# Label Sessions embeds senior 'stars' inside banks and claims profitability in first year



Label Sessions, an innovation start-up founded by Maxine Mackie, has spent the past two years pitching a simple but provocative idea: treat senior practitioners like recording artists and sell their experience to large organisations. According to a profile in the Herald, the Edinburgh-headquartered company — which also maintains offices in London and Cape Town — has grown rapidly since its 2023 launch, building a compact core team supported by a much larger global network of experts.

The firm’s business model is deliberately contrarian. “We sign leaders rather than musicians,” Mackie told the Herald, explaining that Label Sessions does not make albums but instead helps create new products, ventures and ways of working by embedding seasoned operators inside corporate teams. The company itself frames the approach as a hybrid of consultancy, accelerator and creative label: an intersection it likens to McKinsey, Y Combinator and, playfully, Trojan Records. That positioning is echoed on the company’s own About page, which describes an invitation-only network and a producer-led model aimed at turning expert insight into deliverable outcomes.

Label Sessions says it has more than 500 “Labelmates” — a global pool of collaborators ranging from former bank leaders to product builders for brands such as Nike and Google — and a small dedicated staff of around ten. The Herald reports the business works “with every big bank in Scotland” and with international clients including Lululemon, Google and Mastercard; the company told the paper its largest client spent more than £1 million with them in a year while the smallest engagement was about £2,000. The firm also claims to have been profitable from its first year, an unusual boast in an industry where many start-ups prioritise growth over early profitability.

A tangible expression of Label Sessions’ model is its Financial Services Accelerator. The company’s programme material describes a producer-led, cohort-style format that pairs client teams with external experts, entrepreneurs and industry leaders to design and build products or strategies inside incumbent banks and fintechs. The accelerator is presented as a means of de‑risking innovation and accelerating product-market fit in highly regulated sectors, and it sits alongside collaborative initiatives in Scotland’s ecosystem such as TSB Labs and other industry-run labs discussed regularly on the FinTech Scotland podcast.

The idea for the business, the company says, grew out of Mackie’s experience in product development and innovation strategy with consultancies and agencies including IBM and Deloitte. Label Sessions’ About page credits the 2023 founding to a desire to make senior expertise commercially accessible in ways that are flexible and delivery-focused. The company also highlights commitments beyond commercial work, including producer-led projects and pro bono volunteering, as part of its stated civic and cultural remit.

That pitch comes at a moment when many organisations are reassessing how they buy advice. Mackie argues that traditional consulting models can be slow, expensive and staffed by generalists, and she positions Label Sessions as an alternative that offers on‑demand access to hand‑picked specialists. Entrepreneur magazine’s profile of the company notes the rapid uptake of that model among clients and highlights the rationale for matching businesses to leaders with hands‑on experience rather than abstract strategy.

Independent confirmation of some of the firm’s larger claims is limited in the public record. A company snapshot on The Org provides a straightforward organisational overview but is marked as an unverified profile; the assertion that Label Sessions is the “world’s first innovation expert network” appears on the company’s materials and should be treated as a company claim rather than an independently established fact. Nevertheless, broader industry activity — from banks running in‑house labs to partnerships with external accelerators — corroborates the basic market need the company seeks to meet, and public-facing industry channels continue to document similar collaborations.

Mackie is candid about the practical challenges ahead. She told the Herald that educating the market and shifting entrenched procurement habits will be key if businesses are to embrace more agile, expert-led models. She also highlights internal lessons: building a team capable of taking tasks off the founder’s plate and listening carefully to client needs and data. In interviews elsewhere, Mackie has described the firm’s ambition to become a go-to platform for organisations navigating change, while stressing the nuts-and-bolts work of matching the right expert to the right problem.

The personal detail that accompanies the company story underlines how the start-up is pitched: Mackie, who has spoken at industry events such as Money20/20 about the firm’s fintech work, combines a background in large consultancy projects with a hands-on producer approach. Outside work she speaks of walking dogs on remote beaches, a desire to return to painting and a reading list that includes new perspectives on work and life. Those anecdotes round out a narrative of a founder trying to translate a clearly stated conviction about expert-led innovation into a scalable business model.

