

How Marketing On Instagram Has Helped Ron Everline Grow, Scale, And Connect His Business

PAYCHEX
Business
Series

Coronavirus



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Full transcript

Gene Marks:

Hey everybody this is Gene Marks and welcome to the Paychex Business Series podcast. We're going to hear a conversation, a great conversation actually with Ron Everline. Ron is the founder and the owner of Just Train, a physical fitness company in the Los Angeles area. He's got over a million followers on Instagram and he trains big celebrities like Kevin Hart, for example. He's got some great stories to tell us, but also some great advice to share with us on marketing your business on Instagram and growing your brand.

Gene Marks:

All right, everybody. So I'm here with Ron Everline. Ron thank you very much for joining me today. I am really glad to have you on. You've got like a million followers on Instagram, which by the way if you're listening is @justtrain J-U-S-T-T-R-A-I-N. And we're going to get into that soon, but let me just back up a few steps Ron. Let me ask you to give a little history of yourself and your company, how you got here.

Ron Everline:

Yeah, man. First, thank you guys for having me. And I'm always excited about the opportunity to share my journey. Started as a ex-football player, didn't make it, obviously I don't know any athlete. I was pursuing the NFL dreams and things didn't go my way. I knew I didn't really want to work for anyone. I was a Jack of all trades and a master of none. Saw the idea to start training people. I opened up a gym. I started training kids to become bigger, faster, stronger, and I just really saw the big side in adult fitness. And really I created some super cool concepts, but fitness wasn't really my thing. I was just trying so many different things until I changed a lady's life through exercise. And she told me I changed her life through physical fitness and it blew me away.

Ron Everline:

And I realized that was my calling in life. And I really, I had a friend. Well, he wasn't a friend at the time he was a client and I was trying to buy a dump truck from him. Because again, I was a master of all trades and a master of none. So why was I buying a dump truck? I wanted to start a... I was like, I'm going to start a landscaping company. I'm going to haul dirt away. And he said, "No, man. I'm not going to sell you the truck, because I think this fitness thing is your thing. And you need to focus on that." And that was the day I, it wasn't the day, it took me about a month and a half, I said he didn't know what he was talking about.

Ron Everline:

And I just said, you know what, let me just go all in, in this. And because I hated meeting people that was a trainer or a teacher or a real estate agent and sell dogs. Right? I was like damn which one did you do? You know what I mean? And I was like, I'm that guy. At 19, at 24 years old. So I was like, nah this can't be me. I can't walk in a room and say, yeah I sell houses, I hadn't accomplished, I hadn't mastered anything. And so that's how I got to become what people may know as Ron Everline, Just Train today. That's how it got here, football didn't work. I failed my way to fitness.

Gene Marks:

How long have you been doing this?

Ron Everline:

I've been doing this 11 years now.

Gene Marks:

And what is the umbrella of your empire here? I mean, you have a few companies. So, what are you selling and to who?

Ron Everline:

Well, what I'm selling is mindset, right? And most people may think I'm selling the aesthetic of the body and challenging, but I'm selling what I want people... I'm selling to everyone. Just to answer both of your questions. I'm selling to everyone. Because I think that if we all conquer our minds, you cannot accomplish anything before your mind shifts, right? So it's just train the mind and the body will follow. Whether you're trying to become a successful leader, whether you're trying to become a healthier person, you first have to make a mental shift in order to accomplish those things.

Ron Everline:

No matter wherever you are, whether you're working for whatever company, whatever startup you're at. You have to be delusionally focused, and mentally in order to accomplish those things. And maybe not delusional, but you have to be really, really, really driven to reach your goals, but it all starts in your mind. So I'm selling mindset to everyone, whoever wants to accept it. And then my approach is harsh and it's real. And I may not be for everybody. And I'm okay with that, right? Because the hard truth is, it isn't easy.

Gene Marks:

It's not easy. And you have to, you can't be you're something for everyone. So you got to focus on, you think the customers that are just going to appreciate you. So do you have physical locations for your business? Do you have employees for your business or is it all independent?

