



**Complete Transcript: HALO Talks with Petra Robinson
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Pete Moore:

This is Pete Moore wanted to officially announce the release of time to win again. 52 takeaways from team sports to ensure your business success. I wrote this book over the last year. I think you're going to love it. Good to great meets wears Waldo pick 'em up for your team. Time to win in 2022. Happy to come to your club, your studio, your company, and talk about ways we can optimize business and win going forward. Go halo. This is Pete Moore, halo talks NYC on location, lone star state with one of the biggest and best influencers over time in the halo sector, wearing her Zumba necklace and teeing up the final and the most anticipated podcast of ER 2021. Petra Robinson. Welcome to the show and thank you for your patience. Thank you.

Petra Robinson:

You're killing me.

Pete Moore:

Good. So why don't for the few people that don't know your background, why don't you kind of talk about your progression in the industry and we're going to talk about what's going on currently and how you think things are going to play

Petra Robinson:

Out. Okay. Cool. Well, originally, I was just going to tell you that I immigrated from Germany to New York, long island. What town? Wantagh. Okay. But graduated from north Belmore.

Pete Moore:

Okay. Yeah. So I went to Westbury. I, I grew up in Westbury and I went to Clark high school. So we used to play WATO, which is black and yellow is the color scheme and

Petra Robinson:

Yeah. Yeah. My, my ex actually grew up in Westbury really? Yeah. And went to CW P. Okay. All right. Anyway. Yeah. So fitness industry. So speaking of the X we actually ended up in Iran in 78, 79. Wow. He worked for Northrop and so I had been sort of an exercise nut right. In those days, CALS. Right. Yeah.

Pete Moore:

And that's like stretching and aerobics for people that are, that know what a Rolodex is. You might know what that is. If not, we'll modify the terminology, keep going. Yeah. So

Petra Robinson:

I just, I started teaching classes in the apartment building that we lived in and I was like, huh, I can do this. Wow. Come back to the state, started taking jazzercise with Judy Shepherd, miss it. Sure. And then about six months later that up in Saudi Arabia for almost five years. Wow. And that's where, again, trial and error. I was not trained in the business. I was actually an art major. And but you know, you're one of those people where someone says, do you know how to do this? And everybody else takes a step back and you're left in the front. Okay. That was

Pete Moore:

Me. That sense that you also take a step forward though sometimes.

Petra Robinson:

Okay. Okay. Not all the time. Not all the time. Anyway. So yeah, over those years in Saudi, I learned how to teach classes. I, you know, we would come back and forth to the states. I'd take classes with Judy J what's her name? Jackie Sorenson from aerobic dancing. I never took Richard Simmons live class, but you know, did some of the, the videos. Okay. You know, and then just brought that all back and just trial and error, just put it together, came back to the United States and got certified by AF one of the first, one of the first ones. Right. And 86 and that started it. I was picked out of the lineup and asked to work actually for a, and I did, and again, trial and error. They needed somebody to run their convention. Oh, wow. I had no experience. Okay. Step forward. And

Pete Moore:

Actually on the job experience totally by Petra.

Petra Robinson:

I know. Well, I know what that I should write a book right. Should do called trial and error. Yeah. You want to,

Pete Moore:

Yeah. Yeah. You want to learn something, just do it and then you'll figure it out. Right.

Petra Robinson:

Exactly. Exactly. Yeah. So did that and just kept getting more and more involved in the industry, educating myself more obviously. And you know, long story short that's, that's how I got started. And then just, I was VP of AF for 10 years produced the aerobics and fitness championships. Nice. With AF that was a heck of a lot of fun. Yeah. And that's where I got to meet a lot of the movers and shakers that are still in business today. Like Philip Mills, for example, from Les mills, he was the administrator for New Zealand for that team. And so, you know, it was a really beautiful time, the, the late eighties and the nineties for fitness.

Pete Moore:

That's great. So tell us what, what your objectives are today, what you do at these shows and you know, where you want to spend most of your time.

Petra Robinson:

Yeah. So the shows actually let's back into it with, with Zumba. We do about a hundred to 120 trade shows a year. Oh, wow. Even for, for this last period during COVID we did over a hundred virtual events. Yeah. And which was wonderful. Cause it kept that community together. Right. Especially our Zumba community.

Pete Moore:

And when you say trade shows, you're, you're talking about for the ZBA certified Nope market or for

Petra Robinson:

External, the Arnold old remedy wellness Fibo okay. And we just did one for Fibo actually we

Pete Moore:

Did, we gotta get a list. I didn't even know that were 120 trader shows around the, the world there. Yeah. There's there. Yeah. We should post all that. Dave.

