



From Firefighter To 7-Figure Business Owner In 2 Years Transcript

Ryan Moran [00:00:00]

Two years ago, Evan Van Auken was making \$23 an hour as a full-time firefighter. Today, he runs a seven figure business and he has an audience with over a million followers. What the heck happened in those two years? I met Evan when he joined the Capitalism Incubator and then ran into him in person at a conference a few weeks ago, and we were fast friends.

Ryan Moran [00:00:24]

And I heard his story about how he went from working full-time in a career that really had a short ceiling, it didn't have big upside, and he was working himself to death, and his desire to be an entrepreneur finally took over and he went all in to build a physical products brand that has given him financial freedom for life.

Ryan Moran [00:00:45]

But what most impresses me about Evan is his mindset and his thought process of how he approaches everything, and that's what we spend the majority of this podcast talking through. So, in this episode, you're going to hear how Evan thinks about how he runs his business and what he learned being a firefighter that made him successful in business.

Ryan Moran [00:01:04]

You're also going to discover how he accomplished two seven figure accomplishments in just under three years. That's a seven figure business, and that's a seven figure person audience. And you're also going to get to hear he and I talk about why we think his rise to success was so fast.

Ryan Moran [00:01:23]

I hope you enjoy this as much as I enjoyed recording this episode with Evan. Enjoy. Evan, my man, great to see you. Welcome to capitalism.com. How are you?

Evan Van Auken [00:01:31]

I'm doing really good. I'll repeat my answer from earlier, dude, I'm overpaid. Yeah. Thanks for having me, man.

Ryan Moran [00:01:39]



We were talking about this, about how you feel like it's weird to call yourself an entrepreneur and you feel overpaid. Tell me why you say that.

Evan Van Auken [00:01:48]

Well, when I say paid, I don't just mean financially, obviously, but there's just a lot of stuff in my life. You know how we go through life and we have experiences and stuff like this, and it teaches us skills in certain areas, relationships, interpersonal, people, all that stuff self-worth, I got my jump on those skills before I got the jump on the financial skills. So, I'm overpaid in these categories when it comes to my family and happiness levels and contentment and gratitude. Financially, I can work on.

Ryan Moran [00:02:18]

Well, you've had quite the transformation in the last two years. I believe your following is over a million people now. You have a seven figure business, which has a ton of upside, and it's been about two years. So, we'll unpack how the personal development side of things may have set you up for a faster rocket ship ride than the bumpy one that a lot of people take, which is they become an entrepreneur and then they figure out the personal side of things as they're building the plane. It's a great personal development program. But let's back up a little bit, Evan, because it was two years ago you were a full-time firefighter.

Evan Van Auken [00:02:57]

Yeah, it was. That's why I keep this helmet hung up behind me. It's just a good reminder. It's a good reminder of where I came from. \$23 bucks an hour, firefighter, paramedic, running 911 calls, 20 days a month just living at the fire station, that was my life. But that was my bootcamp, that was my ...

Evan Van Auken [00:03:17]

That's where I learned discipline and that's where I learned chain of command and communication and command presence. Walking into somebody's house when they're having the worst day of their life, it teaches you a thing or two about people and humanity and so that's kind of what I mean when I say these are the skills that I learned before I got into business, but business was what let me ultimately leave, segway ...

Ryan Moran [00:03:40]

Being a firefighter, you saw tragedy and you also were the hero at times. I'm curious how that impacted your perspective on life before going into entrepreneurship.

Evan Van Auken [00:03:58]



I've thought about this a lot, the perspective shift. My wife is also in the same ... Was in the same industry. We met together on the ambulance. We were partners for a long time before we started dating and we talk about the perspective that we have on the world versus what other people have.

Evan Van Auken [00:04:18]

It sounds morbid, but seeing dead bodies and dealing with tragedy and understanding the hardships of people, seeing their pain, it gives you a really good benchmark for understanding where your own pain and struggle is at. So, I'm like, dude, my parents are alive, I'm grateful. My kids are here, they're healthy. There's just ... The mindset shift was worth it in and of itself.

Evan Van Auken [00:04:44]

And so, I would have to say that's probably one of the most valuable things that I learned aside from discipline was just the perspective of just being able to see what it's really like out there, and knowing that I've got it made.

Ryan Moran [00:04:59]

Because you see on a daily basis, loss. You see on a daily basis, people losing things that they didn't expect to lose that day. And that gives you context for the struggles you're going through and makes them feel not so bad. Is that a fair summary?

Evan Van Auken [00:05:19]

It's a fair summary because when you get the call and the tones go off and you're at the station and you're living there and then all of a sudden you get the alert, you get maybe half a sentence from the dispatcher. You don't really know what you're getting into until you show up and you walk into the door.

Evan Van Auken [00:05:32]

And so, I would say 95% of the time, it's something more than what we just originally thought. And so, it puts you in this state of mind where you're like, okay, I'm going to solve this problem and I'm going to see it through to the end, no matter what happens because that's my job, I have to. I have to.

