

A Conversation with Mark Cuban and Marc Benioff

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Speakers:

Speaker A - 29.73%

Speaker B - 70.27%

Notes:

Early Entrepreneurial Spirit: Mark Cuban shared stories of his childhood hustle, starting with selling garbage bags at 12, moving on to trading stamps and baseball cards, and realizing the importance of gaining a market advantage early on.

Broadcast.com and Streaming Innovation: Cuban discussed how he co-founded Audionet (later Broadcast.com) in 1995, pioneering the live streaming industry. The company grew rapidly and was sold to Yahoo for \$5.7 billion, marking one of the largest IPO jumps at the time.

Ownership of the Dallas Mavericks: After selling Broadcast.com, Cuban purchased the Dallas Mavericks in 2000. He emphasized his focus on delivering unforgettable

experiences for fans rather than focusing on the team's win-loss record, which helped revolutionize the NBA fan experience.

Shark Tank Impact: Cuban reflected on his role on Shark Tank, which he joined in 2010. He noted how the show inspired countless entrepreneurs, some of whom built multi-million dollar businesses, and discussed how it showcases the continuing vitality of the American Dream.

Cost Plus Drugs: Cuban explained his current venture, Cost Plus Drugs, aimed at disrupting the pharmaceutical industry by offering transparent pricing and affordable medications. He highlighted how the company has grown from 111 drugs to over 2,500, serving millions of customers in just two years.

Speaker A

00:00:00

All right, all right, all right. Good morning, everybody. How are you all doing today? All right. Did you have fun last night at pink and imagine dragons and all right. Everybody liked the drone show? Was that cool? Yeah, that was amazing, right? Incredible. And, um, tell me, anybody, raise your hand if you've built an agent while you've been here? Anybody built an agent? Oh, wow. We actually have some agent builders. Congratulations. How has that gone? Pretty well. Is everyone excited about agent force? Yeah, very exciting. Rebirthing the platform. Very excited about how we've been able to do all the, um, you know, not only extend all of the apps and then build the data cloud and now build agent force. It's exciting. I went over there and I even built my, um, an agent with a customer yesterday. It was awesome. Okay, well, I'm very excited about that. Oh, yeah. Here we go. So, anyway, please welcome my friend, Mark Cuban. Mark, come on out. All right. All right, Mark, welcome to Dreamforce. And this is not your first dreamforce.

Speaker B

00:01:19

Not my first dream.

Speaker A

00:01:20

You have been here many times, and we're so grateful to you for always taking time and being with our community and help our company grow and being a part of everything we're doing, you know, um, I just want to thank you so much for your friendship over the years. It's been so meaningful to me. Uh, mark, um, I want to just, you know, give everybody the opportunity to meet you and really understand. We've never really had a one on one, even though you've done here, you've done the dream pitches and so forth. This is the first time we've had kind of a dialogue. Uh, I think folks don't really know kind of you as a person. You know, they've seen you on shark Tank and how many people have

seen shark tank before anybody? Yeah. Oh, wow.

Speaker B

00:02:05

Friday nights on ABC.

Speaker A

00:02:06

Yeah. You know, I love this theater. It's a very storied place. It's where Steve jobs introduced his products, and it was like, it's always very magical to be here. And, um. Um, I think folks would love to hear you grew up on the east coast, right, in Pittsburgh. And, um, did you always have that? Obviously, you become, in many ways, you've ignited the entrepreneurial spirit and so many people. Now, I met you, like, 25 years ago when you were brewing broadcast.com for a streaming company.

Speaker B

00:02:43

Yep.

Speaker A

00:02:43

Well, I mean, you were, like, doing. Now you can say it. The first streaming company. At the time, we didn't have the words. It was funny, but I remember very clearly I was at a trade show or I was somewhere and you're coming up to me and you were talking about broadcast.com. you hadn't even sold it to Yahoo yet. It was the beginning of the company. But let's go back because here you are, you're growing up on the east coast. When did you first get fired up about being an entrepreneur?

Speaker B

00:03:09

Or was that I've been a husband.

Speaker A

00:03:10

Family or tell us like what was that like?

Speaker B

00:03:13

I grew up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Um, my dad did upholstery on cars, my mom did odd jobs. Neither one of them went to college. And so, you know, the attitude in my family was if you're going to go do something, you have to go figure it out. And I remember vividly going in, my dad and his buddies were playing poker at our house one time and they were drinking and yucking it up. And I remember going in to grab a donut and I'm like, dad, I want a new pair of basketball shoes because I was a basketball junkie back then. Go Mavs. Thank you for Clay Thompson. And so he was like, well if you want a new pair of basketball shoes, those shoes seem like they work, right? When you have a job you

can buy whatever you want. And I'm like, dad, I'm twelve, you know, how am I going to, and so one of his drunk buddies pops up and goes, I've got all these boxes of garbage bags, why don't you sell them around the neighborhood? I was like, cool, I can do that to get basketball shoes. So imagine this, hi, my name is Mark. Do you use garbage bags? And so I started the world's first and last garbage bag route and it.

Speaker A **00:04:16**

Went around, this is when you're twelve years old?

Speaker B **00:04:18**

Twelve years old, yeah. And then from there it went to, you know, buying and selling baseball cards, buying and selling stamps. You know, I started a stamp collection. I would go to a stamp show and I'd walk in with \$5 and buy, you know, market. I learned about market was that those.

Speaker A **00:04:32**

First, uh, what do they call those, those first stamps, like the ones that.

