ramp and robust supply chain management

SOLUTION

- Jabil Healthcare’s innovation acceleration services drove product ideation, design, manufacturing and supply chain optimization
- Deep digital healthcare and consumer electronics experience helped drive product functionality and durability decisions
- Jabil Workcell Model provided a dedicated 24/7 team to expedite time to market

BENEFITS

- Jabil doubled production in weeks to keep pace with unprecedented demand
- Successful launch of Elvie Trainer and Elvie Pump are driving product portfolio expansion
- Ramp of second production line doubled production in a matter of weeks

Elvie is on a mission to improve women's lives through smarter technology. The London-based startup is making major inroads in the women's health space with the launch of category-defining healthcare products, including the first silent, wearable breast pump and a smart pelvic floor exerciser.

In April 2019, the seven-year-old company announced a Series B financing round of \$42 million to help bring women's technology out of the dark ages. "Our ambition is to be the first women's health tech brand to break taboos and fill real gaps in the market," explains Tania Boler, CEO and Founder of Elvie. "We're committed to talking candidly about women's bodies in order to turn negative experiences into positive ones through better technology."

An internationally recognized women's health expert, Boler's passion is reinforced by a PhD in HIV Prevention and leadership positions with global NGOs and the United Nations. "I thought I was quite the expert until I became pregnant and realized there's so many things that happen to our bodies, which are completely normal, but no one talks about," recalls Boler. "As an entrepreneur, I saw an opportunity to start conversations about women's health and diversify the tech ecosystem with innovative, transformational products."

Designing a Better Breast Pump

Boler's first tech foray focused on pelvic floor health, culminating in the launch of the award-winning Elvie Trainer, an app-connected Kegel training device designed to help women through all stages of life. "We didn't just innovate a new technology and create a new user experience," says Boler.



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TANIA BOLER
CEO and Founder, Elvie

really speak to their frustrations and problems.”

Topping the list of design criteria was the need for a discreet and quiet device; something that would enable women to get on with their busy lives. To accomplish this, Elvie completely ignored existing products and devised an entirely new type of breast pump, one without wires or loud motors.

Also defied was the reliance on a traditional rotary motor, which made old-school pumps big, bulky and noisy. The key to coming up with a new, innovative design, however, required some out-of-the-box thinking. This led to the exploration of emerging technologies from different fields.

The journey also led Elvie to Jabil, a world-class manufacturing partner with a strong track record in healthcare and consumer electronics. "Working with a partner like Jabil was so important to us because their healthcare experts understood which emerging technologies from other fields could be readily applied," recalls Boler. "Bringing them into the process early on was critical to our success."

"We completely changed how people even talked about this health issue."

Following this success, Boler set her sights on improving the product that most epitomized bad product design: The breast pump. "This device hadn't been innovated in decades," Boler adds. "It's bulky, cumbersome, requires being plugged into a wall. It's painful and noisy—women felt worse after using it."

To modernize the antiquated design, Elvie approached the problem from a woman's perspective and brought in engineers, scientists and product designers to craft the ideal product. "Our philosophy is quite simple: Put women at the center of the design and innovate from there," Boler says. "By putting the user first, we knew our solution would



Jabil Healthcare Offers an Ideal Blend of Experience and Expertise

Jabil Healthcare has a unique point of view at the intersection of digital technologies, regulations, consumer behaviors and patient outcomes. This perspective proved invaluable in helping Elvie bring its groundbreaking breast pump to market. A full range of Jabil Healthcare services eased the overall process, starting with technology evaluation and product ideation, followed by device development, engineering, supply chain optimization and volume manufacturing.

“Since the connected health space is relatively new, we needed expertise in everything from hardware and firmware to software,” Boler adds. “Selecting Jabil as our best-in-class manufacturing partner was a no-brainer decision because they brought so much experience across so many different partners and product categories.”

Together, Elvie and Jabil Healthcare innovated pump-motor functionality by leveraging the latest technologies. Understanding the complexities of each market required the assimilation of different technologies and new combinations of capabilities to deliver desired functionality and clear regulatory hurdles. Jabil then developed and stabilized specific processes to meet the rigors of high-quality, volume manufacturing. Additionally, Jabil applied its vast experience with precision injection molding and high-speed assembly to streamline critical manufacturing steps.