Evan Van Auken [00:05:46]

And so, whatever you're faced with, solve it, dude. Solve it. And so, it's a skill that I'm super grateful for it because 30,000 units are bad and I'm like, I just lost a bunch of money and now I can't sell anything to my customers. It's like, well, solve that problem, bro. And just the same, but different.



Ryan Moran [00:06:05]

Gary Vaynerchuk says that when he is given an intake form somewhere and it says occupation, he puts firefighter because his daily job is just putting out fires, and what you just said is that the fires that come our way as entrepreneurs pales in comparison to the amount that was on the line when someone calls and their house is burning down.

Ryan Moran [00:06:31]

So, let me ask you, what is your mindset when you go into seeing that there's 30,000 units that are bad? You've got to fix this. Some people would ... That would put them under. So, how do you attack that problem?

Evan Van Auken [00:06:43]

It was just ...

Ryan Moran [00:06:43]

And I believe that's a real problem that just happened, correct?

Evan Van Auken [00:06:46]

Yeah, that happened last month and it was purely systematic. We just attack it. So, when you're ... You become a paramedic, you learn protocols for treating people, and if they present with A, then go to B, and if they go to C, then you go to D. And so, you have a very algorithmic style of decision-making.

Evan Van Auken [00:07:05]

And the same thing happens in these situations. My brain is wired almost, honestly, kind of like a computer because it's been hammered in my head for so many years. So, I'm like, okay, well, we have this issue. What possible solutions can we focus on? And I just kind of go down that tree of making decisions, and it forced me to just think and come up with solutions that I wouldn't have normally come up with when I have choice.

Ryan Moran [00:07:28]

So, what did you come up with when you had 30,000 units that were bad, when you were faced with this dilemma?

Evan Van Auken [00:07:34]

Because it was a blessing in disguise. Normally I would've just waited. We were a one product, one channel, one audience type of company up to this point. Plateaued, right? For lack of a



better term. So, I call that a level one company at the infancy stage, and we needed to get to level two, but the way to get to level two, from what my understanding was, was a combination of the owner's model and introducing more skews.

Evan Van Auken [00:08:00]

So, it forced my hand more or less to get those skews done now, stop sitting on them, stop waiting. You need to get something to your customers now. And so, I was like, all right, let's just send it. It's not good enough, that's okay. They'll tell us what's wrong with it and then we'll make it better. So, I just literally pulled the trigger on six skews and they're all getting dumped into Amazon and our channels now, and yeah. So, in a roundabout way, it just forced my hand and sped up our growth.

Ryan Moran [00:08:28]

Are those products live now and taking sales? And how are they performing?

Evan Van Auken [00:08:35]

Well, it's only been a couple of days, and so ...

Ryan Moran [00:08:38]

Okay. That's fresh.

Evan Van Auken [00:08:40]

I don't ... Yeah, I don't have a lot of insight, but I have a plan and I'm hoping that it's a plan that will give us some of that insight.

Ryan Moran [00:08:47]

Evan, I want to talk about the transition into entrepreneurship because you have grown very quickly over the last two years. You've got two approaches or two businesses. You have your personal brand, which has over a million followers now, and you have the Amazon based physical products brand, which I'm going to have you talk about, which just recently crossed seven figures.

Ryan Moran [00:09:13]

So, what was the timeline from going from zero to seven figures in both of these, seven figure followers, seven figure revenue of this other business? Because you started as a fireman on the side, so what was the timeline to go from zero to seven?

Evan Van Auken [00:09:32]



So, let's see. To give you a tiny bit of context, dude, I've tried so many different things in my life, just trying to make it. I've always wanted more, always. Selling CDs, mowing lawns, whatever the case may be. There's always been something. Woodworking businesses, et cetera.

Evan Van Auken [00:09:50]

But I got to a point in my life where I didn't have the stability ... I didn't know what it was like to try out a stable job and join the rat race and the corporate ladder, and so my corporate ladder was the fire department. My old man's a fireman. And so, it was like, hey dad, I'm thinking about trying this, what do I do? And he's like, well, you've got to do this. And I'm like, okay, I'm going to give it a shot because I want stability. I want a paycheck. I want to take a breath and not have to worry, and so I did that.

Evan Van Auken [00:10:15]

I jumped through all the hoops and it made me the person I needed to become to get hired, but I'm sitting there and I'm like, man, there's got to be more. And the reason I'm bringing this up is because it was very impactful for me. I was sitting at the coffee table making ... Doing some calculations of math.

Evan Van Auken [00:10:29]

I was like, what would happen if I work overtime every single day this whole year? How much money would I make? And it was like, \$320,000. And I was like, dude, that's not enough. That's the maximum, that's my ceiling, that's my income ceiling. And that sat with me for a little while.

Evan Van Auken [00:10:50]

And so, it inadvertently caused me to lean a little bit harder into the entrepreneurship stuff that I'd always loved. So, my wife and I tried a woodworking business back in 2017, 2018, and we had a lot of fun with it. We didn't end up being successful, but nonetheless, it taught us a lot and prepped us for the Scorch Marker.

