



Complete Transcript: HALO Talks with Jarrod Saracco  
Posted June 23, 2023

Pete Moore ([00:04](#)):

I want to thank all of our listeners for several years of dedicated and loyal listening throughout the Halo Talks 400 podcast completed to date. We're going to a thousand by 2024. If you're so inclined, we'd love to have you go to iTunes for us, fill out a review so we can keep this podcast rolling globally. We are now on Chartable's top lists and moving up the charts. Also, if you want to educate yourself on a new year, please go to the halo academy.com. Take a look at what'll be done with 150 executives in the halo sector to get them smarter, get them prepared for capital raises, and also more winning. Thanks, have a great season. Let's go. This is Pete Moore on Halo Talks NYC on location Ursula 2023. I have my friend Jared Rocco here, the Health Club doctor. We are gonna talk about identifying issues with your business, fixing them, optimizing your unit economics and growing and getting a little more sleep in the process of enjoying your entrepreneurial endeavor. So good to see you and meet in person finally.

Jarrod Saracco ([01:23](#)):

Well, great to be here. Thanks for having me. It's a privilege.

Pete Moore ([01:25](#)):

Appreciate it. Awesome. So, you know, you've been in the industry pretty much you know, as long as I have, you know, back in the World Gym Days, I, I think was probably well I was originally back in the World Gym Days when I was with Gold's Gym, but what, what, you know, talk about how you got into the consulting side why you felt like it was, you know, maybe a good way to kind of upstream and be like, Hey, I can help a lot of people.

Jarrod Saracco ([01:49](#)):

Yeah. my story's kind of crazy. I mean, I started in this business, this industry when I was just about 16 years old. So it's really the only thing I've known, you know, since high school as far as a career is concerned. So it's been pretty wild ride. And as I gained experience in different levels of operations, whether it was training, managing, even owning and finding my love for helping others understand it I realized that that's what I wanted to do was teach others the business of fitness. Can they avoid the mistakes that I made? Can they learn from the lessons that I learned? Sure. and can I help them run a more profitable business? And so about 2005, that's when my consulting business was born. And you know, the rest is history. So yeah, that's how I got started with

Pete Moore ([02:33](#)):

It. When, when, before you did the consulting, cuz a lot of people, you know, become consultants and then kind of say, oh, I did this, I did that. You know you know, talk about some of the things that you did experience, I use this term all the time. Experiences, what you get when you don't get what you want. Well, yeah. So I'm trying to keep like guardrails up, make like I don't have any kids, but if I had kids, I'd put like the guardrails up on the bowling alley. Yeah. You know, so you're not gonna go in the gutter. That's one of the things I'll help you make sure you don't do. So, gimme some examples of things where you're like, maybe this wasn't obvious for obvious at first, but let me tell you how I, I help people kind of,

Jarrold Saracco (03:07):

Yeah. So the, the whole way I got into the business of consulting was through getting really screwed by a business partner and, and the gyms that I owned.

(03:16):

Okay. And so at the time it was really like, okay, what am I gonna do with this next step? And I was, I had been asked to speak at club industry. I was one of the first recorded ever, you know sessions at club industry and put online, which was great. And somebody said, you know, you got a real passion for, for this. And I had always been training and always been teaching employees. So the whole natural progression into helping others seemed to come very easily to me. So as I, I got asked to help somebody open a gym, took that experience, really loved it, was able to help them avoid the mistakes that I made. And then I realized, I said, you know what, all the experience I had, this was gonna be great. And then we just take that. We just keep learning. We keep growing, we keep helping. And you know, that's really been a great trajectory

Pete Moore (04:03):

For

Jarrold Saracco (04:03):

Me because I always tell people, people come in, well, most consultants I know, they always think they know everything. That's not my style at all. Right. Yeah. I, I learned just as much from them as they learn from me. And so that's why I'm even here at this trade show cuz you learn every day. Yeah.

