



INVESTMENT BANKER TO ENTREPRENEUR

Filling the gap between entrepreneurs and financing helping them become investible

Written by: Maria Ransome

Q&A

WITH KEVIN VALLEY

Kevin Valley is a consultant who specializes in helping companies seeking to raise capital, negotiate investment terms, or exit to develop a defensible business valuation.

As a qualified Chartered Business Valuator who has spent over 12 years evaluating companies for both debt and equity investment, Kevin strongly believes that unless a valuation can withstand intense scrutiny - it is just a number.

Defensibility is everything.

The Founder and Managing Director of Become Investible, Partner at Aspire Fund Management, and Host of the Caribbean Power Lunch Podcast - Kevin is especially passionate about business and the development of entrepreneurial ecosystems.

He has always admired the power of businesses to change lives, provide employment, and create sustainable wealth.

We asked him a few questions about his journey to entrepreneurship and he leaves us with some great tips for entrepreneurs looking to become investible.

Q

Tell us a bit about yourself, what you do and how you help your Clients.

A I am a consultant who specializes in helping companies seeking to raise capital to grow their businesses, negotiate investment terms, or sell their business to develop a defensible business valuation. I've spent over twelve years analyzing companies for debt and equity investment and I've realised one key thing and that is, when it comes to business valuation or so, the number you generate from running the excel model or spreadsheet is secondary to your ability to defend it. If you can't defend the number you get it's pretty much worthless. I am also a Scorpio ☺



Kevin Valley

Q

What was your job before taking the leap into entrepreneurship?

A I was a Vice President at a boutique investment bank focused on providing debt and equity financing for medium-sized companies. My role was to build partnerships with regional investment firms to ultimately provide funding solutions for our business clients.

Q

What inspired you to leave your full-time job to pursue your own ventures?

A A combination of things, I was working with my brother who was the main owner of the company. I got to see first hand the benefit of owning, literal business ownership. You don't necessarily have to be an owner to be an entrepreneur, you can save up your money and invest in companies and own businesses that way. In early 2018 I launched a podcast I was interviewing entrepreneurs and that passion is contagious. Every-night after doing an interview with one of these folks, I was on a high. It gave me great pleasure editing these episodes to craft it. It was mine, it was something I was creating by hand and it brought me a great sense of pride and overtime I started feeling like Kevin you have a lot to offer this world you have all these skills. I had finally gotten my business valuator qualification so I was now a chartered business valuator and I was like okay Kevin, you can do this you have the skills, your skills are marketable let's try something.





Q Tell us more about Become Investible. What exactly is it and how does it benefit business owners?

A In October 2017, I was asked to speak at a YoPro conference, and they wanted me to speak on becoming investible, business ideas on funding. I remember telling them this story about the time I tried to raise funding by myself for a brief period of time. I was working with these gentlemen and we had many ideas and went to pitch but there were so many things missing from our business model that the investors said no. I used that as a lesson for that audience. The audience loved it and there was so much engagement after that session. I began pondering even more and more. So many medium sized and small businesses come to us for funding and we would have to say no because we couldn't expose the risk in their business model to our investor clients, but at the same time we root for small and medium sized businesses because we see that as the way for the economy to diversify for growth, for job creation etc.

However banks and financial institutions are not in the business of providing advice so this is where Become Investible comes in. We were created to be that bridge between business owners who lack the comprehensive strength in their business model to attract investors, and the investors who are looking for good businesses to invest in.

Q Tell us more about your podcast Caribbean Power Lunch. What was your inspiration behind it?

A Caribbean Power Lunch is a business podcast that highlights and supports Caribbean businesses playing their roles as global citizens. Almost every week I would have an in-depth discussion with an entrepreneur on their business and career journeys, challenges faced, and best thinking to overcome common business challenges.

When the podcast was conceptualized in late 2017 and launched in January 2018, the idea was to feature the journeys of Afro-Caribbean entrepreneurs as I found their stories were rarely heard and seldom celebrated. We have since evolved into being a resource for business owners who wish to scale and compete at a global level.

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WE WERE CREATED TO BE THAT BRIDGE BETWEEN BUSINESS OWNERS WHO LACK THE COMPREHENSIVE STRENGTH IN THEIR BUSINESS MODEL TO ATTRACT INVESTORS, AND THE INVESTORS WHO ARE LOOKING FOR GOOD BUSINESSES TO INVEST IN.

Q What role, if any, has your podcast played in helping you grow your visibility and your business and personal brand?

A A pivotal one. Caribbean Power Lunch was my debut to the world as a content creator, speaker, and presenter.

Q What are three things entrepreneurs should know when it comes to getting funded?

A 1. Who are your target customers?
A Ask yourself these three questions

- Who can you create the most amount of value for?
- Who do you enjoy working with/serving?
- Who is able and willing to pay a premium for your product/service?

2. Focus on building products/services that address specific problems for your target customers.

3. What provides you with a strong and differentiated competitive position over others targeting your customers?

- Skillset and track record of your team
- Protection of your intellectual property
- Strategic partnerships
- Multiple supplier options
- Trade secrets that make your business more efficient

4. Bonus: Maintain strong financial controls

Q What are some other visibility strategies you've used to get yourself seen, heard, and paid?

A 1. Getting extremely clear on what value I can bring to the world, who I can provide most value to, and how I communicate that value.

2. Developing frameworks and methodologies on all aspects of business that I advise on including scaling, attracting investors, and valuation.

3. Accepting and pursuing opportunities to be featured in various media for my ideas, insights, frameworks, and methodologies.

4. Publishing my ideas and insights on social media and other mediums.

5. Building relationships with like-minded entrepreneurs and executives. Partnering to achieve shared objectives.

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Q What advice would you give to persons ready to make the big leap from employee to entrepreneur?

A Focus on problems that you know how to solve very well, build relationships and network with those who can help you, and always be sure to provide value to everyone you do business with.

Q Where can people find you if they want to know more about your services?

A You can learn more about my business valuation services at my website www.kevinvalley.com

Connect with me on LinkedIn at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/kevinvalley/>

Take the Become Investible Scorecard at <https://becomeinvestible.com>

