



**Complete Transcript: HALO Talks with Damien Dau
Posted December 14, 2021**

Pete Moore:

This is your host, Pete Moore. And I am pleased and humbled to announce the launch of my one and only book, Time to win again, 52 takeaways from playing and watching team sports to ensure your business success.

Pete Moore:

Those of you who know me personally, and anyone who listens to halo talks for 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. It's a quick read. There's awesome illustrations in there from our good friend, Mark Cruelly, free cart tunes. If you go to integrity, sq.com, enter your email address and we will send you information on the book and the entrepreneurs' survival kit as well. Be great. Take names, go halo.

Pete Moore:

This is Pete Moore on HALO Talks NYC. I have the pleasure of having Damian from active entities join us. He is in the process of launching a new social marketplace and network for our halo community. So Damon hailing from outside of San Diego. Welcome to your first halo talks.

Damien Dau:

Thanks made great to be a part of it. Looking forward to the session with you.

Pete Moore:

So why don't you start off and just give, give our audience a little background on, you know, what you did before jumping into the halo sector and kind of where you saw some of the frustrations and opportunities that that you're about to solve.

Damien Dau:

Absolutely. Yeah, so I mean, active place for me is been born out of my own personal problems and what I've experienced both as an athlete and in the professional area as well. I mean, as a, as a kid I've been passionate about sports. I was big into endurance sports, so I've been a, you know, runner rider been a cyclist and a triathlete. And for me, you know, endurance sports, I love it. Cause it pushes you be

a under limits, tested the person you, you are. And within. And for me, that, that really came off my last triathlon, which was the world Ironman triathlon out of Kona in Hawaii. I was coming back from the run in the energy lab and my body was hurting inside and out, you know, just 18 months ago before the race I'd had a hip replacement thought, I could go back into the sport and, and compete as I thought.

Damien Dau:

But you know, I was very wrong. So it started, my body started to fail me and I knew I had to change things sort of a moment in time when you're there running and realize that, you know, my injury is going to force me out of a sport that I love so much. And I knew I had to become active in a different way. And I knew I had to find a solution after this event on how to be active. So that's when I really started looking around Pete on what was out there online. And I found that it was a little bit confusing and respects too. There was a lot of information. I had to go across a lot of different locations to find it. I didn't know what to trust. And then my offline community was very limited in that respect as well. And for me that's really where it came from as a problem in understanding that a market is such big market as what we have in health and fitness is quite FRA augmented online. And that for me, as I thought, well, I've competed at the world stage here and I'm having these problems. So surely there's someone else having this problem as well. And that's really where I got to on, on sort of that part from initial stage.

Pete Moore:

Got it. So, you know, when you, when you look at taking on such a broad initiative you know, how do you kind sequence that out and what, you know, what are the big pieces that you want to try and solve first, whether it's from an informational standpoint or whether it's from, you know, just connecting people with products and services and kind of keeping 'em away from Google, which then takes you to queue you a, which you have to sign up for, and then you kind of get lost and you forgot, you're looking for, by the time you get to whatever, you know, homepage you get to is kind of what I've found.

Damien Dau:

Yeah, yeah, exactly. So, you know, we'll be tackling, you know, the categories for us, the core categories, which are endurance sports, fitness outdoor and adventure and wellness as well. The four categories that we really see, there's an opportunity. And we also see people's lives now and their, their active lives are heavily integrated across multiple categories. You know, you don't just do one thing anymore. You know, you're not just a runner anymore. You might be a runner that does Pilates and yoga and goes to the gym as well, for example, and there's conscious about what they're eating maybe goes to a retreat. So we're finding that there's this integration of the cat degrees as well. But initially where we're, we are focused is within the endurance market. So running, cycling, triathlon swimming, you know, we know that's a, he, it's a very passionate market. They love, they love what they're doing. They love talking about it. And we also know that market is very receptive to early tech and early innovation as well. They're very goal driven people. They, you know, they've focused on outcomes and we felt that was a, an exciting market to launch on as, as our first segment or, or, or area.

Pete Moore:

Got it. So when you take a look at someone that's doing, you know, endurance, that kind of becomes there, you know, weekly warrior outlet and their either training or, or competition. So what what's active entities going to do, whether it's, you know, curating their, you know, like almost like a online concierge service, you know, best in class products that they should be using to, to enhance their performance, you know, give us a little bit of taste for what, you know, I go on there and what happens.

Damien Dau:

Absolutely. Yeah. So for any user that comes on there, their journey will typically start, start within the social network or the feed, for example. So our algorithms will be set. So you see things that you are passionate about. So if you are a runner you're going to see things that are going to help you in, in your goals and in your inspirations to be a runner. So it's things like content and information. It could be articles, it could be information that's getting posted by experts or businesses in, in, in the, in the space. You're also going to see products and things to do. So you might see events, you might see other related, active things to do in there. You're going to find a community of like-minded people that are also interested in running across there as well. And you're going to find experts that can help you achieve your goal as well within that category. And that's things like it could be physio, nutrition, coaches, and the like, so that's a flavor you're going to get in feed. And that feed naturally within our ecosystem drives straight into a marketplace. So if you are interested in products, you are interested in finding experts. You can very seamlessly go there within the one E eco ecosystem and find what you're after, but you will certainly be driven around what you are passionate about and, and what, what inspires you to be a runner or a cyclist or whatever it is.