Pete Moore (04:17):

You know, a as you kind of have gone through several different business cycles and you, you see new technologies come out, you see software companies that nobody ever had an interest in. Now they're getting like all private equity, growth, equity capital. You'd be like, you know, I think they had a 10 by 10 booth like five years ago. Yeah. You know, what the fuck, where's that come from? You know, how do you kind of keep yourself as an entrepreneur and a consultant, like, like one step ahead of that? And then when do you know, as a follow up question, when do you know when someone's like able to deploy, you know, like the next big idea?

Jarrold Saracco (04:51):

That's a great question. Thank you. And I spend a lot of time on the edges of these trade shows. Yeah. Because on the edges are where the newbies are. That's such a good point. They're, they're, they're the little companies. They don't have the big bucks to spend on the big boo space. And they just got here. And I like going and find them. And I spend time with them and I want to hear their pitch and I wanna

see what they got. And a lot of times they have great technology or they've got a great widget or something, they just don't know how to deploy it. To your point, they don't have

Pete Moore (05:16):

The, or even explain like how like it works

Jarrold Saracco (05:18):

For. Exactly. And so then a guy like me comes in such a great point and I wind up talking to them and going, I can see that application in this particular gym or this boutique or this style of business, or I could see this help in that. And then that's usually when I go, Hey, I like the little guy. Right. Because the little guy's got something to share. Yeah. They just don't have the market share that the big guys do.

Pete Moore (05:39):

Yeah. I mean, it's interesting in this industry, and you and I have been in it almost the same amount of times. There's always new ideas cropping up and there's, there's so much passion about it and you gotta kind of be able to splice through like what's the, why does that product or service exist? Like is it a personal frustration that somebody solved? That's usually a good business. Yeah. If it's kind of like, Hey, I'm gonna do this studio concept you know, Rocco, what do you think about like, we do aerial yoga on a spin bike, you know, with infrared panels and you can be like, dude, did you, like are you trying to become like a, you know, like a chef at a restaurant? Yeah, exactly. Or like, did you benefit from that Yeah. Program. Yeah. You know, so when you take a look at some of these and say like, okay, here's, it's on the fringe. Do I kind of track this? Do I help them? Do I tell you, Hey, look, you're not explaining this in like our language

Jarrold Saracco (06:32):

<Laugh>. I can't tell you how many times I have that conversation. Like they, they're all excited to tell me what they do. And I go, okay, so what do you really do? Because I have no freaking clue what you just said

Pete Moore (06:42):

Exactly after you told me like for

Jarrold Saracco (06:43):

Five minutes. Yeah. Talk to me. To me. Yeah, exactly. And it's interesting, sometimes these guys, they don't even know whether they're an end consumer product or service or they're actually trying to serve us as the business owners in the gym business or the club business. So it's, it's interesting to, to listen to them and then over years watch them refine their pitches, their presentation and build a story that resonates

Pete Moore (07:04):

With people. Yeah. You know, one of the things that I've kind of learned from my advisory business and you're on the more of like the, the consulting side of like, hey, you got a unit economic issue. Like I'm gonna help you figure out what the drivers are, those problems, and then we're gonna turn it around. I kind of look at it. Either somebody comes to me before they should have come to you and I say like, look, these unit economics, they don't work. Like you can't, you're like, oh you know, I got, I got six

studios, you know, I wanna go to 600. I'm like, which one's the prototype? Oh, the seventh one that you're gonna fund. I'm like, no, dude. Like you have to do your own experiment and then you gotta figure out what the special sauce is in your experiment that you've done. And then you come to me and say like, Hey man, I figured this out.

Jarrold Saracco ([07:47](#)):

Yeah. Proof of concept. I got

Pete Moore ([07:49](#)):

This, like this. I know what the special sauce is. Instead of me trying to ask, pull it outta you, you gotta tell me this how the business model works

Jarrold Saracco ([07:55](#)):

<Laugh>. Yeah. And to your point that that strategy has worked for some people. They've been able to get that to happen. You know, and, and, but proof of concept is huge. Yeah. So I invest before you've put the,

Pete Moore ([08:07](#)):

You know, the money. Yeah. Like somebody wants to invest, it's called friends and family around. Cause those are the people that are willing to like Exactly test, test you out and like give you, give you a chance. But it's not like, Hey, I want to go talk to these venture capital firms. Like, no, no.

