

[Transcript] My First Million / #30 - Reinventing the Energy Drink

All right.

Quick break to tell you about another podcast that we're interested in right now, HubSpot just launched a Shark Tank rewatch podcast called Another Bite.

Every week, the hosts relive the latest and greatest pitches from Shark Tank, from Squatty Potty to the Mench on a Bench to Ring Doorbell, and they break down why these pitches were winners or losers.

And each company's go-to-market strategy, branding, pricing, valuation, everything.

Basically all the things you want to know about how to survive the tank and scale your company on your own.

If you want to give it a listen, you can find another bite on whatever podcast app you listen to, like Apple or Spotify or whatever you're using right now.

All right.

Back to the show.

We were at like a party and I'm handing out five-HTP milk thistle, B vitamins, because you know, we're up for basically two and a half days dancing and having a good time.

You know, my business partner now, Orion, and I started talking the day after taking on the supplements.

He's like, hey, we thought we should package these supplements up instead of having to buy full bottles of each because we thought, well, let's put all these in a beverage.

Can we actually pull this off?

So we go super thin because we burn through all our savings starting the company.

And I mean, we're eating like mac and cheese and tuna every night.

I've got two kids at the time.

We're living in a 400-square-foot trailer.

We were doing like eight cases a month there, so we're like, shit, there's something here.

We used to ring the bell in the office, you know, when we get a new gym and it was like, well, the first month we got like 12 gyms, we were so stoked.

The next month we got 30.

Then we got 50.

Then we were hitting like 200 a month.

Wow.

Right?

It starts adding up quick.

It went from 700 grand to 4 million in one year.

So where do you think this goes?

How big does this get?

Over a billion.

5 million is not enough.

10 million?

15 million.

20 million dollars.

100 million dollars.

It's half a billion in revenue.

850 million dollars.

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One or two people in a bedroom actually put threats to these like giant, giant, giant, multi-million dollar companies because you have creativity and you have nothing to lose. Add another zero to that price, buddy.

Add two more zeroes.

Right?

First?

No million.

Every week we sit down with self-made millionaires and ask them, how did you do it?

I didn't start a podcast.

I started my own personal business school and the teachers are the successful entrepreneurs behind the biggest brands and businesses that we find today.

I wanted to know the real stories with all the details like, how did you get your first hundred customers?

What did it feel like when shit had to pay?

I ask them, how did you spend your money now that you're rich?

And what would you do if you were starting over from scratch again today?

If you're like me and you want to own your own business instead of living a 9 to 5 job, this is the podcast for you.

The Hustle presents my first million.

So I just took a sip of LifeAid's new CBD drink.

So I'm here with founder of LifeAid, Aaron Hynd.

LifeAid is a new sort of energy drink company.

Do you like being called energy drink?

Functional beverage.

Functional beverage.

That's less catchy.

It's less catchy but there's a lot of negativity associated with energy.

Yeah, that's why I pause.

I was like, I don't want to call it that.

But basically, if you're like me...

Clean energy would be a better description.

Right.

Like, I don't want to drink Red Bulls and Monsters myself, right?

Like, I'm not going to put that in my body.

And so, LifeAid is like an alternative.

So founder, you're based out of Santa Cruz, you came up for the day, you got a party to go to tonight.

We do.

So I appreciate you stopping by.

Yeah, bro.

Exciting company.

You guys are doing \$35 million in revenue, I think this year, right about?

Yeah, right.

So that's, you know, got to be a \$100 million company.

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Not many people have done that in the sort of beverage space.

And so we're going to learn...

99% failure rate.

Right.

We're going to learn how you did it, a little bit about you and what it takes to get something like this off the ground.

Because I think I get a couple of different types of guests, right?

You get like the high tech entrepreneur.

And if you're not a programmer, you're not into software, those are sort of just a different beast altogether.

Sure.

But this is something where like, you know, I remember in college when I saw five hour energy and I was like, what's the backstory?

How do you start one of these?

And look, you fucking, you started one of these, you did it.

Give me two things.

I want you to first give me the generic backstory, which is, you know, I was just tired of my options and I wanted to make something better.

Then you want the truth.

And then I want the truth.

Yeah.

Give me both.

Give me both.

They're both, they're probably related.

I don't think they're opposite.

One is more depth.

Yeah.