Evan Van Auken [00:11:10]

So, when I get hired at the fire department, there's an academy. They want to commemorate that struggle, that 18 week struggle with a plaque, and so I made this big, beautiful walnut 8 in my shop and I was ready to wood burn our names in there, and I grabbed my soldering iron and I was like, I'm artistic, I got this, let's go.

Evan Van Auken [00:11:27]



And I screwed up the entire thing, dude. I had to start over. I got stuck on the wood grain. It looked awful. It looked like a child did it. And so, I was like, dude, there's got to be a better way. And so, Sarah and I started doing research, and eventually we came up with this chemical compound that reacted with heat. And so, we mixed it up in the garage and we painted it on a vinyl stencil, peeled it off and heated it up, and it wood burned into our plaque.

Evan Van Auken [00:11:52]

And I was like, ah, shit, this is cool. So, I finished my probation, I'm in the rat race, but in the back of my mind, I'm like, man, that Scorch Marker, I wonder what would happen if we put it in a pen. I wonder if anyone would buy it. So, we did. She gave me the okay for ... To spend \$500 bucks on it, and over time, over time while the other guys at the station were racked back in the recliners, watching TV or sports, I was at the computer, my laptop, trying to learn more about how to build this business and eventually it got to a point where I was able to transition.

Ryan Moran [00:12:28]

How long was that from the time that you started making the scorch marker to being able to leave full-time?

Evan Van Auken [00:12:37]

Scorch Marker started late 2017, officially the very first month of 2018, and I left at the end of 2020. So, three years, almost exactly.

Ryan Moran [00:12:47]

That's pretty amazing, and it's one product, and it's just a woodworking product that is a chemical that you guys made and put into a pen.

Evan Van Auken [00:12:56]

Yeah, pretty much.

Ryan Moran [00:12:58]

What was the turning point for that business? Because you just ... This was an idea that you had. What did you do or what happened in the climb up that helped that one single product cross seven figures?

Evan Van Auken [00:13:15]

I would have to say it would be knowing that it was achievable, the relatability aspect of it, and hear me out. The reason I say that is because there was another fireman at that ... He's actually ... You know this guy, which is really funny. I talked to him the other day. There's another



fireman that came in on overtime and he was sitting at the coffee table and we were all talking, and someone said, yo Cap, hey, what's up with your Amazon business?

Evan Van Auken [00:13:40]

And I was like, what? And he's like, oh, it's going great. We're doing eight grand a month, I fucking love it. And I'm like, what? Tell me some more. And so, I picked his brain throughout the day, and he invented an Apple Watch wristband with an adjustable link, and he got it made on Alibaba, prototype sent over, and then he explained how Amazon worked. I was like, dude, I can do that. Why not?

Evan Van Auken [00:14:02]

And so, I was shown that somebody appear that I could identify with achieve the same thing, and I'm like, ooh, I can do that too. Why not? And so, I just blindly stumbled and just ran to Amazon and listed it and was like, let's go, I'm going to make \$8 grand a month. I didn't sell shit for six months. It was not really [INAUDIBLE 00:14:21]

Ryan Moran [00:14:24]

I tell everybody, for six months it feels like nothing is happening and then all of a sudden, things just started happening.

Evan Van Auken [00:14:30]

It's true. So true.

Ryan Moran [00:14:31]

So, it was performing well in the channel and then getting reviews and continuing to stack that deck.

Evan Van Auken [00:14:38]

Yeah, it was that, and it was just ... Man, it was my sport, dude. It was so fun. I just loved it. I loved the designs and the social media aspect and taking photos and it was just so fun, and it just, it got me there. It really got me there.

Ryan Moran [00:14:54]

So, I want to highlight something for everyone who's listening, because there's a part of me ... Part of my job on this podcast is to pull out the how to. It's to pull out how someone got there in order to achieve a result, and Evan isn't giving that to me, and normally I would dive deeper into something, but I'm reading a book right now, Evan, that is giving me a new insight into how you are describing this and I want to share this with you and everyone who's listening.



Ryan Moran [00:15:21]

So, I'm reading this book right now called *Why Greatness Cannot Be Planned*, and it was recommended by a friend of mine and the thesis of the book, the central message of the book, it's written by two artificial intelligence engineers who ran a bunch of experiments and models and computer simulations to test goal achievement, and what they found is that the least effective way in all of their models to achieve a goal is to set a goal and work towards it.

Ryan Moran [00:15:56]

It's the least effective way to accomplish a goal. The most effective way to accomplish a goal, how they describe it is the pursuit of novelty. The pursuit of novelty is another way of saying pursuing what interests you, pursuing what is interesting and new, what tickles your fancy.

Ryan Moran [00:16:21]

And as I'm hearing Evan describe this, he is really describing the pursuit of novelty, where he had a hobby, which was woodworking, he had a problem so he looked for a new way to solve this problem, had this question about I wonder if anybody would buy this, and then pursued ... From a promotion standpoint, pursued what he enjoyed, which was sharing it and talking about it.

Ryan Moran [00:16:47]

But from what I'm hearing you say, Evan, there was no social media strategy or launch strategy or anything that you were modeling in order to cross seven figures. Am I missing anything?

