

## Phil Pelucha of Billionaires in Boxers

**Speaker1:** [00:00:04.77] This is the Investor Connect podcast program. I'm Hall Martin and the host of the show in which we interview Angel Investors, venture capital, family offices, private equity, many other investors for early stage and growth companies. I hope you enjoy this episode. Hello, this is Hall Martin, one of the best, you connect them here with Phil Pelucha , chief empowerment officer at Billionaires in Boxers. Billionaires in boxers currently provide podcast publicity for Sterckx. One hundred Current and future industry leaders, producer, 50 business podcast and manage award winning podcast, TV and movie business content for 15 plus satellite TV networks globally. Phil, thank you for joining us.

**Speaker2:** [00:00:44.71] Thanks for having me. It's awesome to be here.

**Speaker1:** [00:00:46.36] Great. So what was your background before founding billionaires and boxers? What did you do before this?

**Speaker2:** [00:00:51.97] Yeah, so it was not in podcasting or publicity, which I think people often find quite surprising, but essentially now do and teach the skills that I had to develop as a business owner who found myself on the wrong side of that. Nobody knew me, nobody liked me and nobody trusted me. So the phone wasn't ringing. But I'm a trained surveyor by trade. So Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors studied and qualified. I worked in real estate and got to corporate level relatively early and decided I was going to take the bull by the horns, go off and start my own business, which is which is what I did. And I kind of thought naively that the phone would ring right. I've done a couple of keynote speaking gigs. I've got a board level for large businesses in my 20s. It'll be fine. And yet that's not what happened. So the business where we are today and everything that we do and all the success we have was was born out of my frustration and desperation to try and figure out this stuff for myself. And now we do it for other people.

**Speaker1:** [00:01:52.30] That's great. So what led you to start work in this space? Why were you looking in this direction to begin with?

**Speaker2:** [00:01:57.52] So I before becoming a surveyor, my career, as far as I was concerned, was mapped out for me. I was going to be a soccer player that was from the age of like six or seven. I was signed for professional academies. So that was my career was I'm going to play until my mid 30s, then I'm going to become a coach. Then when I'm bored of coaching, I'm going to become a pundit. Right. So this was my career mapped out for me and then sort of late teens, early 20s. I got told the thing that nobody wants to be told, which is you're medically retired. Your shinbone has the consistency of dried spaghetti. You can't play this sport anymore. And I was miserable. So I went and started studying. But around the same time, this is probably oh, I mean, how long ago are we talking here? So about 12 years ago, I got involved in my first fan podcast. Friend of mine contacted me and said, look, fan alternative commentary is just becoming a thing. This was before the days when sports clubs would drip feed your content on their Instagram feed every five seconds. Like if you wanted to know what was going on outside of game day, you'd have to stand on a bench and look over the fence at the training ground.

**Speaker2:** [00:03:02.86] Right. So I kind of posed quite an interesting proposition because I was both a fan and also somebody who'd played the game and been on the other side of the wall. So I joined the podcasting scene there. I was thinking, why are we not making money from this? Why are we paying to do this? This is insane. I think like eight to ten thousand listeners at a time. A majority of them were male, 18 to thirty five at disposable income that we knew had an interest in a certain sport. So my attitude was surely somebody is going to want to pay for that data. Right? So we ended up going from spending money to do the podcast and making thirteen hundred dollars per episode. And I saw this is a nice little side earner and I ended up growing and selling to sports broadcasting networks and got to see kind of what it could do from the inside. And then when I set up my business and was struggling to win customers, I kind of had one of those wake up in the middle of the night with cold sweats and go, Oh, I wonder if I can use podcasting for business. And I've been doing it ever since.

**Speaker1:** [00:04:03.28] Well, it's great. Well, you understand his space very well and there's a lot of people that like to invest in it. What's your advice for people who want to invest in this space?