And so I appreciate that because you're right.

There are kind of two versions.

I'd say the generic story is, you know, I was a sports chiropractor for 10 years, grew up in Santa Cruz.

I met my business partner, Ryan, at a CrossFit gym, CrossFit, North Santa Cruz.

Right.

He's a certified financial planner.

We both were writing for the paper, started hanging out.

He's a very accomplished DJ.

My wife and I love house music and we both had two young kids.

Our daughters are actually best friends, met in kindergarten.

Our wives became friends.

We started hanging out for a couple of years and brainstorming ideas and, you know, part, we were both very frustrated with the lack of healthy beverages on the market, especially marketed to kids, you know, what our kids are going towards, you know, the kids weren't reaching back in 2011 for kombucha or coconut water, right?

They weren't reaching for monsters and red bulls and it's like, I was offended.

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I'm like, I can't have my six-year-old reaching for this garbage because it's a bunch of shit. So it was really out of ignorance and passion.

We started Life Aid.

So that's more the corporate line, which is 100% true.

The backstory is we were at like a pre-compression, a pre-burning man part.

We were already called three degrees.

I had been part of the founding team for that, you know, helping throw it for several years.

So I invited him and his wife we had recently met and because, you know, I knew he'd enjoy the DJs.

He was like 22 DJs and I'm handing out five-HCP milk, thistle, B vitamins because, you know, we're up for basically two and a half days dancing and having a good time.

What are those things you just said?

I've never taken any of those.

Okay.

So they're all supplements.

One's for serotonin.

If you're having serotonin.

One's good for the liver.

So these are more like vitamins, these aren't party vitamins, these are all natural vitamins.

These are all recovery stuff.

Okay.

Yeah, recovery stuff.

Right.

And I had an eye drop business at the time called IRIEye's Eye Drops.

So I sold eye drops to the Stoners basically.

Okay.

And that's the most Santa Cruz thing I've ever heard.

Well, it was a good lesson and accurate thinking because Stoners don't give a shit that their eyes are red.

It actually, I actually got pretty good distribution.

We turned the most units in novelty shops, not in head shops, which is interesting.

You know, my business partner now, Orion, and I started talking the day after taking all these supplements.

He's like, hey, we thought we should package these supplements up instead of having to buy full bottles of each, put it on the counter in 7-Eleven and call it party pills.

So anytime, you know, I have an idea or he has an idea or we bullshit a lot of ideas, but most of them were lame.

Right.

So I remember my wife coming to me the next day is like, hey, that party pill thing you should, you guys should look into that.

So we started going down that road where we were going to create these party packs.

And we figured if supplements in pill form were the way to go, I'm old enough, if some of you out there might remember, Nodos was really big before Red Bull.

Right.

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Well, that doesn't exist anymore.
Red Bull is a multi-billion dollar company.
So we thought, well, let's put all these in a beverage.
So the beverage was called Raverade, which was a little racy.
Our friends in the scene said, no, no, you got to tone it down.
So we didn't call it party aid.
And then one night on his birthday, you know, so we registered partyaid.com on his birthday.
And then we're like, well, if we do party.
We crossfit.
Let's do one for fitness called FitAid and we golf.
Let's do one golf rate.
We even got Boneraid.com for \$12.
You're just buying domains.
We bought 80 domain names in one night.
Anything with an AID.
Right.
Okay.
And Boneraid, that was available.
That's amazing.
It's still available for the right price.
We still own it, actually.
And then it's just like internet, Google searching, like, okay, what do we want to put in this?
And, you know, I had some background nutrition, so I'm back ending the formulations.
We started researching flavor houses, researching who produces these cans.
Right.
You know, that's an interesting story in and of itself is like, we call the can manufacturer
Rexum at the time was the largest that fed the United States, West Coast sales rep gets
on the phone.
And again, you got to realize 95% failure rate and beverage in the first year, 99% in
the first five years.
So they don't make it.
So the guy quickly surmises, we don't know what we're talking about.
He says, well, the minimum runs 204,000 units, well, we didn't have that much money.
And we said, well, sometimes we heard that there's these things called silver bullets,
which are just blank cans.
These are all made to order.
They're printed on, right?
When they make them, the whole can, the production print, there's silver bullets, which are blank
cans.
You go, ah, those are overruns.
They barely happen.
You know, that's not really a thing that's available.
Thanks for playing because you're both broke dicks and you don't know what you're talking
about.

