



RUBENSTEIN
PUBLIC RELATIONS, INC.

ValiantCEO

November 9, 2023

LiveOne's Rob Ellin Reflects on a Year of Milestones, Challenges, and the Future of Digital Entertainment



"Success is a silent pact with excellence—underpromise to yourself, overdeliver to the world, and outwork the echoes of competition." – **Rob Ellin**

Welcome to **ValiantCEO Magazine's** exclusive interview with **Rob Ellin**, the visionary Founder, CEO, and Chairman of [LiveOne](#), Inc (NASDAQ: LVO).

In this candid conversation, Ellin takes us on a journey through the remarkable milestones of [LiveOne](#), a groundbreaking all-in-one music and entertainment destination that has reshaped the digital entertainment landscape.


From the inception of LiveOne in 2015 to the strategic acquisition of Slacker Radio and the subsequent public listings of LiveOne and PodcastOne in 2017 and 2023, Ellin has been at the helm, steering the company toward unparalleled success.

As the digital era continues to evolve, Ellin shares insights into LiveOne's innovative approach, including the creation of the first standalone public podcast company, PodcastOne {NASDAQ: PODC}.

He also delves into the challenges and triumphs of the industry, offering valuable advice drawn from his extensive experience in launching, selling, and taking numerous ventures public.

Join us as we explore Ellin's reflections on leadership, the changing dynamics of the business landscape, and his unwavering commitment to pioneering transformative digital technology.

Check out more interviews with entrepreneurs [here](#).

Table of Contents 	
1.	In the past year, what is the greatest business achievement you'd like to celebrate with your team? Please share the details of that success.
2.	What advice do you wish you had received when you started your business journey and what do you intend on improving in the next quarter?
3.	Online business keeps on surging higher than ever, B2B, B2C, online shopping, virtual meetings, remote work, Zoom medical consultations, what are your expectations for the year to come and how are you capitalizing on the tidal wave?
4.	Business is all about overcoming obstacles and creating opportunities for growth. What do you see as THE real challenge right now?
5.	In your experience, what tends to be the most underestimated part of running a company? Can you share an example?
6.	What does "success" in 2023 mean to you? It could be on a personal or business level, please share your vision.

In the past year, what is the greatest business achievement you'd like to celebrate with your team? Please share the details of that success.

Rob Ellin: I'm Rob Ellin, the Founder, CEO, and Chairman of LiveOne, Inc (NASDAQ: LVO). In 2015, I developed the concept for LiveOne and founded the company. I was responsible for raising the initial capital and negotiating festival and distribution rights.

I've been driving the company's overall strategy and leading both the LiveOne and Slacker business units. Some of our significant milestones include the acquisition of Slacker Radio, taking LiveOne and [PodcastOne](#) public in December 2017, and September 2023 respectively.

LiveOne is not just a company; it's a groundbreaking all-in-one music and entertainment destination. We bring audiences premium livestreams of concerts and festivals, expertly curated streaming radio stations, podcasts, and original artist video and audio content.

We're at the forefront of the industry, providing a unique platform where fans can access all things music and entertainment.

We're also proud to have spun out PodcastOne {NASDAQ: PODC} this year, making it the first standalone public podcast company. It is a leading advertiser-supported, on-demand digital audio network.

We offer a complete solution, including content creation, brand integration, and distribution, and we've seen over 600 million annual downloads across our extensive range of podcasts.

I've always been a believer in transformative digital technology and media, and I've launched, sold, and taken public dozens of ventures throughout my career in addition to overseeing investments in gaming companies like Majesco and THQ, as well as Jaxx Pacific and many others.

What advice do you wish you had received when you started your business journey and what do you intend on improving in the next quarter?

Rob Ellin: There are a few pieces of advice I wished I received early on. Number one, on our wall in all our offices is a sign that reads, "Under Promise, and Over Perform." This motto has been crucial for success. Number two, outwork your competitors. If you always outwork them, there is a great chance you are going to win. Third is completing five great chess moves per year.

You need to look for five chess moves in your company and, if successful, you are going to create hundreds of millions to billions of dollars in value. Last but not least is to learn from your mistakes.

In building this company I learned from a former company of mine that had an amazing run of its stock but I couldn't make any money because the cost of acquiring a consumer was way too expensive. This made the B2C model difficult to sustain. We ended up spending too much money on marketing but learned from the experience.

