

# Trust and Communication

An Interview with George Pyne, Chief Executive Officer, Bruin Capital

**EDITORS' NOTE** *George Pyne founded Bruin Sports Capital (now Bruin Capital) in 2015 after 25 years transforming businesses in sports, entertainment, media, commercial real estate, and academia. This included taking IMG from a talent representation firm to a global sports and entertainment conglomerate that ultimately sold at record returns. He orchestrated NASCAR's meteoric rise from a regional niche into a multibillion-dollar sports league. He also organized one of the world's largest debt restructurings at the time for Portman Companies across its 19 lines of businesses. Earlier, his comprehensive analysis of Atlanta's Education System led to sweeping reforms of the city's school board. He is a board member of the National Football Foundation and the National Catholic Charities for the Archdiocese of New York. Pyne was Captain, All-Ivy League, and All-New England honoree as an offensive lineman at Brown University.*



George Pyne

**FIRM BRIEF** *Bruin Capital (bruincptl.com) is an international investment and operating company specializing in all aspects of the media ecosystem with a concentration in sports, entertainment, technology, marketing, advertising, live events, licensing, and brand strategy. Today, Bruin companies operate out of 50 offices across five continents with 2,100 employees. Bruin investors include The Jordan Company, CVC Capital Partners, Rock Ventures, NNS, and a prestigious family investment fund group.*

## What was your vision for creating Bruin Capital and how do you define its purpose?

Having led global sports companies for nearly three decades, we saw the oncoming transformation of media and consumer interests as an opportunity to launch Bruin as a vehicle for investors and entrepreneurs to capitalize on the changing dynamics. We felt our unique value proposition of capital and capability would be difference-making resources in the quest to create value and build great companies. We are very proud of how that has played out.

## How critical is it for Bruin Capital to have an entrepreneurial spirit and culture of innovation?

It's vital. Ideas are what drive companies forward. I've learned that great ideas can come

from everywhere, and you need an environment that allows those ideas to be communicated and flourish. We place a premium on independent thinking and encourage it across all our companies.

## How has Bruin Capital evolved since its founding in 2015?

Bruin is much more established now based on the performance of our companies and investments. We're seeing even more inbound opportunities across our desks. Operationally, we move faster. Our network is bigger and can truly accelerate any platform we get behind.

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## Will you discuss Bruin Capital's capabilities and differentiation?

In Bruin's first two funds, we have the backing of The Jordan Company, CVC Capital Partners, plus leading family investment funds, ensuring that no idea or opportunity is off the table for us. We also have a global team and advisors who have run extremely high-performing sports, entertainment, media, and technology companies with massive networks available to our partners. And what distinguishes us from others is our culture. We work very hard to

establish the trust and communication that cuts through the noise and leads to the best, most effective decisions possible.

## Will you highlight Bruin Capital's portfolio companies, and what are the key characteristics Bruin looks for when evaluating an investment opportunity?

The common thread in our companies is that they elevate the sports experience for fans. A few examples from our portfolio are: Two Circles, an award-winning, data-driven, strategic marketing company that helps leagues elevate everything about the fan experience. Full Swing is a state-of-the-art sports simulation company that allows you to play, train and compete in your favorite sports at your convenience. Oddschecker is like an Expedia for bettors who want real-time odds comparison and data. Engine Shop produces hundreds of sports and entertainment “experiences” worldwide.

## Do you worry that the economy and higher costs will have an impact on sports when it comes to consumption from consumers?

Throughout history, sports have always been an escape from challenging times, including the ebbs and flows of the economy. There may be some headwinds – how much is anyone's guess – but I don't see any long-term decaying of the industry. The fundamentals are incredibly strong. We've just been through unprecedented challenges due to COVID and came back even stronger – because fans missed the distraction and entertainment games provide. I'm not concerned.

## What has made the sports industry so special for you and a place where you have wanted to spend your career?

It's my heritage. My father and grandfather played professional football. I played football for Brown. My father-in-law is a Hall of Fame golfer. Both my sons are football players. The eldest played at Brown, and my youngest is now at Notre Dame. There's nothing like bringing a team together in competition. It's like running a business in so many ways.

## Bruin Capital has achieved strong growth and success since its founding. Do you enjoy the process and take moments to reflect on what you have accomplished?

I try to enjoy the process more now than when I was younger. I'm proud of what we've accomplished, but there's more ahead for us which keeps my focus. ●