Speaker B **00:04:35**

You get initially or you, anything that was collectible. So I was looking for market inefficiencies back then, right? So I would go to one stamp dealer, say, well I think this is this classified stamp. And thinking in my mind, this guide said it's worth \$25 and he's selling it for five. So I buy for five, go to another stamp dealer and say, see, this is the dollar 25 stamp, make my \$25 and just keep on ramping up and just, you know, learn from there. And that gave me confidence to, um, be able to sell and taught me about markets and taught me about learning that if you got an, you know, an information advantage, you could succeed. And that's what got it all started.

Speaker A **00:05:15**

And you felt this garbage bag situation was your information advantage. Was that when you're a twelve year old?

Speaker B **00:05:20**

Yes.

Speaker A **00:05:20**

That's when you came up with that insight.

If I knock you out, listen, on.

Speaker A 00:05:24

This garbage bag situation.

Speaker B 00:05:25

Garbage.

Speaker A 00:05:26

I have information advantage.

Speaker B 00:05:27

Yes.

Speaker A 00:05:28

Okay. But you also mentioned some other things. You had kind of a natural. Uh, so you were pretty fired up, right? At twelve years old is what you're saying?

Speaker B 00:05:35

No, I was a hustler.

Speaker A 00:05:36

You found the entrepreneur within very early on.

Speaker B 00:05:39

Yep. I mean, I remember being 16 when.

Speaker A 00:05:42

I first garbage bags, stamps. And what was the other thing?

Speaker B 00:05:44

Oh, you name it. Um, I went to, like when the Pittsburgh Post Gazette went on strike in Pittsburgh when I was like 16. Just old enough to drive, literally, we drove to Cleveland and, and went to the Cleveland plane dealer, went to the, um, where they printed them. And as they came out, we would buy them until my car was full, then drove back to Pittsburgh, stood on the corner, made a fortune just doing that. And you know, you name it, I did it.

So you have the chutzpah also.

Speaker B

00:06:11

Yeah. A little shit to me. Yeah.

Speaker A

00:06:14

And so you have this inside you. This is very early on. Uh, you're basically starting to chain these things together. You're building a link going from one to the next.

Speaker B

00:06:23

Yep.

Speaker A

00:06:24

Yeah. And so, and then you go off to college or did you not go to college? I actually don't know.

Speaker B

00:06:30

So when I was Mount Lebanon High School in Pittsburgh, they wouldn't let me take a business class my junior year. Um, and so I went down to the University of Pittsburgh and started taking night classes and did okay. And so I dropped out of my, dropped out of high school for my senior year, went to the University of Pittsburgh, took the couple business classes they had, but they didn't have a business school. So I transferred to Indiana university. Go Hoosiers. Um, and got into business there. But it got better. Right? So I get to Indiana and this is, you know, a long time ago when they had, you had to stand in line to sign up for classes, right? And so there's a shorter line for the MBA introduction to statistics. So I'm like, okay, well, who's gonna stop me? So instead of taking freshman English or sophomore English or whatever, I stood in line for the, um, MBA statistics class. I signed up, started going to class. They let me keep on going to class. They assumed I was in the MBA program. So by the time I should have been a sophomore, I had a year and a half of my MBA done. And then one day, I was walking on campus, and the head of the MBA school, uh, walked up to me, I'll never forget, starts pounding, literally hitting me in the chest. I don't know what you did, but you're no longer in the MBA program. Get back to undergrad, you know? So that was kind of me like, uh, you know, where there's an opportunity, I'll walk through the door. So I graduated from Indiana, then went to. Down to Dallas.

Speaker A

00:07:55

Wow. Amazing. All right, so this is amazing. So now you're. So you're. Neither one of your parents went to college, but, you know, really found it inside yourself. You knew you

wanted to do that.

Speaker B

00:08:04

For sure.

Speaker A

00:08:05

That was important to you.

Speaker B

00:08:06

Yeah, for sure. I mean, you know, my dad did upholstery on cars, like I said. And he used to take me to work, um, to sweep everything up. And it wasn't because he wanted me to learn how to do upholstery, but he said he wanted me to see what it was like for back breaking work. You know, he'd go to work at 07:00 a.m. come home at 06:00 p.m. you know, five and a half days a week. And he's like, I want you to know what I don't want you to do. You know, I want this to be your incentive to go to college. And, you know, my brother, my two brothers and I both went to college and graduated. And, you know, that was a big deal in our family.

Speaker A

00:08:37

When you came out of college, what was your passion?

Speaker B

00:08:40

Um, you know, I got a job in Mellon bank because they thought I had an MBA. Then they realized I didn't have an MBA, and that ended. And then I went down to Dallas.

Speaker A

00:08:52

Um, now, was that a little resume, uh, issue, or.

Speaker B

00:08:55

No, I didn't lie on my resume. Exactly.

Speaker A

00:08:58

Just tell us exactly what you know, first of all. First of all, just notice and the NBA thing has come up. I just want to put it out there in face of the future political run.

Speaker B

00:09:10

First, let me just say this.

We've talked about that. We're gonna get there.

Speaker B

00:09:16

Okay?

Speaker A

00:09:16

I wanna just get this off the table so we know exactly what the NBA situation is and any other resume discrepancies we're gonna clear up.

Speaker B

00:09:25

You got it. So, first of all, let me just say the picture I had on my resume back then had me with a big pr cardan tie, right? Like this, thick. And a white suit. No lie, because I didn't. I didn't have a regular suit, so I had to borrow a suit for my resume picture. And so it was white. But I didn't lie on my resume. I just said the classes I took and the grade, my GPA and everything, and, you know, they wanted an interview. And it's not on me that they didn't read the whole thing. I guess they didn't get past the suit. But from there, um, that's where I really got into tech. So I got there and they put me. What I did at Mellon bank was I helped them convert from analog systems to digital systems, and I had to learn all that stuff, and, you know, teach people in banks how to convert.