### 📌 Reference Map:

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25376761.scottish-company-label-sessions-founder-disruption-drive/?ref=rss), [[2]](https://www.labelsessions.com/about), [[5]](https://theorg.com/org/label-sessions)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25376761.scottish-company-label-sessions-founder-disruption-drive/?ref=rss), [[2]](https://www.labelsessions.com/about), [[7]](https://thoughtleadershipleverage.com/blueprint-for-unleashing-innovation-in-thought-leadership-maxine-mackie/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25376761.scottish-company-label-sessions-founder-disruption-drive/?ref=rss), [[2]](https://www.labelsessions.com/about)
* Paragraph 4 – [[3]](https://www.labelsessions.com/accelerators/financial-services-accelerator), [[6]](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/fintech-scotland/id1556731553), [[1]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25376761.scottish-company-label-sessions-founder-disruption-drive/?ref=rss)
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* Paragraph 7 – [[5]](https://theorg.com/org/label-sessions), [[1]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25376761.scottish-company-label-sessions-founder-disruption-drive/?ref=rss), [[2]](https://www.labelsessions.com/about)
* Paragraph 8 – [[1]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25376761.scottish-company-label-sessions-founder-disruption-drive/?ref=rss), [[7]](https://thoughtleadershipleverage.com/blueprint-for-unleashing-innovation-in-thought-leadership-maxine-mackie/)
* Paragraph 9 – [[1]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25376761.scottish-company-label-sessions-founder-disruption-drive/?ref=rss), [[4]](https://www.entrepreneur.com/en-gb/entrepreneurs/where-changemakers-go-for-the-right-kind-of-help/490442), [[7]](https://thoughtleadershipleverage.com/blueprint-for-unleashing-innovation-in-thought-leadership-maxine-mackie/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25376761.scottish-company-label-sessions-founder-disruption-drive/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.labelsessions.com/about> - The Label Sessions about page sets out the company’s mission and origin story. It explains that Label Sessions was founded in 2023 to connect organisations to senior practitioners and leaders via an invitation-only expert network and live one-to-one sessions. The page lists the core leadership team, including Maxine Mackie as a founder and producer, and describes operations spanning multiple continents. It outlines the company’s accelerator and expert-network services, the producer-led model, and a commitment to pro bono volunteering. The tone positions Label Sessions as an innovation-focused platform that blends expert advice with delivery capability for large brands.
3. <https://www.labelsessions.com/accelerators/financial-services-accelerator> - This page details Label Sessions’ Financial Services Accelerator offering, aimed at banks, fintechs and payments businesses. It describes a producer-led, cohort-style programme that brings external experts, entrepreneurs and industry leaders together with a client’s team to design and build new products, ventures or strategies. The content emphasises close collaboration with in-house teams, a flexible stage-gate methodology, and options to share risk or guarantee outputs. The page positions the accelerator as a way to de-risk innovation, access a curated fintech expert network and accelerate product-market fit inside complex financial services organisations.
4. <https://www.entrepreneur.com/en-gb/entrepreneurs/where-changemakers-go-for-the-right-kind-of-help/490442> - An Entrepreneur United Kingdom profile of Label Sessions and co-founder Maxine Mackie which outlines the company’s approach to matching businesses with senior experts. The piece describes Label Sessions as an Edinburgh-based platform that is not consultancy or coaching in the conventional sense, and explains how it connects brands to leaders with hands-on experience. The article notes Label Sessions’ rapid growth, the founders’ rationale for the model, and lists examples of the types of organisations its network members have worked with, citing major names from tech and corporate sectors to illustrate the calibre of expertise on offer.
5. <https://theorg.com/org/label-sessions> - The organisation profile on The Org gives a concise factual snapshot of Label Sessions as a company. The page lists the firm’s headquarters as Edinburgh, displays an organisational chart naming founders and senior team members, and provides an estimated employee range. It is presented as an unverified company profile that collates public information about structure and people, offering quick confirmation of the company’s base, leadership and approximate team size for readers seeking a straightforward corporate overview.
6. <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/fintech-scotland/id1556731553> - FinTech Scotland’s official podcast page lists episodes that discuss innovation, regulation and accelerator programmes in the Scottish fintech ecosystem. The series covers initiatives such as TSB Labs and the Financial Regulation Innovation Lab, and features interviews and partner-produced episodes that bring together banks, fintechs and industry bodies. Several episodes include contributions from partners and collaborators around Scotland’s fintech scene, demonstrating how industry organisations, innovation labs and external expert networks collaborate to pilot fintech propositions and run accelerator-style programmes with established banks.
7. <https://thoughtleadershipleverage.com/blueprint-for-unleashing-innovation-in-thought-leadership-maxine-mackie/> - This interview with Maxine Mackie on the Thought Leadership Leverage site explores the rationale behind Label Sessions and how the model translates thought leadership into commercial innovation. Mackie discusses her experience translating research and technical capability into practical propositions during her time at IBM and other consultancies, and explains Label Sessions’ hybrid model of signing senior leaders as advisers and embedding them into client projects and accelerators. The conversation highlights the importance of matching the right experts to business problems and the firm’s ambition to turn expert insight into tangible product and organisational change.