Evan Van Auken [00:17:00]

Blind. I was a rat racer, just flying blind.

Ryan Moran [00:17:06]

And so, your daily activities looked like sharing publicly, connecting with your customers. What did that look like on a day-to-day basis?

Evan Van Auken [00:17:14]

It looked like a lot of half-assed stuff, and I've got a full-time job, I wasn't sold that this company could even be anything, and I was just trying different things. I knew that I wanted to reinvest the profits and try to grow it. I just didn't know what I was doing, so I would just experiment, experiment hiring an ad agency, experiment with Facebook ads, experiment with SEO, and experiment with Shopify, experiment with Amazon.



Evan Van Auken [00:17:41]

And so, I'd learned the basics of all these different skill sets, just trying different stuff. And that's probably what delayed a lot of our growth, but it's also made me a better manager and a better business owner because now I know a little bit about a lot of things, which helps me vet professionals that we work with and stuff too, so ...

Ryan Moran [00:17:58]

And during all of that, you were pursuing things that actually interested you, some of which hit and some of which did not. And you kept doing the things that hit correct and stopped doing the things that did not hit.

Evan Van Auken [00:18:10]

Yeah. Facebook ads was hitting for us, and I leaned a little harder into that.

Ryan Moran [00:18:16]

Evan, you joined the Incubator a few months ago, but we met in person unexpectedly at VeeCon, which was fantastic. And while we were at VeeCon, we were sitting at dinner and we had this conversation about capital management and where to invest your time and resources now that you're at a million dollars, and you had a spoon dropping moment, but I don't exactly ...

Ryan Moran [00:18:41]

I don't remember exactly where it happened in the conversation, but something in that conversation struck you, and I would like to, selfishly, and so that other people can learn from it, hear what that moment or that insight was for you.

Evan Van Auken [00:18:53]

Ryan, it was so ... It was more than a spoon dropping moment, I can tell you that. If you could have seen the brain dripping out of my ears ... But I actually was ... I articulated these thoughts and wrote down notes because it was that profound. It's in my journal, no joke. I really want your ... I really want your audience to get value from it, so it'll take me two or three minutes to explain this, if you don't mind.

Ryan Moran [00:19:23]

Tell us.

Evan Van Auken [00:19:23]



Okay. So, I mentioned that our company Scorch Marker plateaued at \$1.2 million last year in sales. One product, one channel, one audience. And so, I knew that I wanted to grow it. I knew that I wanted to go beyond to the next level. I just didn't know how, I just don't know what I don't know and that has literally been the story of my life. I don't know what I don't know, so ...

Ryan Moran [00:19:47]

And sorry to interrupt, but that was what you said to me when you joined the Incubator. You were like, I mean, everything's fine. Everything's good. I just don't know what ... I just don't know what I don't know. I was like, we'll find it. We'll find it.

Evan Van Auken [00:19:59]

Oh, and find it we did, my friend. So, I knew that I wanted to grow, but I was like, okay, who the fuck is going to teach me this? I don't know anybody. My friend circle, the five you hang out with, they have never built a product from zero and sold it for more than eight figures, and I finally understood that that's what I wanted. That was my want. That was my ask. That was what I was looking to achieve.

Evan Van Auken [00:20:19]

I want to learn how to sell a product for more than eight figures, sell the company. And then I was like, oh, what the hell? I read this, this guy knows. I was like, holy shit. I'm going to DM him. Maybe he'll have some answers for me. And so, I straight up reached out to you because you were the only person I could think of who had accomplished those goals and had maybe the resources to be able to point me in the right direction. No joke.

Evan Van Auken [00:20:45]

So, I was like, I'm going to be this guy's friend. I'm going to try and give him some value so he'd be willing to show me where to go. I just need to be told this website, this person, whatever. So, you talked about the Incubator and I was like, fuck, dude, that's a ... This is a big commitment. I want this, I'm going to do it. I'm going to do it.

Evan Van Auken [00:21:07]

If this will get me closer to my goal, then I'm going to do it. And a couple of things happened in the Incubator, okay? The first one was that I got my Capitalism.com box and Ready, Fire, Aim came in there. Wait, Ready, Aim ... Yeah Ready, Fire, Aim.

Ryan Moran [00:21:21]

Ready, Fire, Aim, yeah.



Evan Van Auken [00:21:22]

And I devoured it and I loved it. It gave me huge insights to where I was in my business and what I needed to do to get the next level, okay? Hugely beneficial to me. I have pages of notes on it too. The second thing that happened was I started going through the trainings and started to learn about the owner's model.

Evan Van Auken [00:21:41]

The owner's model gave me what I needed to apply what I had learned in Ready, Fire, Aim, taught me that I need to cast a vision, I need to find the people, and I need to supply it with money. Get out of the weeds, get out of ops, that's how you grow. This is how you can create this.

Evan Van Auken [00:21:57]

And I'm like, okay. So, I looked at all the visions and I made a vision. This is great. And so, then I figured out, okay, I have all these people that I need to hire to help me execute this, and so how do I find these people? So then what I did was I worked with my business coach and I brain dumped all the stuff on my plate, wrote it all down, every single little thing.