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So stop wasting my time.

Basically, it was the summary of the call hangs up and we're like, oh, God, there goes our billion dollar idea, you know, but then we had this idea, well, hey, let's send them a nice handwritten thank you card.

This is back in 2011 with a \$100 roost chris gift certificate in it.

So thanks for your time.

Wow.

Let us know if anything becomes available.

A week later, we get a phone call, hey, I got two pallets of silver bullets for you guys to buy.

Wow.

That was the beginning of it.

We filled two pallets.

And was that a, I like that little life hack you did there.

So most people wouldn't do that.

What was the, what was the thinking, you know, to keep that lead warm when I've been there before when people are like, look, you don't know what you're doing.

You're way, you're way in over your head here.

Look, I'm going to help you out and just tell you now so you don't sort of go further down this road.

But you didn't, you didn't take no for an answer.

You didn't get a chip on your shoulder.

You were like, no, let's, let's warm this guy up and see if, you know, something comes through.

Well, reciprocity, anyone who's read like Chowdini's work, you know, reciprocity is such a powerful, powerful force, you know, it's undeniable.

So we knew that if we, we were going to stand out by sending my handwritten note and then the \$100 roost chris card, it's like, well, who doesn't like to go to roost chris?

Right.

Okay.

So you get the silver bullets and now you're in the game a little bit.

You're like, okay.

We're in the game.

This idea is alive.

The idea is alive.

So we go down to the flavor house.

Barely make it there.

What's a flavor house?

Can I go to a flavor house?

That sounds awesome.

Anyone can.

I mean, it's basically like a little food science lab.

Okay.

Yeah.

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So it's just like if you went into, you know, your college chemistry class, it's like everyone's in little white smocks and they've got test tubes and scales and shits getting mixed together.

Great.

And so we went down.

I had everything formulated.

The scientists looked at the formulation said, wow, this is great, but if you don't want to use, you know, artificial sweeteners and, you know, this, you can't put this level of active ingredients in a drink.

It's going to cost too much and you can't do without artificial sweeteners or your sugar level would be too high.

We're like, okay, we'll go somewhere else then.

So we literally started to turn around, walk out the door and she's like, wait, wait, wait.

Let's give it a shot because we were ignorant and we were just uncompromising like, okay, we want to make the cleanest products on the markets and no sucralose, no aspartame, you know, low to no sugar and why was that important to you?

Because obviously as a consumer, I appreciate that, but it seems like that was a part of your lifestyle.

You weren't just doing it because you thought that's where the opportunity was.

It was like a fun, it seems like it's a fundamental part of you.

Why was that the case?

Yeah.

I mean, look, Orion grew up on goat's milk in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

I live completely off the grid currently, you know, I live off the grid.

I've got chicken and solar batteries, you know, it's, it's just how does it mean to live off the grid?

I don't even know anyone who lives off the grid.

That means you're not connected to PG&E.

So I have my own well, I have my own septic tank and I create my own power.

Holy shit.

Yeah.

So when all these rolling blackouts and everything, I'm just kind of laughing right ago.

And so you, you do that, does that take up like a massive amount of your time to maintain all of those sort of life utilities for yourself?

Yeah.

It's, it could be a full-time job just taking care of the property, which is eventually what I want to get to.

But I'm balancing here now taking care of the property.

I had my chiropractic practice still because that's paying the bills and, you know, after we started getting a little bit of traction.

So we bought this property.

It was just a deer trail.

I went through with my wife, we hiked down this deer trail.