Speaker A

00:10:14

And what computer was it at that point?

Speaker B

00:10:16

Oh, my God. It was IBM 360s, you know, way, way back when. And you want to learn about an old programming language.

Speaker A

00:10:22

Was it VM, CMS, or mvs? Where were you?

Speaker B

00:10:25

I was neither, right. So I was. I was writing things in, um, a script called Ramus. R a m I s, right. Which was just like, uh, most basic programming language that they could give me.

Speaker A

00:10:35

So we're at the beginning of the beginning.

Speaker B

00:10:37

The beginning of the beginning, yeah. This was on terminals and the whole nine yards. And then from there, um, I went down to Dallas. Um, didn't have a job. Got a job working at night as a bartender. Um, and then I got a job at one of the first software stores in Dallas called your business.

Speaker A 00:10:52

So this is a huge work ethic that you had. You just love to work.

Speaker B 00:10:55

I don't know that I love to work in my twenties, but, um, I.

Speaker A 00:10:59

Mean, you're working a lot for work. I mean, it's incredible.

Speaker B 00:11:02

I like the intellectual challenge. Right? I like to put myself in situations that challenge me. And I got a job working at a software store called your business software. But at the time, I'm living five guys in a three bedroom apartment, five roommates in the three bedroom apartment and sleeping on the floor. And so it was a big deal for me to get this job. And, you know, I would take home, you know, an IBM PC and read all the manuals and teach myself. You know, I've still got my assembly language manuals at home and teach myself.

Speaker A 00:11:31

Which assembly language was this? It was just something on, um, 6502 where we're talking about a microprocessor.

Speaker B 00:11:37

No, no, no. We're talking about, um, the old intel chips.

Speaker A 00:11:40

The very beginning.

Speaker B 00:11:40

The very beginning. Yeah. Um, the eighties, whatever.

Speaker A 00:11:43

No, not the 88s.

Yeah, the 80 before the 80 80 sixes.

Speaker A 00:11:46

Yeah, I know the 80 80 eights.

Speaker B 00:11:48

I know this.

Speaker A 00:11:48

Yeah.

Speaker B 00:11:49

And so, and just doing this basic code, not just to learn it myself and then learning basic and all this, um, and then debase these code, these d based languages. Um, and then I taught myself to code. But so anyways, long story short, I want to be able to move out of this shithole that I lived in with five roommates. And so I had a chance.

Speaker A 00:12:07

One of my responses, now you owned an IBM PC.

Speaker B 00:12:10

No, I didn't own one. Right. I literally, I couldn't, I tried to buy a TrS 80, a trash 80.

Speaker A 00:12:14

Yeah.

Speaker B 00:12:15

And then I went to Radio Shack and they turned down my credit and so I couldn't get it and so I had to like take them home from, um, the office where I work. But one day I had a customer and I was gonna make a \$1500 commission which was gonna allow me to move out of the dump I lived in. And so I went to my boss, a guy named Michael Humecki, um, if you ever run into them. And I said, look, I got the sale and the store needed the sale. I'm like, you know, I called him up and I said, I'm not going to be able to open the store because I got to go pick up a check. He goes, no, I need you to open the store. No, I got it covered. So I made the executive decision to go pick up the check, came back with the check, fired me, fired me. I'm like, I'm a shitty employee. I know I'm a shitty employee. So I started my own company, microsolutions, and we became one of the first systems in.

How old were you right then?

Speaker B

00:13:04

24. 24. And so, uh, you know, well, I mean, it was not that big a deal. I was broke, right? I was ashamed.

Speaker A

00:13:14

So we've gone from the garbage, garbage bags at twelve. Right now we're at micro solutions microsolutions, right?

Speaker B

00:13:20

And um, so I learned how to code some and I still had a lot to learn, but I never had any problem to this day reading the manual, right. If I had to sit down and whatever it is, I'm going to learn it. I taught myself how to code and I would go into different companies and say, okay, I'm going to make you more profitable. I'm going to make you more competitive. I'll write the code and I'll get it done and here's the price. And it worked. And then one of the smart decisions we made was in 1984, no, 83. Um, I decided, you know, what's a good idea to connect these things together. So we worked with an old Bay area company called televideo, who was a precursor to netware for novella. You got to be really old to remember this ship. Um, and literally we were one of the first local area, one of the first three or four local area networking, um, integrators in the country, and that just blew us up. Right. You know, we became one of the top ten sized, um, integrators. And then, um, seven years in, I sold it to Compuserve, which is part of h and r block. And that was my first exit.

Speaker A

00:14:22

So when you sold that to Compuserve, you're now 30.

Speaker B

00:14:25

29.

Speaker A

00:14:26

39 30. Okay, so now you've really, you had your first exit, and we didn't have those words then.

Speaker B

00:14:32

No, not back then.

No.

Speaker B

00:14:34

It was just like, fuck, yeah.

Speaker A

00:14:40

And then what was the size of that transaction?

Speaker B

00:14:42

Um, it was 6 million. And I gave a million to employees. I had somebody I brought in to help. They got 2 million, and I got 2 million.

Speaker A

00:14:48

So that's pretty exciting, right? You're 30 years old. Your parents at this point are like, wow, this is real.

Speaker B

00:14:53

Yeah. I mean, I remember telling my dad that I made \$100,000.

Speaker A

00:14:56

You're not going to the, uh, car upholstery business at this point.

Speaker B

00:14:59

And, you know, I told him how.

Speaker A

00:15:00

Much I made possibility.

Speaker B

00:15:02

Yeah, he knew, and, you know. Yeah.

Speaker A

00:15:04

So they're very proud of you.

