

## **Fortune 1000 Employee Well-Being and Performance Enhancement**



**Henry Albrecht - CEO**

**CEOCFO: *Mr. Albrecht, what is the concept of Limeade?***

**Mr. Albrecht:** Limeade is a technology company that focuses on helping Fortune 1000 companies build healthier, happier and more productive workforces. The basic concept is that we use technology to help large employers engage employees in activities and programs that improve their health, well being and performance while driving the company's bottom line.

**CEOCFO: *This is not a new concept, and there certainly have been programs around for a number of years. What do you understand fundamentally about the process? What do you know that others might not understand quite as well?***

**Mr. Albrecht:** When we started the company in 2006, this was a very radical, new concept. We started with the idea that employee engagement and performance can improve if companies look at their employee's health, well being and performance in a holistic, complete way. Our business model and approach were rooted in both behavioral science and the science of organizational change. There has been a big movement in corporate wellness to lower health risks and increase biometric health values. We feel that a clinical health-centric approach, while important, is insufficient by itself. There are two mega problems going on in the U.S. economy – one is that in the last decade health costs have increased by more than 80 percent. The second issue is that more than 70 percent of employees are disengaged at work. The Limeade difference is that we see these two as related problems. Our approach to helping companies solve these issues is fundamentally different. We look at the big picture of a company's culture and strategy and get to the individual level with fresh, inspirational programs. We pull all the levers we can, from mobile apps, wearable devices, social connections in the workplace – anything evidence-based that positively impacts an employee's overall health and well-being --- including, but well beyond, their physical health.

**CEOCFO: *Other than scale, what are some of the challenges of working with larger companies in such a program?***

**Mr. Albrecht:** Scale is the easy part. I think complexity and diversity represent the big challenges in large workforces. We serve employers who have over 1,000 locations and over 1,000 different job codes. They may even have five or 10 different unions each with different bargaining units and financial incentives associated with their employee engagement programs. Creating one culture, mission and vision across these large, complex and highly diverse geographical populations can be very challenging without the right technology. Delivering outcomes for a large enterprise requires a program that both embodies their corporate strategy, brand and spirit and engages employees in highly personal activities and challenges.

**CEOCFO: *What would a typical engagement be for you?***

**Mr. Albrecht:** The first thing we do is sit down with the customer and listen. Only after we understand the culture, strategy, leaders and business goals can we offer software programs that are highly tailored and relevant. Being a flexible software-as-a-service company is the way we make this cultural relevance scale. Programs can be easily updated to stay fresh and relevant when strategy changes. Change happens every year, including benefit strategy, health care reform, technology and even the tone a company uses to communicate with their employees. We kind of think of it as keeping employee engagement aligned with what is absolutely most important in order to build a great company. The nuts and bolts of the program include health, well-being and productivity assessments, daily tracking with apps and devices, social challenges and both integration and promotion of all their existing employee programs and resources. Then come rewards based on each employee's engagement in those things, followed by dashboard reporting for the employer to see trends

and changes over time. When our customers launch with Limeade, it does not feel like some canned, cookie-cutter program built inside of a health insurance company. It feels like their own strategy being played back at full volume. This has been the key to our success. I think when great companies and great investors get together it is usually around a concept like that in a huge market. If you combine the two dynamics I mentioned earlier --- the rise of U.S. health care costs combined with the fall of employee engagement, we are operating in a very green field of market opportunity.

**CEOCFO: *What is the key to understanding what a company really wants and needs as opposed to what they say they want or need?***

**Mr. Albrecht:** We read their financial reports, see how they interact with their community and soak in their corporate website... this gets you a certain distance. That gets you to how they want to project their brand into the marketplace. The next level down is sitting down with the executives of the company for a frank discussion to hear the things they don't put up on their website. Maybe they face employee turnover challenges, or have trouble attracting and retaining the type of talent they need to drive the innovation needed to stave off competition. Maybe they are expanding globally to diversify production or reach new markets. Maybe their skilled workforce is aging, stressed and having horrendous heart health issues. Those are not things that companies advertise publicly – but they shape the solutions we bring to the table. Then we will actually interview and research at the employee level through surveys, personal interviews, and other research methods. We ask employees what things truly resonate and matter to them in work and life. We try to understand what the psychology of employees and shape an engagement program that takes their input into account. One example is that often times these programs come with rewards, for example cheaper health insurance. We researched the motivation of a client's nursing population and found that they were incredibly stressed. The rewards that resonated with them the most were things like one free year of housekeeping. The final level of research is all about data. We analyze usage, health, mood, activity, cost, performance and outcomes data to deliver a living, breathing, learning system.

**“The way we improve health, well-being and performance is unique in that we bring that employer's culture to life. We actually build the employer brand and inspire change. People want to engage in the program, and we get results that matter, including sustained engagement.” - Henry Albrecht**

**CEOCFO: *Are you surprised at how few people go to that employee level when it seems so intuitive?***

**Mr. Albrecht:** It seems obvious, but I think our DNA as a consumer technology company helps in the enterprise space. We apply traditional consumer marketing and modern big-data digital marketing tactics to the enterprise.

