

# Ep4 - Social Chain - Vodafone Business - Transcript

## **SPEAKERS**

Claudia Winkleman, Steven Bartlett

### **Claudia Winkleman**

Hello, I'm Claudia Winkleman. Welcome to Business Unusual, a podcast from Vodafone Business. Now across this series, I have the privilege of sitting down with some of the UK's, most successful entrepreneurs and hearing firsthand their inspiring stories of building incredible businesses, and what they've learned in the process. And today, I'm excited to be joined by someone who at the time of this recording is about to become a household name as not only the newest dragon on his BBC investment show Dragon's Den, but he's also the youngest ever to join the illustrious panel at the age of 29. Let's rewind. He was a university dropout. His words, who from a bedroom in Manchester, went on to build social chain, one of the world's most influential social media agencies, with an estimated value of 300 million pounds, after going public in 2019. He stepped down as CEO last year, at the time leading a team of 700 people with clients including Apple, Amazon, Coca Cola, and Disney. And now heads up investment company Catina Capital. And if all that wasn't enough, he is also Sunday Times Bestselling author, a speaker, received numerous entrepreneur awards, and as the host of his own hit podcast, The Diary of a CEO, quite frankly, I feel so lucky, we've been able to get a slice of his time. A very warm welcome to my guest, Steven Bartlett. Hello.

### **Steven Bartlett**

Thank you for having me. What an honour. Pleasure.

### **Claudia Winkleman**

We have 9 million questions for you. Be prepared. Firstly, for newcomers to your story, tell us about Social Chain and what it does.

### **Steven Bartlett**

So I started Social Chain, when I was 21 years old, as a, originally it started as a bit of a media company. So we own some of the world's largest social media channels, across multiple niches, we very early on felt that social media was going to be the new frontier of sort of communication. So I very sort of prematurely some might have thought at the time went around the world and met every young person I could find who had built big social media channels, you know, millions of subscribers on a Harry Potter page and 5 million subscribers on a food page and 10 million on a fitness page and gaming page and whatever you the mind could could possibly imagine. And I acquired all of those assets, those assets, brought all of those people together and started sort of really building a bit of a media empire and that spiralled into a marketing business. Because within our walls, we had such tremendous insight on how to use social media to achieve certain objectives that our business might

have. And then later in my sort of journey with social chain, we started we launched our own products as well. And now today is as I speak to Social Chain, more more revenue, selling its own products than it does anything else. And it's on the stock market now valued at just shy of £500 million. And it's you know, it's clients in the marketing side, or everybody from Uber and Amazon, Apple, Coca Cola, to, yeah, the other big brands all around the world. So it's a pretty, pretty staggering how quickly it grew over those seven years. But uh, yeah, it's a media marketing and e-commerce company.

**Claudia Winkleman**

It's so extraordinary for anybody listening, because I can see you and I don't mean it's in a bad way. You're so young. How on earth? Did you know that? And anyone who goes to your website, I mean, you call yourself a university dropout? You're like, yeah, it wasn't really my thing. But I, but I did this. At the time, were you thinking this is going to be huge?

**Steven Bartlett**

I definitely believe that it would be wildly successful. And if you look at the things that I wrote in my diary at the time, I was very, very convinced of the fact that both myself and my business were going to be wildly successful. In fact, that's why my debut book is called happy, sexy millionaire, because that was what I wrote my diary at 18 years old. That's what I was aspiring to become. Through all of my insecurities and stuff. Yeah, I genuinely believe the business would be very big. I didn't know that the path it would take. And I think when you get into business, you can't accurately predict how your story will weave and wind through the world and what it will end up becoming I definitely didn't think we'd become a predominantly an e-commerce company. But uh, yeah, I definitely was ambitious. So.

**Claudia Winkleman**

As you say, Social Chain has a host of global brands on its books. How did you land that big client? So you are a young guy, as you say, travelling the world going? Hello. Nice to meet you. I'm Steven. Was it a domino effect? Did you just have to get one? and How on earth did you persuade them?