Speaker B

00:15:05

Yeah. I mean, when I told my dad how much I made, he started crying, you know. Um, and obviously they were proud of me and my brothers, but. So, anyways, long story short, so

then at that point in time, I'm like, okay, you know, I'm young. I want to have fun. So I bought a lifetime pass on American Airlines, and it was \$125,000. And me and another person got the flight anywhere we wanted for the rest of my life. They stopped selling those for a good reason, but I had a lot of fun. But I also started trading stocks back then. And I never forget because back then, you know, there was just individual analysts, you remember, right? You guys, Republican, from Oracle to Salesforce. You could talk to the Rick Sherlins of the world, whatever. You go on CNBC and you could see the ticker and the stock price moving like this. And so because we were one of the largest integrators, I knew what worked and what didn't work, and so I just started trading stocks. Made good money. And then one day, um, I was getting together with, um, a buddy of mine, Todd Wagner from Indiana. And we were talking, this is 94 beginning in 95. And it was like, you know, you're a networking guy. You know, you've got to understand all this Internet stuff. There's got to be a way we can listen to Indiana basketball in Dallas, Texas. And I'm like, you know what? That's a good idea. So I went and bought a good old Packard Bell 90 MHz PC, right? And just started futzing around. And we created a website called audionet.com. and we literally would do progressive downloads of audio. We would, we went to a local radio stations, took, um, an eight hour vcR, connected it the out, um, the out ports of the radio station to the imports of this vcR. Recorded for 8 hours. Then I would encode it on my PC in my second bedroom. We would do progressive download. You would go, and back then, you know, streaming now is just, it's not even streaming, right? It's just there. You click and it's there. Back then, you had to have at least a 56k modem. When was the last time anybody even used a modem? Right? 56k modem. You had to have an ISP, um, subscription, right? To get to the Internet, you had to download a TCP IP client just to be able to get to the Internet. Then you had to download this progressive download client, right, just to be able to get on demand audio. Back in 1995, whatever it was, right, it was a pain in the ass. But we would go on prodigy and uunet and AOL chatrooms and say, hey, if you want to keep up with, um, what's happening in Dallas, sports and news, go to audionet.com. first day, ten people. Second day, 100 people. Third week, thousands of people. We're like, oh, shit, right? People want to be able to get this. And what we found out was, you know, back then, there was no media sources on your desktop, and people had, you know, corporate t three s, right? Uh, the whole company shared 45 megabits. But, you know, for a stream, you can listen to a Chicago Cubs baseball game, you can listen to news or whatever it was on demand. And then eventually we teamed with some partners who got us into live, and then the whole thing blew up, and it just was insane. And that was the beginning of the streaming industry. And, you know, till we sold to Yahoo. And the Internet market collapsed. We were YouTube on.

Speaker A

00:18:15

This was the beginning of broadcast.com.

Speaker B

00:18:17

Yes.

Speaker A 00:18:17

At what point did you call it broadcast?

Speaker B 00:18:19

Um, when we started, so 1995 and 96, it was audionet and then we.

Speaker A 00:18:25

Got the URL for, I think our discussion is before I started Salesforce, so must, we're between somewhere between 96 and 99 we're talking about.

Speaker B 00:18:33

Right. Because you knew my friend Greg Brady from Oracle.

Speaker A 00:18:37

And so, so when did you sell to Yahoo? What year was that?

Speaker B 00:18:40

That was 2000.

Speaker A 00:18:41

Okay, so, all right. Because it was definitely before that.

Speaker B 00:18:44

Yeah.

Speaker A 00:18:44

So in this zone. So we're talking, so what year did you start the company?

Speaker B 00:18:48

95.

Speaker A 00:18:49

95. So between 95 and 2000, you are, you're at the very, this is the beginning.

Speaker B 00:18:55

Yeah.

Speaker A

00:18:55

Of like you're saying you're actually cobbling it together. So you know where you started as this incredible salesman selling the garbage bags. Uh, now you have this passion to build things that you love, tinkering and building and creating because when you're like hooking up your vcr to build the back end of your streaming system, it was crazy.

Speaker B

00:19:14

Yeah.

Speaker A

00:19:14

Like, that's an amazing thought.

Speaker B

00:19:16

I mean, literally going up into the roof of a radio station to hook up an antenna so we could get the feed. It was insane. It was insane. But that's what you got to do, right? You got to do whatever you had to do. But it just blew up. And so we started doing video in 97. We went public in 1998. Um, and it was the biggest ipo jump in the history of the stock market at the time. It was incredible. And then we just kept on growing. I mean, everything and anything that was first, the first football game, the first Super bowl, the first baseball game, the first, you know, bowling tournament, the first wedding, whatever we could do in audio or video, we had it first and we had millions of users going to the site. Um, Yahoo came along and AOL came along and some others came and said they wanted to buy us. Yahoo. Made us an offer we couldn't refuse for 5.7 billion in stock. And I said yes. Wasn't a hard decision. Um, but unfortunately, when the Internet bubble burst, you know, not just Yahoo, but a lot of companies just rolled back. Right. And broadcast became a victim of that. And there's still like in Yahoo.

Speaker A

00:20:28

Today, this transaction was before that this was started. We were kind of at the peak of the first generation in 2000.

Speaker B

00:20:35

Right, right. Yeah.

Speaker A

00:20:37

Recession didn't hit until 20 01, 20.

00 20 01 when it really hit. Right. That's when they started to pull back. But when we were fully integrated, where we really made our money was in broadcasting events like this. Now somebody's streaming this, we all get it. It's no big deal. Back then we would say, okay, intel, you're doing a new release, new product release. We'll broadcast it in five different languages and you'll broadcast it around the world. And that was a big deal. And we charged them a million dollars, which was cheaper than what they were able to do before, if at all. So it was a good business for us. Um, but like you said, things changed. Come around 2001.