**Speaker2:** [00:04:12.53] It's the same as investing in somebody who has a good network. Right? So business is a team sport is what I'd say. And the people to invest in are not the ones who are

necessarily just good at their bit. It's the people who are also really good at attracting others around them who are equally as good at their par. You know, I'm a firm believer in business is a team sport. Your vibe attracts your tribe. Right? So one of the things that I often find myself saying is that if you think the money in podcasting is in the audience, then you don't understand podcasting. The money and podcasting is in the power of the networking. I mean, I'm preaching to the converted here, right. You've got your own podcast, but it's the it's like it's a VIP backstage pass to your industry. The guy who you can't get on the phone for five to ten minute conversation to talk about what you do, you can get onto a podcast for 30 to 60 Minutes to talk about themselves. No problem. It's a great way of building relationships and getting to know people prior to podcasting. I would have said that if you wanted to move into a new overseas territory, don't expect to make money for six months. You know, you're going to have to open an office, boots on the ground, hire someone with a Rolodex or a good phone book there. Now, that's not the case. You can do all that digital networking via podcasting. So my advice for investing in the space would be don't look at. The size of the audience necessarily, because in three to five years time, Spotify and iTunes are going to do exactly what Facebook did and they're going to start charging you to reach your own audience anyway. So you're essentially just creating yourself an invoice. It's look for the people who are leveraging this to recruit internally and externally, the players who are going to make them more successful in the world of business. That's a smart move.

**Speaker1:** [00:05:45.37] That's great. So you're talking about where the industry is going. Can you tell us more about it? How do you see the industry evolving?

**Speaker2:** [00:05:52.03] So it's funny, actually. So I find myself saying not everybody should have their own podcast and even fewer people should have their own TV series. And as somebody who deals with both, I genuinely mean that. And I think people have misunderstood, often misunderstood. The power of podcasting, so for me, it's quite simple, your own podcast is about learning and about networking. That's it. It's not about winning business. It's not about religion. It's not about sales. It's not about any of that stuff. Right. So I'm sure you appreciate this from when you appear on shows as well. It's a very different skill being a host whose job it is to extract the golden nuggets from the guest and being the guest whose job it is to be there to drop the golden nuggets. Right to complete different skill sets. So although your podcast is about networking and about learning, simple as that, appearing on other people's podcasts are

about credibility, sales and lead generation. It's the your vibe attracts your tripa. So there will be people listening to this that will be listening to me thinking, who is this dude like? I don't want to listen to this man. He's talking crazy and there'll be other people who go, OK, this is really resonated with me. I'm interested in this. And that's a good thing, right? Because we've all worked with people that we really wish we hadn't bothered. And the people who are turned off by what you say, you should be working with those people anyway. But the people who are excited by it, there's something there.

**Speaker2:** [00:07:19.07] There's something resonating so that the people you should have a conversation with. So where I see podcasting is just going to keep getting bigger and bigger. My fear for the industry is that it's going to become exactly like Facebook is right now where, you know, Facebook was very good for a long time at letting you grow an organic audience. And then suddenly they started charging you to speak to your own audience and you'd have to boost post and stick a budget on anything. And then even with Facebook ads, I mean, Facebook ads are great. But I remember the time when you could take like a five dollar a day budget on those things and it would do quite a good job. I think the last time I looked at it, it was like thirty dollars a day is the recommended reach for this. And it's like really podcasting is going to go the same way, unfortunately. I mean, it's I mean, Gary Vaynerchuk said it in about twenty six, twenty, fifteen, twenty sixteen. He said marketers ruin everything. They figure out where you're paying your attention and start advertising there. And podcasting is going to be no different. It's going to be no different. However, if you follow the strategy that I kind of preach, which is not the focus on audience growth, it's focus on networking in the relationship building aspect, it will still remain an incredibly powerful tool for many, many years to come.

**Speaker1:** [00:08:31.10] Well, that's good advice. It seems like podcasting continues to grow dramatically. What is the growth rate today from your point of view to big?

