



**Complete Transcript: HALO Talks with Dan Uyemura  
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Pete Moore:

This is your host, Pete Moore. And I am pleased and humbled to announce the launch of my one and only book titled time to win again, 50 takeaways from playing and watching team sports to guarantee your business success. Those of you who know me personally, and anyone who's listening to halo talks or any length of time, know that I am an avid sports fan and a big believer in the value of team sports. What I've seen over the past 25 years, helping businesses grow raising capital, being an entrepreneur, myself in coaching and mentoring executives in the sector. It's the lessons learned on the field perfectly apply to business entrepreneurs, executives, managers, you name it. Every company that's a strong company has got a good team. So quick read. There's also illustrations in there from our good friend market cruelty free cartoons. You go to integrity, sq.com. Enter your email address, and we will send you information on the book and the entrepreneur wars survival kit as well. Be great. Take names go halo.

Pete Moore:

This is Pete Moore at halo talks to NYC on location Manhattan beach. Bringing in Dan, we mirror right down the road, El Segundo. We are going to push and press. We're going to find out how to run your club better than you did before. So Dan, welcome to the show.

Dan Uyemura:

Thank you so much. And let me tell you, I actually run a podcast myself and like switching on that welcome intro. Voices is no easy feat for anyone who has press dude, you went from jail to like, we are in the podcast. Let's go.

Pete Moore:

Thank you. Well, the last podcast I did with the guy he's played the NHL, we sang, oh, Canada, the start. So, you know, I got to switch on that every once in a while. So we're going to keep by singing. Yeah, we didn't have no karaoke on here, but why don't you talk about your entrepreneurial background that brought you to this industry? And you know, we'll talk about what you guys are doing to help people out

Dan Uyemura:

Right on. I'll try and keep it brief. So, I mean, I'm the type of person who knew I was an entrepreneur from the get-go. I used to have a paper out and I had put brownie, brownie stands up on the corner and stuff like that. As a kid I went to college right through the internet, kind of come to becoming

commercially available 1993 through 1999. It was my college years and jumped right into the internet. So I launched a startup. It was basically my space, a little bit too early. It was a community, blah, blah, blah. We got funded and it went under what the .com bubble. And so I kind of put my tail between my legs and I worked for a bunch of startups because I didn't like losing other people's money. And that's what happened in that, in that instance worked for a bunch of startups here in LA, basically gained like 40 pounds because during the time they would just give you Italian dinners every night and give you cans of Coke on your desk.

Dan Uyemura:

Cause they wanted you to code, code, code and had a midlife crisis at 35 plus 40 pounds and decided like, man, I need to get back in shape. So I as an entrepreneur, we do everything to the extreme. So I basically found my way right into a CrossFit gym after having done nothing for 10 years lost 50 pounds. So I lost all 40 pounds. Plus some was in the best shape of my life at 35 couldn't believe what was happening. And the entrepreneur in me realized like, I think this is the future of fitness. Actually, this was in like 2006, 2007. You know, went right down, right down the route of opening a gym, open a gym. And once I got into the gym space realized all the software was subpar based on what I knew we could build in the software industry. So got immediately to work on building software for gems. And here I am today, 10, 10, 12 years later.

Pete Moore:

So, you know, as you took a look at the, at the space, you know, there there's, there's tech stacks galore when it comes to, Hey, I got this plugin for CRM, I got this plugin for, you know, data analytics. So what does push press deal? And how have you kind of decided, Hey, this is what our core feature set is. And here's where, you know, you should plug in or API with others.

Dan Uyemura:

Yeah. So, I mean, I guess the key learning for us, the two big things where we, one, we knew what software can do when we started building the software and a two, we knew how to run a gym because we had actually been running a gym while building the software. And the biggest problem I had with all the competitors or things when I was evaluating the software that was available at the market at the time was they were all really confusing. And I think it was because they were built during a time when API weren't available integrations. Weren't a thing, you know, it was less modern at the time that they were built and therefore they just like Frankensteined together. This huge, like horizontal piece of software, we took the approach where push press needed was to be designed more like an iPhone.

