Shift Your Strategy as Your Business Grows with Ryan Beauchesne

Episode #7

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Lisa Larter (00:01):
Welcome to, She Talks Business. If you're an entrepreneur, business owner or aspiring mogul, chances are you want to learn more about marketing and mastering and monetizing your business. She Talks Business is where you'll learn all of that and more. My name is Lisa Larter and I'm an entrepreneur, high school dropout, wiener dog enthusiast and your host. Let's get started.

Lisa Larter (00:24):
Hello, everyone. I am so excited for you to hear today's interview with Ryan Beauchesne. Ryan is one of the most creatively talented people I know. If you are not familiar with his name, you may be familiar with his dog's name, Crusoe the Celebrity Dachshund. Ryan and I are going to talk about strategy. We're going to talk about the grand master plan, or maybe there wasn't a grand master plan, behind his celebrity dog influencer brand, and the things that he focused on in order to serve his community, in order to learn about his community, and why a healthy amount of obsession and passion is required as part of any strategy if you are trying to create something outstanding.

Lisa Larter (01:24):
I'm going to tell you right away, Ryan is incredibly humble for all he has done. This guy has created an international brand with millions of followers, as well as a product line that has sold hundreds of thousands of items. So, don't let his humble nature fool you, this guy is brilliant and has done some really, really incredible stuff. I hope you enjoy this interview as much as I enjoyed speaking with Ryan.

Lisa Larter (02:00):
All right. So I am super, super excited about this episode, because I have one of my favorite dachshund dog owners with me. I have Crusoe's dad Ryan here, and I'm excited to talk to Ryan about the strategy behind Crusoe the Celebrity Dachshund, because I've known Ryan since Crusoe was a puppy. I remember the first time Ryan reached out to me, I thought Ryan was crazy. And now Ryan has built this huge empire around his dog and his dog's brother and now his dog's sister, and I am fascinated by his vision. So welcome, Ryan.

Ryan Beauchesne (02:45):
Thank you, Lisa, for having me. It's nice to finally be on this podcast. As you say, we go back pretty far.

Lisa Larter (02:52):
Yeah, absolutely. You spoke at my event a few years ago. It was great to have you there and share your journey with everyone. This podcast, we're talking about strategy right now. You, in my opinion, were really one of the trailblazers in terms of creating a celebrity marketing influencer brand around a dog. I remember when you first reached out to me, I almost laughed at you. I was like, "You have a dog and a blog, what do you mean you want help with the marketing? I don't get it." I literally didn't get it. And that's really why I want to talk to you because I feel like there's a couple of things, one, strategy is rooted in complexity and pressure for so many people. They think they have to have this grand master plan. And sometimes that's not the way it unfolds. And yet you had this idea of something you wanted to do with Crusoe that hadn't been done before. And so, can you tell me a little bit about how that all unfolded and where the vision came from and maybe what the original goal was before you really understood the long-term strategy yourself?

Ryan Beauchesne (04:15):
Sure, I can tell you the story. It's a bit long but I'll try to condense it. I'd first like to say happy birthday.

Lisa Larter (04:23):
Oh, thank you.

Ryan Beauchesne (04:24):
Special day for that.

Lisa Larter (04:26):
Yes.

Ryan Beauchesne (04:27):
Crusoe is over 11 now. I'd say we've been doing this a long time. We were inadvertently one of the first, I would say. I remember Grumpy Cat was around when we started, and I think maybe a couple of others were sort of just starting around the same time. But I had this little dog, who is super cute, and I'd post just photos of him to my personal Facebook. We'd always get this really great reaction just from friends and family. I thought it was kind of interesting. I've always really enjoyed creative writing and even crafting and costumes, that's how it all came together later on, but writing especially. So, I on a whim decided to throw up this blog in the course of a day and start posting pictures of him on his little adventures in the woods and whatnot. And I was writing from his perspective and giving him a little story and a voice and what became quite a developed character over the time.

Ryan Beauchesne (05:33):
So I'd write these little blog stories. I'd create a Facebook page for him, share that through to our personal Facebook pages and social media. Over the first year, I remember looking at the stats and it was all organic but exponential month over month, just the viewers and people looking at it, which I thought was amazing. I probably would have dropped it if it didn't really grow like that the first year. But just because I saw the growth happening, that motivated me to keep going with it and see how far I could push it.