**Speaker2:** [00:08:39.86] So I jokingly say to big is that, you know, I mean, during during like the six months of the first six months of covid, there were more than three hundred and fifty thousand new business podcast created. You know, that's a lot of business podcast. There's a lot of people all vying for the same kind of audience, which again, is why I don't advocate trying to look for just audience growth, because now everyone's trying to make too much noise. Right. But the reason it will continue to grow is because it's easy access. It's free. It's free to access for

lots of people. But we have to look at the statistics. I mean, I'm not a huge fan of statistics because they can be manipulated by the data that you put into it. Right. So garbage in, garbage out is kind of what I say. However, however, it's not difficult to see because a quick search on Google will show you this, that many podcasters will get to 10, 12 episodes and stop because it's not getting the traction that they wanted. They went into it with the wrong reasons and they had vanity metrics in mind that it wasn't working for them. So it will level out at some point where I think the real exciting market here is is just like emerging technology, the areas that have now got much better connectivity in terms of Internet wise. So we're talking Africa, you know, Latin America, Southeast Asia, just as their technology market is growing. So is that podcast market. So the number of podcasts, for example, in Africa doubled last year. In 2020, it doubled from twenty nineteen. That's a phenomenal statistic. Even more so when you factor in that there's still approximately ten years behind the market of the U.S. So that's a tremendous amount of growth opportunity in those areas. And if you're a global connector and somebody that likes to do business across borders, you're going to have a lot of fun with that.

**Speaker1:** [00:10:26.15] So how many podcasts are out there today?

**Speaker2:** [00:10:28.88] Like two and a half million, I think with the last count. We have active podcasts. I mean, there's a lot of there's a lot of different podcasts out there. I mean, it depends who you listen to. But I think Statista the last said that last year we were having like 50000 podcasts a day released globally. Wow. That's a lot of podcasts. Right. Spotify must be rubbing their hands in glee. Um, but it's no wonder they're going to start monetizing it in terms of charging you to look at your own audience and all that kind of stuff. And, you know, it's. It's awesome, isn't it, because it's a great tool to meet people and it's a great tool to have conversations. I mean, I'm somebody that likes to be as efficient as possible. So I am sure that you and I would have a fascinating conversation in private. Why not record that conversation and then we can help people. More people with it is out there. Evergreen, it's producing back links. Who knows who it's going to reach when it's supposed to reach them. And if we wanted to, we could start to repurpose that for marketing material. So one of the things I always say to people is it really doesn't matter how many people are on that particular podcast listening, it's how you use it afterwards.

**Speaker2:** [00:11:30.79] And a great example of that is you think about businesses that will hire a marketing agency or a CMO. Right. And the agency then will do their best interpretation of whatever they think your voice is within the industry. So it's already watered down, diluted now. OK, but if you repurpose podcasts, interviews, they are literally using your voice. I mean, there's no interpretation of it is your voice. This is short clips of you. This is quote of things that you said on shows. And I'm also a big fan of maybe because I don't like spending money. I'm also a big fan of making sure that my book is as efficient as possible. So I'm spending money. I want to know what I'm spending this money on. So I have a rule. And it's a rule that many of my clients and partners have adopted to, which is never invest money in marketing on something that hasn't made you money organically. And podcasting has been a great way of doing that because you'll know yourself if you release five clips from a show and four of them do less than a thousand views and one of them does five to ten thousand views. Guess which one was sticking a budget on?

**Speaker1:** [00:12:35.56] Well, that's good advice. So you've been podcasting for some time. What do you find is the main challenge in the podcasting space, either technically or from a business point of view?

**Speaker2:** [00:12:45.73] It's definitely from a business point of view. I think podcasting has become easier and easier over the years. I mean, when I when I first started, we would record on Skype on a single audio track, there was always that one dude who is breathing like Darth Vader the whole time. And you could you couldn't edit it out or somebody has thought shouting at the wife because they've not put it on mute. It's like I'm on the podcast,

