

# Meet BIOStress, revolutionising stress management with biometric data

As part of our quick fire questions series – or QFQs – we spoke to Tim Wade, CEO of BIOStress about the lost productivity due to workplace stress, grants to accelerate growth and the importance of dreaming big while being mindful of the associated stress.

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We're on a mission to revolutionise stress management using biometric data. Our unique measure of stress uses biometric data from medical-grade wearables built into a digital platform and programme to help organisations and employees tackle this \$trillion issue.

Workplace stress is a huge problem with the WHO estimating it costs the global economy \$1T in lost productivity. However, there is currently no objective measure of workplace stress. Workplace stress is generally measured by asking employees about their stress and unfortunately, this does get to the truth. In our work, we find that people's perception of stress is often out of kilter with their objective physiological stress response – helping employees to understand and manage stress and closing this perception gap will help improve stress management, health and wellbeing. Armed with objective data (anonymised and aggregated) organisations can tackle workplace stress improve wellbeing and reduce sickness absence and boost productivity.

After an initial trial with employees in Bupa last year we have now built our product which is now live with clients and employees in 5 different countries. We have recently signed several organisations to trial the BIOStress programme with their employees and are targeting rapid expansion.

## How has the business evolved since its launch?

Quickly! We started with a basic product that we trialled with Bupa. On the back of some amazing results, we secured an Innovate UK grant (£150K) and angel investment to build the team and the product – algorithm, app, dashboards and digital platform. There is still a long way to go but the team is expanding and the product is live.

We now have a second Innovate UK grant (£470K) to continue to build the product. We continue to seek investment to help accelerate our growth.

## What is your favourite thing about being a founder?

The chance to build something amazing and make a difference to people – both our own team and the employees we help improve their stress management and health – feedback from employees so far has been outstanding.

## Which founders or businesses do you see as being the most inspirational?

I have an interest in health so I like what Zoe is doing. They've raised a lot of money recently and are at the forefront of health research.

## Which other figures in your life inspire you?

I have a great cofounder (Tim Routledge). We chat several times a day even though we live miles away (I'm the northerner and he is the southerner☺). We have great trust in each other which is inspiring.

# What has been your biggest business failure?

I've definitely had a few job failures. I was head of marketing for one organisation and I remember on day 2 of the job thinking I'd made a mistake, I managed to last 6 months but left by mutual consent. I won't name the organisation. What it made me realise is that cultural fit is the most important factor in work. Building the team at Biostress our culture is so important to us – we are building everything based on trust and empowerment and this means we have to be careful and intentional about how we create this.

# What are the things you're really good at as a leader?

I think I'm good at creating a vision and then building and working with a team to deliver that vision.

# Which areas do you need to improve on?

I'm very good at putting off the boring stuff until it becomes urgent!

# What's in store for the future of the business?

Our future will be global with the US as our initial overseas market. Workplace stress is a global issue and we want to be the dominant global organisation.

In the short term, we are continuing to develop the product and deliver our Innovate UK project, Patents are in the offing and investment raising is underway. The team will grow and our sales and marketing accelerate.

# What advice would you give to other founders or future founders?

Let's view this from a stress perspective. Stress is very different for a founder versus an employee – can I pay my mortgage this month is a very different pressure to being busy at work. It's not that one is easier or harder it's just different. If you're working in a toxic culture and not enjoying your job it is

miserable, not having predictability as a founder is also tough.

So my advice is to go for it, dream big but accept it might fail – but go in with your eyes open about the stress that it will cause.

**And finally, a more personal question!  
We like to ask everyone we interview about their daily routine and the rules they live by. Is it up at 4 am for yoga, or something a little more traditional?**

Sleep is a huge part of health and resilience so there is no getting up at 4 am for me. I wake up at 7 am, I do a morning mobility routine, it doesn't so much resemble yoga as my body does not flex into those poses you see on YouTube. Once the children are off to school I'll start work at 8.30.

Work is varied from new business meetings, investor calls, team meetings, and product discussions. I'll chat with my cofounder two or three times a day.

I find working in bursts of intense activity works best for me.

My children are very active so I'll work into the evening but be dropping kids off at various activities from Diving to Netball. Flexible working is a big part of our culture – the team can work whenever and wherever – output is critical, and the 9 to 5 rules of the industrial world are outdated.

I try to get to the Crossfit gym a few times a week. I eat well, avoid processed food and try to get 7 to 8 hours of sleep. We have to drink our own Kool-Aid!

Tim Wade is the CEO of *BIOSstress*.