Jarrold Saracco ([08:20](#)):

I just had a conversation, conversation with a guy today. No, my number one,

Pete Moore ([08:24](#)):

Why didn't you invite me into that conversation?

Jarrold Saracco ([08:26](#)):

Well, you were busy talking to somebody else.

Pete Moore ([08:28](#)):

I find my bad, I'll take, I'll take responsibility for

Jarrold Saracco ([08:29](#)):

Myself. But, but the, the thing was, you know, my number one rule when somebody comes to me and says that they want to build a facility or whatever, the question is why. Yeah. And if I hear, well, me and my buddies, we were tired of hearing. They're like, we, we don't like the gyms in our area. We want to build a gym. Number one rule is you don't build a gym for you. Don't build a concept for you. Don't build a, you know, you don't solve your own problem. You look at the problem in the marketplace. What is the demographic need? Is the demographic. Can it support it? Can they pay for it? What works? I don't care what you like. Right.

Pete Moore ([09:00](#)):

I wanna know what makes you money. You got a hundred people that, that like the same thing you like that could be more.

Jarrold Saracco ([09:04](#)):

Yeah. But it's a hundred people gonna pay the bill. Is it a thousand? Is it 2000 or 4,000 people to this guy's point based on what he wanted to do, can I get 4,000 people in this business to pay him what he needs? Right. Cuz that's what he's gonna need. Right. And he's in a small town. So,

Pete Moore ([09:18](#)):

So what if you were to force rank, here's the biggest issues with, with health club operators today post covid. What would you rank, what, what is it attrition because you're not doing the work to actually understand and have a relationship with people. Is it you don't spend enough money on marketing? Is it something else? So what, what do you kind of hone in on, be like, dude, this is like the core of the, the essence of the problem is?

Jarrold Saracco ([09:42](#)):

Well, we, one of the biggest problems in the industry, and I think in the world right now is finding employees and qualified employees. It's disappeared. Our generation is that, that's here now is figuring out how to make money off of the phone, the internet, social media. They don't want a real job. Yeah. They don't wanna come to work. Yeah. That's a big problem. The industry also lost a lot of fitness professionals and trainers and coaches who now were forced to go on their own to survive and make money. And they're trying to find ways to make money in parts and trucks and social media and whatnot. So the, the labor force is a big challenge to a lot of

Pete Moore ([10:19](#)):

We invested in a company, well we're part of this company called Game Plan. And we're trying to staff D one, D two D three athletes, female, male, into the, into the halo sector like that. We That's

Jarrold Saracco ([10:31](#)):

Fantastic.

Pete Moore ([10:31](#)):

Yeah. It hasn't turned into what I want it to yet, but hopefully, hopefully it does. Cuz those people are natural extensions of being part of a team and popping a jersey

Jarrold Saracco ([10:40](#)):

On. And, and that's the other thing, when you talk about the health and fitness sector and, and franchising athletes, they gotta have that exit strategy. You know, that that athlete is what, three to five year career really average five to seven maybe for someone who's good, what are they gonna do afterwards? Are they gonna open up Popeye's chicken? No, let's get 'em into fitness.

Pete Moore ([10:59](#)):

Get training. I feel like there should be more pressure to get those people in there instead of buying like a Popeye's. Exactly.

Jarrold Saracco ([11:06](#)):

Chain

Pete Moore ([11:07](#)):

100%. Get in, get into the industry and then use your N I I. How's your n i l doing right now? My name Image likeness? Yeah, it's, I haven't really monetizing

Jarrold Saracco ([11:15](#)):

Yet. Well, I think he's over there making me a new one right now, so. Oh, yeah.

Pete Moore ([11:18](#)):

Yeah.

Jarrold Saracco ([11:19](#)):

We're gonna check it out after he is done.