**Steven Bartlett**

I was very aware of what the problem that a lot of big brands around the world had, especially when social media was fairly new. It was intimidating. I position my company is being able to keep brands, our strapline is keeping brands at the forefront of what is possible. It's trying to appeal directly to a marketing director. And then everything we did, it was centred on proving that so I think really, you one of the real reasons why our company above all others managed to pull in such a huge amount of clients very, very quickly was because we marketed our own business using social media in the same way that we did for our clients. And businesses don't really do that, especially as b2b service businesses, they kind of forget that the most important client they have is themselves. So we did a couple of things that the real significant thing was we did personal branding. So I, you know, for probably about four years had a microphone on me at all times, strapped to my top, and a cameraman follow me all around the world for many, many years and put on YouTube, put it all on Instagram and social media, I got, you know, 3 million followers from from doing that, and people buy from people and having lots of followers, when you're positioned as being an expert on a topic is a form of social proofing. So I would end up going to meetings with clients and the clients before the presentation would ask to take photos with me. And that's quite a good indication that your reputation was in the room before you got there. And so we

never had a sales team. In fact, it's one of the crazy things about our businesses, even when I left when we had never hired an outbound sales person to sell the business because we didn't need to, we were so good at bringing the world to us. And I always said to my team as much, it's more difficult to be a peacock. But in the long run, it's much more it makes life more easier than being a salesman. So we focused on being a peacock company that we're all in the papers. When there's six of us, we were the front page of buzzfeed.com. It said the kids that decide what all the other kids are talking about, we were called the Illuminati, we were called awful things. But we intentionally wanted to be called those things and we wanted you to, we know that indifference is the only thing you can't sell. So we wanted you either to love us or hate us. And it ended up working out really well.

**Claudia Winkleman**

I love that you're going for full Marmite.

**Steven Bartlett**

Yeah, exactly. And it's like there was tears in our office a lot in the early days, because we'd log into Twitter and this you know, the gadget, you have done a piece of advice have done some hit job on us when there's like 10 of us and then 20. But it's because we could make anything trend on Twitter within 30 minutes. So people thought that was pretty evil.

**Claudia Winkleman**

No, it's phenomenal. And also, people want to hire people and also people who know what they're doing. They're going oh, I don't really know, what's my login again, I mean, you were owning it. And on it. Talk to me about running a company that is part of such a fast growing digital world, as opposed to maybe creating a product and having long lead times because the pressure to move incredibly fast, you must have felt that?

**Steven Bartlett**

Oh 100%, and we had to design our business from the ground up to be fluid. And it's crazy, because in 2000, I think was 2016, we made 95% of our money from Twitter. And then in 2017, the year after we made 0% of our money from Twitter. So it just goes to show how quickly things changed for us. And that was just because of algorithm changes and things that decisions Twitter had made. So we set our business up and our philosophy that we were a business that was, as I said at the very forefront of change. And what that meant practically, to give you one extreme example was at 9am every morning, every day, Monday to Friday, every member of our team would receive a text message and that text message detailed to them. Everything that had changed in social media, while they'd been asleep. And it was constant, we had to continually understand what Snapchat we're doing what Tik Tok, we're doing Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, so that we could deliver that for our clients so that they would be at peace, and that they would feel that they were kept their partner social channels, keeping them at the forefront of what is possible. And that's just one example. And it's it gets much more extreme than that. Because obviously sometimes we'd be in the office in I don't know, midday, and we see that Facebook have released the live video. And we know that early adopters tend to get the highest rewards, especially as it relates to new features, there tends to be extra reach extra engagement for those that have used features first so we'd experiment in the next hour. We then call Warner Music and say, listen, you're launching with this artist today, we found a new way to do it. Can we go live this afternoon

and a business very, very quickly. And so again, making sure that the people in our business were philosophically aligned to that ethos was very important, but I am deeply you know, I deeply enjoy the speed. I deeply enjoyed being agile and change and innovation. So it would be pretty hard to be around me in that business and not be pulled along in that way. And it was incredibly exciting.

**Claudia Winkleman**

I mean, I've got a question for you did you sleep? Genuinely, because it sounds like you have to be so on top of it.

**Steven Bartlett**

It's really fascinating question and I I can add to that. So I can say you know in 2019 I travelled 50 weeks a year I was home for four weeks and the whole year I spoke you know i'd speaking on stage in some country, the Ukraine or Italy I did I wasn't at home, you know, three or four times a week. Seven hundred employees. I did sleep I never had I've never had a sleep problem in my life. I've never It's never, never been something that's ever concerned to me, I sleep like a baby and I sleep anywhere.

**Claudia Winkleman**

That's testament to your you must have an inner calm. I want to ask you about age, because I mentioned it at the beginning and you are yet to hit 30. And you've already done what none of us will do by the time were 80. Did you use your young age? Was it an advantage, or sometimes a disadvantage with clients?