Dan Uyemura:

Because again, at the time when we built this iPhones were already out. So we had that as a frame of reference. When you buy an iPhone, it comes with like 10 apps, like notes and calendar and whatever clock, but then everything that you want to do to make it yours, you're a financial guy or a fitness guy. You extend it with financial fitness hats. You're, you know, you like playing games, you install a bunch of games. That was the approach we took with push pressure and day one. We, we built it on the concept of integrations and extensibility through the concept of an app store. And I think that's one of the big things that we kind of nailed early.

Pete Moore:

Gotcha. And when you take a look at some of the clients you have you know, I'd say mind, body kind of started as a, you know, running one type of studio, you know, probably wasn't as flexible when it came to looking at, you know, your entire company owned locations or franchise location. So how did you guys architect it, or what's the ideal type of platform or number of studios, a number of clubs, or does that not matter

Dan Uyemura:

For us as of today? Actually, we actually, we sit in a really I really need spot that I think a lot of our competitors have actually left or kind of moved away from, and that's in, in more of the single owner operated, or you only own two or three type of locations, we are working towards multi location. Of course, that is the next, next iteration of what we're doing. But as of today, we work really well. If you're call it a single owner operator, fitness fanatic,

Pete Moore:

And then I saw on your website, dad, up to a certain amount of processing, there actually is no software fee. So talk to us about how, you know, that that's set up and, and you know, what are you guys trying to handle the payment processing or what, you know, what's the, what's the goal on your end?

Dan Uyemura:

Yeah. So, so many talking points to this. One of the reasons I started push press was because I, when I opened my first gym, I went through a month long process of negotiating with a payments provider. And if you, if you negotiate with payment provider, you understand my pain here. It was like faxing statements, faxing my ID, a bunch of negotiation at the time. And I negotiated a 1.9% payment processing rate. One of my first members in the gym is actually one of the co-founders of quick press. He was a banker. His name is Brian. And he told me, there's no way in hell. I was getting 1.9%. And he said, show me your statements. So I showed him my statements. He ran all the numbers and he said, I was paying 4.5%, really, which me off, which really me off.

Dan Uyemura:

Cause I spent a month of my life negotiating for the 1.9. So what we did is we partnered with Stripe early and Stripe is just a flat 2.9% payment processing fee. Then another thing about us is we, you know, I owned a gym. Most of my team has owned gyms and we're really passionate about gym owners. They're on a good mission. They're doing the right thing for the world and they need support paying for expensive software to run your business. When you're make, when you're just starting a gym is really rough. Like I went through that. Right. And so what we built, we actually were the first gym management software to offer completely free tier. So it's free to use a software. There are some gates obviously, because the idea is you're a brand new gym. We do add 1% to the payment processing fees. So you're paying a fixed 3.9%. So the goal, the idea and the message behind it is we want you to grow because when you grow past \$14,000 a month in billing, that 1% becomes more expensive. So let's just flip you to a flat payment and then you don't have to pay that anymore.

Pete Moore:

Gotcha. Gotcha. So, so as you look to compete against someone, you know, there's not a shortage of club management systems out there now, obviously there's been a fair amount of consolidation, you know, how do you kind of get through the noise of, you know, the different feature sets and, you know, there's some people that have come from outside the industry, but don't necessarily understand how

the industry works. They just think that their software is conducive to how to run a club. So how do you differentiate and, you know, really get the message across to look, I've done this, I built this so I could run my

Dan Uyemura:

Club and really know what's going on. You know, versus, you know, other options you might have, like, they might be good ones for you, but let me tell you how we differentiate. I mean, I'll preface this and say that all software has its flaws and all software, like any software might be the better fit for any gym, right? That's, there's not a universal truth to that. And I will also say like, I am an advocate for gym owners and if, if another soft port does work better for their needs, I will just tell them that because I want them to succeed with or without push class. Right. but to answer your question, we, we generally will, we, we honestly were built in the lens of running a gym. And like you said, there are a lot of competitors that are, they come from payment processing backgrounds, they came from PE backgrounds.