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I had a little chainsaw and I'm like, shit, I think you can see the ocean from here. And she climbed up this tree and we're like, yeah, we can see the ocean. So we had this idea. Well, let's buy this property. It's off the grid. We're going to, we have two kids at the time, two small kids or one kid. We had the other kid there actually. We're going to move in on a little trailer, a little 400 square foot trailer and we'll live in a trailer and then we'll build our tree house on top because I'm a chiro, I'll make a good money. It's all referrals. You know, fairly easy practice. I'm only working like 26 hours a week. And so that was a plan. Well, then life aid comes along and we're doing this thing on the side and after about a year we started getting a little traction and my business partner and I were like, shit, we got to sell our practices, burn the ships to the shore and go all in, right? It's time to do that. Like if this thing has some life to it, it has legs. So we both sell our practices and then the guy I sold it to, I sell him my golden goose and he kills it in six months, goes BK. So I literally have no income. Life aid's not paying me money. The practice is not now paying me no money. He was supposed to continually pay you for some amount of time. Yeah, yeah, yeah. So any entrepreneurs out there, take the cash up front, do not finance it. So we go super thin, like super thin because we burn through all our savings starting the company and I mean, we're eating like mac and cheese and tuna every night, which is like a dollar meal for anyone out there who's totally broke, you know, we've got two kids at the time. We're living in a 400 square foot trailer off the grid, eating out of ice chest, like heating water up on the stove in the beginning before we got our solar panels to pour it in the bathtub for like two inches of hot water, like it was like little house on the prairie shit. And your wife is, she's down for the cause or she's like, hey, we need to get back into like mainstream society. My wife was from the city here, so she was full city slicker. She had never done anything. I'm like handed her chainsaw. I was like, okay, honey, this is how you do it. Don't cut your arm off. Let's go. She's my hero, actually.

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She's a trooper.

She is a trooper.

Okay.

So that sounds tough.

How long was that period of like, I don't want to call it rock bottom, but like definitely like a tougher time.

Challenging.

Yeah.

That lasted like six months and then we were starting to be able to draw \$1,000 a month from, from LifeVid and then it was like, oh, that was such a relief, you know, because it's like a little bit of income coming in.

And then it got to like 3,000 a month and then I was like, we are in heaven, like, oh, three grand a month.

We can actually, you know, rent a movie once in a while.

And then it, you know, it just continued to grow and grow and grow from there and fortunately we made our mistakes off Broadway and we're both ignorant to the industry, which I think helped us out quite a bit.

I mean, we used like old school direct marketing to get our initial traction, not trying to go into, you know, every grocery store out there.

Right.

Okay.

So let's rewind.

You're back at the food scientist lab.

I think it's good unless you add all the sweeteners because you have so much, so much on the sort of supplement side.

How did you guys resolve that?

You guys almost walk out.

She's like, wait.

Yeah, she said, no, no, wait.

And we just went in the lab and started pounding it out and our first rendition tasted horrible, horrible.

But we kept working at it and as anything, you know, after a couple years now, now this is the first rendition.

Yeah, this is good.

I don't know if I'm, if it's coming on the microphone, but I keep drinking this thing.

It actually tastes good.

Yeah, yeah.

So all of our drinks are great now.

But I mean, it, there's alternative sweeteners out there like monk fruit, which is all natural, zero calorie, you know, better forms of stevia.

And I mean, the longer you stay in the game, it's just like anything you learn.

You figure it out.

You figure it out.

Yeah.

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And so you guys kept working with the flavor house.

You get the flavor to where after a few iterations, it's like palatable.

Right.

And how do you get the first hundred customers?

You said something about direct marketing.

Yeah.

What were you, where did you, how did you go from zero to your first kind of hundred or a thousand customers?

Yeah, good question.

So we started out just like every beverage company.

It's like, oh, we want to get in stores and that kind of thing.

You know, that model was flawed because consumers in a grocery store, in a convenience store, especially for 30 seconds, they know exactly what kind of drink they want.

You know, it's not a great place for trial.

Maybe Whole Foods is okay for trial.

So we started with our golf raid product and selling it in person.

All right.

Let's take a second to talk about Howard Stern.

That's right.

Howard Stern, the king of audio.

You see, I think he might be getting ripped off by Sirius XM.

If he was to turn his show into a paid subscription product, he could nearly triple the 90 million he's making a year as a salary.

How would he do it?

Supercast.

That's right.

Supercast is the sponsor for this week's episode.

What Supercast does is build and maintain paid subscription audiences while allowing you to retain complete control over your content, your business, and your creative output.

If you want to earn a Media King's ransom, use Supercast.

Visit supercast.com for more.

All right.

Let's go to the show.

Right.

So we were sampling in golf courses where people need it most, drink one when you tee off one at the turn.

We started getting traction there.

We were able to raise a little bit of money and then we started selling to fit a gym, to crossfit gyms because we were in the crossfit community from the very early days and basically we use direct mail.

So you own a crossfit gym.

Yep.

I don't know you from Adam.

