



**Complete Transcript: HALO Talks with David Cantor**  
**Posted January 18, 2024**

Pete Moore [00:00:00]:

I am super excited to announce that we now have a formal partnership with The Prospect Wizard. And when I say wizard, I mean wizard. Obviously, you have a website. This allows you to convert your website traffic visitors directly into leads. It's not just another chatbot, and it's not AI, but it allows a visitor to call, text, or leave a voice mail immediately goes to you, your sales team, or anyone else in the club. Instantly, MIT shows a study that if you contact a lead within 10 minutes, chance of them converting goes up 9 times that of the average. We got the Atlanta clubs on it, Pete Fitness, Gold's Gym, mountainside, City Fitness Philly, College Park, Become one of the next halo companies to deploy the wizard. It's easy to use. Go to the effect wizard.com.

Pete Moore [00:00:51]:

Get a free 30 day trial. Talk to my boy, Dave Gallon. He will get you all set up, and let the leads flow based on the wizard. Go get them. This is Pete Moore on Halo Talks NYC. I have the pleasure of bringing David Cantor, Tenafly, New Jersey. Breaking news, CNN, Wolf Blitzer. We are in Whole Foods.

Pete Moore [00:01:14]:

Not a better way to intro the gnats. So, Dave, congratulations. We're gonna talk about keto. We talk about breakfast, hot, cold, however you wanna take it. David's gonna deliver it. Good to see you.

Dave Cantor [00:01:25]:

Thanks, Pete. Appreciate it.

Pete Moore [00:01:27]:

So what brought you into this part of the business? Was there a frustration that you were trying to solve on your own? Did you not see this category and say, this is open?

Dave Cantor [00:01:38]:

Well, I've been in this part of the business in natural foods for 20 years on the corporate side. So I grew up really in this industry and I've been in the food space even for years before that. You know, I went to school in the Midwest. I actually got interested in food and sustainability and gardening. Really it was really weird, but really early. You know, in college, I started learning how to cook pretty seriously. I ended up moving west to learn how to farm and eventually ran my own organic farm out in New Mexico. And then I went back to school and got a master's degree in nutrition studying, really, food and agriculture policy at Tufts University. And then segued that really round about, you know, sort of trajectory, then segued there to Eminem Moore, where I was hired as a junior marketer in sort of their Skunkworks

division, helping them launch better for you, like health and nutrition brands, helping them diversify their portfolio.

Dave Cantor [00:02:38]:  
Out there for years. Which

Pete Moore [00:02:40]:  
what brands do they have that are better for you? Because the only thing I see is, you know, chocolates at the, at the bodega. What is Moore than a portfolio that's, better for

Dave Cantor [00:02:49]:  
you? Have you ever heard of Kinebar?

Pete Moore [00:02:51]:  
Oh, yeah. Yeah. Sure. Sure. So they bought Kinebar.

Dave Cantor [00:02:54]:  
They bought KIND Bar. They've made they've made a number of really smart acquisitions. But back then, that was, they weren't so active on the m and side, but they were really trying to incubate little brands of their own. I worked on a little organic food brand called Seeds of Change, helped launch that into chocolate, worked on, like, a better for you Chocolate brand called Cocovia. It was great formative experience, great training, marketing training, and really from there, sort of climbed up the marketing ladder. And most recently, I joined a company called Doctor Prager, Sensible Foods, which is best known as a veggie burger brand. And I ran marketing and innovation and r and d for that company for 8 years, And we grew that, you know, we grew that brand really aggressively, sort of five x in the 8 years I was there. We sold it to PE in early 21.

Dave Cantor [00:03:41]:  
I stuck around for almost a year and then jumped ship to launch Vocal. After, like, 20 years of growing brands for other people, I was really itching to do it for myself.

Pete Moore [00:03:53]:  
So, John, how do you feel about being an entrepreneur here with, With a limited balance sheet and, a lot of, control that you have that you don't have to report up to anyone.

Dave Cantor [00:04:03]:  
You know, I sort of feel like my experience, you know, working on small brands, you know, at Prager's was really good training for this. So when you're when you're on small all the you know, 20 years of working in the food industry, but always on natural and organic brands, always on start-ups, always on, like, High growth emerging brands. And as, you know, as a marketer, you have to wear a lot a lot of hats. They don't have deep budgets for, You know, big national campaigns, oftentimes, you really have to be able to, like, make your dollars stretch and be creative, think out of the box, be a little scrappy. And I have 20 years of that training. I think that served me well to sort of kick start folk with Apple.