Dan Uyemura:

They don't really know what it's like to be boots on ground. You're not just the gym owner, but you're the head trainer. You're the programmer, you're the janitor, you're the sales guy, you're the marketer, you're everything. Right. And we know what that's like, because that was my life for like almost a decade. Right. And we built the entire experience of push press around it. And like, when I say that our sweet spot is kind of like the single owner-operator it's that because if you're big enough, if you're making a hundred grand a month and you're running kind of a bigger gym and you have front desk staff, you know, that you can, you can navigate your way around a system that isn't applicable to push press ours is made for, like, if you have one coach on the floor and you don't have a front desk person and you might be there as the owner and the whole system needs to be able to run without a bunch of people doing high touch stuff, like the system needs to take care of it all for you. And that's kind of our sweet spot today. We will extend that for bigger gyms in the future, but the same concepts do apply. But for now that, you know, our sweet spot is more of that.

Pete Moore:

So what have you seen over the last year in maybe a, a heightened interest in, in optimizing the software features that you have, or, you know, where some of the things that you've seen that you're excited about clubs, you know, moving towards

Dan Uyemura:

One thing I am seeing is like, there's a maturity going on in the boutique fitness space. And I guess, I think ultimately that's driven by like the orange theories in them and the various boot camps coming into the space. Like you've got to compete at a higher level years ago, gyms didn't care about churn. It was just all about finding leads or, you know, they didn't know what MRR meant, or they didn't care about recurring revenue. There is a maturity that's happening now. And I think, you know, we're, we're happy to be on the forefront of that. One of the really exciting things to me as a tech nerd is previously ideas like machine learning and AI and big data sets and things like this were only the luxury of an IDM or a Facebook, right? Like they were the only ones who can really have the computing power to crush this stuff and be able to hire the engineers to make use of this data.

Dan Uyemura:

That's not the case now. So what's really cool. That's going to be coming down the pipe probably across all systems, not just push press is going to be a huge push towards data-driven decisions, machine learning, taking place on the backend, a lot of automation that couldn't, couldn't be afforded before. And I think it's going to unlock a lot of productivity amongst let's just call them for what they are like really high stressed gym owners who are doing too much stuff. Right? Like the goal of software should be to automate redundant jobs away from your day. So you can focus on what, as a human being are best at doing. And that's relating with your customers personally, right?

Pete Moore:

Yeah. I've seen some people kind of hide behind the technology, you know, they say like, yeah, I communicate with my members you know, like a studio that had, could have, you know, 300 members and they say, oh yeah, we, we send an email and I'm like, well, what, what are the people actually saying? And how are you figuring out how to, to put that into something that's measurable and then manage the business according to that. So I'm happy to hear that you're, that you're saying that people are going to be using AI. So like, okay, here's the people that are most likely to cancel in the next 60 days, you know, do something about it. And don't just,

Dan Uyemura:

I think to take that a step further, what systems are going to be built towards, at least what we're going to be built towards is not just here's Johnny, he's going to turn the next night at 60 days, it's going to be here's Johnny he's. He has a 58% chance of training the next 60 days, because his attendance used to be, this is now this and his engagement rate in the member app is this. And in order to fix this, you should send this text with this copy. And if he doesn't reply, then you should, you know, it's going to just tell you what to do. Right. And that stuff, is it because as a gym owner, like you might kind of know anecdotally what you have to do, but like having the data behind it matters and then the, then the system can learn and say like, oh, when we send that message, Johnny didn't reply, but Mary did reply to this other thing, so we can start to adjust down the right funnel. Right.

Pete Moore:

And are you an push pressure? You actually developing that or building that in? Yep. Yep. And is that an extra charge or is that, how do you guys think about the, is that the way to like help enhance the recurring nature of their business and your business at the same time?

Dan Uyemura:

I mean, in, in the, in the, at the end of the day, our job is to make our, our, our clients successful. And if they're successful, we're successful. So will that be an added charge? No, but at some point we're, we're artificially low price right now, some point we're probably going to raise rates, right? So the cost will go up, but the value will be 10 X that minimum, you know,

Pete Moore:

Got it. You know, you're in a unique position because you've come from outside the industry. How much time as an entrepreneur do you spend looking at what's going on in other industries instead of just your own our own in order to get ideas or, you know, Hey, look, this is what's going on in the restaurant industry. Like, we're, this is what's going to have to happen in our industry in a year. Or how do you think about it as like a, you know, forward thinking entrepreneur?

