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Robert Glazer: Welcome to Elevate, a podcast about achievement, personal growth, and pushing limits in leadership and life. I'm Robert Glazer and I chat with world class performers who have committed to elevating their own life, pushing the limits of their capacity, and helping others to do the same.

Robert Glazer: Welcome to the Elevate Podcast. Our quote for today is from Philip Seymour Hoffman and it is, "Creating something is all about problem solving." Our guest today, Cameron Herold, is one of the most gifted problem solvers in the entrepreneurial world. He's an experienced operator, entrepreneur, best selling author, coach, keynote speaker, and someone I've worked closely with over the past few years. Cameron, welcome. I'm excited to have you join us on the Elevate Podcast.

Cameron Herold: Hey, Bob. Thanks for having me. I appreciate it.

Robert Glazer: So I've heard you say pretty often that your father trained you to be an entrepreneur from a young age. How did he do that, was it legal, and then what made it stick?

Cameron Herold: There were times when I wasn't sure it was. It's funny, my brother and I were just chatting about my dad this morning. My dad was an entrepreneur really from the get go. I mean, he went to university and studied dentistry and then never practiced. Started his own business right out of the gate. His father was also a CEO and then my mom's dad was an entrepreneur. So we really had entrepreneurship pretty deep our veins and my dad wanted the three kids to not so much be like him, but to really have the time that he had. He really showed us that being an entrepreneur, we controlled our time. We could do whatever we wanted when we wanted and it wasn't about money, it was about having control of our time so we could really have the freedom.

Cameron Herold: And then it was also the hustle. He was always a hustler, right? Of spotting an opportunity. So at a young age he kept showing us that having a job and working as hard as we could or as little as we could to make the same amount of money every hour was terrible. Where we could hustle and find ways to make more money or put it on autopilot or have other people making money for us, and he showed us those little opportunities. So really at a very young age I was shown to do things. And some of them were related to his business. One was selling license plate protectors door to door. And he would always try to give me some new product that he had that he was trying to sell and I was out there selling it.

Cameron Herold: And then I found there were people I could buy products from. I was I think like 11 years old and I bought sunglasses from my piano teacher in bulk and I started selling sunglasses at school. And I was buying them for like \$1 and selling them to kids for \$3. And then I got in trouble at school for selling sunglasses, so I brought them to a gas station and they sold them for \$5 and they paid me \$3 and I was paying \$1. So I realized, wow, I had distribution all of a sudden.

Cameron Herold: So he was always getting us to do these little business things and challenging us to do them and some of them were one day little businesses and some of them went on all summer long.

Robert Glazer: How many siblings do you have?

Cameron Herold: I've got a brother and a sister and myself. I was the oldest of three. We all three of us, actually, run our own companies today. My brother's is like five million plus, my sister's is about 10 million plus, and myself. So we've all got businesses and have been running forever.

Cameron Herold: He also did stuff like teaching us to be creative and problem solve. We used to have this game that we would play where he would give us three objects and we would have to tell a story. So he'd say, "Guitar, fan, and a leather chair." And we'd have to stand up and tell a story about this guy who was in a smoky bar and he sat in a leather chair playing guitar and then someone was taking pictures of him and they were selling the pictures as art. And we would just craft this story and it was all about being creative and thinking on our feet and feeling confident to speak. He taught us about public speaking and just all these little lessons.

Robert Glazer: Have you read the book Range yet?

Cameron Herold: No.

Robert Glazer: Have you heard about it?

Cameron Herold: No.

Robert Glazer: Because it's interesting. It's one of the bestsellers now and it's about how generalists are beating out specialists. And what it says is when their game is where the rules are really confined, like chess or certain medical things, and just more hours and you master the rules and it's sort of a fixed set of things, like the specialization and computers kind of do it well, but innovation seems to come from them. The more someone stays in one domain, the least innovative they are. And so innovation seems to come from people who cross over, like kind of what your dad was making you do, because you tackle nonlinear problems and can come up with solutions to that.

Cameron Herold: Well, he wanted us to really be creative and he really taught us that there was no box, right?

Robert Glazer: Gotcha.

Cameron Herold: He also fundamentally did not believe in the school system. I don't think this is necessarily a great lesson, but he often told us about cheating in an exam or having his football coach, who was also his professor, let them know that just because he struggled on one of the exam questions, he wouldn't mark that one. "We won't Mark that one, Johnny." And so I always realize that my dad didn't really care if I got A's or B's, but I also realized that no one else actually cared, either. And for me school became more about being involved in clubs and organizations and fraternities and college politics and running a business. You know, I was 21 years old, I had 12 full time employees in my company that I owned when I was 21. And I think my dad was really pushing us to be more well rounded and also to network.

