

A Remote/Virtual Health Coach allowing Patients and Employees To Take Control of their Health and Wellness



Don Schoen - CEO

About Bettrlife

BettrLife is a unique technology solution that enables healthcare providers and employers to engage their patients/employees to take control of their own health and wellness through a comprehensive suite of food, nutrition and activity tracking tools that facilitate engagement, and lead to long-term healthy lifestyle changes within their population.

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

CEOCFO: Mr. Schoen, Bettrlife is self-described as an innovative technology company. Would you tell us what you have figured out that others have not?

Mr. Schoen: My background is that I am a serial entrepreneur, and what we have figured out is...as healthcare turns to a value-based payment model, with a greater focus on accountable care, there is a need for a solution to help engage people in their overall health and well-being.

I think in the past, healthcare has expected employers and/or health plans to provide care at any cost, no matter how people choose to care for themselves. With the shift in healthcare now (fee-for-service to fee-for-value), we offer a tool to help employers and patients become more proactive in their care.

What we have learned is that there is going to be a need to connect individuals (whether it is a clinical setting or within an employment setting) to a health coach to help manage health. This must be done in a meaningful way that is convenient for both the individual and the health coach.

The BettrLife product connects the user to a health coach helping them facilitate lifestyle changes and enable them to make better choices around nutrition and activity...ultimately leading to a more engaged user, who feels educated, motivated and supported to improve their overall health.

CEOCFO: How does it work?

Mr. Schoen: A health coach is able to use our application to educate and support users through our mobile and web interface. Once accepted as a health coach by the user, users can begin logging and tracking their food intake, as well as their frequency and level of activity. The health coach can view and monitor the user's log and make suggestions regarding better choices, share recipes, or assign a detailed meal plan to the user, all within the application.

Additionally, we have a smart shopping list that learns what the user likes to eat (based on food logged) and suggests items they may need. The BettrLife application is contextually rich, and relevant to each individual user based on their nutrition and activity patterns.

CEOCFO: There have been services through many of the insurance companies with some guidance for people. Is it your technology and engagement that will make a difference?

Mr. Schoen: It is not specifically our technology, we are leveraging the new technology out there (ie. Smart phones, Cloud) It's how this new technology is being integrated into people's everyday lives. With nearly 70% of the U.S. population owning a smart phone, people are beginning to understand and accept that technology is a tool that can lead to better health, especially when engaged with a health coach or physician who can guide them to better choices.

It may not be 24/7, but they know there are guidelines to follow, along with being monitored, and there is comfort in knowing they can gain support from their coach.

CEO CFO: *Where are you in the process?*

Mr. Schoen: We have organizations that are signing up, and we have clients that are out there. One doctor has a patient under his care using the BettrLife application for a little over a year and she's lost over 120 pounds. In addition to the weight loss, she also reduced the number of medications she was taking.

CEO CFO: *How do you find the coaches and how do you ensure the right people?*

Mr. Schoen: We do not employ coaches. We are a technology company, and this technology is pushed to organizations that have coaches. Physicians may have a nurse or someone on staff that will take on that coaching role internally. Additionally, there are companies who specialize in health coaching who can use our solution to further engage their users.

CEO CFO: *How do you reach prospective customers?*

Mr. Schoen: In addition to consumers, we target three different business-to-business verticals – wellness/fitness, healthcare and employers. We market our brand at tradeshows, through online campaigns, social media advertising and thought-leading webinars. We connect on Twitter, as well as Facebook and additionally engage people via recipes on Pinterest. We are trying to reach populations in C level positions who are aggressively implementing accountable care organizations or establishing wellness programs and policies.

Ultimately, within the next five years, engaging individuals to take active roles in their own health and wellness is going to be key in controlling healthcare costs. BettrLife is the tool that connects individuals with their care provider to achieve better health outcomes in a simple, convenient and meaningful way.

“It stands out because of the richness of the underlying content, the usability and simplicity of the product to the end user coupled with a remote/virtual health coach.”- Don Schoen

CEO CFO: *Do you think that is not only because of the changes in the country but because younger people have a different approach?*

Mr. Schoen: I think that is part of it. The interesting thing is...when we started the company in 2010, smart phones (or the iPhone) had less than 5% market share in the cell phone market place. Now, studies are showing usage of these devices are over 70%. Another interesting fact is, some of our best users are 60 and 70-year-old people, and they get it! I think there is a mindset where people like to feel they are connected, even if it is remotely, is very comforting.

