



## Dr. Nancy Kilcup

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Dr. Nancy Kilcup is the current Director of R&D at Coloursmith Labs, a recently developed start-up company based out of Halifax, Nova Scotia. Conceptualized by former Dalhousie student Gabrielle Mason (BSc. Chemistry, 2017) and officially opening in July 2019, this company seeks to create optical filters for addition into contact lenses with tailored functions, which include hazardous blue light filters, therapeutic filters for treating colour blindness, treatment for myopia, and migraine prevention. After receiving a Spark Innovation Challenge award in 2018 and working with various individuals at Dalhousie University and Saint Mary's University, Coloursmith has now obtained a solid footing as a start-up company. They are currently located in the Innovacorp Building.

After completing her BSc., Dr. Kilcup had the opportunity to work for a variety of start-up companies such as North Atlantic Biopharma, which works on seal oil-based lipid emulsions, and ABK Biomedical, which works on embolotherapeutic products. While in her current capacity as director of R&D at Coloursmith, Dr. Kilcup doesn't do much lab work, she spends a lot of time planning and organizing the general day-to-day regarding work involved with research and development.



Through her experiences, she learned that one of the critical aspects of trying to make a product marketable would be understanding both the market you want to enter, who the stakeholders would be and what they would be interested in, and how to get your product through or around the various barriers to entry that exist. For example, when pitching a product, what would make an idea more marketable is framing it as how the product or idea would affect a company's bottom line. This is something that could be approached in a number of ways, such as pitching the creation of a material comparable to the best alternative at a reduced base price or material disposal price, or being a consumable that would have high market value. Another consideration would be specific barriers in the country you want to market your product in. For example, if a medical device is created for use in the United States, for this device to be marketed it would need to fall under an existing reimbursement code for insurance companies. If no such code exists, one would need to be created before the product is sold.

With Dr. Kilcup's experience working with start-up companies, she also had valuable insight into how to get an idea off the ground. Essentially, if you have ideas for practical things that can serve a societal need, think about who to get in touch with and have those conversations to see how achievable your idea is and how to achieve it, then it might be possible to create your own company. While a lot of ideas could be considered "not-achievable" in industrial work for a variety of reasons (practicality, lack of investor interest, etc.), all you would need is one good idea to start a company.