I force upon you.

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I send you four cans of product.

You have this drink here.

I just sent it to you.

Right?

I have a copy that we wrote that just said, hey, drink this ice cold after your next workout.

Here's why it's so great.

Here's why it's so good for you.

And by the way, if you buy 10 cases from us, we'll give you a free refrigerator.

Right.

Okay.

And this is back in the day when Crossfit gyms maybe had water and they didn't even have a refrigerator.

So it was a very appealing offer.

It was basically doing what Red Bull did in bars, but we were doing the crossfit gyms.

Right.

And were you looking, did you go back and try to figure out the Red Bull Playbook from their beginnings or did you not do that type of research?

No, no, no.

We definitely looked at their model and what made them so successful in street sampling and dominating the bar market and that type of thing and applied some of that and then put our own twist on it.

Right.

And you guys, and did you tell the Crossfit gyms like, look, we're in the community.

We've been doing Crossfit for X amount of years.

Absolutely.

Yeah.

Absolutely.

We pulled on our Crossfit background.

Our, you know, my background as a sports chiropractor and treating Crossfit HQ in Santa Cruz.

That's how I even got into Crossfit.

We signed one of...

You're a fit guy.

There's a podcast where people can't see you, but you're a fit guy.

It feels like, you know, if you made a product, I would sort of believe, okay, this guy lives a healthy lifestyle.

Yeah.

I think that's key.

Right.

Yeah.

We got one of the athletes and influencers in the space that was influential to help kind of put a stamp of validity on it.

And then we started a direct-to-consumer marketing, you know.

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We started building our Instagram following, marketing direct-to-consumer and basically creating irresistible offers, you know, like this is such a no-brainer offer to come into the top of our funnel.

And we know our conversion rates, so just having confidence in your math and your funnel and knowing that you have a great product and great follow-up.

And we built out our customer service team as a very first team that we built out before any salespeople.

We had robust customer service.

What are the issues going on, you know, one-on-one with our customers?

How can we over-deliver constantly and just providing a ton of value?

And did you have any mentors from that sort of CPG or food and beverage space?

Not from CPG, more on the marketing side.

Okay.

One of my really good friends, and he's on our advisory board now, Ben Altadana, who is a brilliant marketer, he basically told me in the early, early days, this is back when I was on the zero-income train, he's like, hey, there's this marketing group I'm a part of, it's a lot of sharp marketers, I think you'll learn a lot.

It's 25 grand a year to join.

I know you don't got the money, but I'll pay for it and just pay me back whenever you can.

Wow.

And no paperwork, no contract, nothing.

He just paid for it.

And going to that, it was like- And these are in-person events?

Yeah, this was in-person event, and then it was in Arizona, and what I heard was we had three products on the market.

We had Gulf Raid, Fit Aid, and PartiAid.

So PartiAid's kind of our burner community, 5-HTP drink, Fit Aid, CrossFit, Gulf Raid, obviously Gulf.

So we're doing events.

I mean, we're up in the city doing a fire festival or something, then we're changing clothes, going to a golf event with polo shirt on, and then changing into our Lulu gear and Reeboks to go to a CrossFit event.

I mean, it was just chaos.

They each had separate websites, separate social, everything, and he's like, you got to choose a single target market, or else you're going to burn yourself out, you're going to run out of all your cash, and get nowhere, no traction with any of the community.

So even though Gulf Raid was bringing in about 700 grand at the time, we looked at the trajectory, the sell-in and the sell-through of Fit Aid and the CrossFit market and said, you know what, they're doing better volumes, we're getting a greater adoption, quicker adoption.

So we went all in on the smaller one and went from 700 grand to 4 million in one year.

And so what's a good adoption rate?

What's a good repurchase rate that you guys were looking at and you're like, that's promising?

Even though it's small today, I believe these rates are like where we need to be.

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Yeah, we were doing with some of our early gyms, we were doing like eight cases a month. They were 824 packs, so 16 cases, we pack in 12 packs now, so 16 cases a month, which was really good volume, that's more volume than you do in a grocery store typically.

So we're like, shit, there's something here.

And then we started this direct marketing and forcing these 4 packs on somebody and we used to ring the bell in the office, you know, when we get a new gym and it was like, oh, the first month we got like 12 gyms, we were so stoked.