Petra Robinson:

I can send you a list. Okay. Yeah,

Pete Moore:

Yeah. We should do that. I think more people are going to want to go and whether it's virtual or whether it's networking or just kind of it back into the flow

Petra Robinson:

And, well, I think next year, cuz I we're just finishing our budgets. Right. And so for next year we've got about 102 shows and you know, some are big and some are small. Like one of the biggest that we do is remedy wellness in Italy where they have generally 230,000 people. Wow. Over the

Pete Moore:

Four days, is it really more like a consumer it's both

Petra Robinson:

Show and business. Yes. It's consumer fitness enthusiast. It's huge. And it's, it's like the biggest, giant fitness party that you'd ever go to. Okay. Besides Zumba of course. Right. but yeah, and then some of them are small, you know, they have like maybe three, 400, but they're all important because you have access to the people. Got it.

Pete Moore:

So what have you seen over the last several years that gets you most excited about where the industry's going, maybe what, what you're doing, you know, with, with your brand and with your network.

Petra Robinson:

It's a good question. I, I think I, you know, I, I really don't know where we're going yet. I mean, I see technology as, as a key component and we definitely obviously had to embrace it this last sure. Of course, 18 months and, and really ramp up because you know, like for us over at ZUMBA it was kind of a challenge because we're live.

Pete Moore:

Yeah. And it's all about the energy and yeah. It's almost like molecules, you know? And, and, and it's just not the same experience, like when we were putting this book together, not to plug the book, but I want to do a hardcover book cuz I want, that does the experience I want you to have when you flip it and it's tactile. Yeah. Yeah. And, and it's, you know, you could say, okay, a Zumba class, you know video on demand. That's great as like a, to keep you healthy, but that's not the ex that's not the relationship I want to have with you. Exactly. So it's really, it is almost like, yeah, I'm going to put my money towards digital and I'm going to go hard on it. But at the same time, like I don't want that to be the

Petra Robinson:

Lead. Well, we don't want it to be the only experience. Right, right. Right. You know, because that, and a community that, that ZBA has done and many other brands, you know, they, they do it as well, you know, maybe on a smaller level, but during COVID it really brought the community together. First we had to ramp everything up because we were not prepared. Right. You know, to put everything on V O D right, sure. Sure. Or livestream or whatever. Right. And so we created the tools for our instructors to be able to learn how to do that. Cuz they had no idea how to do this. Sure. And so we created Zumba. Dance, which then we on average have about 700 classes a day globally,

Pete Moore:

Globally. Oh. Because all, all of your instructors are global, right? Yeah. I mean, Zumba has such an interest thing. Business model. Maybe we should just educate people for a second on the business model because it is different than a franchise or it's different from, you know, exclusive territories and, and so on and so forth. So maybe explain how it, how it started and how you basically are saying, I want everyone to be able to experience this and, and, and be in business and I'm not going to put up roadblocks for you to deliver our passion. That's

Petra Robinson:

Exactly a good way to do that's exactly it.

Pete Moore:

Because are you hiring? Cuz I that'd be part of the marketing

Petra Robinson:

Team. Always. We're

Pete Moore:

Always hiring in kidding. In case we don't get an advertiser for the podcast. I'll text it. Keep, keep me informed. Yeah. No want,

Petra Robinson:

You know, I haven't been back in all the decades. It's a D the D no, but the whole idea was to make it scalable. Yes. Right. Yeah. And also make it accessible. So I helped actually put the program together 17 years ago and we decided not to make it a certification, not to have testing because we want people to be able to come in at any level and enjoy the experience whether they ended up teaching or not, doesn't matter. So

Pete Moore:

Let's just go down at path for one second. So I want people to understand cuz most franchisors, if I'm a, if I'm a franchisor and I'm head of franchising, I might get a hundred applications in. If somebody wants to open up a gold gym or a studio, what have you? I'm probably saying no, at least 95 out of a hundred times, but ZBA, you don't really have to say no ever no. And

Petra Robinson:

First is my, yeah. We're not a franchise, not a franchise and you're not. And the license stays with the instructor. Right. Okay. So we have hundreds of thousands of instructors globally, right. That hold the license and they can teach anywhere they want to from home or church or gym or wherever temple doesn't matter.

Pete Moore:

So given the fact that you don't test out, right, like most other modalities and, and, and programs, was there an assumption that the people that did deliver the best experience are going to turn this into a profession and that's going to quality control itself.