Cameron Herold: I think really the only job that I really had at young age was working at the golf club. And my dad wanted us to work there because it would allow us to be around all these other successful people. And I remember starting to meet all of these men and women that were successful and owned all their own companies or were in successful jobs, and I realized that my network at a very young age was very strong and that became apparent when I started my house painting business. All of a sudden I was painting houses for all these successful people who I'd met because I was working at the golf club in the pro shop.

Robert Glazer: So what was your first real business?

Cameron Herold: My first real business where I registered a company and had a bank account and a company name was a house painting business. It was called Cameron Herold Enterprises. And I was-

Robert Glazer: Yeah, you had a business with the name of the founder under perform [crosstalk 00:06:44]

Cameron Herold: I don't know, I just... Yeah, I was 19 years old, right? I had to go register a business, so that's what I set it up as. And then it was, DBA was College Pro Painters. I was a franchisee for College Pro Painters and they trained me. That was really where I got my real world MBA. In fact, I was talking to the founder of College Pro over email a week ago, Greg Clark, and he started the company in 1971 and I did that for three years in university. I ran a business and then I went on to work for the company at the head office for four years and I coached franchisees. So by the time I was 28 I'd coached 120 entrepreneurs.

Robert Glazer: And then I think soon after that, right, you met Brian Scudamore, who's also recently been a guest, and joined his company as COO.

Cameron Herold: Yeah, it was actually two companies later. So I did a private currency company that I was president of and then I was also a partner and a co-founder for an autobody chain. I was on the franchising side of that and we built that up. It's called Gerber Auto Collision in the U.S. and Boyd Autobody in Canada. So Brian had met me through the Entrepreneurs' Organization. We were in a forum together for about four and a half years when I was running the auto body and the private currency business. And he saw me building these companies and he was starting to build his out and he asked me if I would coach him.

Cameron Herold: And I started coaching this guy that worked for him, Jesse. Jesse ran VP of operations. And after about a week, it might've even only been two days, Jesse went to Brian and said, "I can't do anything that Cameron's coaching me to do. You should hire Cameron to do this because I can't do it." And so Brian asked me if I would join him full time and I said I would work behind the scenes for a few months. And six and a half years later I was still there as the chief operating officer. Jesse stayed for about three weeks and then he left. And we're again friends today, but I think he recognized that I had the skills to build out a big franchise organization and that was probably a big step for the company.

Robert Glazer: So how did your experience as an entrepreneur prepare you for a COO role?

Cameron Herold: Well, so a couple things. One, I built two franchise companies. So as an entrepreneur building College Pro Painters, which was the largest house painting company in the world, and then Boyd Autobody, which became the largest collision repair chain in the world. Having been around that in building out multiunit operations and franchising and franchise systems and marketing and hiring and training, I was really groomed to build those kinds of systems. And then having done it, College Pro was only a four month business where we had to get 120 franchisees trained and hired and up and running.

Cameron Herold: You know, I hired Kimbal Musk back in 1993. Trained him on how to run a business and his cousin who built SolarCity also, Peter Reeve, worked for me. We only had four months to train them, get them up and running, and do \$60 million in revenue and shut it down. We became very, very good at operational excellence. So that, I think, groomed me to have a lot of the COO systems. So I think coupling that with my franchising depth is what allowed me to help Ryan grow 1-800-GOT-JUNK?

Robert Glazer: So you guys were on a rocket ship at that time. What was the size when you came in and during the six year period?

Cameron Herold: Yeah, so when I joined Brian, he had just done two million in revenue. He had 12 franchises and we had 14 employees at the head office, and when I left six and a half years later, we had 3,100 employees system wide. We had 330 franchises. We were operating in four countries and we'd gone from two million to 106 million in revenue. We had no debt. We gave up no equity and we ranked as the number two company in Canada to work for.

Robert Glazer: But it wasn't always easy.

Cameron Herold: It was really hard. It was really hard. Fast growth like that is really, really hard because we had six consecutive years of a 100% revenue growth that you're constantly having to raise the skill set of your people. I was always maniacal about culture and turning our company into a cult, into a magnet for talent. I was maniacal around growing people and raising their skill set because every year they were either growing their skills or they were out of a job. You become very, very focused on people, growth, people, growth, people growth and then just attracting more great people because the more great people attracts more great people. So I was always around the cult, I think, was probably what I was bringing to the table.

Robert Glazer: And with that kind of growth, what breaks more? People or processes?

Cameron Herold: People. I think people break first. Processes always break. I've always said that it's outcome over process or even though I'm a big believer in systems and the franchising systems, people break. People are fragile. Their egos are fragile. There's communication issues. They screw up a system or they don't use a system, but it's always the people issues.

Cameron Herold: Even when I was working with the CEO of Sprint, I was coaching the CEO and the second in command at Sprint for about 18 months, and Marcelo and I, Marcelo's the CEO, we're sitting in his board room and he looked at me and he's like, "When will people stop becoming the issue?" And we both laughed. I'm like, "You're the 82nd largest company in the United States. They'll never stop becoming an issue." Right?

