



# I'm a risk-taker.

Interview

**Peter Ohnemus**

Founder and CEO, dacadoo

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**Peter Ohnemus is the founder and CEO of dacadoo. His new health app is based on Leonardo da Vinci's "Vitruvian Man," which is considered a symbol of symmetry, beauty and body-consciousness all round the world. What can the app do? How does it work? And, most importantly, what goes on in the mind and work diary of an entrepreneur who has founded more than 20 companies and floated three firms on the stock exchange; who is constantly buying and selling, and coming up with new ideas and projects?**

**Mr. Ohnemus, dacadoo is your latest project. What can the app do and how can we best picture it?**

Peter Ohnemus: (laughing) dacadoo is one of my more recent projects. The app comprehensively integrates everything that contributes to health. You might call it your "coach", in that it monitors physical activity, personal wellbeing, sleep quality and diet, holistically. The result is a score that reflects how healthy your lifestyle is, or, at least, those areas where you could improve.

**Which devices have already been optimised for dacadoo?**

There are currently more than 100, including Apple watch, the iPhone health kit, Smartrings, TomTom and Garmin, to name but a few. Everything works in real time. Right now, I can see that I have taken 2,500 steps so far today, for example. That's still too few, there's room for improvement. The important thing is to set yourself personal goals. The app provides support here in a playful way, in line with the theory of self-determination. 130 different kinds of sport have been analysed by ETH Zurich and have already been integrated. The more data you put in and the more often you train, the better the output from your coach as it recognises your efforts and updates the calculations. It also provides tips and instructions, along with your achievements and photos, which can be shared with friends. The best thing is that you score "points".

**“The status quo is not my cup of tea.”**

**Points – for what?**

dacadoo is actively promoted by our partner organisations, which are health insurance providers and insurance companies. If you choose a policy from an insurance company with dacadoo integration and then have a healthy or healthier lifestyle, you pay less in premiums. The more points you have, the lower your insurance costs.

**And that works?**

Even now, we already have contracts covering some 200 million policies in 20 countries. It's working very well. The fact is that health costs are rising year-on-year. The solidarity principle is increasingly coming under pressure as people get older and lifestyle diseases like type 2 diabetes are on the rise – seven per cent of the population is already affected by this condition. We simply have to be open to new solutions, new approaches. "Pay as you live" is a good principle. In future, health insurance is going to work as car insurance does today, with a no-claims bonus for the health-aware and no discount for the others.

**What motivates you to try out new things again and again?**

That's just how I am, I can't help it. I hate everything that has already been invented. The status quo is not my cup of tea at all. I'm fascinated by what I can do today, what I can do better, what new things I can bring about. Right now, 5G cellular networks are on their way and the Internet of Things is evolving at breakneck speed. Gartner says we should expect 25 billion sensors, of which 10 billion will be directly networked with my life. Things are developing at top speed – bodyweight in the car, blood pressure via the steering wheel. That is just amazing. There is so much new potential, so many fresh opportunities are opening up. You just have to take them.

**With Ergon?**

Yes, of course! I have been working with Ergon for more than 20 years, I am completely won over and I will always go out on a limb and say there is no other company like Ergon in Switzerland, because Ergon is run democratically. With a flat hierarchy and complete internal transparency. Every engineer can have his say! Indeed, he must have a say. We have come to appreciate that. Ergon has really dedicated people and they all show exceptional loyalty to the firm. These are decisive advantages. They also pay attention to details and follow them up properly.

**And you like that?**

Of course, I make use of that, it's of benefit to dacadoo. But I'm not like that myself. To use a metaphor, I prefer to throw in a hand grenade right at the start. I'm a risk-taker and I look to see what happens, what we can make of it, how other people take my ideas on board. Then we carry on working together and that's when success comes.

**Is that the secret to your success?**

It's part of it. I think you always have to have dreams; never give up, always get back up on your feet again, be a role model – especially for your own staff. Staying true to yourself is important but so is admitting your weaknesses. It's especially important to maintain an open-door policy at all times. It's much easier to run a company if you have nothing to hide.

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**And if it doesn't work out?**

Then it hurts, you get wrapped up in it – sometimes for a long, long time. Even if you would prefer not to show it to the outside world. Success is much better than failure, that's for sure, but failure is part of life. Not losing authenticity, staying true to yourself and learning from your mistakes – these are just as important.

**Questions about the article?**

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