Pete Moore ([11:21](#)):

We've got a new Rocco avatar,

Jarrold Saracco ([11:23](#)):

This new CI sero that's gonna

Pete Moore ([11:24](#)):

Take be a, on the consulting industry. That's it. With an exclusive Yo bro, you can't do any caricatures for anyone else who's a consultant. Yeah.

Jarrold Saracco ([11:33](#)):

This

Pete Moore ([11:33](#)):

Is it. Yeah, this is it, man. We've,

Jarrold Saracco ([11:34](#)):

We've locked it down. Yeah.

Pete Moore ([11:36](#)):

This is gonna be his calling card. Yep. you know, so, so one is, is you got a labor force issue. Yep. You know, the second thing is that I, that I'm seeing is, and I said this at this event the other day, but, and I've said this on another podcast, so for people listening, thank you for listening to take a little repetition, arti, you can't have artificial intelligence until you have intelligence.

Jarrold Saracco ([11:59](#)):

I

Pete Moore ([11:59](#)):

Love it. And I feel like there's people that hide behind. I got 500 members and you know, I sent an email out to 'em, I sent the text message like, why don't you call 'em, why don't you sit down with 'em? Why don't you buy 'em a cup of coffee? Why don't you find out what, what, what really is in my DNA? You know,

Jarrold Saracco ([12:14](#)):

Nothing will ever replace the original instant message text message, which is the human connection. It will never replace it.

Pete Moore ([12:22](#)):

I agree. You, you,

Jarrold Saracco ([12:23](#)):

You can send it, you know, fucking crazy. Well, listen, even when these things write it, they do a good job, but they're never gonna have the emotion, the feeling, the deeper understanding. You want to use chat, G p t, you want to use AI to write messaging, that's fine. But you better edit it and put some personality and love into it. Oh yeah, totally. And still pick up that phone. I don't care if nobody picks up the phone anymore. Leave that voicemail. Feel that energy, have that personal touch, make the effort, the effort sometimes is worth a heck of a lot more than the outcome.

Pete Moore ([12:51](#)):

Yeah. And I would say, you know, if you got a software database and there's nothing in the database, it's not a software database. Exactly. So fill it up with data. Yeah. and also, you know, I, I tell people, I, there was this ABC fitness solutions report that came out and it said like, 65% of people leave the club because they're not motivated. And it prompted me to think about like, what motivates me personally. Right. And, and there's some things that motivate me. One is that when I was a kid, I used to have access to my dad's change machine change bin. And when the ice Cream Man and Long Island used to drop, I used to go down there, get like fun dip candy cigarettes, big league chew grape, which had a lot of sugar in it. Big

Jarrold Saracco ([13:30](#)):

Chew. I was great. The big wad in side.

Pete Moore ([13:32](#)):

Yeah. Big wad, dude. Nice. Fall asleep and wake up with like go, I'm on my pajamas. Exactly. And I got chubby as a kid. So I had to go to the elastic jeans in the husky section of, of Sears until I was like 13 years old. So if you, if you, if I was a member of your, of So Rocco's fitness and you saw that I was gaining a little weight, all you would've to say to me is like, elastic jeans. We ain't going there <laugh>. I'm not going back there. Yeah. And then I'd be like, all right dude, I'm, I'm here for like 90 days. Like, just sell me a personal training and get me an every group exercise class. I'm not going back there.

Jarrold Saracco ([14:02](#)):

But, but see

Pete Moore ([14:02](#)):

That, that's a motivation that you need to know,

Jarrold Saracco ([14:04](#)):

But it's also an emotional response. That's, and the only way I'm gonna find that out is if I'm asking you questions. Exactly. And there's no chat Exactly bot that's gonna do that the right way and really dig deep and understand that. Yeah.