Evan Van Auken [00:22:21]

And then we categorized it and then we took those categories and we applied them to people that I could potentially hire and put in my business to take that on for me. And then I kept only the things that were in my zone of genius, content creation and new product development. That's it.

Evan Van Auken [00:22:39]

And so, I'm like, okay, well now I know who to hire and what job duties to give them, and so I'm like, okay, now, what about the money? Well, in the Incubator, there's a whole freaking section on how to pitch. And so, I went through that and I was like, oh my God, it's not as scary as I thought, and this is a skill that I want.

Evan Van Auken [00:22:57]

I want to learn the skill ... I'm here for the process, man. I want the skill of learning how to pitch investors. I want it. I want to go through it. I want to learn it. And so, I started creating a pitch and I started asking people for advice on my pitch. What do you think? How can I make it better?

Evan Van Auken [00:23:17]



And what I was forced to do by creating that pitch was to talk about the value of my company. I had to pick a value. I had to iron it out and show it. That was hugely helpful. The second thing was, what do you want? And so, I got to articulate how much money I wanted and needed.

Evan Van Auken [00:23:35]

And the third thing was, well, you better show these investors where you're going to spend the money, so you better come up with a plan and show them. And so, I did that too, and so I had everything in front of me, dude. It was all right there, laid out. It was like, hire these people for this much, spend this much on them, work on this, and more skews.

Evan Van Auken [00:23:50]

And I was like, okay. So, I just started hiring the people. I'm like, okay, cool. This will work. But I'm running out of money. And so, that's kind of the point that it got to. All these things kind of culminated together and gave me the clarity that I needed on a very, very short amount of time and that was the spoon moment that happened at dinner. It was talking about the vision, you berating me for not having completed all the trainings, which lit more of a fire.

Ryan Moran [00:24:26]

I did.

Evan Van Auken [00:24:28]

And now look where I am, right? And then the last thing was the capital management part. I was saving my money for inventory.

Ryan Moran [00:24:35]

So, this was the part I was referencing where you had ... Your brains fell out of your ears, this capital management side of things.

Evan Van Auken [00:24:41]

Yep. And so, basically what I learned from you was that use that money for the whos, and use debt to finance the predictable purchases.

Ryan Moran [00:24:51]

That's right.

Evan Van Auken [00:24:53]

And so, I'm like, cool, I'll get access to some debt.



Ryan Moran [00:24:58]

And you had hundreds of thousands of dollars tied up inventory cost, right? It was just sitting around, and that's not the best use of money. Best use of money is to put into people and into growth because you're going to sell through that inventory, so it's just money that is just sitting around waiting when you could finance that with somebody else's money, which we do in the fund and we do with other resources as well.

Ryan Moran [00:25:24]

But you connect that debt to sell through your inventory and now you've freed up hundreds of thousands of dollars to put into advertising or, low and behold, writing yourself a check so that you can be like ... Okay, I'm good for a while and now I can put my attention on growing the business.

Ryan Moran [00:25:43]

It just frees up so much mental energy to be able to put into growth for the business. Now, Evan, I know this is not your only business. First of all, kudos for having a business that has seven figures and top line and continues to grow and is now launching additional products and has a vision and has good people. You've made tremendous progress in such a short amount of time, but I know it's not your only business. You've also got a personal following of over a million people. Tell us about that business and how that audience grew so quickly.

Evan Van Auken [00:26:15]

When the pandemic happened, I downloaded TikTok. Now, mind you, I'm not a social media guy, and I ... The only social media I had before was just for Scorch Marker, our Instagram account. And I knew almost nothing about it. I read Crush It by Gary Vaynerchuk and then read his second book and then devoured the rest of his content and became a fan of him, and he taught me social media.

Evan Van Auken [00:26:39]

So, fresh, millennial, 30 years old, getting taught social media for the first time by Gary Vee. Right? I would say that's a good place to start. And so, I started ... I pulled out my phone once while I was out of county, or we're going to the fires, we're driving through all these just ... Moonscape, dude, fire everywhere, and I would just snap a little video, post it up on TikTok, or snap a picture of the tanker doing a drop or snap an educational little thing on helicopters refueling and getting them ... And it got attention.

Evan Van Auken [00:27:09]



And I was like, oh, this is an interesting feeling. I like it, but I don't want to talk about firefighting for the rest of my life because I could see the writing on the wall. It wasn't ... I had learned as much as I was willing to learn there at that job. So, I switched to something I cared about, which was business, the things I was learning the hard way.

Evan Van Auken [00:27:32]

And so, I just started sharing about things I'd learned, like did you guys know what a Facebook pixel is? Do you even know how to form an LLC? Because I had to figure this shit out the hard way and learn it on my own, so here's some shortcuts so you don't have to do the same thing I did. I just wanted to help. I've always loved it.

Evan Van Auken [00:27:46]

I taught in paramedic school, taught in EMT school, I've taught in the fire academy, I love it. And so, that's what led me to put myself out there, a combination of Gary's permission and a combination of that attention and wanting to help. And so, I just started talking about business shit and I got traction.