CEO CFO: *There are other companies that have services similar to yours but not at the same depth of what you offer. How do you distinguish when you are talking with someone?*

Mr. Schoen: When we talk to people, they say the exact same thing. On the surface, all they see is a food logger/tracker and they say they are not interested. However, once we show them the application, they realize the level of engagement a person can have with a remote health coach is amazing. The simplicity and ease of use of meal planning, recipe analyzer, SMART grocery shopping list, SMART logger and the high level of focus on nutrition and actionable content that can be sent to employees or patients. There is a realization that there is nothing else on the market like BettrLife. These are key differences in what is available today, and all of this is totally integrated. Once we show the overall encompassing product and the depth of it, they get it.

CEO CFO: *What were some of the challenges in putting together such a comprehensive offering?*

Mr. Schoen: I think the challenge in mobile technology today is staying ahead of where the market is going. I have had two other software companies; one on a LINUX platform and one on Client Server platform. The pace of change compared to these other two platforms is staggering. For every year of development in those platforms, we have seen the mobile market move three times faster. New player's, small and large, are taking on aspects within the mobile and cloud segments every month.

There is a huge challenge today, not only developing in this environment, but also trying to understand and stay ahead of the evolution of smart phones, the internet and cloud computing.

CEO CFO: *What have you learned since the product has been available that has caused tweaks or changes?*

Mr. Schoen: Everything. Feedback from pilots and trial users have truly shaped our product. For example, we now have smart logging – an individualized way of logging food and nutrition. The system learns how you eat and the top three entrées will show up. Then when you choose an entrée such as oatmeal, two other foods that you normally eat with oatmeal will appear. We evolved this feature to make the system easier and more intuitive for the end-users based on what we've learned.

BettrLife makes nutritional choices relevant to each individual, making it easy and simple, not only in terms of logging, but also, making healthy choices.

Another area we enhanced was nutrition...instead of crowd sourcing data; we use a database from the USDA which has over 440,000 product items and another database of over 80,000 restaurant menu items. In addition, a robust recipe analyzer can take any online recipe and itemize the nutrition data in a matter of seconds.

Different market segments, however, focus on different things. We are finding there is a blending as the markets evolve. For example, gamification has always been important to the employer population; however, a recent United Healthcare study showed that competitions and community interactions are shaping engagement in the healthcare space as well.

CEOCFO: How is business?

Mr. Schoen: Business is always challenging. The market continues to evolve and we are learning and changing with it. We are focusing on innovative companies that have extensive wellness programs that want to take their program to the next level, or healthcare organizations focusing on the leading edge of accountable care. We are also looking for wellness organizations who are interested in collaborating with us to focus on nutrition and behavior change. We are constantly refining how we are going to market based on what the market is telling us. More and more organizations are realizing they need a product like ours to tackle the new health and wellness paradigm. We've signed two new clients, one focused on diabetes management and the other on concierge medicine so we are starting to see some trends. We're also receiving some significant interest from medical schools doing studies with different types of chronic populations. We are in the right place to capitalize on this new market opportunity.

CEOCFO: Why does Bettrlife stand out?

Mr. Schoen: It stands out because of the richness of the underlying content, the usability and simplicity of the product to the end user coupled with a remote/virtual health coach. The best way I have equated this is we have aggregated a great deal of information. Using cloud technology, the system learns individual choices and makes logging simple and convenient. It is very similar to what Apple did to iPod. Before iPod came along there were M3P players out there, but what iPod did was make it simple to find and play music, and simple to download music, and the system started making recommendations back to the individual what music they might enjoy. We have taken this type of approach at Bettrlife.

BIO: Don Schoen is a serial entrepreneur, having owned six different companies over 35+ years. His businesses have ranged from a sandwich shop and regional supermarkets to national technology companies. Over the past 25 years, he has owned and actively led three technology companies. From 1984 to 1992, he developed his first technology company, which focused on the supermarket industry. He successfully sold this company to a publicly traded company (Telxon) and remained there in a variety of C-level positions for the next 3 years. In 1995, Schoen met a physician who was developing an electronic charting system. The two began a professional collaboration, eventually forming MediNotes Corporation. MediNotes established key strategic alliances with major industry players including Per-Se, McKesson, Cerner, Fujitsu, Motion Computing, Allscripts, Quest Laboratories and LabCorp Laboratories. MediNotes installed software in over 5,000 medical clinics and serviced more than 25,000 users nationwide. In 2008, Schoen successfully sold this company to the Eclipsys Corporation (then subsequently purchased by Allscripts). In 2010, Schoen started BettrLife, a health and health/wellness technology company with a mission to help organizations facilitate behavior change in consumers, ultimately helping them to lead a healthier life through better consumption and activity.



Bettrlife

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