Robert Glazer: Yeah.

Cameron Herold: It's tough. And I also really love people, right? I really, if I hurt them or I'm stressing them too much from stretching them too much, or if they're struggling at home or in their personal lives, I empathize really, really heavily with that and I really take a lot of that on. I think people's always the issue. It's tough.

Robert Glazer: Yeah. And you shared a great analogy with me a few years ago, which I think is relevant because obviously there's the people and everyone's trying to do what they can to increase the capacity of the people to grow in line with the business so that they're ready for those jobs. But there's also just, businesses have tons of data these days. I'm not sure that they know how to separate signal from noise, but they have a lot of data. But you used sort of an analogy, the car dashboard analogy. Can you share that one? Because we talk about that one a lot. I think it's helpful in terms of figuring out when you are growing like that, what you actually need to pay attention to.

Cameron Herold: Yeah. I almost need to codify that a little bit more. I was teaching a CEO that the other day. So the analogy is this. Let's say that you drive a Tesla Model S or a

Mercedes 7-Series, right? Regardless of what kind of car you're in, both of them have a dashboard. Well, actually the Tesla, not so much anymore, but let's say the Mercedes for a second. So if you think about what's on your dashboard, the biggest gear on your dashboard that you look at all the time, like every minute or so, or not even, every 30 seconds or 20 seconds, is the speed, right? It's very big. It's right in front of you. You look at it all the time. And then another one that you look at usually every few days, or depending on how often you drive the car, is the gas gauge.

Cameron Herold: You just kind of get in and you go, "Oh, I have enough gas for the next few days, I'm good." And then all of a sudden it goes on and bright orange. And it goes, "Hey mother, you know, you're almost out of gas. You should go fill up." So it's a small little dial and then all the other ones that are on the dashboard, they might light up in orange if something's wrong to tell you something's wrong but you don't really need to look at them. And then in the background, the car computer is tracking a lot of other data, all kinds of data, but you don't need to see that. As the driver of the car you don't need to see it. You just need to know it's being tracked so that when you take it into the dealership, they can plug your car in and they can see if there's anything wrong or they can assess or diagnose anything that was showing up as orange on your dashboard.

Cameron Herold: I think in a company it's the same thing. At the leadership team level, and even at the business area level, we're often looking at so much data being presented to us, spreadsheet after spreadsheet with tab and all these links. We don't need to see all that. What we need to see is maybe two or three metrics per business area and we need to have those metrics show up in a different color. You know, red, yellow or green. Green if we're in the range we're supposed to be. Yellow if something's going slightly off, or red if there's a problem so that we know what to look at. And then let's say that marketing's three metrics were all showing up as yellow or red, you might then open up the hood and look at all 20 or 30 metrics that marketing's tracking and you might start digging in a little bit more. So I think that's the way I look at companies tracking their KPIs or metrics is similar to how a car would track and report.

Robert Glazer: Yeah, and the one thing he used to always push us on, and I think people look at this both ways. Talk about the difference between having a process and a lot of rules.

Cameron Herold: Having process and a lot of rules. So a process is, or a system that works, is one that happens and almost can't progress unless the system is being followed, and it can almost happen in the absence of people. So a good example would be, the reason we have police with radar detectors and speed limit signs trying to prevent cars from going too quickly is we're not using a good system. So they're trying to put all these processes in place, or systems. They're trying to hold people accountable to something.

Cameron Herold: A really good system would be, or a process would be, that could be automated, would be to put a governor in place on every car that would only allow cars to

go a certain speed based on the road that they're on. Like a golf cart. You know, you go into some golf courses and it goes like four miles an hour if you're in the parking lot. It goes up to 10 miles an hour when you're leaving and then it goes to 15 when you're out on the driving course. It's like, whoa! How did it happen? Well, that's an automated system that you can't break. I think we don't put those in place in companies enough.

Robert Glazer: Well, the processes help kind of set people free, right? They're not meant to-

Cameron Herold: Right.

Robert Glazer: They're meant to make the job easier for people, not to tell them, "Here's what you can do, here's what you can not do." I mean, one of the first ones that I remember you had us put in place years ago, and when we were worried about the recession years ago, was the onboarding. Client onboarding process. Yeah, explain how that looks for a company and what it saves them from.

Cameron Herold: Yeah. Well, it's interesting. I was actually talking to another client of mine who I was coaching the other day about this and he's bringing on a senior VP of engineering and I said, "What's your onboarding process?" He goes, "Well, the guy knows what his job will be. We'll introduce him to people and he'll be up and running." I'm like, "No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. He needs to sit in with customer service for a couple of days. He needs just to ride shotgun with sales for a couple of days. He needs to observe the factory floor for a couple of days. He needs to read the marketing manual. He needs to go for lunch with each of the division heads. He needs to go for coffee with a couple of people in each different business area. You got to spend a couple of weeks onboarding someone so they truly understand the full landscape before they start their job."