Pete Moore [00:04:44]:  
Gotcha. So what brought you into this category? Did you have an epiphany? Were you on the you know, in the grocery store and said, you know, where is this? And it and it wasn't there?

Dave Cantor [00:04:55]:

I mean, it so a few different a few different answers to that. One answer is, like, a lot you know, my ideas come from everywhere. My the ideas can come from, you know, singing in the shower, playing guitar, listening to music, working out at the gym, whatever it is, Or eating a bowl of oatmeal and, you know, just being annoyed that it's, you know, filled with carbs. And I think that was sort of the epiphany here, which is I was coming home from the gym regularly. I was back at the gym after leaving my last job. I was working out aggressively. I was working on folk revival, and the brand architecture started taking shape before the product was taking shape. So I was already I knew I wanted it to be functional.

Dave Cantor [00:05:36]:

I knew I wanted it to involve, like, heirloom and heritage ingredients. I saw some white space. We were doing some innovation brainstorming, and I and I and oatmeal was rising to the top as an idea that, sort of checked a lot of the boxes for a good innovation idea. And I, you know, and I thought to myself, I enjoy eating oatmeal. I'm eating oatmeal all the time. I'm Placing my oatmeal with all these nuts and seeds just to displace the carbs with some protein and fat and sort of, voila, we I thought, I think we have our 1st contender here, our 1st product.

Pete Moore [00:06:08]:

Where did the name Folk Revival come from?

Dave Cantor [00:06:13]:

So, look, first of all, I'm sort of a music nerd, so I'll start off with that. I confess I'm sort of a music Eric. And so I liked the ring of it. Sometimes, you know, brand names, they can, like, roll right off your tongue, and this one rolled right off the tongue for me. The folk really speaks to the people part, the human nutrition part, right, the functional nutrition part, and the revival, really speaks to The heirloom and herding heritage ingredients, which I referenced a minute ago, which is really what we're trying to do. That's sort of the mission of the brand to deliver, like, real functional nutrition by reviving heirloom and heritage ingredients. And the sort of hero heritage ingredient in our hot cereal are acorns. So here's our hot cereal.

Dave Cantor [00:07:00]:

Show it to Aaron. And, you know, acorns are a heritage food. They're consumed in pockets around the world. In North America, they're not widely consumed, but they are and surprised as an important heritage food amongst many native, tribes and communities, and there's a real opportunity to Introduce acorns to a wider audience and really be, like, the 1st national brand to bring acorns to market, sort of rolling out a new food ingredient similar to, You know, chia or quinoa or coconut water, which 25 years ago, Americans did not consume these Talks, essentially. And now they're and now they're

Pete Moore [00:07:36]:

supplier for, for acorns. Did you go to one of the density of squirrel population, and, basically, you'd have to take over that territory?

Dave Cantor [00:07:44]:

Right. So I talked to this community of squirrels. I talked to their elders, and they agreed to sell me some.

Pete Moore [00:07:51]:

That's nice. That'd be great that'd be great if the animals actually had some economic benefit to the economy. No. But was there a big acorn producer, or did you did you did you?

Dave Cantor [00:08:04]:

Yeah. So there are very few places around the world where acorns are, like, Moore. Processed in an industrial scale. So I've been able to partner with one of them, and they've been truly a partner. In fact, they've been an early investor the business. So not only are they selling us acorns, but they've actually written a check and are really sort of vested in our success, which has been terrific. And, you know, acorns are interesting. You can't pick an acorn off the ground or off of a tree and eat it.

Dave Cantor [00:08:31]:

We're all familiar with the oak trees. We're all familiar with the acorns that litter our driveways or backyards or parks or playgrounds, but you can't eat them sort of similar to olives. Like, you can't pick an olive off of a tree and eat it. It just wouldn't taste good. It would be bitter. It's the same with acorns. You have to process them, and it's pretty laborious to process them. You can do it at home, and I've done it at home, but most people don't, because it is quite time consuming.