Lisa Larter (06:07):
Yeah. So what I'm hearing you say, which I love because I think that KPIs or key performance indicators are such an important part of any business, and so what I'm hearing you say is that the data was really what made you continue to move forward with this. Because you got a sense you were onto something based on the growth that you were seeing. Is that right?

Ryan Beauchesne (06:32):
Yeah. Maybe it's semantics, I don't even know if I would call it data versus reaction from people. I saw it was taking on and developing with people and that they were enjoying it.

Lisa Larter (06:48):
Right. So the engagement and the way people were responding is what gave you, I guess, the fuel to keep going. When did you start to think of this as something you could monetize and turn into a business?

Ryan Beauchesne (07:05):
Not for quite a long time. I'd say minimum three years into it is when we maybe launched some of our first merchandise. I still remember the day when we sold our very first little greeting card we had, first ever thing we had for sale. I was over the moon like, "Wow." But then I wasn't self-sufficient on it until we finally got a book deal five years later. And it still wasn't enough money to fully justify going full time in it, but it was the push I needed to jump and just try it.

Lisa Larter (07:41):
Mm-hmm (affirmative). And so are there things that you did that you would consider part of your strategy to, I guess, accelerate the growth of the business so that you could do it full time?

Ryan Beauchesne (07:56):
Yeah, I mean, in the first few years as it was growing, I was seeing that and I was starting to think, "Oh, it'd be really cool if we could get a book deal out of this." It was sort of my first goal or milestone that I developed in the process. I had started to reach out to book agents. I was putting together a proposal myself and everything. And it was all coincidentally that during that time we actually got approached by a publisher directly, so it all worked out. But that's what I was working towards at first.

Lisa Larter (08:29):
At first. And then your online platform, I mean, this dog has over one million followers on, I think, Facebook alone. You've got hundreds of thousands of people connected inside of your community. I've seen your website go down

several times because you post something and the traffic, it can't keep up with the volume of people-

Ryan Beauchesne (08:52):
Annoying.

Lisa Larter (08:53):
... who care about this dog, right? And so, you transitioned into more products, including the ramp. When did you decide to make that move and why did you decide to do that?

Ryan Beauchesne (09:08):
Yeah, that was an interesting one. As a dachshund owner yourself, you know they have the back issues and something you need to be cognizant about. So when Crusoe was younger, I was building him these super ugly makeshift ramps for the bed and stuff. I remember the first time I posted a photo just of him and the ramp was in the background, I wasn't even trying to take a picture of it, but everyone was commenting about it and asking about it, where did we get it. And then it was in that moment that it clicked like, "Wow, this doesn't really exist out there, and it's really useful to these small dog owners." And so I kept that in the back of my mind for years actually before I decided to develop it into a product and try launching it.

Lisa Larter (09:57):
And then when you did, how did it go?

Ryan Beauchesne (09:59):
It went pretty big. The first ramp I had made was probably when he was three. And I didn't launch it till 2018, so it was a good six years or so before it actually came to fruition. And we launched on Indiegogo crowdfunding. I thought maybe we'd sell 300 ramps was my goal, $15,000, and we sold over 500,000. And it kick-started-

Lisa Larter (10:30):
That's pretty amazing. The sense that I get from you, Ryan, is that you kind of slowly put these ideas together and you set the bar low for what you think might happen, and then it explodes. Is that what your experience has been?

Ryan Beauchesne (10:49):
Yeah, pretty much. Yeah, from the beginning it was following what just really interested me and what I really enjoyed, and putting out little feelers along the way. And then what took hold I would follow that path, which is true in so many senses in terms of the type of content I would make, in terms of what platforms we gravitated towards, in terms of what products and merchandise I ended up going to. Yeah, in so many aspects, that's kind of what we did. Adapt, I guess you could say.