**Steven Bartlett**

And the answer is actually both. It's very interesting. I actually, I remember looking back at one of my investor emails I sent when I was 19 years old. And you can tell I'm 19 years old, because the date is on the Gmail email. And I told the investor that I was 18 when I was 19, when I was only a couple of days out, but I remember actively wanting him to think I was 18 instead of being 19. Because in certain situations, the way that I view it is expectation. Yeah. versus reality, the gap. So if someone expects, if I'm 18, the expectation is pretty low, right? Oh, look at him, he can draw a picture, like, it's very low. But if I come in here, this is the reality of how I deliver myself how I present myself, the difference is impact. And this is the impact you're having on people. It's the difference between what they expected and what what you've delivered. And so I think there was state there was moments where I was, I was really, really leaning into the fact that I was an 18 year old. However, as you move through your career, and you're in the boardroom, with the CEO of the world's biggest company, whatever, and you're trying to persuade them of your idea and your experience, that you're a safe pair of hands, they call it, then it was incredibly important to do the opposite, which was for me, bringing in people around me that were quite clearly, as we call, they call them in business grey hairs, especially as it relates to banks as well in raising when our company went to the stock market, banks giving you 20 million pounds or whatever, they want to see what they call a grey hair CEO, which is someone that is seasoned veteran who they can trust who, yeah, he's gonna give them that peace of mind. So I would then lean on those people. And I would make it clear that my sort of skill set is the social media piece, but the operational piece where experience really does matter, or the financial piece where experience really does matter was solved by these other people. And I'm just playing my role.

**Claudia Winkleman**

You've been quoted as saying that you've watched Dragon's Den since you were 12 years old.

**Steven Bartlett**

Yeah.

**Claudia Winkleman**

A Is that true and B, were you always going to have a business?

**Steven Bartlett**

So I it's definitely true. I didn't just watch Dragon's Den since I was 12. I've watched every episode, every remake of Dragon's Den all around the world from Shark Tank in the US. They also call it Shark Tank in Australia, they call it Lion's Den in Germany, there's an online Irish one that I watched a lot of when I was younger, I don't really think there's many episodes that I haven't seen, to be honest, I was I was gonna be in business. So it's funny because I didn't when I was younger, I didn't know I didn't know how you made a business. So I was going around telling people at one point after my little stint of wanting to be a dentist and going on work experience and realising it was the most boring thing in the world.

**Claudia Winkleman**

Apologies to all dentists listening.

**Steven Bartlett**

I think they'd agree. After that phase, I, I started telling people that I was going to manage a big business that was the phrase I was always using when I was like, 12 to 16. And I was saying that because I didn't know how you made them. No one ever told me how they became to be. So I seen people that like managed them, but I didn't understand the concept of ownership. So I would say I'm going to manage a big business one day, and yeah, I started doing that when I was like 14 15 16 started my own little companies and and then yeah, went off to university to study business dropped out and eventually started my own.

**Claudia Winkleman**

When you got the call from Dragon's Den, was it an immediate Yes.

**Steven Bartlett**

So I just quit. I just quit Social Chain. So we're in the middle of pandemic, right when I when I first when they called me. I think in my heart It was an immediate Yes, but I think I played hard to get a little bit.

**Claudia Winkleman**

Smart.

**Steven Bartlett**

Not even with the BBC more with myself. It was more like don't make a quick decision. Steve, don't make a quick decision. But But my brain was going to obviously Yes, just you know, obviously. Yeah,

exactly. Yeah. So as I asked my friends, I was actually away for my birthday. So I asked the friends I was with, I said, Listen, I just got this call. These are my best friends. I said, let's take a vote. Because I was actually I called the same time to two channels called me, the BBC was one of them. And I went to the other one, and I basically gone I basically agreed to do a show on this other channel. And so I said to my friends, which show do you think I should do? And it was a five to six vote for Dragon's Den, but I knew I wanted to do dragon so it doesn't matter. Like, yes, you know, I was trying to be diplomatic, but in my head, I was, of course, you know, it meant so much to me as a kid so and I felt a sense of responsibility to represent people like me on that show.

**Claudia Winkleman**

Absolutely. Have you filmed? Yeah. How was filming

**Steven Bartlett**

Amazing. And really surreal. Like I've got to, I've got to say, like, what the hell am I doing there? Like I've sat next to Peter Jones and Deborah Meaden and it's almost not real because you have watched them. I mean, the agenda has been there for 17 years, maybe 18 now, and Deborah Meaden I think 15 or 16.

**Claudia Winkleman**

You'd have been 14, you'd have been 12.

**Steven Bartlett**

Well yeah, it's 12 when Peter started, so I've been watching him on screen since I was 12. And I'm like, it's weird, you know, like sitting next to him. But they were all just so amazing to me. They're also just kind and they were, you know, yeah, Peter Jones is just like, he looks like, you know, he's supposed to be seven foot as massive man, right? But he's the nicest man I've ever encountered in my life. Like, on camera, you know, he can be a bit tough as a negotiator in the den. But off camera, he's just the nicest, sweetest human being I've ever encountered. And Deborah is just brilliant. Brilliant, very smart.