Ryan Moran [00:28:08]

So, I'm biased right now, right? But once again, in this case you were pursuing what was new and interesting to you. There was not a strategy that you were following. You had the interest that kept you going forward. This is a very novel idea to me because my whole life was figuring out the how my whole, and I think a lot of entrepreneurs are paralyzed by the how, and the how got me to a million, right?

Ryan Moran [00:28:42]

And it helped me get a lot of other people to the million because you can kind of three-step your way to a million dollars. But as the authors of this book say, great accomplishments, extraordinary achievement as they call it, is never achieved through a goal with your just relentless pursuit of that goal. So, you're kind of confirming this for me because this may be your personality or this may be wishful thinking, but you seem to have an ease about you.

Ryan Moran [00:29:16]

You seem to have an ease about your life, an ease about your ... Not that your life is easy, but that you approach it with this sense of ease and calm. Is that ingrained into you or is that a learned skill?

Evan Van Auken [00:29:34]

A learned skill.



Ryan Moran [00:29:35]

Tell me more.

Evan Van Auken [00:29:37]

I would say that I learned it maybe around 2012, in that time period, when I was learning how to treat patients as a medical professional, being calm and competent and confident. And it taught me that ... A lot about your demeanor and how you present yourself can have a profound effect on the situation.

Evan Van Auken [00:30:02]

Your tone of voice, your mannerisms, the speed of where you speak, how you speak, where you're looking, there's just so much about it, and interacting with people. And I got to firsthand see the benefits of that, coaching down anxiety attacks and people that are hyperventilating, to the situation where it's like, oh, you got to deliver that news, don't you, dude?

Evan Van Auken [00:30:26]

And so, it taught me how powerful that we can be as people. And I don't want to be reactive to life happening around me. I wanted to be proactive and set the standard and the tone for how I want to live and so it's just kind of compounded and carried over over the years in our family and the way we do stuff, I think.

Ryan Moran [00:30:46]

You said to me when we were in person a few weeks ago that you had a goal of exiting a business for \$30 million, and the way that you spoke about it was very similar to the way that you are describing giving bad news to a patient or going into a fire or going on a date with your wife.

Ryan Moran [00:31:08]

It was just very matter of fact, with a calm expectation of that's what was going to happen next. There was no doubt in the way that you spoke about that, and I was hoping you could provide some insight or some context into how you think about that goal and why you are able to approach it with such calm confidence.

Evan Van Auken [00:31:32]

That's a very good question. And I'm just going to answer it honestly. It's ... Part lies in ego and part lies in the things that I've been able to see and experience. Time and time again, a



recurring pattern in my life is they're not better, smarter, stronger, or faster than me. Why can't I do it?

Evan Van Auken [00:31:58]

And I've seen so many successful people that have poor character traits and a lack of skills and I'm just like, I can do that too. Why can't I? So, it comes from a place of ... So, I say it comes from a little bit of ego, to be honest with you. It's just like, why not me? Why can't I do it?

Evan Van Auken [00:32:19]

And so, I'm just like, okay, well, this is what I want to achieve and I set my mind towards it, and I just ... I believe it too, to be honest with you. I 100% believe ... I guarantee you, Ryan, that I could literally do anything that I wanted to. This is what I want to do right now. I just, I believe it. I don't know, what's ... Conviction, that's the word I'm looking for.

Ryan Moran [00:32:42]

And what gives you that conviction? Some people would look at this and say, but two years ago you were a firefighter. What gives you the confidence to go from such a fast exit from your job to having the confidence and the belief in a \$30 million exit?

Evan Van Auken [00:33:05]

Well, you've done it. And so I'm like, if Ryan can do it, I can do it. That's no ... That's not an attack on you, but it's just like, you figured it out, and how you know to do it. And if there's somebody out there that knows how to do it, then it's just a matter of learning what they know.

Evan Van Auken [00:33:20]

It was ... When I first started with Scorch Marker and I was meeting with consultants and I was starting to enter a different phase of doing business with people, there was a conversation that I had with a consultant and he was like, once you realize that the people that run shit in this world, they're not better than you, they just know different things, he said, once you realize that ...

Ryan Moran [00:33:40]

Or they know different people.

Evan Van Auken [00:33:41]

Yeah, exactly. They know different people, they know different things, and once you start to understand that and really, truly interpret it, it just opens up a mental door.



Ryan Moran [00:33:50]

Yeah. It means that you need to learn some new things and meet some new people. That's it, that's literally it. And something that I have learned from my good friend, Brooke Castillo, is you can believe something just because you choose to. So, I will believe I will have a hundred million dollar net worth within the next seven years because I choose to, and seven years may come by and I don't have that net worth, but I'm very confident that I'll be closer to that goal than if I hadn't set that goal.

Evan Van Auken [00:34:26]

Yes.

Ryan Moran [00:34:27]

I can't give unto you a silver platter the evidence of what will happen over the next seven years, but I can give you evidence from my past of times that I accomplished things that I never thought were possible until I believed they were and then I just started operating like that.

Evan Van Auken [00:34:42]

Do you have an example of one of those things, by chance?