Lisa Larter (11:28):
Has there been anything along the way that has been part of your strategy that you would say, besides the book, was one of the most impactful levers in helping you really elevate the visibility of the brand? I know you've had some big home runs with videos that you've done and the calendar's been a really big success. But is there anything... Again, I'm trying to understand because I think people think that they have to have this grand master plan when it comes to strategy, and often it's not necessarily a big plan that they need to have but it's more a series of little steps that they take that help them to iterate more and move closer to the goal. And so, I'm trying to understand for somebody listening to this podcast who is trying to do what you've done. Because there's lots of people out there now that are inspired by what you've done. There's lots of pet owners that are passionate about trying to do what you've done with their pets. I don't know that they really understand the level of commitment, the level of work or the tiny steps that you took that ended up getting you big gains over the long haul. So what can you give to somebody listening to this who's got this creative idea in terms of where to start or things they can do to really try to make it work?

Ryan Beauchesne (13:04):
Right. Are we thinking of content creators in terms of listening to this a little bit?

Lisa Larter (13:11):
Yeah, there would be content creators listening for sure. I mean, I don't think there's anybody today who has a business that doesn't have a responsibility for content creation.

Ryan Beauchesne (13:20):
Right.

Lisa Larter (13:20):
I don't think it matters what kind of brand you are, there's got to be some type of content.

Ryan Beauchesne (13:24):
Great.

Lisa Larter (13:25):
I think what I'm most interested in with you is you took an idea that really came from a passion project, which was out of the love for your dog, the love of training your dog, the love of creating a voice or a character for this dog and bringing his personality to life, and you have continued to iterate as you go along. You've got Oakley who's got his own character and you've got Daphne who's got a character now that is completely different from Crusoe. And so, I'm just trying to help people get into the... It's like you're a mad scientist. You are like this creative genius that doesn't... I don't know that you know you're genius.

Ryan Beauchesne (14:09):
Okay. I wouldn't flatter myself that much. I think it comes back to following the platforms a little bit. We started with the blog and photo. So it was really photos and writing to start. Then when Vine came out, I jumped on Vine right away, because I loved the whole concept and everything. That's what really kick started us into videos, actually. So that was the little six second videos. And then when Instagram launched videos, which could be longer, 15 seconds, we started making them a little bit longer. And then we would post them on Facebook, they get a pretty good reaction there. Then Vine went away. Instagram allowed up to one minute videos, and so now I was doing one-minute skits for Instagram and Facebook. And that's where Facebook especially, they started to go more viral. And so I was pushing deeper and deeper into Facebook trying to make these viral videos.

Ryan Beauchesne (15:12):
I developed somewhat of a formula, somewhat, in terms of killer dog, very original costume, running around playing. Very natural and then plain, but in

the costume and developing that into the little video skit story itself. And then when Facebook Watch launched in 2017 or '18, they had a minimum requirement of three minutes because now they want to run ads on those videos to compete with YouTube of course. So, Facebook actually approached me to be part of that original program. So I was at crossroads like, "Do I want to start making such long videos when I've had such success with these shorter ones?" But that's obviously the way Facebook was trying to push things. I thought, "I'll try it."

Ryan Beauchesne (16:07):
But now this was also an opportunity to blend in what the original spark was with Crusoe, which was more the writing. I lost that with the shorter viral videos because there was no story or talking or anything. So now in three-minute videos, I was bringing back my writing, his character, the personality with voice over. Now it's a full little story skit. So we started that on Facebook Watch, and then I started cross-posting those to YouTube, and all of a sudden YouTube has a huge reaction. So now, also because Facebook sucks now, I've started focusing way over to YouTube. YouTube's probably my primary one, and we've grown to 800,000 subscribers since I started posting there in 2018 with these longer form episodes now.

Lisa Larter (16:56):
Wow.

Ryan Beauchesne (16:57):
And they've gone up to 15-minute long.

Lisa Larter (17:00):
That's crazy.

Ryan Beauchesne (17:01):
I just keep playing longer, pretty much.

Lisa Larter (17:05):
So talk to me a little bit about a time on this journey where you questioned whether you had made the right decision to do this and how you overcame a challenge that you faced along the way.