**Speaker1:** [00:13:08.83] But could you keep them quiet?

**Speaker2:** [00:13:10.34] You're like, how are we ever going to release this show? Like how we made money from this is a miracle to me. So it's actually become easier and easier. And I often jokingly say things like, I mean, if you look at matchmake, which I think is one of the places that we met, it's a great tool for helping find guests and guests who are looking for shows. Right. That's that's awesome. When I first started inviting people onto shows, it was like I was inviting them in for a police interrogation, like they thought I worked for the IRS or something. It was like, who are you? Why are you asking these questions about me? What do you want to know

this or that's like I just want to get to know you. You know, there's no there's no cynicism in it, I promise. I'm not outside your house monitoring your calls. So it's definitely the business aspect. And again, I'm not a fan of stats, but statistics say that less than 10 percent of podcast and guests will ever monetize podcasts. And I typically find that that's because most people try and run it like a TV or radio show. And that's not what this is. You know, TV and radio is polished.

**Speaker2:** [00:14:07.93] It's airbrushed. I mean, especially TV. It's like three hours worth of content cut down into a forty five minute show to show you the highlights. Podcasting is so raw and it's so authentic and that's where the beauty is. And if you try and go to above that and start to polish it too much, it loses its authenticity. And now you're in the wrong space. Right? So I think the biggest challenge that most people have is not really understanding what its power is. So they come into this with kind of like a a plucked out of thin air vanity metric of, well, I'm going to do this for a month and if I don't get the five thousand listeners, I'm going to leave. And it's like you talk to some of these businesses, especially service based businesses, and you're like, you couldn't even handle five thousand customers. Like, what are you doing? Like if I brought a hundred of your ideal customers to your business right now, you'd be having sleepless nights. So why on earth do you want to have five thousand downloads? Like what are you what are you working this number out of thin air for? And then you get disappointed when you don't get there, like our current podcast on new podcast that we launched in about.

**Speaker2:** [00:15:11.93] I don't know, November time maybe has 350000 subscribers and it's picked up and repurposed by two global radio stations, and I can honestly tell you that happened because I don't care about the audience. And that sounds awful. But my attitude towards the audience is I'm learning, I'm networking. If you want to learn and come along and get the gold nuggets and grow from this to good on you, awesome. I really hope it smashes and helps your business grow. If you don't want to listen to this more fool you, because I'm just going to go and carry on because it's helping me grow. I'm growing as an individual. I'm learning and it's helping me. So and by doing that, people have kind of bitten onto that and gone. I like this. Like he's he's learning. I'm learning. We're all doing this together. And I tend to ask the questions that many of them would like to ask if they were on the show anyway. So I am just that sort of mouthpiece for the people in the industry and it seems to resonate well with people.

**Speaker1:** [00:16:08.39] Well, that's great. You mentioned the Darth Vader effect. My first started, I had a headset with a microphone on it, and I was talking to a guest once and I started hearing that that breathing sound come in. And I was looking around to see who who is doing that. And it turned out it was me. So I had to move away from the headset because it you can lose yourself in the podcast and not not be cognizant of where that's coming from. But it was a learning experience, which is I think everyone goes through at some point.

**Speaker2:** [00:16:36.68] But I actually I actually banned hooded tops with a zip for that very reason because people would have headphones on and they'd be talking away and the microphone is rubbing against the zip the whole time. And because they can't hear that, I don't know that. So you've just got this whole thing going on. So it's like no zips,

**Speaker1:** [00:16:52.91] No

**Speaker2:** [00:16:53.27] Nose at all. And but, you know, you get used to it eventually and you find what works. I mean, I even like things like look at Yeti. I mean, I'm not commissioned by them or anything, but I think. Yes, one like podcast, Mike of the year for the past three years in a row, and you can pick up a new one for like 100 hundred and fifty bucks. So, you know, it's not like it was back in the day where you would have to buy radio material that was going to cost you like a couple of thousand dollars and set you back. And you're thinking this is getting a bit extreme just for a podcast. But, you know, for for 100 bucks, you can get a decent microphone these days. You've got a pair of headphones, just great tools out there to help you record this stuff. There's audio enhancement tools that help you tidy it up so there's no excuse anymore. The barrier to entry just simply doesn't exist.

**Speaker1:** [00:17:37.73] Absolutely. But, well, tell us more about billionaires and boxers and how do you fit into the overall podcast landscape?