The next month we got 30, then we got 50, then we were hitting like 200 a month.

And these things are each like \$2,500 a year in revenue, right?

It starts adding up quick, it's sweet.

And so you guys found that playbook that you start milking on the CrossFit side.

And today you actually do have the multiple brands.

So did you go sort of narrow and then go back out broad again, or how did that happen?

Yeah, so we went, you know, continued to go deep with FitAid and we love CrossFit.

We're still, you know, official recovery drink at the CrossFit Games, Spartan Race.

We are heavy in that community as well.

And then started really creating products around our lifestyle, you know, it's like

I'm really big in the neotropics and brain health.

So then we created FocusAid, we started Neotropic Drink and, you know, we're traveling, we're traveling all the time, like 52 flights a couple of years ago, a few years ago now, you know, just constantly, every weekend on the road, it's like, oh, we need immunity aid for our immune system when we're traveling and just creating products that we would use ourselves and that we'd feel good about giving our kids.

And so give people, give people a sense of the hustle it takes to get this going.

Like you mentioned, you know, we're doing a golf event, quick change clothes, you're at this here in the city for a party, change clothes, you're going to this CrossFit gym time.

What was it like getting this thing off the ground?

Tell me some more stories about like how, what it took to get the thing going on the hustle side.

Well, you can see my hair.

I was completely black hair 10 years ago and I'm fairly gray now.

Yeah, I got some grays on the side here.

I mean, what's it take?

It takes resilience to a level that you can't even imagine.

It takes checking your ego at the door, you know, in a very, very big way.

I mean, there's so many things that can sink a company, right?

It takes a hundred things all aligning to have success.

It takes one thing to completely sink you.

Did you guys ever face that sort of, oh shit, this might, this might, you know, this thing might fall through.

Once you got a little bit of momentum, did you ever have like a daily, daily, what were some of the big disasters that came up?

I mean, financial is a big, big one, you know, like having three grand, four grand and payroll

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do do and having two grand in the bank account like, oh shit, we're supposed to pay these people tomorrow.

And we only had a couple of employees was like, we literally don't have the money to pay us, you know, from hiring the wrong people out of desperation, like, oh, we really need to hire people.

And then it just crushing culture and, you know, from building a culture, becoming a manager and a boss, when my biggest team was four people prior to this.

And now we have 70, you know, it's just, there's, to having blowout arguments with my business partner, but because we both felt so passionately, it could have been easy like FU, FU were done. I mean, that could have happened a hundred times, you know, to having, you know, product not run on the line.

One time they ran our product and it was under carbonated, so we couldn't sell any of it.

And that sucked up all our cash flow.

Like there's so many challenges, you know, as an entrepreneur, but that's also what makes it so fun, you know, I mean, you're like constantly living on the edge, like, oh shit, you know, can we make, can we actually pull this off and, you know, sometimes things just continue to align and I have, you know, really deep faith that this company just was meant to be because there's so many times we would have completely gone out of business and it's something just worked out at the last second.

So you guys got from, you know, obviously the zero to one stage where you got this thing off the ground, you're starting to pay yourself through random month or whatever.

And at what point were you like, okay, this is, this might be big.

When we finally got our first PE round from like a very respectable private equity firm partner.

Which was how far, how far into the business or where were you guys at at that time?

We were, let me think, we were at year, between year and four and five, I believe.

Okay.

Yeah, we were doing about, we were doing like eight, nine million, something like that.

And you approached them, they approached you?

We were out kind of testing the waters, dipping our toes in.

We got an introduction from a mutual friend and they flew out to our office in Santa Cruz and we met them and just like super cool guys, like all their money, long horizons.

It was just a lot of alignment compared to a lot of the other companies we were meeting with that was just more like turn and burn, like, okay, we got five years, seven years and you know, you got to, you got to execute in that time.

These guys were like, hey, let's continue to grow something that's built to last a durable brand here.

And you approach business from a different perspective when you're like, okay, what's in the best long-term benefit for this community versus how do we maximize profits to flip the thing in two years?

For sure.

So where do you think this goes?

How big does this get?

Over a billion.

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And what does it take to get there?

Two, 250 million in sales will put us over a billion.

What does that take?

I mean, it's just continuing.

Keep on, keep it on.

Keep on, keep it on.

I mean, we're just continuing to execute, heads down, executing.

