



**Complete Transcript: HALO Talks with Danielle Donovan
Posted December 7, 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 then when it was listed as 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. So quick read. There's also illustrations in there from our good friend mark, and cruelty-free cartoons. 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 welcoming the inaugural employee of integrity square, who is now running a really awesome company called CHEERFIT. Danielle, welcome finally to the podcast.

Danielle Donovan:

Thanks so much for having me excited to be here.

Pete Moore:

Awesome. So let's talk about, you know, your collegiate cheerleading background and how you've always kind of had this in the back of your mind of turning this into a, a, this passion and into a profession and kind of where you you've taken it to now.

Danielle Donovan:

Yeah, no, absolutely. So I'm always a big believer on turning a challenge into an opportunity. So I was a cheerleader for Syracuse university where I actually ended up tearing my ACL twice in my four years there. So I turned my freshman year, got surgery, went back toward again, my junior year. And instead of getting surgery, the second time I turned to fitness and rehab my need a full recovery through fitness

instead of surgery. And that just opened up my eyes to the power of fitness. It was the first time I was really working out what to keep up with the competitive, competitive level of cheerleading with able to prevent injuring, go back to full recovery. So that just opened up my eyes to the power of fitness. I also went to Syracuse for marketing and entrepreneurship. So I always knew I wanted my own thing.

Danielle Donovan:

Just not sure exactly what that was. So after graduating really just combine those passions together realizing in the trailing role that there's not quite a fitness program to keep up at the level that cheerleading is today. And really just went in and initially started Triplt to be fitness solution for cheerleaders. Today we've grown and expanded to work with, you know, athletes, former athletes, busy moms across the board, but it really started with the challenge of tearing my ACL, rehabbing it through fitness, and then turning that opportunity that into an opportunity to create a fitness program for cheerleaders around the world.

Pete Moore:

Awesome. So let's just educate everybody who doesn't know what cheerleading, you know, has turned into. Obviously it's a, you know, it's on ESPN, there's cheerleading competitions. I don't think when I was growing up that there was this level of competition directly, you know, turning cheerleader and kind of into its own sport on its own. It typically was just, Hey, we're going to cheerlead for a team. And it's, you know, part of like your high school and college, but, you know, give us a little bit of a, a timeline or chronology on, you know, what this has become.

Danielle Donovan:

Yeah, no, I mean, truly today is so much different than it used to be. Everyone's, I'm sure seeing the Netflix show cheer and really that just opened up the eyes to the elite level of athletes that your leaders are. And really, truly leading has evolved from cheering for sports to them becoming their own sport in general, competing against each other. And that's really the market I started to focus on is this world of called all-star cheerleading where it's very, you know, niche and specific, but the industry itself is pretty big on and has truly evolved from, you know, being on the sideline to now being of the most elite athletes in the world. They just announced that it's going to be featured in the Olympics for a next Olympics. And so really it's growing and evolving and being able to help athletes as the sport evolves, focus on the fitness aspect, not just to prevent injury, but also really to improve their confidence and improve their skills.

Pete Moore:

Got you. So w what age do people start in cheerleading now? I guess probably back in the day was kind of more of a, a high school. You know, you have a lot of kids now, you know, starting out, you know, an early age and kind of using this as like, Hey, this is kind of my sports channel, if you will.

Danielle Donovan:

Yeah. So initially when I started the program, as it was, you know, back as it was just fitness for true leaders, I thought I'd worked with the high school, the college aged kids. But what I really found is that they, you know, kids from another girls from eight about six to eight years old were diving right in, and really just getting started on this crazy competitive world of cheerleading. And then that brings you to, you know, about 18 years old. And then after that you devote your whole life to it. And then all of a sudden it's gone. And that's where now cheer that today we have the certification program. We had the

workouts to really work with the, you know, girls and women who shared their whole life. And all of a sudden now they're not doing it. And then still want to have something that they can reconnect to that cheer and dances. And then you get a real side business as well through the certification.

Pete Moore:

Got you. So what's been some of your experience in either, you know, convincing health club operators to kind of put this on their you know, on their calendar for, for group exercise or, you know, if they've got an extra room and you can say, Hey, look, this is, you know, an area that's kind of an untapped potential, you know, how are those conversations going? And I would say, as a preamble, you know, shelling into the health club channel or into the studio channel, you know, the sales cycle might be longer than, you know, anybody wants. So, you know, perseverance obviously clearly important in any business, but especially in, you know, entering into the you know, the halo sector on bricks and mortar. So tell us how that's gone.