**Speaker2:** [00:17:44.48] Yeah, great question. We're very niche. Very niche. We I mean, look, don't get me wrong, we did podcast publicity and we did a podcast production. Podcast production is I mean, we've got like six month waiting list on that side of the business. And it's going to remain that way between you and I, because I don't want to scale that side of our business. Loads of people are doing podcast production. That's not where I get off for me. It's



that whole no like intrust piece. Right. So if something is missing in your industry, if you're not getting enough inbound leads, enough media inquiries, pay speaking gigs, it's probably because the no element of no like interest is missing. And a good way of testing that within your business or anybody listening is your customers that you have at the moment. Do they like you then suggest then there's the like taking care of. Do you get referrals and recommendations again? If the answer's yes, then the trust bit is taken care of. But if you don't have an influx of inbound leads and media inquiries heading your way each month, then your industry's best kept secret, which is not a title anybody wants. Right? So you need to work on that. No more people need to know you. They need to associate a problem, a solution, a thought with whatever it is that you do. So for us, podcasting is is ground zero, right? It's the place that we begin.

**Speaker2:** [00:19:00.47] It's the ground floor. It's the solid foundation. We also get involved in keynote speaking gigs, media enquiries, and we produce over two hundred and fifty hours of business content for, as you said in the introduction, fifteen plus satellite television networks globally each month. So we kind of get people that TV stage as well, but it's getting you where you need to be. A lot of businesses that would be a sledgehammer to crack a nut and wouldn't even be necessary. We just need to put you in front of the right people. So we typically find that I mean, we're ranked number one at what we do. This probably about fifty companies worldwide to do what we do at the moment. We are price wise, probably somewhere in the middle, which I quite like. We're not cheap, but I'm also not the most expensive in the industry, not by a long shot. My philosophy behind that is I like being people's favourite invoice to pay because they're not going to go anywhere. Right. If they continue to have great value and a great service from us and enjoy paying the invoice, they're not going to go anywhere. So for us, it's about positioning ourselves and working with theses private equity firms, businesses directly and podcast networks to make sure that their audiences are they are reaching the audiences that they should be. They're providing value, but they're also converting them into. Leeds fans and even advocates of what they do,

**Speaker1:** [00:20:14.38] So for someone looking for a provider like yourself, what would be the right questions? They should ask a potential provider to find the right one.

**Speaker2:** [00:20:22.33] That's a great question. That's a great question. So with the power being in the network, you want to know who that network is? That would be a great question.

So, you know, one of the questions that I get asked a lot, and it's usually my favorite question to be asked when I'm doing well, working with clients is who do you know that you can introduce me to? That can help me because I'm rubbing my hands at this point going, great, let me get my phone book out, because it's you know, whether it was even if it wasn't podcasting, I'd still be a connector in another form, because that's that's what I do best. And it's the bit that I really enjoy for me. Every time I have a conversation with somebody, I almost go, I know who I should introduce you to. This person is going to help you get to that next level. So that's definitely one question is who do you know that can help me and take me to that next level? The other one is you really kind of want to understand their track record, right? Because there's a lot of people, as there is in every emerging technology, that jump on the bandwagon, like there are people that will spring up and tell you, you know, I'm a podcast production expert, I'm a I'm a podcast publicist, I'm a whatever. And actually, they've been in the industry for 12 months.

**Speaker2:** [00:21:25.48] They've not really achieved anything for themselves. And they've they sure as hell don't know how to do it for you. They know how to design a nice website and hit some keywords. But that's about it. Right. So you really want to understand that track record again? I mean, not to say you have to work with me, but as a bit of a comparison, I've been 12 years of podcasting, over ten thousand hours of podcasts, grown and sold to podcast networks and then grew and sold to professional agencies. So one executive search firm and one ad agency, you all using podcasting exclusively to fuel those businesses. So now we've been teaching other people and doing it for them for six years with 100 percent success record. Like I'm very, very proud of that. We're very picky about who we work with. So these are the kind of questions you should be asking. And if I'd almost go so far as to say additionally to a question, if the person who you're speaking to isn't kind of making you jump through some hoops and isn't asking you a lot of questions to us, analyze whether you're a good fit, you should probably turn and get out of there quite quickly, because the reality is that I won't stick my name on my reputation to somebody that I don't like and that I don't think can do a great job in their industry.