Ryan Beauchesne (17:21):
Definitely a hard moment in terms of Crusoe's brand and the personality and character I was trying to develop was when I first started the episodes and his voice over. So you got to think, people for years have been following this little dog, reading his blog, his books. They have their own voice in their head, right, of what they think he should sound like, and then all of a sudden, here's his voice. So definitely threw some people off. I was really hesitant to even give him a voice in the first place.

Ryan Beauchesne (17:54):
Another thing I've also done is a lot of surveys to our fan base, kind of getting what they think of certain episodes or changes we've done. So once we launched the voice, I did a survey and asked people about it. There were a lot of people who didn't like it or didn't think it was right, so there was a lot of questioning in my head of, this is the right thing to do? But ultimately, I decided to push through it because I liked the voice and I thought it fit the vision. It really worked out. Later that year, we won a people's choice award and I'm certain it was because of those episodes.

Lisa Larter (18:36):
Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah, for sure. I think that one of the challenges is when you build a brand that reaches as many people as you have, you can't please everyone.

Ryan Beauchesne (18:50):
Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Lisa Larter (18:51):
There are so many different people with different opinions that you're always going to have certain people that don't think you've done the right thing. There's lots of armchair quarterbacks. Of course, you're leading, because nobody else has really done this, but everyone wants to tell you how you should do it even though they haven't done it, right?

Ryan Beauchesne (19:10):
For sure, yeah, yeah.

Lisa Larter (19:10):
That's interesting. Let's talk about the future. I mean, you guys brought Daphne into the mix as part of your family. We both know that unfortunately the only bad thing about dogs is they don't live as long as humans. And so, as Crusoe starts to get older and may or may not want to participate and playing, doing the videos and those types of things, what is the future iteration of your business? Where do you see things going over the course of the next 10 years? Have you thought about that?

Ryan Beauchesne (19:50):
I've thought about it. But again, it's one of those things where I have a slight vision. I'll follow it a little bit but I'll also follow the little path if something opens up slightly different for me. Yeah, Crusoe's just over 11 and Daphne's almost two now. We thought at the age Crusoe was when we got her, it's a nice time where you're still young enough to play with her and teach her his traits and all his bad habits too, and then she'll learn the gig. So we thought it was a nice time. I'm not going to lie, a little bit of it is a business decision and continuing our program and what we do.

Ryan Beauchesne (20:43):
I mean, my plan for now is just to keep going with the videos and what we do. If Crusoe tells me that he doesn't want to do it anymore, then I'm happy to let him sit out a little more. As you know, he's had some health stuff going on in the past year, so he's actually done a lot less this past year. But I start working with Daphne and then Crusoe comes over and he wants to be in it. For now, it's going well. I'm trying to push it to where Crusoe's brand is more than just him, that his legacy is even bigger than that. So right now we're working on a mobile game based on Crusoe. I've also been talking with someone about doing a cartoon, which of course could continue on for however long.

Lisa Larter (21:43):
That's cool. I would love to see a Disney film Crusoe. That would be so cool.

Ryan Beauchesne (21:51):
It would be. I don't know if that's gonna come together or not, but it's one of those things that if it comes together and we get a good reaction, who knows if I'll pursue that the most. I'm not sure yet.

Lisa Larter (22:06):
I do know other people that have had dogs that have been part of a brand, that at some stage they have brought another dog in, basically to replace the character. And so it's almost seamless because the dog looks identical to the existing dog, and so you don't actually know even in the transition when the transition happened. Do you know what I mean? It's not like, "Oh, this dog died and now we have this dog." It's like, "Okay, there's two dogs that look the same." I mean, people mix Oakley and Crusoe up all the time. I don't know how, but they do.

Ryan Beauchesne (22:51):
Yeah, they do. I'll tell you though that that doesn't interest me though.

Lisa Larter (22:55):
Yeah. There's only one Crusoe.

Ryan Beauchesne (22:57):
Yeah, there's only one.

Lisa Larter (22:59):
He's a very sweet dog.

Ryan Beauchesne (23:01):
I couldn't live with trying to replace him like that. There's no denying that he has been my livelihood for the last six years, but I don't look at him as a business like that.

Lisa Larter (23:17):
Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah. You are more emotionally invested than you are financially invested.

Ryan Beauchesne (23:23):
Yeah, too much so.