Pete Moore:

Yeah. So if, if you talk to investors, they'd probably say, well, how does this differentiate from somebody setting up a really, you know, deep you know, Facebook group. So, so what's the response to that type of question.

Damien Dau:

Yeah, absolutely. I mean, you're looking at these general platforms out there at the moment, Facebook, Instagram, and the likes. And they're great, but you know, when you consider, you know, someone's, someone's core elements in their life, they have family and friends, which Facebook do extremely well. They have LinkedIn for their business and their profession. They don't have a place to own for their health and fitness. They don't have a home for their health and fitness journalist platforms are fantastic of being generalist platforms. They're not specialized, and they're not a, a home or a destination that is functional to someone's purpose that they're inspired about, or they love. And for us, that's what active place brings. It brings that home. And it brings that that place that people can go to about, you know, to come to what they're so passionate about and leaves all those generalist things to the, if they want to go see what the neighbor ate last night for dinner or their best friends, new dog, absolutely go there. If they want to go and focus on their health and fitness, then they come to active place.

Pete Moore:

Got it. So do you intend to kind of quality control that, or does the, you know, each kind of micro group, you know, looking forward kind of quality control itself? Cause obviously when it comes to spit fitness, performance endurance, you know, there's probably a lot of personal trainers out there that have their own, you know, prescription and it's not one size fits all. So how are you, how are you thinking about, you know, dealing with some of those types of, you know, questions on how, how you manage the marketplace?

Damien Dau:

Yeah. And the content, absolutely. It, the user generated content that will come out of it, you know, is, is, is I think what we're sort of mentioning there. And it's, it's an interesting one, the platforms being bit else around, you know, making sure people come, they come and they feel good about themselves.

They feel inspired or they, they post something or they see something that helps them in their active life. And, and we're seeing that already within the community, the community is naturally just posting things that are related to their health and fitness. You know, and that can come, but, you know, we're finding, it's a nice blend at the moment. We're not seeing people come on here at all and posting random components. It's kind of like going to LinkedIn and posting about a holiday or something you might have randomly done in your life. It just doesn't fit within the community. And we're seeing something very similar on this platform at the moment with, within the community.

Pete Moore:

So what what'd you do before this, that, you know, gave you the confidence that you could, you know, pull this off from either technology standpoint or from a, you know, creating a marketplace?

Damien Dau:

Yeah. I've been in the, the startup era for about 10 to 12 years now. I've had a few that I've been a part of co-founded built a an ed tech business out of Australia earlier, which grew up to a, a 600 million valuation within three years. So I learn a lot of lessons good and bad through that period and made a lot of mistakes along the way. So, you know, I've been shaped on how to grow a business fast, and I understand it from, from personal experience, I've also spent 18 years in the health and fitness category. I I've done a qualification in a it, and I've worked in small to medium business as well, you know, from sports consultancy, running events sports, travel experiences, digital publications. So I've had a nice footprint in regards to that in addition to being working for larger enterprises, such as Nike, AED, a seller in my career as well. So I've had some good experience in the category. You know, I've got an overall, you know, well, well rounded aspect around it. And you know, for me, that's really formulated, you know, the problem on the business side as well. And it, and it's sort of like solidified that it's not just a user, an athlete problem, actually, a business problem as well, finding a customer and building a community online is, is a difficult fragmented trustless process at the moment.

Speaker 4:

I want to take a minute and tell our audience about two awesome workout recovery products I've been using for the last 18 months from higher dose.com leader in infrared technology for athletes like all of us all, or we're an investor in the company. That's not why I'm telling you this. I'm telling you this because it works. You got an infrared sauna blanket. I hop in there, I'll listen to some podcasts, burn 800 calories, get a mad detox and a P E M F, which is a post electromagnetic field crystal mat that I lay on. And I recalibrate my cells to the normalized level, the earth. If you got somebody you like, and you're looking for a pretty awesome gift, they will love it. You can use this code halo 75 gets \$75 off, and you will not be disappointed. Hire dose.com, promo code halo 75. And now let's get back to our regularly scheduled program.

Pete Moore:

So a lot of relationships that we have in the audience that is mostly listening to this podcast or owners, operators of bricks and mortar multi-unit facilities for the last 18 to 24 months, they've been focused on how do I work my relationships outside of the four walls of my respective, because I have to how do you envision, you know, take, take a 30,000 square foot health club and, you know, how would they potentially kind of weave into active entities and, you know, basically become an authority in some of the services that you're offering advice or, or, you know, location of as well as still maintaining, you know, their core client base. And, and, you know, connecting the two.