Cameron Herold: So years ago at 1-800-GOT-JUNK? I remember bumping into this girl, Amy Chan, in the lunch room and I was like, "How's it going?" She goes, "I just want to get started." I'm like, "What do you mean, started? You've been here forever. Everybody knows who you are." She's like, "Tomorrow is my last day of training." I'm like, "Oh my gosh, you've been here for three weeks and you haven't even started your job yet." And she was a marketing assistant in a marketing group of nine people. But we wouldn't let her start her job until she was truly onboarded to the point that she was already becoming kind of iconic in the company before she was able to start her job. And I think that's when people really feel loved and accepted and understood and they really understand how everything fits together, is because we slowed down before we go fast.

Robert Glazer: Interesting. All right. We're going to take a quick break and we'll be right back with Cam Herold.

Robert Glazer: In 2004 Mike Zani and his partner started a search fund. A search fund where you raise money with a leadership team already in place and then look for a company to buy. Well, here's what Mike learned the first time he bought a company.

Mike Zani: Bob, we were really pretty good at the strategy stuff and we were good at the financial side of things, knowing what to pay for a company, but when we finally bought the company, figuring out how to get the right people in the right roles and managing them was really hard, surprisingly hard, and we sucked at it.

Robert Glazer: So Mike and his team used The Predictive Index to help them fix their people problems. Then when they bought and ran two more companies, they use The Predictive Index again. In fact, they became so enamored with The Predictive Index that, you guessed it, they bought the company.

Mike Zani: Yeah, we bought a 60 year old technology company. I have to pinch myself. You know, I get to run a company that helps people solve their people problems. Designing teams, hiring, inspiring managers, and when it comes down to it, almost all business problems come down to people problems.

Robert Glazer: So if you're trying to figure out how to get more out of your people, I'd recommend you go to predictiveindex.com/elevate and request a demo of their product. That's predictiveindex.com/elevate.

Robert Glazer: Whenever I'm doing an interview and someone asks me about the best productivity tool I use, my answer is SaneBox. I've been using SaneBox for four years and cannot manage my email without it. SaneBox artificial intelligence monitors your inbox and moves email you don't need to read right away to your SaneLater folder. All that's left in your inbox is the important stuff. You can also snooze emails and have them come back to you in your inbox at the right time. If you know how email folders work, then you know how SaneBox works. Find an email in the wrong folder, just move it. There's nothing to learn, nothing to install. SaneBox works directly with every single email server or service that's ever been created. Get a free two week trial and a \$25 credit by visiting sanebox.com/elevate. That's S-A-N-E-B-O-X.com/elevate.

Robert Glazer: And we're back with cam Harold. So Cam, I know you're a big believer in the COO role and even started a whole organization around that role and helping to provide the same tools to number twos that number ones have. Can you talk a little bit more about that?

Cameron Herold: Yeah, and I love that you're one of the only rare people who call me Cam, so you clearly know my sister.

Robert Glazer: Yeah. No, your sister calls you Cammie, to be fair. I asked her if I could use that. Yeah.

Cameron Herold: Okay. Now we're in trouble. Yeah, I went by Cam. Well, so my name when I was born was Cameron, but I was called Cam for 27 years. Then I moved to the West Coast. I was tired of introducing myself as Cam because people think it was Ken or Kim. So finally I'm like, "Screw it, it's Cameron." And then she started kind of infiltrating my business world and has got me going as Cam again. It's funny. So the question was what about the COO?

Robert Glazer: Yeah, it's about the role of COO and why you started the COO Alliance.

Cameron Herold: Sure. So the COO's role, I've always believed, is like in a traditional family where you've got a husband and wife raising kids, you've got a bit of a yin and yang, right? You've got the true kind of partnership where you divide and conquer. And in the COO world, the COO's job is to make the CEO iconic, to take all the stuff off the CEO's plate that they don't love doing or they suck at, to be the person who really gives them the true kind of like emperor's new clothes truths. You know, when no one wants to tell the CEO what's really going on, the COO needs to be the one to say it to them privately. They're kind of like their conscience. They're the ego check. They're the truth sayer.

Cameron Herold: And I always saw that as the COO, I would go to these events with Brian when I was his COO. We would go to an Entrepreneurs' Organization event or a YPO event or some entrepreneur conference. And I never really felt like I fit in because I'd be standing there talking to all these other entrepreneurs, and I'll give you an example. One would say, "We've got to get all the right people on the bus." And everybody'd be like, "Yeah, we got a better at recruiting." I'd be like, "Let's talk about it." And they'd be like, "No, let's talk about marketing." I'm like, "Whoa, you just brought up recruiting. We can talk about that for two hours." But they didn't want to talk about it for two hours. They wanted to just stay at the more thematic level, which was good.