Ron Everline:

Yeah, no. So we have a physical location here in Los Angeles, California. So when I got into the world of known people, celebrity, I started to travel. But then from the very beginning, I knew Just Train was not about me and more about the trainer. So we have about 10 trainers. We train a bunch of celebrities. We also train in the middle East and we have trainers living over there and we're consulting for a lot of businesses. So right now I have a head of development and about, we probably have a team of 15 right now. I have videographers. That's the question for one of the head of the... I don't know exactly how many people are in the funnel right now. Yeah.

Gene Marks:

It gives me a good idea. Because you good on the other side. Okay. So let me pivot over to Instagram. Right? So you've got like 1.1 million followers on Instagram. So that's a lot, a hell of a lot. And my first thought is well, I guess this guy he's got a lot of followers because he does train celebrities. Right? Like Kevin Hart. So if you're going to train and you mention them and you tag them, other people find out about you that way and followings create followings, am I right? Is that why? Or do you feel like your Instagram has succeeded for other reasons?

Ron Everline:

Yeah. So yes and no, right? Because I don't want to completely be disrespectful to that. But I think that what people have to understand, you go find another celebrity trainer in a space. They don't have the following I have, right? Because I've given less of my celebrity and more of myself to a mindset. And so yes, you see the 1 million followers, but for me, it's been about how do I grow and scale and connect. So if my clients tagged me, those are my friends and family members at this point, because that's what the position I'm in and that helps the business. But I've never went to them for the business side. I had to give the people the product, and the product was mindset with the exercise and what was I selling? So if you go to my page is not driven by just celebrities.

Ron Everline:

Let me post with the next celebrity, let me post. It's always been about the value that I add. And that's what people bought into. They were the eyeballs that got you here. How do I keep you to stay. Right? What am I going to do to get you to stay here and forget about it? And then when it clicks, you go, oh he does train Kevin, he does train Russell. He does train Usher. He does train Mustard the DJ or whoever it may be. Neo or whoever. They may give me some eyesight. But then again, I work with... A lot of different YouTubers are my friends and you got cross market. But my number one thing was what value am I adding? What am I doing when people do, when eyeballs come to my page. If that's the case, they can just, they don't need to follow me if it's going to be celebrity driven. I'm not a celebrity, I am a motivator through and through, I live this.

Ron Everline:

I'm thankful that people have followed me and I've become known and I have a responsibility. But I signed up to be a motivator, a trainer, I want to inspire. So, that's my calling and so it's not easy. It hasn't been easy. You go find somebody else who they train celebrities, that has built this authentic following. It's going to be difficult and I don't take my shirt off every day. No disrespect to the guys and the females who do, but imagine being the guy that has... I could have grown even more if my shirt was off, right? So that's another thing. For me, it was like... But I also have brand partnerships and things that have come to me at a higher level because of certain brand positions.

Gene Marks:

It's funny. When I look at Instagram, we as business owners, we spend so much money on trying to market our business and get leads, new customers, right? So yet our best clients and customers come to us as referrals and Instagram because you've built up the following and because you've made such a commitment to it, it's a huge referral source. And I'm assuming, is Instagram probably your main... I'm sure it's not your only, but is it your main source of additional work. Do people come to you because they saw you on Instagram or wow you look like, you're just the kind of trainer for me, your company looks like something I'd like to be involved with and can you help me?

Ron Everline:

Yes. To say, I think that because I'm not available, right? Because of my clients, I don't make myself readily available just for anyone to get in contact with me. So Instagram is a DM away from saying, hello, you know what I mean? And easy I can get to you right now. Just like, if I wanted to DM Michael Jordan, I can DM him. It's his choice to open it. So, that's just what happens right? And yes, I think we... And so to speak to that, this is why I think Instagram, Facebook are such valuable tools of any small business, any business. Any business, that's why partners come to us. You know what I mean? This is why partners come and say, "Hey Boss, we need you to market this because they understand Instagram. You know what I mean? And so how I scale that is up to me, but absolutely to your question, yes.

Gene Marks:

Why did you choose Instagram over say Facebook, Twitter. And I haven't even checked TikTok, if you're on TikTok or not. But it seems like Instagram is your main platform. Why did you choose that?

Ron Everline:

Yes, I am on TikTok. Yeah. Instagram chose me and I chose Instagram. I remember I never... Again man, I'm the guy that never wanted to be seen. I thought Instagram was going to be just this little fun thing that I was doing. I was really building and I still am. I was building a training business where I wanted to touch as many lives as I could outside of celebrities. So, that celebrities would just be the influence. And it grew into a business and I adjusted, and I'm blessed and I'm fortunate for it.