Dave Cantor [00:08:56]:

It could take up to a week, that type of thing. So unless you're doing it at, like, a big industrial scale, it doesn't really make sense. So, fortunately, we have that sort of scalable by solution in place today.

Pete Moore [00:09:08]:

And how do you, how do you look at the cost on the input side? And what price point are you trying to reach? Obviously, people are on, you know, keto diets and, you know, take better care of themselves and, you know, obviously, Whole Foods. You know, they're willing to pay more. You know, it's Square question of whether you need to be at a higher price point if you wanna hit the mass market. So when you think about the input costs of an acorns versus oatmeal, you know, do you have to be at a higher price point? And do you wanna be at a higher price point given the consumers who are on keto are probably, you know, Moore active and care about their health and more disposable income is going towards, you know, their inputs and their fuel.

Dave Cantor [00:09:47]:

Sure. Sure. So, yeah, look, we're always trying to manage our costs, and there's cost efficiencies that come with scale. So right now, we have, you know, and in terms of, sort of pricing strategy, we're really aiming to be on shelf around a dollar more than the other sort of better for you, you know, natural organic, natural organic cups of oatmeal. So, you know, the analogy for that might be what happened with, like, say, Greek yogurt, again, approximately 20 years ago, which is that Kattera was dominated by, you know, Dannon and Yoplait and these sort of, like, sugary yogurt options. And then Chobani and IE came in and really shook up the category. And what they offered was they offered something was priced more, you know, at a premium about a dollar more a cup or more, but they offered protein. And I think that's a good analogy for us, which is we're gonna be about a dollar Moore on shelf, but we're offering 20 grams of protein versus most of the other sort of oatmeal cups are anywhere from, like, 7 grams up to, you know, maybe 12 grams, 14 grams.

Dave Cantor [00:10:54]:

We're at 20. And then unlike all of them, we're really low in carbs. So we're just a fraction of the carbs. They all have 30, 40 grams of carbs, essentially, depending on the variety. We have less than 5, depending on the variety of folk revival. So much more protein, far fewer carbs. It is keto. It's we're not leading with keto, but it is keto.

Dave Cantor [00:11:15]:

It is paleo. It is gluten free, grain free. We're and then, of course, we are very much sort of sustainability focused, mission driven in terms of reviving these heirloom foods.

Pete Moore [00:11:29]:

This is people are want to let you in on a little secret. There's this company called promotion ball. And what they do is they give out rewards from retailers that allow you to incentivize your members without having to do 0 down and 1 month free or giving away shakes or giving away t shirts. What you wanna do is build a rewards program that lasts, that people value, and that doesn't discount your own products and services. So here's the deal. There's something called rewards vault. The rewards vault is going to allow a member to set up their own profile. They are going to answer questions.

Pete Moore [00:12:05]:

You are going to get those answers. You're gonna be able to target those members, and you're gonna reward them inside your club, inside your spa and outside of the club and outside of the spa to get them to become loyal, to get them to pay their monthly dues, and to be rewarded properly for the actions. A lot of companies are cutting back on rewards. You shouldn't be. Promotion Vault's your answer. Trust me. This is real. So when you take a look at, you know, from a marketing standpoint and being in this industry for 20 years, Some groups have the luxury of doing national commercials or a Super Bowl commercial.

Pete Moore [00:12:43]:

You referenced that you bootstrapping several brands for large companies. When you when you came up with the folk revival, what are some of the things that you said, hey. I'm gonna kinda go this route or, you know, anything that's, you know, maybe a grassroots or guerrilla marketing. We've got a lot of people that are in brands that are localized for health clubs and fitness studios. And sometimes they'll come up with, like, buy 1, get 1 free. Or, like, 1st month free and, you know, no 0 enrollment. Like, let's be a little more creative. So what are some of the things that you have found to be successful that you gotta, you know, say, okay.

Pete Moore [00:13:19]:

This is how I'm gonna do it because it has to be grassroots. So that's how we're Moore it, I get that.

Dave Cantor [00:13:25]:

Right. So it's gonna have to be grassroots. So what I have found is the most efficient use of dollars are spent actually in the store. There's nothing that sort of drives trial more than a shelf tag, you know, At Whole Foods, it says 20% off or a dollar off. That Moore in a store, there's 10,000 items to look at, and you have to grab people's attention, and that grabs people's attention much more effectively than a social post or, you know, anything. People aren't seeing social posts running out to their store generally to purchase the product. So being really smart and efficient with spend, you know, with really shopper marketing, trade marketing dollars, for 1. But, you know, sort of longer term vision.