Speaker A **00:21:12**

How would you kind of characterize your entrepreneurial spirit at that point? I mean, here you are, you're probably about, my guess is in your mid, your mid to late thirties.

Speaker B **00:21:22**

Yeah, 39. By the time we sold your m.

Speaker A **00:21:24**

Mid to late thirties, you're 39 now. You've come a long way from twelve. And now, how would you say, here you are as a real, you're an accomplished entrepreneur, you've built a company, you've gone public, you've sold the company. I mean, that's the life stage of the entrepreneur. So now you're thinking, what about your life?

Speaker B **00:21:48**

That's a great question, actually. Um, I wanted, I spent my entire life working, you know, um, and hustling in one way or another. And at that age, you start thinking, what's next?

Speaker A **00:22:03**

You know, are you married at this time?

Speaker B **00:22:05**

No, I'm single.

Speaker A **00:22:06**

Okay.

Speaker B **00:22:06**

And I mean, I've been through the whole thing, you know, it's me or your company. And I, uh, was like, what's your name again? You know, seriously, I mean, I was on a mission. You

know, my dad would always say to me, the most valuable asset you don't own is your time. And I was on a mission to reclaim my time and wanted to just have control of it, which is why I sold, um. It would have been great to continue with streaming. It would have been great to see where it would have gone, you know, because after the bubble burst with Internet stocks, there was that time between, um, 2001 and when Google bought YouTube, where there was a big hole. Right? So in the back of my mind, I'm always curious of what we would have done. But more, uh, important to me than continuing to be an entrepreneur at that point was, okay, I wanted to reclaim my time and just see what I can do with my life and where I can go. So there I was.

Speaker A **00:23:01**

Now there's a moment here. Now you've completed the transaction with Yahoo. We're moving into the recession. It's 2001, 2002. I don't think you've bought them. When did you buy the Mavericks?

Speaker B **00:23:12**

In 2000.

Speaker A **00:23:13**

In 2000? Right after the transaction.

Speaker B **00:23:15**

Right. Right around the same time, yeah. Yeah, it was one close. And that was fun. So that, you know, when you talk about doing things I wanted to do.

Speaker A **00:23:21**

And that was, what, 200 million to buy them for?

Speaker B **00:23:23**

285.

Speaker A **00:23:24**

285.

Speaker B **00:23:25**

Yeah.

Speaker A **00:23:26**

So it's 285 million to buy the Mavericks, and that was that. Now you have a new company.

Speaker B

00:23:30

Yeah.

Speaker A

00:23:30

This is another company.

Speaker B

00:23:32

Yeah. The Mavs are a different beast. Right. But I'm the one tech guy in the whole NBA.

Speaker A

00:23:36

And.

Speaker B

00:23:36

And that was interesting because, you, uh, know. And I used to get in trouble and give them shit. I used to always say NBA. Nothing but attorneys, right? Because it was like the first five positions, starting with David Cern, Adam Silver, all the way down. They were all lawyers, and they all thought and acted like lawyers, and they put together marketing programs like lawyers, you know? Um, and one of my big things when I talk to entrepreneurs is always to ask, what business are you in? Right. Because a lot of companies don't realize what business they're in. The. And the NBA always thought they were in the basketball business. And I'd be like, okay, you're in the basketball business. What was the score of the last game you went to? I don't know, you know? But do you remember dunks? Not really. But do you remember who you were with? Oh, yeah. I went with my date, my mom, my dad. I took my son or daughter to their first game, and I had to convince them that the NBA was about experiences, that the game was there to create energy, but everybody was there because they wanted to have fun. You know, basketball was just the vehicle and finally got them there. And that's, you know, what we did with the Mavs that I think really changed the NBA. You know, I put microphones, um, on the rims, you know, so if a guy. We didn't do it on our side of the court, right? But if a guy on the other side missed a shot, you hear clank. Right? And if our shot went through, you hear. And we still do that to this day. And now most teams copy us, and, you know, we. I remember telling, um, when I first got there, um, you know, as the owner, I didn't create a big. Put together a big office or anything. I put my desk right in the middle of the fishbowl where all the salespeople were. And I just had one desk right there because I wanted to send the message of, you know, we were selling a different product. And so what I did was, I made a rule. If you mention our win loss record, you're fired. Because I don't want people talking about, you know, do we win? Do we lose or whatever. I wanted people talking about how much fun you can have and that, you know, this is the only place that

you can go to a professional sporting event where you can scream and yell as much as you want. It's the only place where you walk in an arena. I mean, we've all been there. You go to a Warriors game or wherever, Mavs game. You feel the energy when you walk in the arena. Where else do you get that? Where else can you scream and yell at the top of your lungs? Ref, you suck. Ref, you suck. I mean, it's as cathartic as you can possibly get. And then there's that moment, if it's a close game where, you know, the ball is in the air, and if it goes through and you win, you're hugging everybody and people are walking off the court, walking out the door, screaming and yelling. You don't get that experience anywhere else. And that's, you know, what I tried to convey to them. And then over the next 24 years that, um, I owned the team. You know, they didn't always appreciate it. They find me a lot of times. But, um, it was worth it. It was worth every minute of it.

Speaker A 00:26:22
2000 to 24.

Speaker B 00:26:23
Yeah.

Speaker A 00:26:24
So it's from 2000 to 2024, you're owning the basketball team.

Speaker B 00:26:27
Yeah. Now I own 27.

