



Co-founder &
Chief Operating Officer

Rafael
Guper



Could you tell us a little bit about your background?

I'm originally from Brazil and spent the past 10 years as a creative strategist leading global business and brand strategies for companies including Shell, Bayer, Reckitt-Benckiser and MARS Petcare.

I created Vivo Meditação (the Brazilian equivalent of Headspace with over 20 million active users) and also NOSEID, which is the world's first AI based dog tracker to help identify lost dogs powered by my MARS Petcare.

The corporate world left me feeling fundamentally dissatisfied so I left the industry to recycle myself. I completed a masters in Venture Capital at Saïd Business School and this led me to finally create a venture of my own... UJJI!

Did you always want to be an entrepreneur? What motivated you to enter the startup world?

I always planned to take the risk and build something from scratch which genuinely solves the consumer pain and I truly felt that I did that in one way or another with the corporates I worked with. But I was always chasing the next pay rise, the next promotion or the next award, the next mind blowing project - this sort of mentality can keep you in the corporate world for years, searching for the next big thing.

What's interesting is that since I embarked on this entrepreneurial journey, I feel that every milestone is now part of an overarching purpose - it comes down to helping people achieve more satisfaction daily in their lives and at work. It's always aligned with our most important vision of the company and is what is driving me as an entrepreneur every single day.

Moving on from your previous ventures, why and how did you develop UJJI ?

As I said, myself and my co founder were not completely feeling fully fulfilled, and we knew we weren't alone. We created a global qualitative survey with 440 respondents in 39 different countries and saw a pattern. We realised that well being, has always been aimed at the 1 in 6 people suffering from mental health. Obviously, that's very important and thankfully, companies are taking care of that. But what are they doing for the other 5 in 6 employees who are dissatisfied with one or more areas of their life and work? These are people that could become mentally ill in the future, but nothing is really being done for them.

UJJI is an HR tech B2B2C SaaS solution for employee wellbeing with a twist. Companies continue turning a blind eye to staff who are dissatisfied, because they continue being active, going to work every day. There is the potential that they will leave their jobs because they might reason that if they go to another work environment, they'll eventually address their dissatisfaction. This is a terrible outcome for companies with the huge financial impact of staff turnover and retraining.

Do you think companies are coming to realise that all employees need nurturing?

100%. I think it all started with yoga in the workplace or giving employees discounted access to a gym and so on. Or nice couches for you to lay down and just relax and chill. That's all good but it's not enough! It's very important to have a day to day process in which you better understand your employees, not only those that are already suffering from mental health, but really every single person that is coming into work every day. There's always one or more areas in which employees are dissatisfied.

If we can better understand what it is that is making them dissatisfied, you can better deliver against that and have a culture in which they'll be happier and healthier in the workplace.

How does UJJI work?

UJJI offers an immersive, neuroscience backed and game-based coaching experience. We help employees identify what's missing in life and work and make their days more satisfying through little everyday wins - employees choose the areas that most matter to them.

They complete UJJI sessions, delivered through gamified self assessments, video and audio lessons, games and real-life tasks. Along their journey, they receive trials, gifts, discounts, and experiences that help them progress towards their goals. These rewards truly help drive behavioural change, because they're little wins that help you progress towards your bigger goals further down the line.

Off the back of employee engagement, employers have access to a real time insights portal. They can filter the 100% anonymized and aggregated data and the Behavioural Insights, which better helps them understand their employees needs. They can use these to continue to improve the workplace, retain talent, reduce turnover, and even see financial results all the way down to the bottom line.

What we're really doing is leveraging the power of behavioural science to make work and life more satisfying, which in turn, helps performance of companies individually and industry as a whole.

Most company perk schemes see the employee say, 'I'm really interested in cooking or I love the outdoors' and they'll get offers that are matched to that but not in a very bespoke way. Is that where UJJI is different?

Most companies sign up to either a reward gateway platform or even pay individually for all these different solutions such as gym passes or discounts. They may also have a project management system in place for therapy and coaching, so it's a very disjointed provision. Only 2.5% of the employees actually go ahead and adopt those offers because these employees don't necessarily need or want all of the stuff that is being offered. We identify exactly what they need, and connect each individual employee straight to the platform that they need, so that the employer doesn't have to pay for all those different platforms. We've positioned ourselves earlier in the consumer journey, identifying exactly what these employees need on an individual level - we then connect them specifically to each of these different platforms so that the employer doesn't have to pay for all that.

What are your plans for UJJI and where are you hoping to be in 12 months?

For the next 12 months, it's all about product market fit. We're selling subscriptions to client companies through trials and converting them into paid customers whilst also bringing in affiliate partners offering trials, gifts, discounts and experiences to our end users.

UJJI has just recently closed out its pre-seed round with Angel investors across the UK, USA, Israel, Brazil and Malaysia. We'll soon start conversations for a bigger raise in our seed round, so again, we will stay close to Connected for the next round, as we know the calibre of investors on the platform is really high.

What will you be spending your £5k grant? Have got one particular area of focus which you are putting funding into at the moment?

We'll be putting the prize money behind our marketing efforts, populating our funnel from top to bottom. The whole of the £5k will be going into driving warm lead generation and generating more brand awareness of UJJI in order to more effectively drive higher LTVs and lower CAC.

Want to know more about UJJI?

Check out their website at <https://ujji.app>, follow them on Instagram @ujji.app and find them on LinkedIn!