Pete Moore ([14:15](#)):

So, you know, from a standpoint of like in incentivizing and we work with this company, promotional, incentivize someone to tell you their information. Sure. But that's monetary. Whether that's get buy 'em dinner, you know, coffee. I feel like people have front desk workers that check people in for a class and then they, they play on their phones. Get those people to go on their, on my LinkedIn, go on my Facebook, go on my YouTube, find out shit about me and put it in a database. Don't, don't stalk me, but say like, Hey, it looks like, you know, Hey, I know when his birthday is. Hey, it looks like he likes to go to sporting events. Oh. The guy said on his LinkedIn that he that he loves to catch footballs. Oh. We just hired this guy who used to play at Rutgers, who was all American.

Jarrold Saracco ([14:56](#)):

So you mentioned introduced them. Yeah. 100%. You mentioned Long Island. One of my clients is in Holbrook online. Right here. Yeah, I know it is. Right. Built a beautiful 45,000 square foot gym there in, in Holbrook. And that, that desk staff, you know, they're supposed to take that personal interest, but are the membership coordinators there. Guess what? Still write handwritten thank you notes. That's, we make them write handwritten thank you notes. Nobody does that anymore, I think. That's

Pete Moore ([15:19](#)):

Great.

Jarrold Saracco ([15:20](#)):

Get an email drip. We'll do it. Yeah. We're still gonna put you in our automated email drip. We're still gonna do that. But getting a thank you card from the gym that's handwritten. You don't see that anymore?

Pete Moore ([15:30](#)):

It's, you know what I Don's do anymore? Either. I don't even throw those out. I feel like it's like, it's special. It's like artwork. Yeah,

Jarrold Saracco ([15:35](#)):

Exactly. It's a dinosaur. They took the time, they took the

Pete Moore ([15:38](#)):

Fossil. Unfortunately, I don't have one of those magnetic refrigerators.

Jarrold Saracco ([15:42](#)):

Oh. Put it up on there with the, a little, a little alphabet letter magnets. Or you can spell. Yeah, I was thinking about



Pete Moore ([15:46](#)):

Maybe like one of the strawberry shortcake things, or like, my mom would've like a picture of a house that we used to live in or something. We

Jarrold Saracco ([15:52](#)):

Had all the letters and you know, you had to spell stuff on a, on a refrigerator. Yeah, yeah, yeah. My mom still has pictures

Pete Moore ([15:58](#)):

From I was so thinking about maybe I should send those to my mom. There you go. And maybe we'll go from Holbrook. We'll have 'em do like a drop ship for my

Jarrold Saracco ([16:04](#)):

Mom. Well, you should go check it out. All

Pete Moore ([16:06](#)):

Right. What's it called?

Jarrold Saracco ([16:07](#)):

Unique Fitness.

Pete Moore ([16:08](#)):

Unique Fitness. Yep. All

Jarrold Saracco ([16:09](#)):

Right. Awesome. Right, right near MacArthur Airport.

Pete Moore ([16:12](#)):

That's great. So, you know, as you kinda look forward here, you you're running your, your own business right now. Yeah. You got a number of clients. You call yourself the health club doctor. Yep. at the same time, like a doctor maybe comes in parachutes in when I'm having some issues. Correct. I'll call 'em and be like, Hey, I got some things going on.

Jarrold Saracco ([16:30](#)):

That's what the symbol is. The para jump 'em right in. Ah, it's jumping

Pete Moore ([16:33](#)):

Right in. Yeah. Jump in and then jump out. Yep. So how do you work with people? Is it kind of like, Hey, I'm here for you when you're in the trenches, I gotta get you out and then you call me when you need

Jarrold Saracco ([16:42](#)):

Me. It's a little bit of everything. Okay. You know, so we, we do what we call gym rescue. Right. So when they're having trouble and they got, why

Pete Moore ([16:49](#)):

Isn't there a show like that by the

Jarrold Saracco ([16:50](#)):

Way? Said bar. You know, it's funny, I got asked about that many years ago, and then there was a group that jumped in and did a similar show and it was terrible.

Pete Moore ([16:57](#)):

So, what was it called?