Speaker A 00:26:28
What percentage of your time was that? And then at some point, shark tank happened, what, ten years ago? Twelve years ago? 1515 years ago?

Speaker B 00:26:36
Yeah. It's crazy.

Speaker A 00:26:37
Um, so you're nine years into the Mav that all of a sudden, shark tank starts to happen.

Speaker B 00:26:41
Yeah. So Shark tank, we shot two weeks in June and two weeks in September, so. And we always started shooting the day after the Mav season ended, where the NBA season ended. Um, and, you know, so it wasn't, it wasn't a conflict.

Did you create shark tank?

Speaker B

00:26:57

No, Mark Burnett did.

Speaker A

00:26:58

How did they, how did that all come together?

Speaker B

00:27:00

Uh.

Speaker A

00:27:01

So wait, we're nine years into the Mavs.

Speaker B

00:27:03

Yeah.

Speaker A

00:27:03

And did that then, was that a commitment of your life for those nine years? Or did you have other entrepreneurial things during that as well?

Speaker B

00:27:11

Mostly investing. Right. Um, and running the Mavs, I mean, was easy, right. Because you have a set schedule and, you know, I would try to combine business with whatever I was doing. So if I was coming out here and we're playing the warriors, I'd set my meetings around the same.

Speaker A

00:27:25

And there was a. There was a marriage in there somewhere, right, in that nine.

Speaker B

00:27:29

Yeah, I got married in 2002. Yeah. Still, um, married, actually, my um, my anniversary is the 21st in a couple days, so, yeah, and so, yeah, but, you know, so it all balanced out. And, you know, for the busy time when you're owning a team is when free agency, trade deadline, you know, the draft. And so. But other than that, you know, you hope your coach works and you hope you have the right players. And sometimes we did, sometimes we didn't.

00:27:58

You know, so that's amazing.

Speaker B

00:28:01

Yeah, it's been a good run.

Speaker A

00:28:02

So you're investing, you have the Mavs, and now all of a sudden, it comes along, hey, do you want to be on. Do you want to help me put together this tv show?

Speaker B

00:28:09

Yeah. And actually.

Speaker A

00:28:10

And what did you think at that point? What happened? So I thought, that's so different than everything you've done.

Speaker B

00:28:15

Yeah. I came in the second season as a guest, and at that point in time, in 2011, I guess. No, 2010, um, Shark Tank was bouncing around. The ratings weren't very good. Like, if desperate Housewives had a night off on ABC, they'd put in shark tank. Right. You know, if, uh, Tuesday night there was a cancellation, put in shark Tank. And I'm like, okay, you're gonna let. They brought in Jeff Foxworthy, the comedian, to do three episodes. And then separately, they brought me on to do three episodes. And I remember thinking to myself, um, this show sucks, but it's on national television, and I'm gonna go in there and just raise hell. There's no way a business show is gonna last a long time. And so I went on there and just, you know, bought everything, yelled at everybody, just had fun. Told Mister wonderful he was a moron five times a show, you know, yelled at Laurie. Um, thank you very much. I love Kevin to death. He's a good dude, but he's an idiot. Um, he is a really good guy. So I gotta put that in there. Um, but. So they put me on, and then not because of me, but the show started to gel, right? And then the ratings went up and then went up and went up, and they moved us to Friday, and Bamdeh, it became a hit. And as it turns out, the reason became so popular is that it's one show that the entire family can watch together, and it's one show where, you know, a parent talking to their eight year old son or daughter. That's a good thing, right? You're talking about business. You know, I did the show. I stayed with the show, I should say, because I truly believe the american dream is alive and well. I mean, you look at Mark, he's a uh, you know, he's the true american dream. You see all these people here, there's just so many reasons to believe in the american dream and american exceptionalism. And I truly believe all of us have that one idea. And shark tank encourages you to go for it. And just over time, just helping companies and having people come up to me all the time. We watch shark tank, love shark

tank, and now we, you know, having been on 15 years, it's like, oh, I started watching shark tank when I was ten, right? And I started this business and Yada Yada, and just being able to get.

Speaker A

00:30:25

What's been your biggest surprise over this 15 year period with Sharknake, I think.

Speaker B

00:30:29

Just how many people have watched it and used it as motivation to start a business. You know, it wasn't just a tv show for entertainment. People have learned from it. People have got motivated to start companies. People have, you know, pivoted because of things they've seen on the show. People have come on the show and just had amazing successes. I mean, I've got companies that have done hundreds of millions of dollars in sales and have gotten bigger valuations than that and had exits. And it's just incredible to know that somebody's on the carpet just pitching their business, asking for 100 or 200 or \$250,000, and 5710 years later, they're doing \$200 million plus in sales and putting millions of dollars in their pocket. And I always try to push all.

Speaker A

00:31:14

Those companies, go to the specifics, give us that specific entrepreneur that's on your mind right now.

Speaker B

00:31:20

Like dude wipes, right? You guys ever heard of dude wipes? They're just hysterical, right? They came on the show and they were like, okay, we're gonna make fun of poop jokes, right? Anybody shits their pants in public, they're gonna be our next influencer. You know, it was just hysterical. And now they've, you know, become the third large. They basically lead the, um, the wipe category. And they're literally, you know, you gotta have a dream. You literally follow your passions no matter where it takes you. Um, literally, they're taking share away from toilet paper, and they're creeping up now, and they'll do 150 million in sales this year. Um, I had another company, beatbox beverages, and they started, they had a really rocky start, and they used to have these things that looked like big beatboxes that were filled with just alcohol, right? Basically, the whole idea was, can you get a college kid drunk? But then they changed it to go to single servings instead of the big thing and then the single servings got into convenience stores and college towns. College kids started loving it. Got picked up by liquor stores, got picked up by everybody. Now, you know, they'll do \$140 million. Their last raise was at 200 million. I mean, getting kids fucked up is profitable, you know? You know, and then if they shit themselves, dude, wipes is right there, you know. But these entrepreneurs went through ups and downs and. But they found success. And then I had smaller ones that had exits. There was, um, a company