Danielle Donovan:

Yeah. So twofold with that one. There's the health clubs and the studios who we, you know, it's, it's very different. We have top palms, it's a fun, high energy workout. So it switches, you know, it's not just the typical workout or so, you know, working out work out like a cheerleader is very markety and something that people want you back onto. We've been featured in everything from south magazine Teboda is the hottest new workout from NBC. So really just focusing on that, cheer inspired, fun, high energy workout. A lot of people are looking for that, something that's different. And then also looking for that fun back there. And our whole philosophy is to help people to want to work out not, oh, I have to go to the gym today. I have to do my workout. I feel guilty if I don't really using cheer fit to amp up the fun factor, which then in turn has that has them wanting to come back, which shows the consistency.

Danielle Donovan:

And then in turn, they're seeing the results. So that's for the health club. But with that, we also have a unique model where we can also work with the tree leading jams. And that's another whole world in itself. It's not just a fitness gym, it's a cheerleading gym and a cheerleading facility where for that facility, there is nothing quite like that. Maybe they run Zumba class here and there, but especially for the parents who drop their kids off at practice, and now they have nothing to do. They drive two hours to drive their kids to practice now for the cheer gyms, it is an opportunity to bring in additional revenue and then give something for the parents to do as well. So we work two certified coaches at cheer gyms to bring it into cheer gyms, to add that additional revenue line and then for health budgets. It's about that. Something different, that fun fact there.

Pete Moore:

Okay. So tell us about this whole cheer gym, you know, niche, are there a lot of them out there? You know, I haven't seen any yet, but I'm probably not the target market, although I might be able to hold something over my head, but probably not,

Danielle Donovan:

But yeah, no, the cheerleading world is a world in itself and they always, you know, the riches are in the niches and really niching into that cheer world where it's called all-star cheerleading. And so it's kind of the competition level of the highest level where people are paying money for their kids to be the best of the best. And there's huge facilities. And the, you know, competitions you see on ESPN fostered through

the gyms that are around the country around the world. But it's definitely, once you start to like, hear about it, like now, after listening to this podcast, I bet you don't see a ton pop up and see them as you drive by, but it's definitely a big industry with that in itself.

Pete Moore:

Got you. So, you know, as you go to those types of venues or you go to those health clubs and say, Hey, look, I can help you generate some more revenue, bring in, you know, a more diverse client base, maybe turn some of your kids' programming that, you know, a lot of the kids care or daycare rooms, or, you know, more like babysitting rooms. Do you see people resonating with, Hey, look, I want to provide fitness. I don't care what age it is. You know, there's a lot of talk right now. There's a group called kid strong. That's out there right now. That's going and kind of creating like mini gyms for kids on a membership model. So how do you think cheer fit, you know, kind of fits into that and what would be the build out cost or what is somebody needs to get started to take that into their club? And then the last part of that question, which will be an add on is, well, how much square footage do I need to allocate?

Danielle Donovan:

Yeah. So with your thing, it's amazing because you can truly grow with the program because the program has grown. So we started it's fitness, sports cheerleaders, primarily eight to 14 year old athletes using the workouts. And we still had that whole athlete portal and the whole athlete out. So we have a section and a segment of our athletes, but then as the program has grown, the community has grown as well. So you start with an athlete, then there's also the former athletes and all the setting, you turn 18 and you age out, you not most likely, you're not going to go to be a [inaudible] cheerleader. Your time is done. So now you have these passes and the certification opportunity to continue that longevity. And then for the busy moms who just need to do something for themselves that can continue on to being targeting the moms as well.

Danielle Donovan:

And I feel like it's really grown as I have grown. So, you know, I was triggered in my whole life and all of a sudden I stopped and I didn't know where to turn or what fitness aspect I wanted. Then now cheer fits for those former true leaders. And then I had my son a year and a half ago. And so now, you know, connecting with the moms as well, and we're very community driven and community focused. So I have grown, the community has grown. So it can literally be from athletes starting, you know, eight years old to moms who are 45, as far as the program itself, to connect to a gym, all you need. We work to get their coaches and instructors certified. So they go through our certification training program, which is a two day eight hour course. They have a fall training manual to learn a very specific check-in method and structured.