Here's the thing, it doesn't matter what your anticipated exit is or even if you're building a company just to cash flow it, as long as you execute, all doors remain open.

I don't care if it's a recession, if the economy is booming, IPO, you're bought out, whatever, merger, execute.

You execute on key metrics and all doors remain open.

I get a lot of questions, I'm sure you do too, which is like, how do I raise money?

How do you sell?

And it's like, if you want to raise money, build a great company.

People want to give you money.

If you want to sell, build a great company.

People want to buy your company.

And so that is the most foolproof way to do it.

You can still sometimes sort of raise money even if you have a bad company or sell, even if you don't have great prospects.

But if you want to know the best strategy is to build a really damn good company and then everybody wants to get involved, you have a great time hiring people and so on and so forth.

100%.

So you've grown this thing now and how do the big competitors respond?

I mean, have you seen a change from the sort of red bulls of the world where they look at this and they say, this is a competitive threat?

Have they turned their attention yet?

Absolutely.

I mean, they're not dumb.

They see their numbers, which are much bigger than our numbers, but even a little 1% shift in their numbers is a big number.

So I mean, we flew out, Nestle had us out the other day to give a presentation on food as medicine.

Like all the big companies are paying attention.

Most of them aren't good at creating their own better for you in-house.

They just, for whatever reason, they can't do it, but they've been on acquisitions, they'll take minority share in different companies.

And so I like it because it's changing trajectory and as long as we continue to change the health trajectory in this company in a positive direction, then over time, the expectations change and then people are just healthier.

Like the fact that diabetes rates are higher than they've ever been in the history of this country is ridiculous.

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It's ridiculous.

So, and not just that, it's everything, like health is not improving.

So the current model is broken, and a big part of that is food and beverage.

We've been poisoning people with sugar and artificial ingredients for 100 years now.

How do you build that trust?

Because I'll be honest with you, when I first looked up the company, I was like, okay, it's a drink company.

I've seen so many of these that are either just straight up they're bad for you or they say they're good for you, but they're actually bad for you, they just changed the profile and it's like, it's no sugar, okay, but it's something else instead.

Like I know in the gaming community, because I'm at Twitch right now, the gaming community has G Fuel, which is like some bullshit to me, right?

So how do you build that trust or am I just, Mr. Skeptical and everybody else is like kind of down, everybody else sort of buys in right away?

You should be Skeptical, and more and more people are.

It's like 65% of people now read labels prior to making a new purchase, which is great.

I love label readers, I love nutritionists, I love doctors, I love people in the know,

because they're looking at this can and they're going, okay, let me see the sugar content.

Oh, let me see that, oh, there must be two servings per container, like companies like to play that non-transparent bullshit.

Oh, they're going to use some artificial sweeteners like Sucralis or Aspartame or how much added caffeine is in here.

Then they buy it and they call it right in, they're like, hey, trust pilot review, like

I'm a so-and-so, and this product is actually really damn clean and delivers, it tastes great, these guys are legit.

Yeah, that's great.

And what do you do business-wise now?

So we were talking on our way in, you said, once you're a made man, it becomes easier to make money, right?

Because as you taste some success and you get a reputation, now opportunities, deals, different things start coming to you, talk a little bit about that phenomenon and what you're doing, how you're thinking about approaching that.

Yeah, I mean, one, we continually work with young entrepreneurs all the time they're reaching out with mainly CPGs, but have some idea or some stage of growth, because that always comes back full circle.

So we're working with companies, we're making some small investments in other companies, personally, that we see traction.

But my point before we started was once you've had that successful checkout, you have that reputation, you've been there, done that, you've kind of taken all the jabs and bruises and gotten beaten up and come out the other side.

You have the knowledge, you have the reputation, and you got a little bit of money, hopefully a little money in your pocket, then you can really go, okay, what can I do now?

Now I can take 10 entrepreneurs, 10 different businesses that are all in a space that I truly believe in and that are all showing signs of life and increasing velocities and

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doing well on the shelf and give them each a half million bucks or a million bucks and let them run with it and then sit back and be more of a mentor, a coach, advisory board, board of directors, that type of thing.

And I think that's where real wealth, as I observe it, that's where real wealth is created.

And what has been a splurge that you've done now that, because you went from mac and cheese and tuna to now, you guys doing well, where have you sort of, how have you been able to celebrate that?