Petra Robinson:

That's one, two, right? From the beginning again, because of my AF past. Right, right. We affiliated with AF and with ACE to encourage our instructors to get a professional fitness certification because what we teach them at Zumba is very basic as far as the fitness side. And then we focus on the dances and the exercises and putting the, the choreography together. Right. Gotcha. So our goal is to get them certified through all of our partners out there. Got it

Pete Moore:

Got, so you're basically saying, look, I'm going to, I'm going to give you a program, but I'm you, it's the foundation of it is, is for someone else to certify you, which kind of gives you a little bit of not distant, distant. Yeah. You're a little bit of distance, right. To say I'm not responsible for, for that part of it, but I'm going to give you the program and the, and the revenue opportunity and community building and the apparel and the, the support. Right. It's really interesting business mind. I mean, I've watched it over the years and I'm pleasantly shocked at how amazing it, it continues to be and proliferate cuz a lot of things, you know, like you've you and I have seen over the years, like some of the things you mentioned before, you know, they have a five or 10 year life cycle and then they kind of disappear and kind of get recreated and Zuma has really had staying power

Petra Robinson:

Throughout. And one of the reasons to lead into your question sure is Zen and Zen is our Zumba instructor network. And that is the magic sauce, the secret sauce, because that's the monthly

membership program that our instructors belong to. They pay a monthly fee for that fee. They get more than any other brand. And I say this honestly, any other brand in the industry because the that's, the company's focus is this is our way of educating them. Right. So they get new, they get a whole one hour workout choreography for free music, not for free, but you know, for their member marketing materials, they get discounts on the Zumba wear. I'm sure you've seen our Zumba. People are very bright and bold. Oh yeah. And,

Pete Moore:

And they're not shy about town. No, but

Petra Robinson:

That's also, you know, deliberate, you know, because they feel like they're part of a community. Yeah. And they're very proud, you know, to where that, that Zumba gear. So the Zen program is really important and it keeps them, first of all, it keeps them connected to the company and each other, but it really does give them all these tools and, and the members were the ones that really benefited from VOD from, from learning how to teach at home during COVID.

Pete Moore:

So to our, I'm going to make a statement and I wanted to ask you about how you'd respond to this. So if somebody, you asked me like, you know what, tell me top the top three things about myself. I'm going to interview myself for a second. Just hang out one second. Okay. Here we go. Now I'd tell you like, okay, I'm an athlete. I was just writing this down. I'm an athlete. I want to help people succeed. And I do soul cycle. Right. That might be the three things that if you said to me, Hey, tell me three things about yourself. I'd probably include soul cycle in that top three. So I'm assuming almost everyone in your network, they define themselves as I'm a zoom instructor. This is what I do, even if it's not their full-time job. So how has that organically evolved and how much does do people internally say, you know, I'm basically one of the most important things in these people's lives.

Petra Robinson:

That's a really good question. But I think I, I bring it back to that sense of community that we started right from the beginning. And, and to be honest with Beto, you know, BETOS the creator and then the other two Alberto's are the business side. And you know, he made everybody feel that he was accessible. Yeah. That he was their instructor, you know, personally, no matter how big he got yeah. Over the decades. Yeah. You know, and so is there's this sense of connectivity where, and accessibility, and for the longest time, now you can email, you can email him, you can email the Alberto's, they will email you back. Yeah. And who does that? Yeah. You know,

Pete Moore:

The, the interesting thing about most successful companies start there's a DNA of, of, of a person or a frustration or a passion that it then turns into to a company. So a lot of people come to us and say, I've got this really awesome idea. We're going to put like a spin bike on top of an elliptical machine and you're going to like go upwards down. Yeah. And I'm like, okay, so one, what frustration are you solving? And like, what's the DNA of the company. Like, you're just trying to become the next something. But typically the next something of Uber or next something of Peloton that doesn't work because it there's no, there's no DNA to it. There's no frustration that was solved.

Petra Robinson:

Yeah. With, with Soma. I, I don't think there was a frustration, but it was just actually a joy. Yeah, exactly. You know, the philosophy is just wiggle and giggle, you know, whether you can do the moves or not, it doesn't matter. And the other thing with Beto, when you, when you watch that, man, he makes it look so simple. Right. And he makes it so that you have a level of success and that's, you know, brilliant. And the charisma that he has, what has happened is that, that has filtered down to the instructors. I mean, it's, it's the community. I can't talk more about the Zumba community because they are, I'm going to say, it's almost like a cult. You know what I mean? Like they are so passion, a positive cult. That's nothing wrong with very positive. Yeah. I mean, and, and they also each other, you know, so there's not a lot of that competitiveness, right? Yeah. Oh,

Pete Moore:

We're entering a very interesting point that I, in this conversation that, that triggered something that's I think it's important for people to understand this company was built based on joy. Right. Totally. And it was based on proliferating that joy to everyone and not saying no to anyone. And the business model basically ensures that there's no obstacles to finding joy. So in your business, our listeners here, which I'm sure is going to get a lot of podcasts, think about what you bring to your business and, and what barriers you put up to people getting into it and try and figure out a way to, to re-engineer a business model to, to not say, no, it there's something, there's something deep about how this business was set up.