Cameron Herold: And then I realized that I didn't have a zone to sit down and talk about interviewing and recruiting and closed questions and open ended questions and reference checks and topgrading and really understanding how to review resumes and what filters to use and stuff that you should spend a lot of time on, systemizing and training your team on. So I wanted to start a place for the COO. And I realized...

Cameron Herold: I just spoke yesterday at a conference with 650 CFOs at it. It was the MIT CFO forum. 550. Sorry, 550 CFOs, and there were no entrepreneurs in the written. It was all CFOs and they were in their zone geeking out on finance related M&A stuff that I would lose my brain, but for them it was awesome. And there's places for lawyers and there's places for marketers, but there was never a place for the COO. So we started this organization called the COO Alliance. And your COO, Matt Wool, was one of the founding members of it three and a half years ago. And it was actually him and Zach Morrison from Elite SEM were already chatting behind the scenes with each other. And they were kind of the impetus for starting it, so thank you for that. It was great.

Robert Glazer: Yeah, I know Matt, after Matt went to his first one, it was great because he was like, "Wow, there are a lot more crazy CEOs out there than you are." It became a support group for people dealing with all of their founders, CEOs.

Cameron Herold: Well, it's a support group where we realized that all the CEOs are a little bit crazy, but they're supposed to be.

Robert Glazer: Yeah, well that's the economy. If you can firewall them, then it's really helpful. I would say my batting average is to come up with... if two out of 10 of my crazy ideas turn into something, that's a pretty good year.

Cameron Herold: Well, it's funny. So I interviewed your COO, Matt Wool, on our Second-in-Command podcast where I only interviewed the second in commands, and one of the things we talked about was, and I remember this, was when you were going to start your Friday forward emails.

Robert Glazer: I haven't listened to this yet. I should listen it.

Cameron Herold: Oh dude, you got to listen to it. It's so good. We were laughing about it. We were going, "What is he thinking? He's crazy. Who the hell cares? No one's going to read these, but let him do his thing." Right? And it was one of those, Matt was like, "No, let him do his thing. Let him write his performance partnerships book. Let him do his thing." Because there's a few things that the entrepreneur feels so passionately about that doesn't really cost anybody money. It doesn't cost a whole lot of time. And if you let them do their thing, often those things, that momentum creates momentum.

Cameron Herold: And dude, were you ever right? Like, wow, have you ever created some momentum with a couple of your things. Your books and that email that you write weekly have been massive for you. And I think the other times where the COO needs to say no is really hard because sometimes... I remember at 1-800-GOT-JUNK? Brian wanted to do his hunks of junk calendar, raise money for charity and it was going to be awesome. We pushed it off for years until finally he had to do his damn calendar. Well, it flopped. It didn't do anything. But there were other things that he really had to do like say that we were going to be on Oprah and I thought that was nuts, but we went for it and sure enough, we ended up on Oprah.

Robert Glazer: You said a key point, I think, is that the effective number two or COO, they're a firewall and they judge where it has organizational risk, where it has resource and finance risk, or where like, "Look, just let them do it." And I think that the firewall is important. The stuff that pulls in a lot of people and distracts people from their day job, those are the initiatives that that's where Matt or someone in that role I think starts to stand up more. But if it's a low risk skunk work thing, again, you're going for a batting average. We joke in baseball in America, I mean, 300 will get you in the hall of fame, three out of 10. I think if two out of 10 of these harebrained ideas work, they could be the things that push your

business. That still means the eight are going to fail. But two out of 10 might actually help push your business forward in the next year.

Cameron Herold: Yeah. And sometimes it's the... and the hard part for the COO is to be there as the counterbalance. To protect the entrepreneur from themselves. To say what no one else wants to say, but also to give them the room to do what they're good at. And that's where the real mutual respect comes in. And Matt for you is yours, where he thinks you're genius and crazy. Beautifully crazy, but mostly genius. And he gives you the room to explore that and then he takes the stuff off your plate that would distract you from that or take your time away and then you're able to play his support where you could go behind him to talk to the team and go, "Yeah, Matt's being a hard ass and being tough, but he needs to be. He's watching out for everybody." You're protecting him internally and he's protecting you, and that's where the trust just spirals up.

Robert Glazer: Yeah. I mean, I see that on the budget. So we're in a budgeting cycle now and I always tell Matt, "Here's what we want to do next year from our goals." And then I say, "Here are the, you know, throughout the year, there's five or six things, those new ideas," and he'll be like, "Look, we're not going to hit the number. So what you want to do? You told me to hit the number" He kind of just spits everything back to me and I'm like, "Oh, well yeah, then let's not do that." So is it a helpful balance.