What's your use of this money?

Because the last podcast I did, the guy had a great phrase, it's not rocket science, but he just said, I just view money as a tool to enable a better quality of life.

100%.

And so how are you using money as a tool for you to have a more interesting, more adventurous, more fun life?

Yeah, well the first part is when we were able to take a couple chips off the table, which wasn't a ton of money, but I was \$246,000 in student debt loans and I paid them all off in one stroke of the key and it was the biggest weight lifted from my chest, like I don't know the government or anything, it felt so good to be debt free.

And then as we were able to save up a little bit of money, I had on my vision board that I'd look at every day when I brush my teeth on the mirror there, it was like spend a month or more in Hawaii.

So for the last two years now, I was able to go in on it, just a little condo in Poipu in the south shore of Kauai with a couple of friends and we bought a condo, beautiful little two bedroom close to the beach and now we're doing at least a month a year in Kauai.

That's amazing.

I love that.

I tried to do a similar thing myself where I said to my wife, I said, let's spend one month out of every year just living somewhere else.

And so we did Buenos Aires the first year, we had a baby this year, so I don't know if we're going to be able to pull it off necessarily, but I highly recommend that.

And in fact, the easy excuse is like, I'm too busy or my work won't let me do it or whatever.

And I'd say, if you think you want to do that, you should be just go for it, just go ask and say, hey, I want to work out of this other country, I'll work.

I'm not necessarily taking full month off, but I want to go experience something else.

Buenos Aires on my shortlist for sure, that in Croatia.

That's amazing.

And so what about, you strike me as somebody who is, when you said you lived off the grid and you're into new tropics and all this stuff, I think you're thinking for yourself, right?

So those are contrarian things right now, those not, like society's not spoon feeding those to you.

I was asked this question not long ago, and it's kind of a hard question.

So you can take a second to think about it, but the question was this, it's like a dinner

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party conversation, which is if you, if you could change three things and you could do one, two or three, whatever you want, if you could change three things about the way that society works.

So things that societal norms today, but that, you know, don't fit your worldview.

What three would you change if you could snap your finger and then society sort of changes in that way?

What would you change?

Right, all television, so TV gone, like CNBC, Fox News, CNN, it's all BS, like it drives me to say it.

I haven't had TV in my house for 17 years, I don't miss a thing, you know, so I'd get rid of it.

TV gone.

I would have public funding for politicians, as long as they got a certain amount of signatures, there'd be here's your whatever, a hundred grand, a million dollars, whatever it is.

You can't spend a penny more than that.

Everything has to be accounted for, go and put everybody on a level playing field.

Like the special interests of money out of politics.

And then third, I would, you know, all these artificial ingredients that, you know, are in food and beverage, you know, those need to go by by.

And it's like, we don't put lead in our pain anymore, we don't have asbestos in our ceilings, like, it's just a matter of time when we look back at this era and go, well, no wonder, you know, cancer rates are high and diabetes and all these chronic diseases and Alzheimer's on the upswing, look at what we're doing to our body.

So I think there's those aha things that are out there right now that we need to just get past.

And the fourth thing I would eliminate, single use plastic, big on that, like, it's got to go.

It's got to go.

Come on.

It's awesome.

So give me a, as we sort of sign off, how should people who are listening to this, who are like, you know what, this guy's awesome.

I want to get in touch with him.

I want to send him, you know, my business that I'm working on, have him take a look or

I want to ask a question.

I just want to say thanks.

How should people get a hold of you?

Where should they follow you?

And who are you looking for to reach out to you?

Like, because a lot of people are going to listen to this.

So who should reach out to you?

I think my specialty, our specialty is CPG.

So you know, I could give some things on team building and stuff with people in tech.

But if anyone's really looking into consumer package goods, you know, feel free to reach

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out to me.

It's basically my name, A-A-R-O-N, Hind, H-I-N-D-E, mainly on Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook or you know, go to our website, lifeaidbebco.com, you can check us out.

All right.

Brother, thank you for coming in.

This is awesome.

Thank you for the drink.

I love it.

You're welcome.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Bye.

Bye.

Well I need a dollar, dollar, dollar that's what I need

Said I need a dollar, dollar, dollar that's what I need

And if I share with you my story, would you share your dollar with me?