Lisa Larter (23:24):
Yeah. I hear you, I get it. I totally get it. I mean, I don't mean to sound like all doom and gloom, because obviously I have two dachshunds myself, and I want them to live forever. I'm constantly researching the average life

expectancy and if you do this, how long will they live? I see people in your community, all of this, "Jackson just turned 20. This one just turned 21," and I'm like, "Yes, Sunshine's going to live forever." But Crusoe is living his life out in public with you, so it's a little bit different for you.

Ryan Beauchesne (24:08):
It is.

Lisa Larter (24:09):
So what about you, you the business owner? Does Ryan aspire to do things differently or does Ryan have another next big idea that isn't related to the dogs?

Ryan Beauchesne (24:25):
That's a good question. Maybe retire. Well, the DoggoRamps business that we talked about a little bit before has grown quite a bit and that's almost splitting... Well, it's trying to split my time between Crusoe and this business now, and I could be full time on DoggoRamps and still not going to be doing enough work. I'm at crossroads there. Do I hire someone to come in and manage it fully for me while I concentrate on Crusoe and YouTube and stuff? Or do I still try to balance it myself for now? Not sure, but that's going really well, and I really like that I have that. This past year when Crusoe went through some health stuff, it got to me a lot emotionally and personally, and so going over to DoggoRamps and working on that was actually in a way a nice little escape from not thinking about it too much. Because if I'm working on Crusoe's brand, I'm looking at his pictures all day long, there's just no escape.

Lisa Larter (25:45):
Yeah. Yeah. It's stressful when they're not well and you don't know what's going on. He's doing better now, is he not? The last blood work was-

Ryan Beauchesne (25:54):
Yeah. Yeah.

Lisa Larter (25:54):
Which is really good. But I have been in that situation with Gretchen. Before she passed away, she had the same type of liver oddities in her blood work

that you experienced. I mean, that's not what happened when she passed away, but I understand the pressure and the stress. Every week you're going to the vet to get a blood test to see where they're at. And then you have a winning streak and then all of a sudden you're backwards and you're like, "What the heck is going on?" It's stressful.

Ryan Beauchesne (26:24):
Yeah. Of course pandemic on top of that and everything this past year, it's... Thankfully he's doing better right now. I've thought about if I were to start a totally unrelated business or something one day, and if I followed a somewhat similar formula of developing a following in something and then building a business off of that. I like that process to doing your business, especially if you have time. If you're thinking of doing a business one day and have a bit of time leading up to it and still thinking about it, one thing you can do today is start to build a following or a little community around just that general topic or industry.

Ryan Beauchesne (27:15):
So fishing, for instance, I really like fishing as a pastime. So if I were to start an account myself about fishing or whatever and build that up over a couple of years as best I could, focus on content like I did with Crusoe, just that at first, learn from that community, and then if I have an idea for a fishing business, now I have a starting audience to go off of. And that's what I attribute DoggoRamps' success pretty much 100% to. If we didn't have a starting audience of three million small dogs, dachshund owners, it wouldn't have kicked off like it did. It would have been totally different.

Lisa Larter (28:00):
I think what you just said is very interesting because it sounds to me like your strategy has been a lot of consistent dabbling. "I'm going to try this idea, I'm going to see how people respond. I'm going to the see how it works. I'm going to nurture it and cultivate it. I'm not going to expect it to turn into something big overnight. I'm committed to a couple of years of developing the idea and then seeing where it goes." Whereas, most entrepreneurs that I have coached, they have this idea for a business. They're not consistent about doing the creation and formulating the community. But what they really want is they want the six or seven figure payoff and they want it fast.

Ryan Beauchesne (28:48):
Right. Yeah.

Lisa Larter (28:49):
It sounds to me like your approach has been the opposite. Would you agree?

Ryan Beauchesne (28:53):
Yeah, I think so. I think there's a fine line between dabbling or putting out too many feelers where you're not focused enough. I've always had just a few out at a time that I've developed just with my gut sense in terms of what are some directions we should explore. But then yeah, absolutely, the ones that take on and we get a reaction from, I follow them further or develop them further, push them. Yeah, it's a combination of getting a reaction from people. But as I said, I also did so many surveys and talked with our community. One of our strongest communities right now, even though it's one of our smallest, is our Facebook group as you know, where it's such a dedicated original core audience of Crusoe fans there. They talk among each other. They're so willing to contribute their ideas and feedback. It's the most amazing focus group you could ever ask for.