Cameron Herold: Yeah. Well, one of the ones that we've seen as well with this is where the CEO has got some big new project that they really have to get out the door on. And what we say to them is, "That's awesome, let's do that project. But of the seven projects that are already on our pipeline that we're working on, which one do you want to delay?" And then they go, "Oh. Oh, I get it."

Robert Glazer: That's a strategy we use for clients too, in terms of not saying no, but saying, "Okay, you want us to do all this other stuff, are you comfortable if all these new projects hurt the revenue of the baseline program as we shift our resources?" "Oh, don't do that." So yeah, that is a helpful framework to frame it back to people in terms of what the cost is.

Cameron Herold: Yeah. The cost on the people side, the cost on the, which project are we going to delay side, the cost on the emotional toll. We only have three resources. People, time, and money. So what's the highest ROI we can get off those?

Robert Glazer: Yeah. Well, let's shift gears to another one of your passions and recent books, which is meetings. And the title of the book, Meetings Suck, would tell us how you feel. And I mean, I used to work with a lot of these when I was more involved in our early days, the Silicon Valley high growth companies. And I would go out there and just, I felt like everyone met all day. So what is a good meeting? What are the meetings we need, and what are the meetings we don't need, and what are the rules for meetings that make them productive?

Cameron Herold: Okay. So you just touched on a really important subject for me. So I've been coaching a company for seven years now. It's called BlueGrace Logistics. They're at about 750, 800 employees now. Two years ago they raised \$255 million from Warburg Pincus. I've coached them from about 40 employees up to where they are now. And it was around three years ago I was talking to Bobby Harris, the CEO, and he said, "Our meetings suck." And I was like, "All right. Well, tell me about them. Have you ever trained your management team on how to run meetings?" And he said, "No." I said, "Have you ever trained all of your employees on how to attend them and how to participate in them and how to show up at them?" He said, "No." And I said, "Well, then meetings don't suck, you suck at running meetings."

Cameron Herold: Because I've been in other companies when meetings are really good, they're really effective, they're really powerful, they're fast, they're focused and people get shit done. And it's kind like how to get more shit done with less people faster. And he's like, "All right, tell me more." So we started to kind of sketch out what made highly effective meetings and that became the format of the book Meetings Suck was, 30% of the book is how to run meetings, 30% is how to attend them and participate in them, and then 30% is what meetings you need to have to build a highly successful company. And people are buying hundreds of it for every employee. If you've got 50 employees, they're buying 50 copies.

Cameron Herold: And my view on it is that the average employee, the data actually says the average employee spends one to two hours a day in meetings. And the meeting is either in person, over video, or over the phone, talking to discuss or move something forward. So if the average employee, let's call it one hour a day, they're spending one eighth of their day in meetings, that means they're spending one eighth of their salary doing something they haven't been trained on. So that was the whole impetus for writing that book was to get people to stop complaining about something they've never been trained on how to do. And it's kind of like, I said, Little League Baseball. You would never send your kid off to Little League Baseball without teaching them how to hold the bat, how to catch the ball, and how to throw the ball. You'd at least give your kid the basics because you wouldn't want him to come home from Little League the first night saying, "Baseball sucks." Baseball doesn't suck at all. Johnny, you suck. You're just shitty at it.

Robert Glazer: Yeah. When you were sort of coaching us around the meeting stuff years ago, one of the things that we ended up doing was we gave everyone a rate per person and told them that they had to include the total cost of the meeting in the meeting itself.

Cameron Herold: There's actually calculator apps that you can actually download the free app and you put in like six executives, two managers, four frontline staff. You put in the quick salary and then you press start and it calculates by the minute what the cost of that meeting is. I did that at Bobby's, at BlueGrace Logistics. They were running a daily huddle and it ran for nine minutes and I wanted to show people that the cost of running a daily huddle for 250 business days with all of their 200

or so office employees who were coming to the daily huddle multiplied by the cost of the entire year was costing, it was like \$600,000 is what they were spending on the huddle. And I'm like, "Take it seriously." And people are like, "Holy shit, we had no idea." I'm like, "Yeah, that's why we have a seven minutes system for daily huddle. We don't just stand around and chat."

Robert Glazer: Yeah. I mean, it makes a big difference about why you having it. Who should be involved. When you do that, I don't know, maybe it can be half hour, not 45 minutes. Or maybe if you can just trim time off meetings. Yeah, it adds up.

Cameron Herold: Yeah. I say book every meeting for half the time you first think about booking them for. So like a quick, get it done in less time if you need to. So if you're going to do it for an hour, do it for half hour. If we're going to get together for a day, book it for half a day. You control the extraneous chatter. And then I also like finishing every meeting and every phone call five minutes early and that way you can walk down the hall and talk to your assistant and get a cup of coffee and start the next phone call or meeting exactly on time.