Danielle Donovan:

So if you go to a gym in Australia, which we have, or in New Jersey, you know, you're walking into a terrific class, cause it's very specific, it's very formatted. There's a fun factor. And you know where you can add your own individuality, Allie too, but you learn the structure. So you get certified, you pay, the coaches can pay or the gym can pay to go through the one-time certification costs. And then there's the continuing education to those certification current, which is not just, here's a new exercise. Here's a playlist. We really combine the marketing aspect, the business aspect, the entrepreneur aspect, building competence on camera engineering, your celebrity. So giving the gym owners and the coaches and

instructors that true confidence to go out there and lead their facets. So then you both through the certification, the one-time certification classes, \$500 to be certified and then \$50 a month to keep the certification current. And then you had the license to go out there and turn it into your side business, make extra money, add revenue to your gym by teaching the classes. And as far as the square footage, literally all you need is you get home.

Danielle Donovan:

But all you need, there's no equipment needed. Just, you got pom-poms when you do the certification and become a cheer fit captain, which is we call our instructors. And then the class itself is just pretty much body weight. You can add light weights to level up, but you can don't need much equipment or any equipment and you don't need much space. So it's pretty easy. You can do it on the go. You can do it at your gym and you don't need a huge facility to roll it out.

Pete Moore:

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 are, we're an investor in the company. That's not why I'm telling you this. I'm telling you this because it works got an infrared sauna blanket. I hop in there, I'll listen to some podcasts, burn 800 calories, get a med detox and a PEMF, which is a pulsed electromagnetic field crystal mat that I lay on and our recalibrate my cells to denormalize level the earth. If you got somebody you like, and you're looking for a pretty awesome gift, they will love it. You could use this code halo seven, five it's \$75 off, and you will not be disappointed higher dose.com promo code halo 75. And now let's get back to our regularly scheduled program.

Pete Moore:

So over the last, you know, 18 months here with COVID, have you been seeing a lot of, you know, whether it's personal trainers or, you know, mini fitness celebrities, or what have you saying, Hey, look, I want to kind of add as many certifications as I can, you know, almost like, you know I got a bow and arrow and I got all, you know, a holster and I'm saying, Hey, you know, I I'm sure if it's certified am NASM certified, you know, I'm also a massage therapist. You see, you know, the mainstream personal trainers, you know, and, and coaches in general, you know, having cheer fit is kind of one of their potential programs or do you see, it's mostly a lot of cheerleaders from the, the, you know, the past to basically say, Hey, look, I'm an expert, I'm a professional. And I got to get my cheer fit and now I'm like game on.

Danielle Donovan:

Yeah. So it's interesting. A lot of the people who are certified now are using CHEERFIT as their, their first certification. They know they want to get into the fitness world. They want to get into group fitness, or they are cheer or dance coaches. And they are drawn to church that they get certified that gives them the confidence to go out there and teach classes and they can add, you know, other classes to their resume, but it really gives them that confidence level to teach a format it's structured fast. So we have, you know a lot of people who, you know, are those former jewelers, former dancers who want to get into the fitness world, all we're never quite sure how, and then we have a ton of coaches who initially want to get certified to have that, you know, just extra bit of confidence to teach their team and lead their team in a structured workout because they're not, they as a coach, you know, they're doing choreography and routines and events and competitions.

Danielle Donovan:

They don't have a fitness aspect. And, and now people are finally realizing, truly doing is elite. Peer leaders need fitness. So coaches are coming to get certified. But what we'd really like to help them do is to open up that market and help them make this certification a side business for them. Because once you're certified, you have the license to teach the classes, tried to whatever you want, keep a hundred percent of that. So we empower them to teach those classes now to the parents of the athletes, do their farmer, true leaders, teach them online in person, help them see events and pep rallies. And so really empowering them to then go above and beyond just their initial concept of getting certified to train their team. But Hey, this can be, you know, a really profitable business for myself as well.

Pete Moore:

Got you. So talk for a minute about, you know, what type of exercises that are included in the workout and how that those are kind of selected based on the types of movements or, you know, the, the actual, I don't know, what do you call them like a acts, if you will, or, you know, routines that are done in shearling at our specific, obviously that goes sometimes to like I got to do a bar class and, you know, I think the next day, okay. I, you know, I nailed that. And then the second day I can't move cause I've been using muscles that I don't think I knew even existed. And now they're, they're angry at me. So like have you kind of looked at and said, okay, here's what it takes to optimize what I'm doing. Here's what it takes, you know, to prevent injury. And there's like a select number of core exercises that are key to the, to the cheerleading, you know, you know, enterprise, if you will.