We needed to focus our energy on a massive growth engine but also focus on the bottom line of figuring out how to reach a massive audience without having to grow it yourself. When you learn from those mistakes you can come out of the box strong.

The first thing we did when we bought Slacker Radio was to immediately take all the focus away from spending \$80 a sub to acquire subscribers with big breakage and put all our energy into B2B deals.

When implementing this plan, we first focused on our Tesla partnership, making sure we delivered on multiple fronts. Number one was out service anyone else. Number two, outprice them by making sure we out priced them by a large margin. We are one third the price of our competitors. Number three was giving them the opportunity to be the coolest company around who actually chooses the music for their car owners by giving them the opportunity to white label our service.

The branding wasn't the key, the key was having those licenses in place. Last was our ability to be flexible. As an example, we can make a music subscription for a watch company.

So, if Disney wanted to make a music subscription, I could make it for a dollar, but it would have to only be kids' music. You wouldn't be able to deliver 60-70 million songs, you would have to deliver the songs that fit that audience.

We give all the companies we work with that same opportunity to give them that unique content that fits their demographics and audience creating that unique flexibility that no one else can give.

Looking towards the next quarter, I am always looking to improve. For starters, we just cut another \$2 million in costs. As a company, we recognized over two and a half years ago that the market was going to change. It was no longer a growth market. We had to consolidate. So, we pulled in our costs focusing not only on growth but on the bottom line. It is the same thing I've done with all my companies over the years.

Focus the engine on getting the bottom line to cross the \$100 million dollar mark and then you have enough revenue, branding, and power in the market to focus on understanding what the bottom line is. Which is why our EBITDA has moved from negative \$15 million to positive \$15 million creating a positive \$30 million dollar swing.

Online business keeps on surging higher than ever, B2B, B2C, online shopping, virtual meetings, remote work, Zoom medical consultations, what are your expectations for the year to come and how are you capitalizing on the tidal wave?

Rob Ellin: This is still the beginning of the beginning for the industry. You will see more and more triple-A content streamed around the world. We have always partnered with the biggest brands and celebrities in music, allowing us an enormous reach.

With a focus on increased online and streaming opportunities, we have already streamed over 3000 artists to 5 billion engagements and over 500 million livestreams. As this industry continues to grow, these numbers will skyrocket.

Business is all about overcoming obstacles and creating opportunities for growth. What do you see as THE real challenge right now?

Rob Ellin: The advertising market has been hit hard, and you are going to have to have unique and original programming for success. Our focus on podcasters has opened the floodgates for us to be able to capture all the new sponsors coming into the space as they leave other places.

Radio is a long-term melting ice cube, but podcasting is going to grow in leaps and bounds. It's going to grow from here where we are currently a billion-dollar-plus industry to \$7-10 billion from all the different revenue streams that come from it.

This is a time for us to own the space and become the thought leader in all of podcasting. We are going to be nimble and aggressive in a market where Spotify has let their whole team of original programming and podcasting go.

In your experience, what tends to be the most underestimated part of running a company? Can you share an example?

Rob Ellin: Everything. Every day is a new challenge. The key is to focus each year on achieving five great wins, and no massive hits. You must protect yourself against massive hits, while still taking risks.

You must always be taking risks and thinking about what the next top technology is to grow. One of our big focuses right now is automation in cars and where it is going. It offers a massive opportunity for us, and we have worked aggressively to partner with leaders in the space, including Tesla, to help steadily grow our audience.

As a company in the technology space, we're always going to focus on next generation technology. AI, as an example is one, we have worked hard to successfully incorporate into our services. Looking toward the future, there will be a window for NFTs again, so we need to focus our energy on those places where you have mass growth and mass opportunity.

What does "success" in 2023 mean to you? It could be on a personal or business level, please share your vision.

Rob Ellin: Our year end is March 31st. Our planned success was to make over \$120 million in revenue.

We worked to secure huge growth from last year, going from \$90 million to \$120 million plus. We continue to grow our EBITDA. Last year was \$8 million in EBITDA, this year there will be \$13 million plus.

We will continue to add more creators to the platform. Social media creators, podcasters, musicians that are part of our family, company, and continue to grow with us.

Jerome Knyszewski, VIP Contributor to ValiantCEO and the host of this interview would like to thank Rob Ellin for taking the time to do this interview and share his knowledge and experience with our readers.

https://valiantceo.com/rob-ellin-liveone/?utm_source=web-stories-generator