Damien Dau:

Yeah, no really good question at the moment, very timely with what's going on, obviously with a, you know, with a global crisis, you know, has changed things. And, and for me, it's a new environment. We're all living into the future. And I mean, just alone, I think this digital immersion that we've all been put through and it's been a long crisis globally that we've all been affected in, you know, I believe has, has created and changed behaviors and habits for people for the future. So what they used to do or what they used to believe, how they used to do things I believe will now be changed going forward into this new environment. So for businesses, health clubs, and gyms to consider that would typical bricks and mortar, you know, how do they bring, what is typically an offline experience? How do they bring that online and bring a, a business outcome online to that?

Damien Dau:

And for me, it's, it's a number of comp components that active place can assist in that. I believe the online delivery model for businesses in this category is well established. There's a lot of digital platforms that enable people to do these zoom face to face experiences. And I think that's a space that's going to be interesting, the other components. So when you think about it, it's like, well, how do I now draw in a customer that typically may used to be a walk in or used to be a local community. I used to drive around to find a new customer, how do they do that online? Now, in addition to that, how do they actually grow a community online and retain a community online as well? That they've done before that is high intent and high engagement levels. And that is, you know, one thing they've got to consider. And then there's the component of obviously commercializing a product online. So I think offline services need to consider what is a full end-to-end experience for my company online to keep me going into the future. So I can prospect, and it's kind of like moving into a, a hybrid model in a way where they still have a great offline experience, but they need to now consider what does my full end-to-end experience look like online.

Pete Moore:

Got you. So once you have these communities set up, you, what are you seeing as the most mission critical information that people are right now, scouring different sites and directories? Is it, you know, event registrations? Is it you know, workout, recovery, you know, talk, talk to us about, you know, where you see the biggest holes.

Damien Dau:

Yeah, I mean, with, with, with lockdowns and, and the restrictions that been put in place globally, you know, what we've seen obviously is a hold on event participation in a big way and obviously travel. That's pretty obvious. We have seen a heavy lean into, you know, let's call em online active programs, virtual programs into the market. So people now wanting to pick up a yoga or Pilates workout at home an integration of a, a personal training or a fitness solution that they can do the convenience again at their, their own, at their own house or within their own timeframe. So we're seeing a big, a big pull into that category. Absolutely. We're also seeing an interest into communities, you know our user sign up and growth is sort of has been growing extremely well for the past 12 weeks. We're talking like 10% week on week growth of user signup. And I think that's cause people are searching for communities on there. Cause typically that's been something they've been able to do in their offline experience. Now, you know, that, as I said, this digital immersion is having to bring that online.

Pete Moore:

Got you. So, so as an entrepreneur, given this as your, you know, probably fifth or sixth different venture and I use this term all the time and that experience is what you get when you don't get what you want. So it sounds like you've got a wealth of experience you know, for, for the entrepreneurs out there, you know, what, what are some, either quotes that you live by, or, you know, pitfalls that you say, you know, I'm not making 'em this time around

Damien Dau:

<Laugh> how long is the show? <Laugh> you got five minutes, my friend <laugh>, there's plenty of pitfalls. So you know, for me, it's, it's, you know, I mean, there's so many things, you know, quotes and the likes. I just really feel that someone, you know, you need to find your purpose out there for entrepreneurs. You need to find what you love and drive, find a problem in what you love and then drive that home hard because startups are not easy things. And anyone that wants to get into them, you have to have that purpose, a deep purpose behind it because the, the, the hard times you will not see through them if you're doing it for other reasons. For me, that is, that is an absolute number one importance. The other thing is to manage balance as best as you can in a world where you're probably working 60 to 80 hours a week.

Damien Dau:

If you're not, you're not working enough on it <laugh>, but you need to manage your health, your family, your friends and your own time as well. And that is a, a juggling act that I don't think you ever can perfect, but think that you need to be well aware of and, and consciously aware of as you build a business, because if you're building a business for a long term, and that's what startups are startups, are they, you know, seven, you know, for me, it's a seven to 10 year plan at minimum, you need to be able to make sure you've got a sustainable model and you are on your game as well. So for me, they're probably the first two components, Pete, that I think any entrepreneur and startup looking to, to build something should consider.

Pete Moore:

Yeah, no, that's, that's helpful words of words of wisdom. So, so give us you know, where do we find the site, what's the date that everybody should start going on here? And then what do you think you know, a regional health club or boutique fitness chain, how should they interact with you or, you know, figure out where their spot is on the platform?

Damien Dau:

Absolutely. I mean, so, I mean, it's active place.com. We are on Android and iOS as well on the apps. We currently have a, a free business plan that businesses can go and sign up to on, on the platform form and trial it out. We're launching our first paid subscription model next month which will enable additional subscription services for businesses to come on and extend further into, you know, finding a customer, building that community and commercializing their products within our marketplace. So I'd say jump in give it a drive and see what you think. You'll find a customer base that's already there and engaging. And you know, for us, it's only going to be growing further.

Pete Moore:

Great. All right, man, we'll look forward to meeting up in person in in Southern California please hit us up, but as we can be helpful to you, and it seems like you've found a spot that everyone can benefit from. So welcome to the halo sector for the next seven to 10 years.