called Panoramic that did computer vision. And this was ten years ago, and it was obviously early, but what they had was software that worked in an Apple five, I think, an iPhone five. And it used to have a flat basal, flat bottom. Right. And they used the, um, sensors to make it turn. So, you know, it would take a picture, make the sensor turn it a little bit, turn a little bit. Then it stitched it all together in a panoramic view. And then Apple changed their form factor. And so we pivoted to doing computer vision for, um, websites. And then they pivoted even further and got a deal with Carvana. So when you go to the site of Carvana and you see, you can open the car doors and, you know, move, um, the car around and everything on their site that's from. That started with a company on shark tank that just started with, um, doing. Stitching together panoramic views and just evolved and did a great job and they had a great exit. So there's great entrepreneurs that come on Shark Tank, and then there's some really, really dumb ones. Right. But that's like any investing.

Speaker A

00:34:05

All right, now, I want to accelerate a little bit, because you're now, it's 2024. You've now sold the Mavs, and you made some money. You went from 285 valuation to 3.5, plus some upside. 3.5 billion. Ah, so that's. You've pocketed the 3.5 billion.

Speaker B

00:34:24

A big chunk of it. Yeah. Some still on the come. Yeah.

Speaker A

00:34:26

But the last time I was in Dallas, we were at nobu or having dinner, and you're like, oh, mark, I'm thinking about this company. I'm gonna build this thing. I'm gonna do drugs, but you're just gonna pay a little bit. It's gonna be cost plus drugs. And then I'm like, listen, I'm going, this is a huge idea to the point where I either called you or emailed you the next day, and I'm like, listen, \$10 million right now. I will invest and you're like, no, I refuse. I will not take your money. I'm like, I should have jammed it right then at you because I was so convinced that this was gonna. Must have been about two years ago.

Speaker B

00:35:05

Yeah, that was two years ago.

Speaker A

00:35:06

We're having dinner and I'm like, this is a winning thought.

Speaker B

00:35:09

Yeah.

And, um, I remember it very clearly because, you know, not too many people go, no, I will not take it. This is not. It's too early. I'm gonna fail. You were giving me all these excuses, and I'm like, oh, that's not exactly what's gonna go on. But, you know. But now here you are. You're in the zone again, right? So we've come a long way from that twelve year old, uh, kid selling trash bags to now we're the 66 year old guy who's selling drugs.

Speaker B

00:35:36

26 year old guy selling drugs. Yeah, yeah. You know, you gotta do what you gotta do, right?

Speaker A

00:35:42

So now you have this company, and one of the things I wanted to talk about is. Cause I don't think a lot of people know that you've done this huge pivot in your life to cost plus drugs. And then I was on the site, I'm looking at the products, and I noticed it's not just cost plus drugs, it's Mark Cuban's cost plus drugs. And I've been waiting for this moment to kind of go, thanks. You know, obviously, Mark Cuban has become a huge brand also, right? So you're taking your brand, your metabrand, you're linking it to this huge opportunity, which is every company is paying too much for drugs and pharmaceuticals for their employees, and you're going to cross this bridge. Yeah, uh, I knew. I'm getting there. Because when I see you lick your lips, that's when I know that this guy is like, you're still hungry for another huge success. Like, you just were like, yeah, let me at this. So just sell me some of this, right? So just tell me, what is cost plus drugs? What is Mark Cuban's cost plus drugs? Where are we going now? You're 66. This is gonna be your.

Speaker B

00:36:46

Don't. You don't have to know how old I am, right?

Speaker A

00:36:49

Well, no, it's like an amazing life story. You have the passion, you have the fire.

Speaker B

00:36:54

You're just getting started.

Speaker A

00:36:55

You're just getting started. You're the entrepreneur's entrepreneur, right? You are not just selling things. You love building things. Give it to us. Am I right? Yeah. Give it to us.

Speaker B

00:37:13

So I got a cold email from a guy named Doctor Alex Oshmyansky.

Wait, what was the name?

Speaker B

00:37:20

His name is doctor Alex Oshmyansky. And took me a while to learn. One more time again, doctor Alex Oshmayansky, he's now my co founder. And he sends me this email and he says, I want to build a compounding pharmacy that manufactures drugs that are on the FDA shortage list because there are drugs that, you know, for pediatric cancer that if they're on the shortage list, kids can't get, etcetera. I'm like, okay, that's interesting. Um, let me do some homework. And right around the same time, this is when the farmer bro, Martin Shkreli, was going to jail. And so I'm reading up on him and he literally took this one drug, a generic drug, Daraprim, bought up all the rights to all the manufacturing and jacked up the price. And I'm like, if he's able to do this, this is not an efficient market, right? Going back to my stamp collecting days and I'm like, talking to doctor Alex Oshmayansky, um, we need to think bigger, you know, because this is obviously inefficient. What if we started a company and if we can get the URL, we'll name it cost plus drugs and we got the URL. And what if we started this pharmacy online and we showed our cost? Because nobody ever knows the cost that they're going to pay for their medications, whether you're the employer or the, you know, insured, um, or a high deductible. You know, you know, the process. Your doctor says you need this medication. Um, you know, for guys my age, it might be generic cialis. Tadilafil, right. Um, and you go to our website and you put in Tadilafil and it shows you our actual cost. So now there's no uncertainty and it shows you our markup. We decided on 15%. Why 15%? See, you know, just guess and see if it works. And then it's \$5 shipping and \$5 because a pharmacist has to check for any contraindications and all that. And so we set it up and we also put together a complete price list. We started shipping on January 19 of 2022, right around the time we were talking, and it just blew up. You know, as it turns out, this industry is completely open.

