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Rx Bandz – developing their Life Saving MiniJect®, the World’s Smallest Auto-Injector for Patients and Military



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Interview conducted by:
 Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor
 CEOCFO Magazine

CEOCFO: Ms. Walsh, what is the idea behind Rx Bandz?

Ms. Walsh: I was prescribed to carry an EpiPen. It was big and cumbersome. When I went running, I had to duct tape them to my arms. It was embarrassing. I knew there was a better way to solve this problem not just for me but for the millions of people who need to carry injectable medication. So, I created Rx Bandz. Our team has designed the world’s smallest auto-injector, to increase patient adherence and outcomes. Patients are saddled with carrying auto-injectors that don’t meet their needs. Two-Thirds of people prescribed to carry an auto-injector just leave them at home. Another Seventy percent don’t even remember how to use their auto-injector a year later. Many are intimidated and will hesitate or delay using it, further putting their lives at risk. We knew we could make a difference, and create a smaller, friendlier, easier to use auto-injector that met the real world need of patients.



CEOCFO: What were some of the challenges in creating a small auto-injector? Why was there not one before you decided to work on it?

Ms. Walsh: The market was previously not incentivized to innovate and that is starting to change. Patients are now more educated than ever and play an active role in their healthcare. They won’t tolerate medical devices that don’t fit their lifestyle. I believe companies that refuse to adapt their outdated auto-injectors will be eventually replaced like the Yellow Pages. Although creating a lifesaving auto-injector isn’t easy. The FDA sets extremely high requirements. Our auto-injector was designed and built to not only meet patients’ needs but also meet the FDA’s requirements.

CEOCFO: Where are you today in the process of development, commercialization, clearances?

Ms. Walsh: We are going through the FDA process right now, so we expect to have approval in about 18 months. We’re also in the process working with the military to deliver additional injectable medications.

CEOCFO: *What have you learned so far, working with the FDA?*

Ms. Walsh: They are an amazing resource so don't be hesitant to reach out early and often. The FDA's mission is to keep people safe and ours is to save lives. They have been extraordinarily helpful in providing guidance that has been instrumental in helping us to achieve our goals.

CEOCFO: *Is the injector the same for vaccines, diabetes, anaphylaxis, as you are working on the various areas, or would this be one solution at a time, depending on what would be in the injector?*

Ms. Walsh: MiniJect is a drug delivery platform, so it can be easily adapted to also deliver a wide range of injectable medications via IM or SubQ, including highly viscous biologics and vaccines or large molecule drugs that are still in the pharma pipeline. We will produce our auto-injector for both emergency use and non-emergency use indications.

CEOCFO: *What would be involved in manufacturing? Would a company that is producing these devices now need to retool their factories? Where and how will this hit the industry?*

Ms. Walsh: We have several options. We could manufacture the device for direct sales or for pharmaceutical companies which want to use MiniJect to deliver for their propriety injectable medications. We could also out-license and tech transfer so our device could be manufactured by the licensee. We are already engaged in discussion with pharmaceutical companies that are interested in using MiniJect to deliver their formulations.

"Our team has designed the world's smallest auto-injector... We knew we could make a difference, and create a smaller, friendlier, easier to use auto-injector that met the real world need of patients." Jessica Walsh

CEOCFO: *Would you tell us about some of your military contracts and how that came about?*

Ms. Walsh: We were invited by the military to work with them. They wanted to improve battlefield delivery of emergency medications and MiniJect's rugged, compact and waterproof design seemed like a great fit. In many ways their environment requires a significantly more robust design. The adaptations we made to meet military standards will also end up benefiting our civilian market, especially those who live and active lifestyle.

We are so fortunate that we have champions at the military who support our work. MiniJect is designed to meet the needs of Special Forces, SEALs, Parajumpers and other units that work in challenging conditions.

CEOCFO: *Development and commercialization are always expensive. Are you looking at funding, investment, or partnership? How have you worked so far and how do you see continuing on?*

Ms. Walsh: We are looking for both investors and partners. Many of our investors were attracted to our innovative designs and the huge market that's expanding globally. We are currently lining up investors for our Series A equity round which we expect to close fairly quickly. It a huge opportunity for investors to get in at the right time. We are also seeking to partner or license our device to pharmaceutical companies that are looking for a competitive edge to take market share.

CEOCFO: *Do you find it easier to attract attention from potential investors as it is such an easy concept to understand?*

Ms. Walsh: We have been very fortunate that our investors are enthusiastic about our company, device, and progress. They have been wonderful to make introductions and bring other investors. However, I wouldn't say that it is easy – most things worth doing are not easy and require an element of perseverance. Our auto-injector is a combination product meaning it is both drug and device. Many investors in healthcare traditionally invest in one or the other but not both. But we have been fortunate that many investors are all committed to saving lives. Although, it has helped that we have breakthrough technology that meets patients' needs, in a global market with high revenue potential to deliver multiple therapeutic indications all run by an experienced team.

CEOCFO: *What have you learned from your past experiences. You are an entrepreneur. You have been involved in a number of different arenas. You are also, from your site, a frustrated EpiPen user. What have you learned from previous ventures that has helped you get to where you are today with Rx Bandz?*

Ms. Walsh: I believe the most important lesson I learned was to stay true to your mission and build a great team that is dedicated, and gritty, and does not give up when faced with obstacles. It was our mission to save lives around the world that attracted smart, skilled and enthusiastic team who were not only resilient and nimble but also passionate about designing a transformative drug delivery platform. As the Founder and CEO, I try to clear their path and bring out their best work to accomplish our shared goal.

CEOCFO: *Why should Rx Bandz and your MiniJect® stand apart from the crowd? Why is it so important?*

Ms. Walsh: We see MiniJect’s innovative design and features as transformative. When we think of innovation, imagine comparing the auto-injector industry to what happened with telephones. Not too long ago, people used phone booths. Now we have smartphones. Our MiniJect is that next generation innovation. In the future you find it hard to believe we ever use to carry around 6” auto-injectors.

We addressed core issues from the patients’ perspectives. MiniJect is not only much smaller but, it is easier to use, waterproof and durable. It is designed for people who are active and mobile, who won’t stand for outdated technology.

Consider that one out of three children that are bullied for carrying larger auto-injectors. MiniJect is not only a compact device but our accessory attachments easily attach to their key ring, waistband or however they want to carry it. It is such a huge advantage in terms of being able to have it there when you need it most. It really is everything a modern day auto-injectors should be for both patients and our military. I’m excited that MiniJect will be able to save lives around the world.