**CEOCFO: *What has changed in your approach since the beginning? What have you learned as the company has grown and developed?***

**Mr. Albrecht:** One big trend that that has changed the way we work is the ubiquity of mobile devices, social-platforms and wearables. Looking at our own data about how self-tracking and team challenges drive different types of engagement and outcomes has led us to support over 80 apps and devices for fitness and related activities. We see that exercise not only helps with health, but also with workplace dynamics. Many of our customers now promote walking meetings with managers, killing two birds with one stone. There have also been large regulatory changes. I think the Affordable Care Act has really made people more aware and accountable for their own health decisions. They know they will be rewarded for making decisions that are good for their health and well being and more aligned with company goals -- and perhaps less rewarded when they are less willing. This type of consumer accountability may also unlock people from their company's benefits, making them more free agent-like than they used to be. Employers need programs that not only drive alignment and accountability, but also that drive loyalty and a positive culture. Our goal at Limeade is help with both.

**CEOCFO: *Limeade was recognized as one of the best places to work. How did you accomplish that?***

**Mr. Albrecht:** The biggest way is drinking our own Limeade. We use our own product religiously, and in ways that push the envelope on what our technology can do. We are constantly innovating, experimenting and pushing the boundaries of employee engagement in our own company. We also set an extremely high bar for talent, and an even higher bar for alignment with our values. Maybe this is also the consumer brand mindset, but building a great employer brand mandates being off the charts intentional, consistent and values-driven about the way we attract, hire, engage and inspire people. For example, our values are the key factor in promotion and compensation decisions. That sense of intentionality is higher than I have seen anywhere else.

**CEOCFO: *When you are initiating a program for a company, do you work with them on strategies for rolling it out to their employees?***

**Mr. Albrecht:** We have a whole set of data-driven best practices that we provide for them, based not only on what we know about their company, their employees and the strategy, but also on the data from over a million users. We view our

service as something that makes a big splash when it launches, but that needs to evolve every quarter to stay fresh. Otherwise, you get what we call the ‘wellness flatline’ – where traditional wellness companies get everybody to do an assessment and a screening, maybe make a phone call once a year, and then they are done. That is never acceptable to us or to our customers. Real, sustained engagement that resonates with employees is the hallmark of our approach.

**CEOCFO: *Your site indicates first to deliver the delightful and smart innovations that keep your program fresh. Tell us about ongoing changes and how that fits into the picture?***

**Mr. Albrecht:** First of all, we let science and data guide a lot what we do. That means when we set goals for a person, we make them very personal and relevant, with self-assessment, biometrics, past history, location and environment as data clues. We set a small number of goals because small steps lead to big changes, and we make those small steps easy to take. We provide peer support as well as organizational and sometimes financial support. We use behavior change science and behavioral economics as guides. But no amount of fancy science talk matters without beautiful, simple design. Design keeps the program fun and it makes it feel current – not your typical HR fare. We are constantly monitoring and evaluating engagement so that when we recommend new approaches, we do so based on their actual data. Our agile technology DNA allows us to innovate more quickly than legacy health services companies. That means that when there is some fantastic new device, application or modern technology that is more engaging, we tend to be the first one to roll it out.

**CEOCFO: *What might be different a year from now at Limeade?***

**Mr. Albrecht:** We release a new version of our core engagement platform once a month, so we will be 12 months into the future, and that means 12 big, new chunks – and probably 200 small bites – of functionality. Because we are agile, it is actually hard to say exactly what all those things will be. I will say we will focus on health, well-being and performance at both the individual and company levels, and we will be customer-driven in our innovation. You might even see new products from Limeade that expand our footprint across the health, well-being and performance spectrum.

**CEOCFO: *You recently announced a \$25 million investment. What are the plans?***

**Mr. Albrecht:** We’ll sustain our high rate of growth, customer driven innovation and deliver new products. I will expect we will see a disproportionate amount of that funding invested in R&D to make our solutions even more engaging, rewarding and insightful. We have a long list of firsts as a company, from the first comprehensive well-being assessment to our social challenges to our open app and device platform – we would expect more firsts. All of our success will revolve around world-class customer service. In fact, our first company value is to delight customers and I think we will double down on that in every way possible.

**CEOCFO: *Why does Limeade stand apart?***

**Mr. Albrecht:** Limeade is a great company that makes other companies great. We are intentional, purpose driven, and sustainably innovative in pursuit of our mission. The way we improve health, well-being and performance is unique in that we bring that employer’s culture to life. We actually build the employer brand and inspire change. People want to engage in the program, and we get results that matter, including sustained engagement. Lastly, we are fresh. We keep things different, modern and new, and expand beyond what most employers think of as traditional corporate wellness.

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

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# **Limeade**

**For more information visit:  
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