Lisa Larter (29:57):
Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Ryan Beauchesne (29:58):
And so I've done a lot of asking them about things. Even for the ramps, when I was developing those and designing them, I was asking them "What is the height of your bed?" and stuff, and getting all this great information that I used.

Lisa Larter (30:15):
Mm-hmm (affirmative). It's interesting because you also... I mean, you've got hundreds of thousands of people in that group, but you haven't monetized the group. What I mean by that is you've monetized the group because they buy stuff from you, but you have not been one of those marketers that has required people to pay to be part of the community. You also haven't followed the trend of, "Oh my goodness, this is too much work, we're going to shut this group down and move some place else. And if you want to join us, you need to pay to be part of the community." So, I find it interesting that

you really have chosen to go right when a lot of other people have gone left in terms of how you have done things in this business.

Ryan Beauchesne (31:03):
Well, talking about the group, we have a few moderators who pretty much manage it self-sufficiently without me right now. We have them because they have been such dedicated fans over the years. They've become friends of mine. And they just care so much about Crusoe and this community, they are happy to do it. So that's amazing that this community has developed and is thriving somewhat on its own. In terms of subscription paying or something, I have considered starting a Patreon. YouTube launched a membership program. I've thought about those, but I don't feel like I can deliver that extra value right now in terms of extra content or whatever it entails.

Lisa Larter (31:56):
Ryan, have you ever considered writing a book in terms of what it takes to be a good and engaging dog owner? I also think that you are very different in terms of the amount of research you do into the care of Crusoe and Daphne and probably Oakley too. You're very, very, very knowledgeable about the breed, about health, about how to train them. And so, I look at you and I think of Cesar as an example, right?

Ryan Beauchesne (32:34):
Right.

Lisa Larter (32:35):
He's got all these dog books. I would actually be more interested in reading a book that you wrote, because I think there's something interesting there in terms of play. And the way that you play with the dogs and engage the dogs creates such an experiential life for them, but it's also rewarding for you. Have you ever thought about that?

Ryan Beauchesne (33:06):
Not directly in those words, but that's for sure interesting. I look at myself as when I'm interested in something, whether it was Crusoe's original blog or Crusoe himself, his health or whatever it is, I become obsessed, and I go full in into it, sometimes even at the expense of my relationship. There's times

when were starting Crusoe's blog and Vine and stuff, and we had to have some discussions about balancing time for us versus just making content and everything. That's been true this past year and previous with his back surgery or his liver stuff that was going on. I'd spend days and days researching and learning everything I could. I think that comes back to the success of the business or the brand and stuff is if you're really passionate and interested in something, I think you should be happily obsessed about it, or as obsessed as you want to be obsessed with it.

Lisa Larter (34:24):
Yeah, I agree.

Ryan Beauchesne (34:27):
So, yeah, writing a book, I have to think about it.

Lisa Larter (34:32):
I think you should. I think a lot of people would buy your book because I think a lot of people are curious about the things that you have done to basically train Crusoe, to care for Crusoe. Even myself, I ask you questions all the time, what raw dog food do you think is the best one? What would you do about this? You are a wealth of knowledge in terms of being a pet owner, specifically a dachshund breed owner than anyone else I know. So, I'll buy the book.

Ryan Beauchesne (35:15):
Yeah. That's a good point. That comes back to being an influencer, right? We've accumulated so much knowledge of the breed and everything. So it's not always about influencing what products to buy, but it's also, I'll just say, how to maybe a better dog owner. When Crusoe went through his back surgery, again, I researched an incredible amount. I always want to speak to the best experts in the world, which we did with his liver stuff and everything. So I get all these different perspectives, I collect all this information. Still the most visited page on our website is the IUDD resource page on the back disease for them. By far still the most visited. We documented his whole recovery and his rehabilitation and everything we did.