Speaker A

00:39:22

Thank you so much for not taking my money. I just wanted to appreciate that. So I'm so grateful to you.

Speaker B

00:39:32

Okay. Um, but, yeah, so now for any of you, you know, if you have high deductible or you're an employer. Right. Um, or as an employee. And you want your employer to spend less on medication so your deductible can go down. Um, go to costplusdrugs.com. that's costplusdrugs.com and spelled out c o.

Speaker A

00:39:55

S t p l u s. I've been. It's been. And it's very impressive.

Yeah, it's a nice guy.

Speaker A **00:40:00**

It is very clear. Right. Uh, here's the product, here's the price, here's the piece. And also Mark Cubans.

Speaker B **00:40:07**

Right. Okay.

Speaker A **00:40:07**

Now that I want to just talk about that, because I know you do. What? No, because for the last two years, I was watching it, going, lamenting, oh, man, I should have just gone down there and just forced them. Uh, but then, you know, but then all of a sudden, the site went from cost plus drugs to mark Cuban's class. But what was that? Tell us about Brandi, because I think this is a key thing, because you are obviously a great salesman, developer, business builder, tinker, creator, but also now Marketer. So when did you make the shift? Like, oh, no, I need to extend my brand so early on. How'd you think about that?

Speaker B **00:40:47**

That's a good catch, right? Because it's early on. And when you walk in and start talking to people in the healthcare industry and you say, we're going to change the healthcare industry, they start laughing, right? Because there's been 50 companies, 100 companies, 1000 companies who all walk in the door saying, we're going to change the pricing of medications in the United States. And so the only way we can.

Speaker A **00:41:07**

Get them, I've invested in a couple of them, right. It's been a difficult situation.

Speaker B **00:41:11**

Yeah. And, uh, this isn't a big technology play. You know, all of healthcare is an arbitrage, right. Everybody just tries to take a little nickel, a little dime there and there. And there's no transparency, which allows the arbitrage to keep on going. And so the only way I could get people to literally sell less medications was to tell them I'm fully committed. And the only way to prove to them that I was fully committed was to put my name on it. So that's why it's marked cuban cost plus drugs, because that's how we were able to get.

Speaker A **00:41:39**

And that was the shift.

That was the shift.

Speaker A 00:41:40

Because people also, you also have a lot of credibility, integrity, and also just overall trust, right. With consumers that they know who you are and they know, they at least.

Speaker B 00:41:52

Know the name, right. Then they may not know why.

Speaker A 00:41:55

So you wanted to move to a trusted brand. Faster.

Speaker B 00:41:58

Right. Because we needed to get the manufacturers to trust us to sell it because we launched with 111 drugs. Now we're up to 2500. And it's only been two and a half years. Now we have millions of customers, we're shipping millions of scripts.

Speaker A 00:42:10

What, what is the revenue this year?

Speaker B 00:42:12

I'm not gonna tell you, but it's really good. Yeah, it's really good.

Speaker A 00:42:16

It's a lot more than 100 million?

Speaker B 00:42:17

Yeah.

Speaker A 00:42:18

More than a billion?

Speaker B 00:42:19

No.

Speaker A 00:42:21

When will you be more than a billion?

I don't know yet. Depends. So it comes down to like what's your goal?

Speaker A **00:42:26**
When would you like to have a billion?

Speaker B **00:42:27**
So here's what's missing, Mark. What's missing is the CEO's of the largest corporations in the country, healthcare.

Speaker A **00:42:34**
Understand, outside financing you could scale more quickly. You're probably just not thinking fast enough because you could go fast.

Speaker B **00:42:44**
But here, but here's the thing, like the CEO's of big companies, it's not your core competency to know your health care costs, right? You're not gonna know what you pay for, you know, out of network care for a broken arm. And that's what building these sales forces.

Speaker A **00:42:57**
To get that message out is gonna be quite time consuming and expensive as well. I know you're gonna do salesforce. Yeah.

Speaker B **00:43:03**
Ah.

Speaker A **00:43:03**
Customer by customer and meet with CEO's and have this face to face conversation.

Speaker B **00:43:09**
And you know the hard part. The hard.

Speaker A **00:43:11**
And there might be competitors coming so the window could be closing. So you should really be thinking about this.

Speaker B **00:43:16**

Thinking about raising more money. Right. Um, but the hardest part, literally I spend most of my time talking to CEO's about how they're getting ripped off. Um, because now, you know, there's things called PBM, these pharmacy benefit managers, the Bukas.

Speaker A

00:43:29

How many people think this is a good sales pitch right here? Yeah. Yeah. It's such an impressive company and it's. But what's amazing is it's the whole lineage, you know, it's how you are just a master entrepreneur.

Speaker B

00:43:44

You just shut down my sales pitch. I'm not going for it.

Speaker A

00:43:47

You are a master entrepreneur. It's incredible. And we just don't have this many examples of people who've been able to link from basically company to company, idea to idea. But also you've crossed industries from sports to media all the way now to, you know, healthcare. Uh, this is really impressive. I don't think I've ever met anyone who's crossed as many bridges as you have. Mark Cuban. Thank you for coming to Dreamforce.

Speaker B

00:44:18

Thanks for having me, Mark, for being.

Speaker A

00:44:19

Here, for supporting us. We're so grateful to you. Thank you so much.

Speaker B

00:44:24

Thanks, Mark. This is awesome.