Dave Cantor [00:14:08]:

I love the idea of talking to, getting this in the hands of many people at music festivals across the country, concerts. There's no reason we shouldn't be, you know, leveraging the name, leveraging sort of that audience and this product, Things like that, whether it's other also effect, like whether it be, you know, Spartan races there tough mudder? Or we those types of events also really great sort of targeted audience. I think a lot of those consumers are already interested in the brand and purchasing and repeating on the brand. So those types of partnerships are in our future.

Pete Moore [00:14:43]:

Mhmm. And then when you look at the, the growth of the influencer Moore, Having a celebrity or an athlete potentially invested in the brand, you know, and basically have that as something that they've They take themselves, you know, basically, some free marketing related to that. Have you thought through that? Is that a good investment, bad investment? Obviously, it's kind

Dave Cantor [00:15:04]:

of a

Pete Moore [00:15:04]:

wild west market. It's good. Yeah.

Dave Cantor [00:15:08]:

It is. It is. You have to you have to be targeted in terms of you have to be sort of strategic, and the investor It has to be strategic. Right? It needs to be a good fit. It wouldn't make sense for someone who's known for, you know, something totally unrelated. But if there's someone living, you know, who's been on a weight loss journey, who's been, who an athlete, someone who's living a healthy lifestyle, that type of thing. It makes a ton of sense, and we would welcome those conversations and that investment. We've had a couple conversations, in the past, but it was a while ago, and we were just really too small.

Dave Cantor [00:15:39]:

So, hopefully, with the, you know, with the increased visibility that I think will gain from being on shelf at Whole Foods, that will help. I think, you know, it's pretty dynamic. The company is changing month to month. So, even by the time this airs, I think the company is gonna look a little bit different than it does today.

Pete Moore [00:15:55]:

Gotcha. And just related to Whole Foods, obviously, everyone that's on a business development role says, hey. We got a meeting. You know, we're gonna close this deal in 30 days. Never happens. What kind of timeline given your experience over 20 years where you say, look. We have a first meeting. Let me just tell you.

Pete Moore [00:16:12]:

Nothing's gonna happen for x number of months. What's the Moore on that?

Dave Cantor [00:16:18]:

I can't speak to that. The selling process for retail, for grocers is at least 6 months, essentially. There's probably some, you know, strange exceptions that have happened that have happened to me and a lot of them to others, but it's essentially a 6 to 12 month selling cycle. So for instance, with Whole Foods, I think we sent samples in in April, if I'm not mistaken, April or May. I think it was April. We just heard from them now, and we'll be shipping in December and on shelf along the eastern seaboard in January. So that gives you a flavor. April to January.

Dave Cantor [00:16:56]:

And that's not uncommon. Most of the retailers operated that, sort of selling cycle in food service with restaurants with chain accounts. It's far longer. Typically, it's even far long.

Pete Moore [00:17:09]:

This is Pete Moore. Here's the last tip for you of the podcast. We are partnered up with a company called Higher Dose, higherdose.com. They are the leader in workout recovery products, infrared technology, LED light masks, neck enhancers and other products such as PMF mats and sauna blankets. If you have not gotten on the workout recovery train, your time and your stop is now. You gotta get these products in there before these workout recovery and spas end up saturating your market, having your members walk out of the club and going into one of their locations for \$200 per month where they're paying 39 to you. Let's become an expert in workout recovery if we are already an authority in workouts. Higher dose, check it out.

Pete Moore [00:18:00]:

There's a wholesale code, and we look forward to helping you augment your products and services to meet the demands of your members. And, hey, Let's get people happy, healthy, and sweating, and the recovery should be just as good as the workout. And then for the entrepreneurs out there, some of the decisions that are made early stage of who's gonna who am I gonna hire next? And what does that roster look like? How have you thought about that from your past experience on, you know, do I need somebody in logistics, or do I need somebody in sales? Do I need somebody research or I need business development? Like, those are key decisions on where you spend those dollars. So how have you kind of managed to say, this is who I need. This is what their pedigree might be or experience. It is the job title. Can you speak to that?