**Speaker1:** [00:22:36.04] Good advice. And so in the last few minutes that we have here, what else should we cover that we haven't?

**Speaker2:** [00:22:40.39] So I think an interesting one actually is the piece we've been doing over the last couple of years with private equity and venture capitalist firms, because that for me has been a real interesting one, not least of all, because it came completely out of left field, wasn't something I saw coming. But it's also how many opportunities there are in these emerging markets. So when I say emerging markets, I'm talking Southeast Asia, particularly Malaysia and Singapore. I'm talking the southern part of Africa, a little bit of Northern Africa as well. Sorry, anybody in Northern Africa annoyed at this right now, but particularly southern Africa and then Latin America. There are a lot of businesses in those areas and a huge, huge amounts of potential there. I mean, it's not a surprise that the likes of Amazon and Microsoft spending billions of dollars building data centers all the way across Africa. Right. They know it's the next big market. They know what comes next. You know, you wanted to take one market and take fintech, for example. You know, Singapore knew that they weren't going to be able to compete with Hong Kong for that classic banking meital. Right. Hong Kong have that nailed. That's that's theirs. So Singapore focus for the past five or six years on being the fintech market. That's who they're going to be. But there's so many opportunities, particularly for US businesses and investors, to go and have a lot of fun over there, do really well in terms of your investments, but actually use your experience and connections here back in more established markets to really open doors and facilitate the introductions for these businesses, many of whom this is a pipe dream, to move over to the US.

**Speaker2:** [00:24:08.92] They have no idea how to do this, but they have a product that would really revolutionize the market over that. So there are there's a minefield of opportunities if you just kind of go out there and find it. Now, the great thing about podcasting doing this is that previously you'd have to kiss a lot of frogs. Right. And then to find a few princes, whereas now you get to see who you resonate with. You get to learn about people first hand. You get to see who you should be doing business with. And, you know, this is a philosophy I'm using my business. And if you pick it up in yours, I'll be delighted because I promise you it will help you no end, which is I love what I do, but I only love what I do when I love who I'm doing it for. If I don't love you and have a vested interested in working with you, we should not be doing business together, no matter how good. Logically, it might appear if you're showing me a business plan, if I'm not feeling it, let's not do it right. And if you take that philosophy and start going out that you will not only find money making opportunities in great places to invest in great places to. I investment, but you'll also find the people that you should be doing that with.

**Speaker1:** [00:25:15.85] That's great. Good information. How best for listeners get back in touch with you.

**Speaker2:** [00:25:20.11] Yeah. Thank you so much. Great question. So there's probably two places. It's good to go and talk to me. Definitely head over to [billionaires in boxes, dot com](#), which I believe is in the show notes below. The only other place to really talk to me and I'm being honest, is my LinkedIn page. The team manage the other profiles, LinkedIn. I like LinkedIn. It's a good platform. So if you want to kind of come and learn about what we do, head over to the website. You want to ask me any questions directly and specifically head over to LinkedIn and come and chat.

**Speaker1:** [00:25:46.94] They're great. We'll include those in the show notes. Want to thank you for joining us today and hope to have you back for a follow up soon.

**Speaker2:** [00:25:52.66] Thank you so much for having me.

**Speaker3:** [00:25:55.02] Investor Canek helps investors interested in startup funding. In this podcast series Experience, investors share their experience and advice. You can learn more at [Investor Connect, Doug](#). Paul Martin is the director of investor Canek, which is a 523 non-profit dedicated to the education of investors for early stage funding. All opinions expressed by Hall and podcast guests are solely their own opinions and do not reflect the opinion of Investor Connect. This podcast is for informational purposes only and should not be relied upon as a basis for investment decisions.