Jarrold Saracco ([16:59](#)):

I don't think they called it Jim Red. They called, it was like that Restaurant Impossible Gym Impossible or something like that. It was bad. It was not good. We should go and do that. We should do it. We should look at it again. But and

Pete Moore ([17:10](#)):

I'll have my mom Right. Handwritten notes in my,

Jarrold Saracco ([17:11](#)):

There we go. Thank you very much. That's it. Watches the show and we'll do it from Phil. How you doing?

Pete Moore ([17:16](#)):

How you doing? How you

Jarrold Saracco ([17:17](#)):

Doing?

Pete Moore ([17:17](#)):

You Lou or Mickey <laugh>.

Jarrold Saracco ([17:19](#)):

But

Pete Moore ([17:20](#)):

So,

Jarrold Saracco ([17:20](#)):

So we do the gym rescue stuff. We also do the full service concept to completion. I've literally had people sit down with me and say, Hey, I've always had this vision. They write stuff on a napkin at a bar and go, can you do this? And Yeah, absolutely. But you know, everything in between. It could be operations, it could be sales, it could be training, leadership, management. But I, I really do enjoy the turnaround process. I love the coaching process, watching the staff learn and grow. But I do love the concept of completion, ground up type of stuff. So that's

Pete Moore ([17:50](#)):

A lot of fun. Awesome. Well, hopefully we can get some work done together in 2023. Let's do it. And going forward, you know, we run something called Halo Academy Yep. As well. So I'd love to figure out how to get you immersed in that in some capacity. Maybe even teach some classes for sure with us.

Jarrold Saracco ([18:04](#)):

Love educating. Speaking today at three 30 actually,

Pete Moore ([18:06](#)):

So yeah. Where's that gonna be?

Jarrold Saracco ([18:08](#)):

Room 11 right here. We're talking about profitability,

Pete Moore ([18:11](#)):

So. Oh, okay. Yeah, like that. I got EBITDA hat on.

Jarrold Saracco ([18:13](#)):

I know today. I know. So my, my whole consulting

Pete Moore ([18:15](#)):

Business, you don't have EBITDA can talk to you.

Jarrold Saracco ([18:16](#)):

That's right. But my whole consulting business is built on the eight building box of profitability. And most people they focus on two or three, but they don't focus on all eight.

Pete Moore ([18:24](#)):

All right. You heard it first here. I get to rewind on that after Ursa. Are they taping it, by the way?

Jarrold Saracco ([18:29](#)):

What's

Pete Moore ([18:29](#)):

That? Are they taping that?

Jarrold Saracco ([18:31](#)):

I don't know. We'll find out.

Pete Moore ([18:33](#)):

We gotta tape more Educational content is probably another takeaway from Yeah, exactly. From the show here. Why not? Hundred

Jarrold Saracco ([18:38](#)):

Percent. I

Pete Moore ([18:39](#)):

Mean, somebody's gonna watch it. We, exactly. So in closing here, you got any good quotes that you live by? Business quotes, personal quotes? Quite

Jarrold Saracco ([18:48](#)):

A few, but I think one that really sticks with me in all things, you know, when you're through changing, you're through, you know, you, you gotta be able to adapt to change. Change is gonna happen whether you make it happen or somebody else makes it happen. And your ability to adapt, move forward, you know and, and grow and learn from those situations is really important. And so if you're afraid of change, you're probably gonna have a, a difficult time navigating life in business. So when you're through changing, you're through.

Pete Moore ([19:15](#)):

I like that. There was a guy that we interviewed down in Atlanta over, during, during a little bit after Covid. And he is like, that is one phrase, have you come this far to come this far? Right, exactly. Exactly. I'm just like, you know, if you're not gonna change, like, come on. Like, let's just keep, yeah. Let's power through this. Love it. Awesome, man. All right. Well feel free to use the halo term as much as you want. Awesome. Limited royalty free. And let's do a Halo Academy together

Jarrold Saracco ([19:39](#)):

Next. That sounds great, man. Hey bro, bro, thanks for the opportunity, man.

Pete Moore ([19:41](#)):

Appreciate it.