Robert Glazer: Well, you're a prodigious writer because your latest book out, Free PR, really goes into the whole strategy that you used at 1-800-GOT-JUNK? Do you want to give a quick overview of the book and what that was?

Cameron Herold: So that actually goes way before 1-800-GOT-JUNK? as well. I actually connected the other day with the first media story I ever landed was in 1986 and the Tom Hewlett just added me on LinkedIn. I was like, "Whoa dude, you're the guy who covered me in 1986 for the Sudbury Star." So I learned how to do free PR back at College Pro Painters. And what we understood was, every day the media is looking for some story and they don't have money to go out and find it. So if you phoned the journalist, if you phoned the photographer and say, "Hey, do you have two minutes? I think I have a good story about you," they'll tend to cover you. So we used that system inside of 1-800-GOT-JUNK? We landed 5,200 stories about our company in six years. And then when I left there, I started teaching all the CEOs and companies that I coach how to land free PR and a company out of Boston, called grasshopper.com, asked me... David Hauser was the CEO. He asked me if I would write his in house PR manual on how to do PR for Grasshopper.

Cameron Herold: So I wrote a 13 page, 15 page manual and he paid me to do it and that became the initial chapter for Double Double, which became, you know, the PR book was the expansion of that. That's how it started. If I was to kind of give you some of, I guess, the key tips or takeaways? First thing we talk about now is called the digital trifecta. So when you land press, when you land press coverage, whether it's a podcast that you're on or a blog that you're written in or Forbes magazine covers you online or in the print edition or a TV show that you're on, whatever the coverage you get is, that's your earned media. That's the media coverage that you earn for yourself. And that does okay. People hear about you, they learn about you, they buy your books, whatever.

Cameron Herold: But then when you post those links, and when we landed the 5,200 stories at 1-800-GOT-JUNK? we had no social media profiles. Facebook didn't exist yet. LinkedIn really didn't exist. Twitter didn't exist. So we had nowhere to amplify our PR. So now you would link the stories to your press page. You would post it on your Facebook profile, your LinkedIn profile, your Twitter profile, probably four to five times over the next three months. You would share that story. You would email it out to your entire list. So you take your owned media, all of your social platforms, and you share the story that you earned with your list.

Cameron Herold: And then the third area of the digital trifecta is paid media. So that's when you buy traffic towards that post that you've just shared. So as an example, two years ago, the publisher of Forbes magazine covered me in the physical print edition of Forbes. He wrote about the Vivid Vision concept. I posted that on my Facebook page. I posted it on my website. I'd emailed it to all the speaker's bureaus. And then I bought traffic. I only spent like 75 bucks or something, and I got a whole bunch of CEOs in the U.S. to see that story on my Facebook profile.

Cameron Herold: So that's how we kind of amplify the earned media that you're getting. So that would be the kind of senior version or the more advanced version of PR. If we go back to the basic version of PR, every journalist woke up this morning and thought, "What the heck am I going to write about today?" And your job is to pick up the phone in the morning sometime between nine o'clock and 11 o'clock and call them and say, "Hey, do you have a couple minutes? I think I have a good story for you." And most of them will say, "Sure, what's the story?" And then give them the rough ideas of the story and see if you can turn it into more of an angle that they can cover for you.

Robert Glazer: And your whole system is about building an in house competency, right? Versus most people, I think, outsource it.

Cameron Herold: Yeah. It's very much an in house competency. I don't like PR firms traditionally because I find that you're going to spend five or six thousand, seven thousand dollars a month to have a person who really is only spending a day and a half a week on your brand. The way PR firm can make money is to have one person to work for three brands. So wouldn't it be better to pay a PR person \$5,000 a month? 60 grand a year is more than any PR person makes. Pay them 5,000 a month to work just for you. Have them sit near you or near the CEO's office, near the marketing team. Work in collaboration with marketing and sales and drive your company culture, drive your marketing and your sales focus and pitch you full time, where that's all they were pitching.

Cameron Herold: So yeah, I teach people how, and each of my books is really almost like a manual how-to. So the book Free PR is how to build an in house PR team and how to do it. It's not the theory of PR. It teaches you how to go and do it.

Robert Glazer: Awesome. So I have to imagine you've got another book up your sleeve. Any clues to us of what the next one might be?

Cameron Herold: I've got two. Not because I want to, but now I'm being pushed really hard. Pulled really hard to do these two. One of them is on the emotional highs and lows of CEOs. It's why most entrepreneurs are bipolar. Bipolar disorder has been nicknamed by the medical community as the CEO disease, and I've taught a lot of CEOs over the years about this roller coaster ride. I've had a couple of them say I've saved their life because they were suicidal. Now they realize they're just an entrepreneur. So I'm going to talk about how to ride that highs and lows.