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TANIA BOLER

CEO and Founder, Elvie

Fastidious care was taken with complex components, such as ensuring high levels of durability for the bottles, along with reliable connections and seals to prevent leakage. Equally important was ensuring easy attachment and detachment for cleaning. “Our bottle has quite a unique shape and we struggled to get the robustness we needed,” notes Boler. “Jabil has so many specialists and experts in different areas that we worked as a team to thrash out a solution that met Jabil’s high-quality standards for manufacturing.” By addressing all product functionality under a regulatory umbrella, Jabil also ensured that Elvie’s breast pump would meet all requirements needed for a consumer healthcare device in Europe as well as a Class II medical device in the United States.

When Elvie obtained FDA clearance much earlier than anticipated, Jabil quickly secured long-lead items despite supply constraints in the electronics industry. Jabil engineers defined alternative parts by utilizing long-standing relationships with leading component manufacturers and distribution partners to create an optimized, global supply chain of qualified parts.

“Jabil placed a bet on a small company with a big vision,” says Boler. “They believed in our concept and felt that if we could get this innovation to work, we could make an impactful change for women.”

For additional information, visit jabil.com/case-studies/chiaro-elvie-and-jabil.html



Innovation Acceleration: Ramping Production at Record Speed

By the time Elvie launched the world's first silent, wearable breast pump in September 2018, the company had amassed a waitlist of thousands of women eager to untether from their large, loud and wired counterparts. In contrast, the compact, completely wireless Elvie pump was small enough to fit inside a nursing bra and operate unattended.

The lightweight, hands-free device scored high marks for hassle-free operation, while the accompanying smart app offered remote control and real-time milk-volume tracking. A resounding success, the Elvie breast pump garnered rave reviews and moved quickly from cult-like status to the runaway, category-defining leader.

This rapid rise to brand prominence, however, created an immediate demand for increased production volumes. "We were surprised by how fast women switched from incumbent brands to the Elvie Pump," says Boler. "It was at this point where our partnership with Jabil really showed its true value as they quickly changed manufacturing processes and doubled production in a matter of weeks. This made a material difference to our business."

Jabil's ability to pivot with speed and agility was reinforced by the company's Workcell Model, which provides a customer-centric approach to managing unique project needs. In Elvie's case, their dedicated Workcell at Jabil ensured that a well-coordinated effort between consumer healthcare and regulatory experts enabled swift, decisive action. "One of the things I appreciate most is Jabil's Workcell Model," Boler adds. "We have a dedicated team to ensure consistency and iron out problems in real time. With Jabil, we have a 24/7 partner who's there if, and when, we need them."

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Envisioning the Future of Women's Healthcare

In a relatively short period of time, Elvie has turned two women's healthcare product categories on their heads. The company is eager to retain market momentum with the rapid-fire launch of additional connected devices into the digital healthcare space. "To fulfill our mission, we need to keep innovation at the center of everything we do," says Boler. "We also need Jabil by our side to guide us through R&D and manufacturing as they are an innovation-led company too."

In addition to innovating a new technology and user experience, Elvie wants to elevate conversations about women's healthcare. "Changing how people talk about women's health issues is crucial," Boler adds. "We need to have conversations about the future of women's health so companies like Elvie and Jabil can partner on exciting opportunities to transform care and improve experiences."

As Elvie looks to the future, the company is poised to enter 15 new markets in the next two years. Jabil is ramping production at a second location to provide greater manufacturing flexibility while seeking ways to leverage its global footprint of more than 100 facilities worldwide to support Elvie's aggressive growth strategies.

"The most exciting thing about working in technology is that if you get it right, you can design something that really makes a difference in somebody's life," concludes Boler. "The uptake can be phenomenal and the impact immeasurable."

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About Jabil

Jabil (NYSE: JBL) is a manufacturing solutions provider with over 250,000 employees across 100 locations in 30 countries. The world's leading brands rely on Jabil's unmatched breadth and depth of end-market experience, technical and design capabilities, manufacturing knowhow, supply chain insights and global product management expertise. Driven by a common purpose, Jabil and its people are committed to making a positive impact on their local community and the environment.