

MetLife 'Speed Dates' 16 Cutting-Edge Insurtech Start-Ups in 8-Hour Innovation Hunt
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In fifth annual 'Ignition' event, emerging tech companies vie for potential partnerships by demonstrating how MetLife can benefit

On Thursday, June 6, MetLife will host its fifth “Ignition” summit, an annual one-day experience to identify emerging digital capabilities that will drive transformation in the insurance industry.

By bringing 16 startup companies to MetLife’s New York City headquarters with more than 200 of its own business, operations and tech leaders, Ignition serves as a catalyst to spark creativity across the enterprise globally.

Throughout the day, each startup team hosts seven, 30-minute sessions to present the value they can deliver in partnership with MetLife – all under this year’s theme of “Strengthening Connections in a Digital World.”

“Digital experiences are embedded in every aspect of how MetLife conducts business globally,” said MetLife Chief Digital Officer Greg Baxter. “As technology advances at an exponential rate, we’re not only committed to keeping pace with that acceleration but doing it while simultaneously ensuring interactions remain extremely personal. Ignition 2019 looks to reinforce the critically important human aspect of our connections with customers, partners and colleagues.”

The startups – specifically targeted because of their unique capabilities to create new forms of customer value – will each present under one of four subthemes. Three of these target connections with existing customers, future customers, or colleagues and partners. The fourth theme centers on confidence – which explores how MetLife can leverage digital solutions to confidently manage risk while promoting business growth.

This year’s presenters bring a range of technology expertise including: Artificial Intelligence (AI), data security software, data mining, governance solutions, sales platforms, apps for customer interaction during life-changing events, data analytics to answer real-time customer questions, virtual platforms to coordinate health treatments, tools to optimize an organization’s internal performance metrics, and employee onboarding and career development platforms.

In keeping with Ignition’s emphasis on the power of diversity and the importance of being farsighted, Steven Johnson, the bestselling author of *Where Good Ideas Come From: The Natural History of Innovation* and *Farsighted: How We Make the Decisions that Matter the Most*, is delivering the keynote speech.

Nearly 60 startup companies have participated in Ignition since its launch in 2014. Those relationships have ignited over 20 Proof of Concepts and contracts with 10 start-ups to date.

“A critical pillar of our innovation strategy is to have an external orientation,” said MetLife’s Senior Vice President of Innovation John Geyer. “It means that with every opportunity or challenge, we consider which internal strengths – and which external emerging technologies – we should apply. Once we uncover a technology or solution that might work, quick experimentation is the key. We then learn from these tests with the goal of quickly commercializing and scaling winning ideas.”

Ignition 2019 is part of MetLife’s enterprise-wide digital transformation that combines AI, robotics and automation, advanced data analytics, partnerships with startups and universities, and venture capital investments. This integrated digital ecosystem is used to improve customer experiences, drive business growth and optimize internal operations.

This ecosystem includes:

- Relationships with 18 venture capital firms, strategic partnerships with leading technology companies, and collaborations with universities such as Carnegie Mellon, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the MIT Media Lab.

- Investment of up to \$100 million through MetLife Digital Ventures to accelerate investment in strategically aligned startup companies.
- The MetLife Digital Accelerator powered by Techstars®, which identifies and mentors start-ups that are developing industry-disrupting technologies in the insurance space. The next class of 10 start-ups will be announced in July.
- Working directly with start-ups through [LumenLab](#), MetLife's Singapore-based business incubator which focuses on driving scalable innovation in the key areas of wellness, wealth and retirement.

About MetLife

MetLife, Inc. (NYSE: MET), through its subsidiaries and affiliates ("MetLife"), is one of the world's leading financial services companies, providing insurance, annuities, employee benefits and asset management to help its individual and institutional customers navigate their changing world. Founded in 1868, MetLife has operations in more than 40 countries and holds leading market positions in the United States, Japan, Latin America, Asia, Europe and the Middle East. For more information, visit www.metlife.com.

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