Cameron Herold: Actually Tim Ferriss did a blog post on me about 10 years ago about the roller coaster ride, the entrepreneur roller coaster. So there's going to be a book on that and I think it's important to educate not just the CEOs but their employees and their families of why these entrepreneurs go through the very big highs and the stressful depressing downs and it's a hard world for them to live in by themselves. Anyway, so that's one.

Cameron Herold: And then the second will be on the kind of two in a box model of the CEO, COO, which I believe is the two really tight role that needs to be played in a company, more than any other C level role. The CEO and COO have to be a real strong, strong, strong partnership. And I'm going to talk about how to recruit and onboard and build the relationship with and leverage that second in command role inside of any organization.

Robert Glazer: Awesome. You're averaging about one a year. So it's been an impressive-

Cameron Herold: Five books in 11 years.

Robert Glazer: Five books. But three of them in the last like four years, right?

Cameron Herold: Yeah. One happened by accident. I was at a Genius event with Joe Polish and Hal Elrod came up and asked me if I would co author The Miracle Morning with him. So that one wasn't intentional. So yeah, I got lucky on that one.

Robert Glazer: All right. Last question for you, Cam, and you may have alluded to this. Actually, I think we were talking a little about this before we started, but it could be singular or repeated, but what's a personal or professional mistake that you've learned the most from?

Cameron Herold: Wow. So I think the biggest, biggest personal one is not to take everything so seriously. This is just what we do to make money and none of us are getting out of this alive and we're all going to die and just have some fun. I'm really, really, really figuring that out now. That's why I like Matt so much and you so much. You guys laugh a lot. It's really nice.

Robert Glazer: I mean, you got to, right? It's hard.

Cameron Herold: But it's hard. It's been hard for me. I've had to learn that. On the professional one, it's when you hire people, listening to them. If you're not going to listen to

them, hire someone else you will listen to. So we almost lost the company 1-800-GOT-JUNK? We were running about a hundred million in revenue system wide. We had 250 employees at the head office and we were spending money that we had. We had five million in cash and we spent about 800,000 on bonuses, 600,000 on a renovation, but another 600,000 on a big office move, about \$2 million in taxes. And then all of a sudden we realized we didn't have enough money to pay our payroll and to get us to spring when our revenues would go really high.

Cameron Herold: So we went to the bank to get a loan and the bank said, "Well, you don't have any money. We can't loan to you." And we're like, "What do you mean? We've been making money for six years. We just spent four million bucks on this stuff. Why wouldn't you loan to us?" They go, "Oh, if you'd come to us last week when you had five million, we would have loaned you five million, but now that you spent four and a half of it, we're not going to loan you any." We're like, "Well, that's stupid." And they're like, "No, you're stupid." It was like a bunch of school yard kids calling each other, like, "You're dumber than I am."

Cameron Herold: What had happened though, was for six months our VP of finance kept saying, "You're spending money too quickly. You're growing too quickly. You're spending too quickly, you're growing too quickly." And Brian and I just kept pushing forward, pushing forward, thinking we had it, not understanding how the balance sheet worked, not understanding how cost flow really worked. And he had to go out and borrow \$417,000 from his mom to meet payroll. And we had this very quiet, very shy, very, very smart VP of finance. But Brian and I were... Listen, I'm a 98 D in DiSC. I'm a high D, high, high D. And so is Brian and we just drove right over top of this guy who was trying to tell us to be careful.

Cameron Herold: So I think the big lesson is, well, if you've got people in your meeting, listen to them, right? Why invite them to a meeting if you're going to talk over top of them the whole time. So it's just really, really surrounding yourself with people who you're willing to listen to and if you're not willing to listen to them, hire people who you are.

Robert Glazer: Yeah, don't hire people to be your checks and balances and then roll over them. Well, a lot of us can learn from that story. What's the best place for people to find out about you, your world, books, everything you do?

Cameron Herold: Sure. So all five of my books, as you clearly pointed out, I guess seven in a couple of years, we're on Amazon, Audible, and iTunes. And then the cameronherold.com has access to everything, or the cooalliance.com. But everything's really the cameronherold.com. And then the Second-in-Command podcast as well, which they should really give that a listen to as well. I've covered some really great companies on the Second-in-Command.

Robert Glazer: All right. Cameron, thanks for sharing your story and experience with us. I think you've kind of shown our listeners why you are such a thought partner to growth companies and their leaders.

Cameron Herold: Thanks Bob. I appreciate it.

Robert Glazer: To our listeners, thanks for tuning into the Elevate Podcast today. We'll include links to Cameron and all of his work in podcast and everything he does on the detailed episode page at robertglazer.com. If you enjoyed today's episode or enjoyed other episodes, I'd really appreciate it if you could leave us a review as it helps new users discover the show. If you're listening on Apple podcast, just select the library icon, click on Elevate, and scroll down to the bottom to leave your review. That's all it takes. Thank you again for your support and until next time, keep elevating.