

COVID-19: Interview with David Haines, CEO of Glucose Republic

Glucose Republic is building a technology that can help with the management of glucose in the body with a tailored approach to understand and track what is eaten.

Maddyness spoke with David Haines, Chief Executive of Glucose Republic to understand how the company has coped during the COVID-19 pandemic and what the future holds.

Glucose Republic is working on an urgent unmet need for health – we don't understand the impact on us of the food we eat. Diet providers assume their version of the diet is the only answer, whereas Glucose Republic's focus is on the individual.

Indeed, even identical twins, who qualify in many ways as the best similar people on Earth, have different glucose responses. Their work in glucose is based on prior experience of building the world's first mobile diabetes management system which included the world's most accurate insulin pump. Then the pandemic came along...

[Maddyness] What have been the biggest professional challenges during lockdown?

[David] The biggest professional challenge has been adapting to online working and meetings. We have raised money before, but always face-to-face. The silver linings are more time at home, more time with the family and vastly reduced journey times to get anywhere.

Was remote working a new thing for you?

We have worked remotely before – often where there was a need to complete a project task or write an article. Everything went online which was a new challenge. The hardest part is striking the balance between the remote working and keeping the community together.

As a leader, how have you managed your (and your teams) mental resilience through lockdown?

We have checked in regularly to check everyone in our ecosystem is happy – if in doubt, overcommunicate! Also, I have kept in mind and tell people there will be a day this is all over. I'm not able to name that day yet...

What have you implemented to stay competitive?

We have remained focused on what we came to this business to do, and we are still doing it. Starting something worthwhile is never easy... We try to stay alert to changes. Our strategy is not negotiable, our tactics can and do change...

What do you think of the support

packages for startups offered by the government?

We did get Government support through Non-Domestic Rate Relief, which is welcome. We couldn't benefit from the Founders' Fund. In general, I think the Government could have helped by increasing tax relief under EIS and SEIS to 80% from 30, which would have matched the furlough limit for employees. Giving investors (angels) more confidence would have helped. They have had so much to cover not everything could be done, but that move would have helped the start-up community.

Do you feel confident in your business post-COVID?

We believe in Glucose Republic, nothing has changed.

Are there any changes in society/economy that you think will help you?

What we are tackling is the long-term challenge of diet and health – which can lead to obesity/Type 2 diabetes/autoimmune diseases and more. What COVID-19 has made apparent is the challenge this poses in a pandemic, as people in these categories, unfortunately, face a much higher risk having contracted the virus. We believe it is a wake-up call to our approach as a society to this.

Tell us about your future post-COVID?

Our future is making a difference to people's lives, bringing transparency and choice to customers in tracking what they eat, predicting the impact of future foods upon them and ultimately helping to prevent worsening health outcomes in the future.

See Glucose Republic on NOTWICS Connecting People

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