Petra Robinson:

Well, and I have to be real honest with you. I have to give Alberto Pearlman and Alberto iion and actually Beto too, the credit for that. Because again, my alpha had it those days in those days was kind of still screwed on pretty tight. Right? Yeah. Yeah.

Pete Moore:

And, but you came from that perspective, so you can't re-engineer your own, right?

Petra Robinson:

Yeah. Yeah. Testing, you know, I figured, okay. Some testing. Yeah. And the guys were like, no, if we do that to your point, we're not going to succeed. We're not going to allow people that want to be able to experience that joy. Yeah. Whether they ever teach or not, it doesn't matter. You know, a lot of times you'd be really surprised if you go into one, like a big instructor training, a Zumba instructor training, you can look around. And there are people that, you know, will probably never teach, but they're coming because they want to learn how to do it better. And they even join Zen again. Why? Because they want to practice at home. They want to be better. So it's a really unique dynamic because you've got fitness professionals coming in. Yeah. And you got consumers. Yeah. Just ordinary people. You,

Pete Moore:

You know, what people don't talk about in this industry is when somebody tests out and they don't like, you're doing a bar certification or you're doing some certification and they say, oh, like we had 10 people and you know, three of them, you know, tested out and then, and we hired them, no one ever talks about what are those seven other people saying, right. They can't be saying anything good about your brand. They can't, they're probably saying that there's something manipulative about your process or there's something that's not fair about it. And those seven people are now alienated from you as a

member, as a potential employee. And I telling like at least 10 of their friends, you know, Hey, I should have made it. I don't know what happened. This woman did this or this guy like treated me. No one talks about that. And in Zumba, you don't have that because the business model is not structured that way. I think it's really important when people listening here is really dissect all the different layers of your business or what you're trying to provide and then engineer the revenue model and the cost structure in the license, or instead of the franchise or the certification versus the program. There's something really interesting about how this business was set up. Well,

Petra Robinson:

I think you, you hit it there. You have to have some easy entry point. Okay. Just a basic entry point that people can come in, feel somewhat successful. Maybe they won't be, you know, the top fit, bro, but at least let them in and then you can keep training them and grooming them. And then hopefully they'll be at the level that you want them to be. But, you know, I agree to tell people, oh, you're not good enough. Right. You know, and you know, and years ago, you know, at AFA, I don't know too much what we're doing right now, but when we did have the certifications, you actually got a review afterwards. If, if you didn't pass, they actually told you, well, during your setups, you did da da. So we're on this. And so it was a very positive way of giving criticism, right.

Pete Moore:

Without exiting someone from the call.

Petra Robinson:

Exactly. Because then, and then you got to go and retest for free. So, you know, again, make it easy for people to come back to you sure. With the improvements that you're recommending. I

Pete Moore:

Exactly, exactly. So, you know, you, you spent a lot of time in a lot of different areas of the world, as we talked about before over the next couple years, where do you plan to spend your time in focus? Well,

Petra Robinson:

I think that the next few years, for sure, we're going to have the trade shows. I mean, on average, I travel in a normal year. I travel at least two weeks out of every month, you know, domestic and international to the different trade shows. I definitely will probably do that again. But we'll see how 2020 right now we're all going in with eyes open and hopeful. Yeah. That it's going to be at least maybe I don't want to say half like 2019, but close. Gotcha. Yeah. So I do see myself doing that, but you know, on the other hand too, you asked, you know, like what, what are you good at? How would you, so my three things that I would say to you is, you know, what's important to me is my, my, the family is first sure. I've got three sons and a grandson miles. So that thank you. I love, obviously I love Zumba. I am mama Zumba, by the way, you know? But the other thing that I'm really good at it is connecting people sure. And bringing them together and then letting them talk amongst themselves, you know? And I like, I do like doing that and I would love to do that a little bit more.

Pete Moore:

That's great. Down the road. So finish up with I know you've got a number of great quotes. So do I give us a, give us one? Well, you mentioned one at the beginning. Well

Petra Robinson:

You mean my Joan of a yeah. Yes. So meet all challenges with courage, strength, and faith. And I, and I honestly, to be honest, I really do say that to myself pretty much every morning. That's great. Before I head out the door and just, and then the other one you saw the necklace I have on today and it just says be so, you know, try to be your very best and also hopefully be a role model for your family. Yeah. And for the people that are around you. That's

Pete Moore:

Great. Yeah. Well, it was great to finally meet you in person. Thanks for coming on the show. Look forward to seeing you at other networking events and we can hand people off to each other.

Petra Robinson:

I would love that the, this has been a pleasure and good luck with this, with your book. Amazing, great stuff.

Pete Moore:

I'm going to sign it for you. Time to win again. Be victorious. Thank you. Go halo. Go mama Zumba. Thank

Speaker 3:

You.