

Online Employee Stress Management Platform



Janesse (Jan) Bruce
CEO and Co-Founder

CEOCFO: Ms. Bruce, what is the concept behind meQuilibrium?

Ms. Bruce: meQuilibrium is an online platform that helps employees dial up their resilience and coping skills so they are better able to function at work, at home, in life in general, and in their health. meQuilibrium uses a digital coaching model, meaning that we took the processes that coaches were doing and made them digital, online, and very scalable so that you can use this for not just twenty executives in your company, but for all the people in your company.

CEOCFO: How would someone engage with meQuilibrium?

Ms. Bruce: Employers buy meQuilibrium, and they usually start to work with us because they see that stress and the overwhelm in today's culture is making people unproductive or impacting their health, performance, morale and their engagement in their work. For whatever reason, when the executive buys meQuilibrium, we work with them to start a series of promotions to the employees. We can do posters, in-person kickoffs, webinars and webcasts, but it is primarily email. We promote that if you are feeling overwhelmed or feeling stressed, here is a solution that can really help you gain control. The employee then signs up, and when they enroll with a simple email and password onto our platform, they get a personalized, private, secure account and a personalized coaching plan that helps them tackle the areas where they are vulnerable.

CEOCFO: I would be concerned that the employer would think I had a problem if I was using it. Is that just old-fashioned thinking?

Ms. Bruce: It is. Interestingly, if you as an employee read our privacy statement upon signing on, you will see that you are always on our secure, HIPAA-compliant platform and that your employer has no way to see the data on an individual basis.

CEOCFO: Would an employee be doing this on company time?

Ms. Bruce: Different companies approach this differently. Some companies actually want to put aside some time for employees to sign up and do the initial onboarding, others simply make it available for employees to use on their own time. What's great about meQuilibrium is that it's personalized for every individual, and they can use it 24/7 whenever they want, on any device, on a laptop, a smartphone or tablet. They can even enroll using their home email address, rather than their company email address.

CEOCFO: Walk us through the process. How do you come up with a plan?

Ms. Bruce: meQuilibrium was built on science developed out of University of Pennsylvania and we have a perpetual license on this. The science indicates that our thinking styles provide valuable clues into how you cope with adversity, stressors and everything else that is going on in your life. When you enroll, you complete your meQuilibrium assessment which includes questions about your emotional, cognitive, and physical health, your connections in life, social relationships and sense of purpose, as well as the things that impact your life such as your clutter, home life and your work. We can see across all of those dimensions of your life to gain insight about where you are strong and coping well and where you are vulnerable. Then our algorithms crunch all the data from your assessment, so we can provide a personalized plan of learning modules and activities to boost your coping skills. You might learn in your profile that you eat because you are emotional. You may already know that, but you may not know that you are prone to being angry. You may learn that the anger keeps you from connecting to people, and that makes you lonely, or the anger keeps you from connecting to people, and in that way you are not really connected to your work. We unpack all these things for people,

and then we give them new skills that they can practice online to develop new competencies. It is very much like executive coaching, but it is done privately and individually with videos and interactive widgets.

meQuilibrium was founded on the philosophy that in today's culture, stress is the new fat. What I mean by that is, not only has stress become a larger epidemic than obesity, but that also this culture of 24/7 media and online communications and the constant bombardment of news and entertainment is also addictive and detrimental, just as we are addicted to sugar and carbohydrates. In the same way that we have to re-teach people how to deal with food, we have to teach people how to deal with stress and overwhelm. meQuilibrium has developed a way to very efficiently teach people to get to the root of their thinking to discover what is stressing them out so they can create awareness and then change those habits.

For years, coaches, social workers and psychologists in executive coaching and training did this. That is great, but the problem with it is that it is very expensive, and typically, a CEO would pay for maybe 20 to 50 people at a company to go through this. Therefore, that kind of intervention is not scalable, nor is necessarily measurable. With meQuilibrium, the more you use it, the more personalized it gets to you, and it really becomes a tool to teach you about how to manage your coping skills.

CEOCFO: Do you find that there are certain techniques that people in general tend to like more? Are you surprised by some of the things people choose to engage in or choose not to engage in?

Ms. Bruce: We have a variety of methods, to capture attention and engage the users. People learn in many different ways. Some people really like emails, and some people never look at them. Some people like games and widgets, and some people like to watch the videos. We have found that if we serve up all these things to people, they self-select. The only other point I would make is that I have seen in the marketplace, many games, similar to video games, that really do not do the job. They may be fun, but they do not produce results. For example, trying to shoot at bubbles with happy words in them does not necessarily improve your ability to cope with challenges or focus under stress. It does not make you more positive just because you can pop those bubbles in a brain agility game about happiness. There is momentary enjoyment and there is long-term efficacy.

“Stress costs companies a lot of money across the board: productivity, absence, safety, disability and health care, and when people are stressed they do not necessarily take advantage of their health benefits. They do not work as well as they can, and they do not enjoy their lives.”- Janesse (Jan) Bruce

CEOCFO: Is there a common thread among the companies that have chosen to use your services?

Ms. Bruce: Our clients believe that human capital is a highly important asset and not a cost center. The HR departments who buy us believe that their job is to make better product, grow revenues, and improve shareholder value, not just manage the cost of the benefits.

CEOCFO: Do you find that people are lower down on the food chain benefit more from using meQuilibrium?

Ms. Bruce: Senior executives and managers are more resilient than other people. That in itself is part of the problem that companies today face. You have your senior team who does cope better, and they need to understand that their teams of people who are doing the day-to-day work do not necessarily have the same coping skills. meQuilibrium can be, in this way, a real equalizer. We are also able to do live training to help people in managerial positions understand that how they think and how the people they manage think are not necessarily the same and how to manage better with that understanding. We call it bridging the resilience gap.

CEOCFO: How is business?

Ms. Bruce: Business is great. We are a young company, but we are attracting very large Fortune 500 companies that care about optimizing the potential of their workforce. We have grown our base 400% year over year.

CEOCFO: Put it together for our readers. Why pay attention to meQuilibrium today?

Ms. Bruce: First of all, there are many ways that you can spend your money, and a lot of important employee performance and health issues to deal with. But if you look at prevalence rates, cost implications and the interdependencies of these issues, stress clearly rises to the top. Stress costs companies a lot of money across the board: in productivity, absence, safety, disability and health care. Not to mention that when people are stressed, they do not necessarily take advantage of their health benefits. They do not work as well as they can, and they do not enjoy their lives. If you are going to spend money on anything, stress is the #1 thing to focus on and resilience is the technique that

can have the most profound effect on people's stress levels and their ongoing coping skills. If you are thinking about doing something about stress and you understand that resilience has proven to be the best strategy for dealing with this issues, consider a digital coaching solution – a coaching solution that is scalable, personalized, private and measurable – gives you the best chance of success and measuring how it can impact your business. If you get to that point, we believe meQuilibrium can provide people with a very powerful way to build resilience at every level of their organization. We would be excited to talk to them.

Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOCFO Magazine



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