Ryan Beauchesne (36:16):
I get messages from vets and vet techs who say this is like a textbook example of how to do this. So it's a great resource for people. I don't wish Crusoe to go through any of that, but if he does, at least we can share that experience and hopefully help other people avoid it. Same thing with the ramp business. That's designed to prevent this from happening to dogs or help dogs that have had that happen to them. So it's rewarding to know that this product that I invented for my dog is now in over 10,000 homes helping other people's dogs.

Lisa Larter (36:55):
Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah. Are you planning to do an outdoor one?

Ryan Beauchesne (37:01):
It's funny you say that, I was just asking our manufacturer about it a couple of weeks ago, yeah.

Lisa Larter (37:08):
Yeah, I need an outdoor one. I need one in Calgary.

Ryan Beauchesne (37:08):
It's just taking time getting it universal enough for all the different types of outdoor stairs or number of stairs.

Lisa Larter (37:18):
Yeah, yeah, I can imagine. I can imagine. I mean, where we are in Calgary, the way our stairs go down, it's very steep. When we lived in Nova Scotia, the way we built our stairs, we built them not very high and they were lower and so it was easier for the dogs, right?

Ryan Beauchesne (37:40):
Right.

Lisa Larter (37:41):
It wasn't a high vertical step. Whereas, in Calgary it's not that way. And so I carry them up, I don't let them go up and down the stairs. But that means I have to go outside every time they go outside, which is not always fun. So Ryan, in wrapping up, I guess, what advice would you give somebody that

has an idea, for somebody that has an idea for something but doesn't feel like they have a well thought-out strategy? What advice would you give them in terms of getting started?

Ryan Beauchesne (38:21):
I think, first and foremost, and I hate to say it because it's so cliché, have a passion for something. But I think you really need to enjoy whatever it is you're doing and not, as you said before, just want to jump to the six figure reward from it. You have to realize there may not be an immediate payoff. But if it's something you really just enjoy doing in and of itself, just do it because you enjoy it and rewards will come from that. And obsess yourself to a degree, but be open to changes and follow the different paths and see where it will lead you. But just do it because you enjoy it, first and foremost.

Lisa Larter (39:14):
Right. Don't do it to just chase money, do it because the act or the art of doing what you do brings you joy in and of itself.

Ryan Beauchesne (39:25):
Correct. When I used to work for a marketing agency, my boss would always say this one thing that always stuck with me that, "Just because you build it does not mean people will come." So creating and everything is, I still believe, the most important thing. But even along the way, I was always trying to develop myself professionally and my expertise and everything. I was first starting Crusoe's stuff, I was working at an agency at the same time for the first few years, and so I was running different contests on Crusoe's page to grow followers and things like that, and then using what I learned there and the agency, and the stuff in the agency I was trying on Crusoe's thing. I was still taking a methodical approach to growing it at the same time.

Lisa Larter (40:21):
Yeah. It sounds to me like you are also a big experimenter. "I'm going to try this and I'm going to look and see how people respond. If people respond well to this, well, then I'm going to try it again and I'm going to tweak and change little things until... " You remind me a bit of mad scientist, right? I mean, a tweak, and change and adapt and pay attention to how people are responding to this thing that I'm doing until they really figure out what are the elements at play here that are having the greatest impact.

Lisa Larter (40:57):
I think part of what brings you joy is the responsiveness of the community to what it is that you're putting out there. And so, Crusoe brings you a lot of joy, and so using him as a vehicle to engage and see that joy spread to other people is another layer in terms of what you've built.

Ryan Beauchesne (41:22):
Yeah. Yeah. I would say the reaction from people and seeing their joy in something I created has probably been my biggest early motivator, for sure. Yeah.

Lisa (41:35):
Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah. Well, it's hard not to feel joy when you see those little pups, that's for sure.

Ryan Beauchesne (41:43):
That's what I go for.

Lisa Larter (41:46):
They're pretty awesome. That Daphne is quite the character. I love the contrast of the personalities that you have chosen. I know you and I were communicating about her when you first got her, when she was a puppy. I forget the word that you used to describe her personality back then. She was feisty, I think you said.

Ryan Beauchesne (42:10):
Yeah.

Lisa Larter (42:10):
And so how would you describe her personality as being different from Crusoe's?