Dan Uyemura:

So there's multiple answers to this one. I really don't spend a ton of, like, I don't have blocked out time or concerted time that I spend looking at other industries as an entrepreneur and probably anyone else here who is an entrepreneur will relate every business I interact with. I dissect I'll go into a restaurant and I'll, I try to understand what's their funnel. What are they trying to get me to do? Where, you know, how does this business work? Where are they making money? Why is this so cheap? And then there, you know, all of that stuff. So the trends I'll say this much, the biggest, one of the biggest eye-openers I had, I I've spent my, I never owned a SAS company before this one. So I've spent my last five years learning everything I can about SAS. I didn't even know what, you know, what some of these high level unit economics were five or six years ago, or, you know, what I realized is gyms are basically SAS companies.

Dan Uyemura:

Yeah. Their service as a service is what they are. Right. So everything I learned in terms of how to grow, push, press, how to increase the unit economics, how to generate leads, how to go outbound, how to do inbound. Like everything we do completely applies to gyms, right. Almost 100%, except they're just dealing with people in person, right? So they have slightly different like scalability issues. And, you know, they have brick and mortar footprints that they have to deal with and stuff. But one of the biggest education pieces we can do as we work with gyms is just teaching them how to understand unit economics of a service business. Right. So I pay attention to most service businesses I interact with for that, for that measure.

Pete Moore:

W when you talk about pricing, you know, I, I'm trying to get health club operators to raise their price. You know, there's no reason why it should cost less to buy a Turkey wrap, then, you know, a health club membership for a month in New York city. So, you know, as you think about engaging with people and saying, Hey, look, this is what my price is as like the start, but I'm kind of mission critical to your business. And you actually want me to make more money because the more money I make, the more money I'm going to reinvest in my business. So, you know, we're kind of lockstep and we're actually a partner with you. Do you have hope or do you see operators saying, you know, look, if I'm going to compete with orange theory, you know, I'm not going to compete on price. So I'm going to compete on value and results. And I got to get paid for that.

Dan Uyemura:

Yep. Yeah. So, I mean, I think that the, the common journey of an entrepreneur is you compete on price until you can prove you can compete on value, right? That's, that's common. And, and it's inherent, like without even thinking about it, people do that. The, what you have to get people to realize is once you have value, you have to compete on value. You shouldn't be competing on price. And I think that's the turnover. That's the point where a lot of gym operators don't see as like, I am either this close to unlocking value, or I'm already there. And now I just have, and what it is is the competence in sales really is what it is. Most gym operators, especially the ones we deal with, the single owner-operator types. They love their clients. They love their community. They really want people to get fitter and that's their mission.

Dan Uyemura:

They don't want to be seen as a slimy sales person. What they don't understand is like when you don't deploy some sales technique and some, some designed funnel for sales, you're actually doing a disservice to the people because they might not join your gym. And they might, they might not even get into fitness because they weren't led to understand the value that they can get out of your process. The other thing to this point that was brought to my attention, maybe three or four years ago, that is so relevant is generally there's two types of shoppers in the world. And let me know what you identify with. There's top-down shoppers and there's bottom up shoppers. So top-down means like you're going to on a vacation and you're looking for hotel. You start looking at like the most premier hotels and you start shopping down to the, what you can afford. And then there's bottom up shoppers who like start at motel six and go like, ah, that's an a drug area. I don't want to do that. And they move up to like what they're comfortable with. Right. Me, I'm a top-down shopper.

Pete Moore:

Yeah. I taunted down it not bragging. I'm just answering your question.

Dan Uyemura:

[Inaudible]

Dan Uyemura:

Yeah. And you might go all the way down to like something, not that great. Right. But you want to start aspirational and I think that's a mindset, right? You want to work with aspirational. People who want to start at the top. Right. I want to get to the top and those people are willing to pay to be at the top. Right. Yeah. And when we're talking unit economics, like you want to work with people who are willing to pay to me at the top, because once you get them to the top, they'll pay you what you're worth.

Pete Moore:

Yeah. Do you know? It's so interesting when you think about that. Cause you know, a lot of if you're a steak restaurant, you know, you're gonna, you're going to like lead with, you know, like the Kobe beef and then somebody come in and get like a, you know, a petite filet. Right. But you you're saying like, I got the best stuff here. We're in a health gum industry. You're like zero down, 19 a month. And then I'm going to try and upsell you to 99. Why don't I say like \$99 a month, I will change your life and you will be so amazing. But if you want to feel mediocre, like I got a \$19 option, like what better way to like present.