Danielle Donovan:

Yes. So with every workout and through the certification, like I said, it's a very specific format and structure. So every class includes five main elements starting with the stunting element, which, you know, cheering, Spire, but it really works balance and stability. So it's a lot of single leg exercises, working balance stability, core strength, which is great for cheerleaders, but also great for everybody who needs to focus on balance and stability. Then we go into our sweat fees, which is the cardio. So again, great for cheerleading, for endurance, but also great for everybody who needs to focus on building their cardio, building their Thrones. Then we go into our sculpting phase, which is more of the bar style, the touchstone, the toning, the strengthening and really work to strengthen those muscles each. And then we go into our abs phase, which is the core strength, again, great for cheerleaders, but also great for everyone else.

Danielle Donovan:

And then we go into flexibility. So every class has those five components. There's different exercises within those components, they follow a specific structure. But then within those components from switching, from exercise to exercise, that's where you add in the cheer and the choreo and routines. So there's our sidelines in between each session. So with the cheerleaders, it's very specific and formatted to work the muscles that cheerleaders need to work stability, to defy gravity, to throw people in the area, to build their endurance. But when you think about it, everybody needs that everybody needs core strength. Everybody needs flexibility, every everybody needs balance. So we really tie it twofold. And then throughout the workout, there's cheer inspired exercises. That's our signature exercise where it's using true emotions, but applying it to a exercise that everyone, you know, you can do a squat all day, but then when you add a cheer motion and some arms to it and add your punks, then it becomes our cheer fit signature exercises.

Pete Moore:

Sure. And once somebody gets certified, you know, those are the five key elements, but are they also, you know, somewhat allowed to infuse their own, you know, workout regimen is as part of this.

Danielle Donovan:

So the format is very specific to the format. So if you teach a terrific class, you know, you're teaching that clear-cut format in the certification, we teach you how to teach turbot scope, which is more bar style, cheer dance, which is the dance cardio that is most popular and SharePoint and boot camp, which is more of a higher intensity. But within that, everyone has their own, you know, I can add their unique style, do unique flair because within the exercises, there's a section for your sideline, which is the little mini routines at your leaders doing lot on the sidelines incorporating that fun factor. So whether it's an eight count dance or cheer or an emotion or a Chan, that's unique to every instructor teaching so that they can come up with on their own. And then the exercises, they, you know, there's a ton of exercises that they can pick and choose from following the specific structure and format. So they don't have to do the exact same exercise, every single class there's hundreds to choose from, but just working it so that the class flow has those five main elements in it.

Pete Moore:

Got you. Got you. So as you look forward here, you know, obviously you're an entrepreneur, you know, you've taken your passion, tend to a profession. Sounds like you got all the content nailed, you got the certification, you know, how, how big do you want, do you think this could be, and you know, what kind of team do you have around you? You know, what are some of your goals?

Danielle Donovan:

Yeah. I mean, I'm looking for this to be the next Zumba of cheer fitness, really going big with this. The concept is there, it's scalable. We have everything in place and now it's just really growing back through the licensing model, through the Triplt certification. So training coaches, instructors, former cheerleaders and dancers to go out there and get you if it's certified and bring this to their community growing it through, partnering with other online platforms to train to certify the instructors on that platform and now bring it to the bigger consumer platform. So now to your fit is a household name and then partnering and connecting with the gyms, the fitness gyms, the cheer gyms to create that host facility. So now people are taking classes at different facilities. So really going full circle with it, certifying people, let them teach classes wherever they want to teach online in person bringing the consumer model and getting other instructors certified who teach on those bigger consumer platforms and then connecting with the host gyms to offer it to your fit at physical locations. So I think really big things with this. As far as our team, you know, I've grown with your bed over the years and do this full-time now we have another girl who will help us with marketing and then some admin support. So it's a small team now, but as we continue to grow, the certification really took off this this year. And our team will continue to grow as video as well.

Pete Moore:

Awesome. I'm glad you reached out. And look forward to seeing you in person here. At some point as this pandemic is finally ends, as long as I stop watching cable television,

Danielle Donovan:

I know it's been too long, but I'm excited to, yeah, it was great to connect today and excited to chat with you guys.

Pete Moore:

Awesome. So we'll have in the show notes how to get in touch with you, how to get certified and we will wave the cheer fit flag and looks forward to having this these kids up to adults taking your program. So congrats on the on the success to date and get to see your personal growth and professional growth. That's awesome.

Danielle Donovan:

Thanks so much for having me. It it's great being here.

Pete Moore:

Good. Good. All right. Talk to you soon.