Ryan Moran [00:34:44]

I mean, I sold 150,000 copies of a book having never, ever written a book in my life.

Evan Van Auken [00:34:50]

It's a good example.

Ryan Moran [00:34:51]

Books don't sell 100,000 copies anymore. That is top 0.1% or, .01%. Thank you very much. Thank you. And I believe I'll sell a million. I believe I'll sell a million because that was what I set out to do. And here's the interesting thing, Evan. Now I'm sort of processing as I'm listening to you talk, I did not have a plan for selling 150,000 books. I don't have a plan for selling a million.

Ryan Moran [00:35:27]

My plan, if I had a plan, I would be going on every podcast possible and hustling my way to sell books. I'm not doing that. I'm not doing that. I am instead of holding that intention. I look for opportunities not to sell a hundred books, but who do I need to meet to sell another 50,000 or another 100,000?

Ryan Moran [00:35:49]



I mean, Tim Ferriss hasn't read it yet and he hasn't talked about it, so, I mean, that's still an opportunity. Gary Vee hasn't talked to ... He endorsed it, but he hasn't talked about it. Robert Kiyosaki hasn't talked about it yet. So, there's all these opportunities out there.

Evan Van Auken [00:36:03]

The endorsement by Gary and Russell was a solid move. That's what was the social proof that caused me to pull the trigger.

Ryan Moran [00:36:12]

Interesting. And here we are. Here we are. Evan, the building of the personal brand, you have over a million followers now across all channels, can you look ... Looking back, can you point to how this has opened doors for you in the other brand, or are these different ... Completely unrelated, different businesses?

Evan Van Auken [00:36:35]

It's opened an incredible amount of doors. Yep. Yeah. I had no idea the power it would unlock, and the way that I look at my followers versus an outsider looking in is completely different, but that's besides the point. The point I'm trying to make is that by putting yourself out there and having a presence, people are able to take a quick snapshot of who you are and see if ... Are you valuable or are you not?

Evan Van Auken [00:37:02]

Are you interesting or are you not? And just that little bit of just being able to show a little piece of what I do or am capable of to potential people, it's just, it opens the door up to so many things, Ryan. It is absolutely insane, and it has convinced me that this is now going to be a 40 year long-term play. I'm just going to have this.

Evan Van Auken [00:37:24]

I don't need to get a bag. I don't need to monetize it. I don't need to ask. I just want to give some shit away, and I just want to be who I am and just be a cool fucking dude and let it open doors and let the deals come in that way.

Ryan Moran [00:37:36]

You said on a podcast that we did for The One Percent and one of our training calls, you said that you tried a bunch of different types of content to grow your audience, but that one type is what really took off. Would you explain a little bit about how you discovered that process and what happened after you found that content that worked for you?



Evan Van Auken [00:37:58]

Yeah, so I was trying all kinds of stuff. When I first started on TikTok, dude, I was so nervous, bro. I was so nervous. What are these guys going to think about me? What is my dad going to say? My brothers. Are my brothers going to make fun of me? What about my wife? And so, I'd go in my truck and I would put on AirPods and I would record TikToks in my truck just for some privacy so I wasn't ...

Evan Van Auken [00:38:16]

Anyways, the point I'm trying to make is that I tried all different kinds of stuff, talking to the camera, showing how-tos and doing all this different stuff, but what really hit was succinct, impactful value. People just want to be told the secrets, really, for lack of a better term. And so, I was like, how can I distill this entire concept into the shortest possible form, and how can I make it easier to understand? So, I did some book drawings in my notebook. I just did some basic drawings,

Ryan Moran [00:38:48]

Like stick doodles.

Evan Van Auken [00:38:40]

Yeah, doodles. And I talked over it and it hit. And it still hits. I got 4 million views on a video I posted last week just about some basic stuff. And it gave me so much insight, Ryan. It just gave me so much insight. It helped me understand how to deliver a message and how to keep people engaged, and I've just been building on those skill sets ever since, trying ... Still experimenting with different things, but really discovering myself, what I want to do, what works for me, and what works for the audience, too.

Ryan Moran [00:39:19]

Do you have a plan for what you want to do next? Or have you learned that the path just kind of opens up for the next intention for you?

Evan Van Auken [00:39:37]

No, I have a plan.

Ryan Moran [00:39:40]

Tell me.

Evan Van Auken [00:39:41]



Yeah, the decisions that I've made are mostly strategic in my life, and I very much would rather choose where I want to go than let life dictate where I'm going to go. And so, big picture stuff, I'm going to be in space, a hundred percent. I dream about this stuff. I dork out about this stuff.

Evan Van Auken [00:40:00]

I want to work on infrastructure that can help bring minerals back from these asteroids, I want to get people up there, I want to see what the world looks like from up above. I want that feeling that the astronauts get to talk about when they see the oneness of the whole earth. It's dorky stuff, I know, but it's just ... That's my thing. That's my Jets. That's my sports team, you know?

Ryan Moran [00:40:19]

Yeah.