Ron Everline:

But yeah, Instagram I guess we chose each other, right? Because it started to grow and it became like the plan for me, where Facebook was all Ad driven. They weren't letting you reach your following, which Instagram has slowed down, but Facebook just became all Ad driven. So it was hard to just put up an organic post and for it to reach the people that were following you. I think I have 100,000 people on Facebook or somewhere close to it. And it just became so difficult to reach your audience on Facebook. So it shifted my focus to just saying Instagram, Instagram, Instagram. And it seemed like everybody was doing that.

Gene Marks:

Okay. On Instagram, you do... I've noticed that you do races with your customers-

Ron Everline:

Or anybody, I smoke anybody. I smoke you too. Yeah. So it doesn't matter-

Gene Marks:

Tell us what that's all about? Why do you do that?

Ron Everline:

Well, listen, if you know me or know of me, you have to, people are looking for some type of consistency in you rather it's about a workout post every day. Rather it's about your funny. Rather it's about your business acumen. Rather it's about you inspiring small business. You have to create a mantra, right? That people connect with you through. And so there was a thing that I did in 2019, where every morning I woke up and I was screaming, G morning, I had thousands of people saying G morning with me. And then I woke up and I was waking up and I was doing in a very crazy way. And I woke up and in the morning I would talk to birds, chirp, chirp because I was waking up with the birds.

Ron Everline:

The birds were chirping and I was acting like I had an influence of birds and things just find me. I'm just and the races just became a joke. And then it turned into like, I'm really fast. You know what I mean? I'm really fast. And so it was a play on movement, humor but competition, and competition fuels us. But friendly competition, I'm not competing to destroy, I'm competing to uplift though. It's this really cool thing. And so I just wanted to create a mantra, something for people to identify me with outside of just the guy who just pick stuffs up, pick things up and put them down.

Ron Everline:

And so you have to do that, right? Because it's about diversifying. You look on the internet, guys you'll say, why would I follow Boss? There's, everybody is on Instagram is a trainer at this point, even they're not a trainer. So you have to find these thing that make you stand out. And I have a personality. And so I'm going to use my personality. This is who I am. And I'm thankful to be able to just make people laugh. And I look different. I got a big birthmark on my face and I'm okay with all the things that I am. And so I'm going to walk into the power of being me.

Gene Marks:

Right. You know what it reminds me of the races, actually in a good way. Do you ever see on Gordon Ramsey's Instagram account, chef's like post a video of them making a dish and then Ramsey just sits there and just roast them as they're preparing the dish and it's absolutely hilarious what he does. And it like carved out a name for them. Because they're very funny videos to watch. So yours reminds me of that in a different way. Because you're taunting people to race you and it's all in good fun and it's for physical fitness and then you're racing them. And then you've got funny things to say about it and it's good. So, how much time do you commit? And I ask these because business owners are trying to evaluate where to spend their time and money. So how much time do you commit to Instagram considering how important it is to your business?

Ron Everline:

You know man...and I say this humbly. I've been fortunate enough to position myself in some different ways. Before it was a problem in my household with my wife, right? I was probably on Instagram nine to 10 hours a day, I was studying what was happening. You know what I mean? I needed to know I was hosting every day. I was replying to comments. And now I would say three to four because I still have to keep my, but I have a team that's helping me in it. You evolve, right? And now I'm having strategic conversations with my business partner, like J.P. Morgan Chase and Michelob Ultra or Cellucor Nutrabolt, where I went from being an athlete, right? And this is a great story for you entrepreneurs or you small business owners. I went from being a paid athlete of Nutrabolt to now being an equity partner, share partner with Cellucor, right?

Ron Everline:

But it took me five years passing up on deals, more money, people coming to me saying, "here's more money. We wanted Boss. We want you." And I'm like, no I'm going to stick with the people I have because it's brand trust. I'm not just going to make change over because more money. And I believed in it and in return, I can look back now and say, man this partnership has turned out great for me because I want to tell people that being an entrepreneur sometimes means patience. You know what I mean? And I didn't know that what this was going to evolve into was ownership. But, I just knew at that time that the focus had to be, I'm playing the war. I'm in it for the war, I'm not in it for the short game. And that's what it meant for me. And I'm just, I'm truly, truly thankful for it. And so that's where it is.