Ryan Beauchesne (42:17):
Still very, very feisty. Both are characters, I've extrapolated on them. But I'd say they're still based on who the dogs are to begin with. Crusoe is very laid back, very calm, very cool, ladies man. He was the last puppy in the litter, so he's always been shy a little bit. He doesn't mind wearing stuff. Daphne was the only puppy of the litter, which is pretty rare that that happens. She was a

big, chubby puppy, tons of energy, really feisty. She's still really mouthy, like will... like put her mouth on you. Not biting but just really mouthy, really loud, talks and barks with such exaggeration and emotion. So they're totally different. And Oakley, who's Crusoe's half brother, just a little bit younger, 10 years old now, they have the same father but different mother. Oakley, based on reality without offending him, he doesn't have full attention to things, very easily distracted, can't look at the camera for too long. So that's why we give him the goofy voice and stuff. It totally fits his character and who he is.

Lisa Larter (43:48):
So do you think that you guys will ever have a third dog?

Ryan Beauchesne (43:52):
I don't think right now.

Lisa Larter (43:53):
Two is so easy to travel with, right? You get on a plane, they fit under the seat, but yeah, add a third one.

Ryan Beauchesne (44:00):
Third and then you take travel out. I don't think we would. Even two is hard for me.

Lisa Larter (44:08):
Yeah. Two is hard for my husband too. He doesn't like it because Sunshine will just go to sleep under the seat, no problem. But Eddy, he has to be vocal all the time. He does not like being... and so he's always like... And so Paul has trained Eddy now that he will take treats and he will almost crumble the treats and he'll drop little tiny, tiny pieces in the bag, so that Eddy's trying to find these little tiny morsels in the bag. But now the dog is expecting him to do that, and so as soon as you stop doing that, what do you think the dog does? ... which is exactly what he doesn't want the dog to do. So it's kind of funny.

Ryan Beauchesne (44:51):
Like a slow crumb feeder.

Lisa Larter (44:53):
Yeah, exactly. Exactly. Well, they definitely bring a lot of joy into our lives. Your dogs bring joy into my life. I love that I got to meet Crusoe. I hope I get to meet Daphne at some point as well, because I'm a crazy dachshund lover, just like you are. Thank you for your time today. What I love about this is from the outside it looks like you had this grand master plan of pet influencer domination from the very beginning. The truth is it was not a grand master plan, it was just one step at a time, and iterating and testing and trying different things and focusing on building a community and adding value for that community. I think that that is reassuring for a lot of people to hear. You don't have to have the perfect picture. That picture can change as you go along. But you do have to be obsessively committed to providing value. And if you can't be a little bit obsessed with the passion, and create value on a regular basis for people, it likely isn't going to build into anything.

Ryan Beauchesne (46:11):
I think you summarized it perfectly.

Lisa Larter (46:14):
All right. Well, thank you very much, Ryan, for being here. Folks, I will have all of the links to Crusoe's website and the dog ramps. Once Ryan writes his book, I will come back and I will add the link to his book here as well, so that you can buy a copy. Thank you so much, Ryan, for being with me today.

Ryan Beauchesne (46:37):
That was good. Thank you so much, Lisa.

Lisa Larter (46:40):
Thank you for joining me for this episode of She Talks Business. If you enjoyed the show, you know the drill, leave us a review, tell someone about it and join the conversation on social media. Thanks for listening and until next time remember, done is always better than perfect.

Lisa Larter is a Business Strategist, Digital Marketing Expert, Author and Speaker.

The Lisa Larter Group helps their clients to formulate marketing strategies that support their business goals and objectives. Lisa provides consulting & advisory services, and implementation services including: social media & content management, book marketing, and website design.

Ryan Beauchesne is the Owner and Creator of Crusoe the Celebrity Daschund.

Crusoe is a little wiener dog who grew to popular heights on social media and YouTube, and who achieved such feats as becoming a New York Times Bestseller and even winning a People's Choice Award. Alongside being an influencer/content creator with Crusoe and continuing to further develop that brand and various avenues, Ryan has also started and manages a successful brand of ramps for dogs that he invented, called DoggoRamps.