Evan Van Auken [00:40:20]

And it comes rooted from a bunch of ... I read a ton of science fiction. Orson Scott Card is my favorite author and I've read every single one of his books and it just, it inspires me. However, that is end game stuff. That's the stuff I want to do when I really want to just give in to those fantasies.

Evan Van Auken [00:40:38]

But there's something that I've been put here to do, and I'm not exactly sure what it looks like because the technology won't be able to facilitate it yet. But I really want to leave an impact and I really want to be able to teach people, and I've always wanted to make it into a video game, an MMO RPG. I don't know if you've ever played MMOs, but it was a huge part of my life growing up.

Ryan Moran [00:41:03]

Sorry, my internet brain had to catch up because MMO from my background was make money online, so.

Evan Van Auken [00:41:08]

Yeah, when I was a teenager, I played massive multiplayer online role-playing games. World of Warcraft, Final Fantasy, EverQuest, these things. There's a feeling that you get inside when you feel that sense of accomplishment, community, and togetherness with the people that are trying to accomplish this singular purpose, right?

Evan Van Auken [00:41:31]



And it was very special for me, it was the first time I'd ever experienced that and I was able to make money in that video game in real-world dollars. I was able to craft friendships and leadership and learn things, and I'm like, holy cow, this is amazing. And I also see a problem with the traditional education system, which is one of the reasons why I like to educate so much.

Evan Van Auken [00:41:49]

And so, man, one day I'm going to build it, dude. The vision will ... The vision is taking shape. It's fuzzy, but I know that one day it's going to be a combination of learning how to teach people the skills that they need to be successful while at the same time, having it be a fun and immersive experience, something unlike we've ever seen.

Ryan Moran [00:42:06]

Well, Evan, this is weird to say to a dude my age, but I'm really proud of you, dude. You have grown so much even since we met officially, even since we interacted for the first time. Your vision is bigger, the way that you are approaching things is wiser, and just the way that you talk about business talks ... Is now that of not an emerging entrepreneur, but as an established one, which is different than how we met.

Ryan Moran [00:42:37]

It has changed so much. You've been a phenomenal student. You're just the most model, phenomenal student, and so I'm really, really glad to have you and to share you with the audience. Where do people find your business content?

Evan Van Auken [00:42:53]

YouTube, just YouTube, Vanader. That's all. That's all I care about just trying to ...

Ryan Moran [00:42:57]

Vanader is the YouTube name?

Evan Van Auken [00:42:59]

Yeah, it's technically Vanader Growth or growth, but I go by the shorter Vanader occasionally, but all you got to do is type it into YouTube and that's me, man.

Ryan Moran [00:43:08]

And things happen, and you show up. Well, Evan, it's great to see you, my man. Thanks for being with us today.



Evan Van Auken [00:43:14]

I appreciate you, Ryan. Thanks for having me, man. Ryan didn't ask me to make this video. I'm making it because I feel that I have a responsibility to share what I've learned with other business owners. You see, this is our company, Scorch Marker. We were stuck at a million in sales last year and I don't know what to do next, I really didn't.

Evan Van Auken [00:43:27]

And so, I had read Ryan's book. That's it. That's the only thing I knew about the guy. But I thought to myself, man, if he's done it, if he's exited a company, if he's gone past a million, then he must know how to do it. And so, I reached out to him to see if he could guide me.

Evan Van Auken [00:43:41]

And what he suggested was that I joined his Incubator program, the program where he set up, where he handpicked the coaches, put together the curriculum, the videos, the support networks, and all the people so that all you had to do was show up with your idea, take direction, and then you can execute.

Evan Van Auken [00:43:55]

I've been in that program now for maybe three months. It was worth every penny. Not only did I find new 3PLS, new marketing companies, new people, but I was able to understand what I need to do next, and honestly, if you don't know what you don't know, you're kind of screwed.

Evan Van Auken [00:44:10]

You have to find somebody that can teach you what you don't know so that you can get to the next level, and holy cow, the Incubator is a place where you can learn that. Like I said, Ryan didn't ask me to make this video. I'm making it on my own accord, reviewing the thousands of dollars that I spent on this program, and I can tell you, it's a hundred percent worth it.

Evan Van Auken [00:44:27]

If I could go back in time, I would do the exact same thing. I would only maybe pursue it with a little bit more intensity because I know that if you ask questions, you'll get answers. That's all you have to do is ask high quality questions and you will get the answers. Man, I am just so glad I joined and I'm learning so much. I hope you will too.

Ryan Moran [00:44:44]

If you found value in this podcast and you're ready to go deeper, here are three resources where we can help you. One, you can grab my book 12 Months to \$1 Million on Audible or Amazon. It has over a thousand reviews and it's the playbook to building a seven figure



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business. Second, you can join our community of entrepreneurs who are following a plan to build a 1% net worth by building businesses and investing the profits.

Ryan Moran [00:45:16]

You can get plugged in at [Capitalism.com/1](https://capitalism.com/1). And third, if you're looking to go deeper and build a seven figure business that you can sell, you can work closely with us inside the Capitalism Incubator, and you can get on the waiting list and find out what we do over at [Capitalism.com/inc](https://capitalism.com/inc). That's capitalism.com/inc.