

John's Story On... A Mission to Mobilize Hidden Expertise



A high achiever all through school, John's future seemed mapped out to everyone around him: top marks, good university, respectable profession, stable job. The usual path. But John veered off script. What started as a fun distraction - joining army cadets with his friends - became a defining choice. He had unknowingly placed himself in an environment in which he would thoroughly thrive. At sixteen, he signed his first contract with the army, beginning as a soldier, then qualifying as an officer, and ultimately making captain.

During his time in service, John grew increasingly frustrated by something others seemed to miss: while the institution prided itself on physical prowess, it overlooked the countless hidden talents within its ranks. Among his comrades were trained engineers, surveyors, bricklayers, carpenters, plumbers - valuable skills that lay dormant during operational downtime, despite countless opportunities to put them to use. Why, he wondered, were they hiring private contractors when qualified soldiers stood ready? This conundrum was John's early genesis of the thinking that would go on to plague his mind as he transitioned out of military life and into the civilian world, where the same inefficiencies seemed even more pronounced.

After leaving the military, John joined the NHS. Growing up surrounded by doctors and nurses, it was familiar territory. As he rose to hospital director, he encountered the same problem that had frustrated him in the army: talented people systematically underestimated and undervalued. Medical students with sharp minds relegated to assistant duties only. Receptionists with PhDs forced to stay in their admin lane. John himself had been slotted into entry-level management at the start of his tenure, despite having commanded 120 soldiers and a multi-million-pound budget in a war zone just eighteen months earlier. In an institution with thousands of employees, John began to dream:

"Imagine if we could mobilize all those people who constantly highlight the problems, and bring their vast expertise to the fore. That is the essence of management: helping people be their best when facing a real problem, and using that momentum to fix things, to build things - allowing people to feel useful and satisfied in bringing their value to the fore."

John wasn't the only one who'd envisioned people connecting through shared knowledge to tackle challenges collectively. Via an introduction by Matthew Mezey of The Health Foundation John found a kindred spirit in Hesham. They were bound by a shared, burning frustration that the healthcare system was failing to mobilize its greatest asset - over a million skilled, experienced, passionate personnel - to solve its most critical problems. In each other, they found an equal dedication to the heavy lifting required for real change. **Hesham, the doctor, and John, the hospital manager, were an unlikely pairing - two roles that seldom move beyond managing and regulating to actually explore and build together. This duo defied expectations. Free of egos and cutthroat tactics, they were driven only by a sheer determination to right the system's wrongs.**

"We started the journey as a nonprofit, with a constitutional mission that we had to follow. Every time we were tested neither of us flinched. We built trust with each and every test, always arriving at the same decision and with the same level of conviction, led by purpose over anything else."

Peer recognition arrived via the Q Community - a network for health improvement across the UK and Ireland - whose innovation competition not only validated their concept but funded their first MVP, tested amongst 400 target users. Hexitime emerged: a digital marketplace where expertise is traded using time as currency. Now, as Hexitime co-founder, John has returned to serve the very system he once navigated as hospital director, but this time, with the power to transform it. Together they've developed a rhythm - an ebb and flow of energy, commitment, and workflow - that's brought the business from vision to reality.

"Time-banking is intuitive, it's what we've done for centuries, neighbours helping one another out. On a very human level, what we're doing makes a lot of sense. We're stripping back the hierarchical monster we've created in organizations to empower people and give them opportunities to get things done using time as a currency that forces respect and equality."

For John, the math is simple. Organizations with large workforces that don't empower every employee - regardless of rank - to contribute their skills and experiences to solving business problems, are hemorrhaging money and talent. They're burning cash on external solutions while alienating the people who could solve problems from within. In his words... *'Ignoring your workforce's potential isn't a philosophical failing. It's just bad business'.*

John is someone who commits completely to everything he does - and learning is always at the heart of that commitment. In the army, he earned a degree in military studies, immersed himself in the work, and rose through the ranks to captain. At the NHS, he pursued a masters degree in hospital management and worked his way up to hospital director and when he couldn't fix the inefficiencies, he left to innovate the solution himself. When Hexitime evolved from idea to product, he completed his MBA and won a tender to implement it at the very institution he studied at. For John, every challenge is an opportunity to study, master, and excel. He's gone all in before and he's doing it again with Hexitime - this time, he's changing how we think about knowledge sharing, making it collective, accessible, and transformative across entire systems like never before.