Dave Cantor [00:18:52]:

Yeah. So, I mean, So every business is different. Certainly, even every food company, it it's different. Typically, a first hire might be a head of sales, and some sort of sales and marketing support staff. It's very, very common. It's not, you know, universal, but is pretty typical. In my case, sort of prelaunch. Remember, I left my job in the end of 21.

Dave Cantor [00:19:17]:

I worked on this all throughout 22 with Developing sort of the brand architecture and the and the recipes and finding a factory and building a website and all that. That was all that was essentially years' worth of work all throughout 22. We didn't turn the website on early 23, essentially, the 1st week of 2023. So, in that case in my case, I you know, look. I believe in, like, you know, If you're gonna go fast, go alone. You're gonna wanna go far, like, go together. You know that old adage? So I definitely believe in, you know, going further together. I ended up bringing on 5 different partners, and it was really dictated by needs.

Dave Cantor [00:19:53]:

Fortunately, from my time in the industry, I have Lots of industry contacts, lots of people I love and trust and, you know, admire, and, and they certainly have skill sets that are different than mine and complementary. So, from the branding side, we brought in an amazing sort of branding and marketing partner, which I think I can mention. Their name is special operations, and they helped develop the packaging and the initial website and that type of thing. Really sort of smart strategic thinkers, really creative. And then as we got further, I needed a finance person. I brought in an old finance contact of mine, former CFO from doctor Prager's. We needed r and d. I brought in an old Mars r and d, manager.

Dave Cantor [00:20:37]:

DTC, same thing. I brought sort of a DTC guru on board. Same with Social. I brought on like, when it was time to do social, social costs money, of course, and we were able to bring in a partner who's sort of

putting in sweat equity like all of us and who's willing to sort of give us, some amazing social content, which we ordinarily wouldn't be able to afford. So Those aren't hires per se, but it was about sort of bringing in the right partners and not being scared of parting with some equity to make sure that we can sort of get this ship off the ground.

Pete Moore [00:21:11]:

And what about the, talk about the crowdfunding decision, to go that route and not go into, you know, venture or, you know, friends and family, raise. Obviously, there's a lot of talk about crowdfunding. I think there's It's getting more, legitimized, you know, from a governance standpoint, which is good. From getting customers become investors, obviously, in a brand. You know, that's a nice way to Yeah. Have somebody You know, tell their friends, oh, I'm an investor in this. Go try it. So probably a business development, any an equity play at the same time.

Pete Moore [00:21:47]:

But there's a lot of work that needs to be done for that. So how did you kind of manage through the pros and cons of going through that process?

Dave Cantor [00:21:56]:

So we raised some money. I've been bootstrapping this, for the most part myself. I have not done a proper friends and family round. We did receive some early investment. I mentioned our Acorn, supplier was an early investor, 1 or 2 others. But these are challenging fundraising times as you know and your listeners know. So we start exploring crowdfunding, just a little while ago. This campaign is gonna go live around in just a few weeks, and It's gonna be live on Wefunder.

Dave Cantor [00:22:28]:

So if you look for folk revival on Wefunder.com, probably under the food and beverage You'll see our campaign. It will be live by the time this show airs, I presume. And, yeah, there's a lot of upfront work. There's actually some, you know, some Initials for upfront expenses, you have to budget for accounting and legal and produce a sharp looking video and things like that. Once again, fortunately, I have a lot of these sort of resources in our amongst the 6 of us, the initial partners. So, Special ops who created the sort of the branding and the packaging, also was able to shoot the video. So I have that luxury. Not every entrepreneur who's exploring crowdfunding will have that, but ways to do it efficiently, and I think we're gonna have some success.

Pete Moore [00:23:15]:

Awesome. Well, feel free to use the HALO, acronym to describe the, the sector that you're in. I will definitely try and become a, and having, eater of your, of your folk revivals. And, let's see where distribution could be had, you know, or pressurize the trainers and the certified nutritionists that we know and the dietitians, and get this, you know, top of mind. Congrats on the progress. It seems like you bootstrapped this without a lot of, You know, wasted investment, which is you know, you gotta think about that as a big win also. Right?

Dave Cantor [00:23:50]:

That's true. Yeah. No. I thank you very much, and thanks for the opportunity to, to talk with you today.