Dan Uyemura:

Yeah. Yeah, exactly. I mean, there's, there's a million different theories on pricing and you know, some people will talk about price anchoring on the 19 and then getting him to go up. But you know, I think you, if you, that's the hard part about selling at a high price point is you have to provide value or people will quit. You can't charge 3 99 a month for a gym membership and be a 24 hour fitness. Right. So you have to back up what you're, what you're doing. But if you can back up what you're doing, you should be charging an aspirational price. Yeah.

Pete Moore:

So switching gears, last question I had for you. The pace of change on technology today is about as fast as it can get. You know, when you think about the amount of versions of new apps that get uploaded with new features or bug fixes, I used to run a software company in 2000 to 2003. We had a new version come out, you know, once every 12 months some of my sales guys unfortunately were trying to sell that

version before it was ready. So nobody bought the prior version. Didn't help with sales. Leave that aside. You know, you as an, as a technologist, as an, as an entrepreneur, as somebody that's, you know, probably Fasten your seatbelt, is that the pace of change in our industry too fast? Is it just right? Is it, you know, Hey, we don't have time to digest the technology. What's your view on that? You know, giving up, being an entrepreneur and having thousands of opportunities and trying to pick them.

Dan Uyemura:

Yeah. It's, it's a V that's a very, it's a wide question, right? Because this could apply to the consumer. This could apply to the gym owner. This could apply to me building software. A lot of, lot of different ways to go. Let's put it this way. In my opinion, I think the consumer is the ultimate important piece because they're the ones who are buying gym memberships, right? I think consumers love technology change. They love going from, you know, watching CBS news at night to having Netflix watch anything you want all the time. Binge-Watch everything, right? That's, that's the world of consumer technology. As a result, as a gym, yours, you are selling and competing for their attention. And that's what they want. Right. I'm not saying it. And it would be tough to implement too much technology in the gym because I do think in the gym, there is something about just raw back squatting and doing burpees and running.

Dan Uyemura:

There's, you know, like the, just the technological appeal to that and building community and all the things I have in these gyms have no technology. Right? But the things surrounding that they do want technology. They want to have a nice member app. They can interact with the gym, with, they want a community piece to it. They want, they want to be able to, you know, sign up for a membership at your gym or a free trial class without spending 18 minutes, you know, and trying to remember passwords and all that. Like it needs like all the pieces where they do touch tech have to be flawless and best.

Pete Moore:

That's a great, that's a great answer. So, so in closing here, you got any good quotes that you live by or things that you like to say or things that motivate you when late at night fixing something

Dan Uyemura:

Honestly. So many. I mean, I, I mean, as a philosophy, I, I think it's important to fail as a human being. If you're a gym owner, you, you should be able to appreciate it. So, so many people are afraid of failing, right. But in the gym, I keep speaking to the gym owner. Right. Cause that's what I love. You need people to fail. I have to fail my back squat in order to establish a one rep max run rep max, right. I have to try for a seven minute mile to get a seven minute mile. I have to try and fail a hundred times to get a seven minute mile. Right. Comfort. Doesn't bring anything. Right. so failing is a part of the process and you just have to fail fast and learn from it. Everyone already knows that. The next thing I would tell people, since I've got the platform to do it, there's a, there's a guy in this, in the tech space named Naval Ravikant.

Dan Uyemura:

He, he started a few companies. He's actually put out a podcast. He did a tweet storm, which he turned into a podcast, which is basically how to become rich without being lucky. You're not in your head. Have you heard of it? Life changing. So I tell everyone, I get a chance to just, it's a free podcast. It's a free eBook even. Right. I bought the book because it was so life-changing to me, even though I list. So I do long distance running because I can listen to things that make me smarter or whatever, while I get some exercise, I've listened to that podcast probably five times now, how to get rich without going lucky.

Yeah. listened to that over and over and over again, because there's so many tidbits in there that will change your perception on how to run your business or approach life that are key. Right.

Pete Moore:

Awesome. All right. On that note, I'll see you for brunch and El Segundo welcome officially to the halo sector. Feel free to use that acronym. And I look forward to meeting you in person here and [www dot push, press.com](http://www.pushpress.com) help one person at a time, one gym owner at a time, and we will successfully change the world. Good to have you on.