Gene Marks:

So let's talk about the long game and then we'll wrap this up because I do want to be conscious of your time. But you are talking about, you're not in it for the short game. And I'll tell you the one thing that concerns me the most about your business. Because I have a similar issue, I think I do, which is, my company I have 10 employees, we have hundreds of customers. If I get hit by a bus tomorrow, my company is going to go away pretty quick. It's just dead. And I admit that flat out that that is a big exposure of mine. And it's the same thing with you. I mean, so you are the company and you are the name and you're the brand and people want you. So what is the long-term plan? What are you thinking of? How do you build value in your company without you being there forever?

Ron Everline:

Well, and that's what I'm doing every day, right? So I'm aligning my team, it's scary but it's the truth that you said it. But also my reality is, I work every day so that my team can be on, right? And whether it's the new trainer and I tell them every day, I'm lighting your candle. So you can be on fire. You see what I'm saying? I don't worry about what I can't control. So my number one thing is how do I elevate, right? The people around me so that they understand my mission. They know what I'm trying to do. You know what I mean? And that's my main thing. You know what I mean?

Gene Marks:

I mean, do you have any succession plan? You've got a little baby that I saw, before a long time off between you can hand the business down. So is there, when you're saying you're building your team, I mean, are you putting thought into...

Ron Everline:

I'm building people?

Gene Marks:

Good.

Ron Everline:

I'm all about building the people. So I have a team with trainers. They have their own clients, I'm giving them the system. Again, people change every day, but I want to build a team of trustworthy individuals, that see the value in the brand Just Train. Hence why Just Train has never been about me. And it's always been about the brand if that makes any sense. Right? It's Just Train and that's why that's so important to me because I want Just Train to be the business, right? And not Boss. That make any sense. So I want the name to stand for something, not me. That's why I said in the very beginning, I never signed up to be a talent or a individual. And something I battle some time with changing my Instagram name, to my name and letting, Just Train run. I have trainers that represent, Just Train Chris, Just Train Blue, Just Train Joe, Just Train -. So many different people that represent our brand, but I want to scale that. You see what I'm saying? So, it is difficult, but I want the name to have commonwealth value. If that makes sense.

Gene Marks:

If it's any comfort to you. I mean, I did the opposite thing, which I think is probably a mistake. I mean, I named my company 25 years ago, the Marks Group. So unless somebody else named Marks comes along, that branding has been all around that. Whereas if you did Just Train you have the potential for your brand to survive you, whatever other road that you decide to take. So Ron in the minute or so that we have left, what do you got coming up this year? Any new products, any new things you're going to try?

Ron Everline:

Yeah. So listen, I'm up for trying a lot of things, but again, I'm stepping into exactly what we're talking about, entrepreneurship, leadership, my J.P. Morgan partnership, just balance. I want to tell people that life is about balance. Everybody in the fitness and wellness industry, talk to your clients about balance. It's not about this. It's about the mindset and really sharing my mindset to the mass of how you too can break yourself out of this mental mind by... That's really what I want to push forward in 2021.

Ron Everline:

It's like you too can be where I'm at, where and most don't know what I've done. But it's not been about celebrity. It's been about the process to getting yourself to where you ought, the long game, right? Taking less money to get to a place of, this the greater reward. And so just more partnerships, more seats at the table, more conversations, more positions. I want to be in more boardrooms. I want to be in more conversations about change. I want to be, I want to add value to my community. And so that's what 2021 looks like. And so you can put any tag on that. 2021 looks like it's help change and hell of evolving going up.

Gene Marks:

Ron Everline is the owner of Just Train in Los Angeles. His Instagram account is @justtrain J-U-S-T-T-R-A-I-N. Ron, thank you for your insights. Not only on Instagram, but branding and building your business. We appreciate it. And I wish you the very best of success. My name is Gene Marks. If you'd like more help and content and advice for running your business, you can get it @paychex.com/works. That's W-O-R-X. Again, my name is Gene Marks. Again, our guest was Ron Everline from Just Train. Thank you very much for listening and we'll see you again. Next time.

Speaker 3:

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