**Claudia Winkleman**

And when people come in, and pitch I'm interested in whether, because you're the new you're young, you're smiley and lovely. Did you did you want in with everything? Or were you? Or did you suddenly forget about the TV cameras and became your business self? And you were quite Yes, go, I'm out.

**Steven Bartlett**

Yeah, I was super happy to go out. Even if it was like an emotional story. At the end of the day, I'm there to invest. This is not where I do my charitable giving, like there are other avenues where I'll donate to charity. So this is a business decision. And it's my money like do you know what I mean, I can spend that money on other things like I could spend on my nieces, or you know, something else with my family. I could spend it in other places. So to give it to someone is a really serious decision.

**Claudia Winkleman**

More from my chat with Steven in just a minute, first I want to introduce a brand new initiative and Vodafone Business. First I want to introduce a great new initiative from Vodafone Business. In the last

year, there's been a huge rise in the need for businesses to get online. Small and Medium Enterprises make up 99.9% of the UK business population. Founders and entrepreneurs have never had so many decisions to make when it comes to technology. digital skills are more important than ever, but at least a third of small business owners in the UK said they aren't sure which tools will best suit their needs. Many haven't invested in any digital support. Some have only the most basic cybersecurity. That's why Vodafone has introduced business dot connected a free online training programme to support 100,000 businesses across the UK. It offers free webinars workshops and online training module. There are different levels of upskilling to cater to those just starting that online journey, as well as businesses looking to build on existing experience. Find out more by Vodafone Business, online knowledge and Resource Centre, V Hub where you can sign up to business connected and connect your business to the free tools and training. You need to digitally transform search Vodafone Business V Hub.

Steven, let's continue step down the CEO of Social Chain in December 2020. Was that hard? Was that like giving your baby to a babysitter? And um, does it make you quite sad, or we was it time?

**Steven Bartlett**

it was definitely time. I always talk about the importance of knowing when to quit things in life. And for me, that was the perfect time to quit, you know, people always glamorise this idea of like not quitting, it's seen as being really like virtuous and courageous to like, not quit things. Because you know that that phrase that knocks around that quitting is for losers, it's come to come to be true in my life, that the opposite is actually true. And quitting is the like, really important thing that you have to do before you start your next thing. And people don't talk about the art of quitting enough. And so one of the things I talk about my new book, when I talk about the fact that I quit my business and how I've been able to quit all of these things school, got kicked out of there for quitting going to lessons and then University and my first company, Wall Park, and then Social Chain. Why i'm able to quit with such ease? And because I think it's a very logical flowchart-esk decision where you say to yourself, listen, are you thinking of quitting? Whether it's your job, your relationship, whatever it might be? If the answer is yes, why are you willing to quit? Why are you thinking of quitting, and then the flowchart kind of spirals into two directions, and it's either because it, something's really hard, like a marathon, right? And it's just really, really difficult. Or it's because it sucks. And for me, that's where I found myself where I found that the situation I was in for me started to suck a little bit in terms of control ahead of the business and the future of the business. I tried to change, I couldn't, even if I could change it, the effort, it would take me to change this business. were no longer worth it for me. So I made the decision to quit, and I was at total peace with that decision.

**Claudia Winkleman**

A that's excellent. And also B, it's not like, you didn't smash it, like, your work is done.

**Steven Bartlett**

Yeah. Yeah, exactly. And I, the bits that I wanted, the bits that I was, I wanted from my company, the control that I wanted, and for us to push you a certain strategic mission, I could now go and do myself in any business, where I had all of that control. And this is crazy thing when, when you're 21 years old, and it's a paradox. It's like you're entrepreneurs, you start the business, and you don't know what you're

doing. So you do need help, and you do need money. But then if you stay in that business for 10 years, and so you get to 31 years old, by 31, you have less control than ever before, but you're more capable than ever before. Yeah, so because you've you've now learned the lessons and your wits about you can't be you've lost the control, and you've given away the business because you needed to when you're young and naive. So the thing that you should probably do is start again, with all of that expertise, and resources that you now have. So that's what the decision I made was, I just need to start again,

### **Claudia Winkleman**

Lots of entrepreneurs who i've spoken to for this podcast, they're now I've speak I've spoken to them, they're now on their second or third. They do it they build it out. And they go Thank you very much, and then they start something else, often in a completely different area. Tell me about your new business. I think it's Catana Capital?

### **Steven Bartlett**

So there's three, there's three, three companies, because Catana Capital is just an investment vehicle. So I do some of my Dragon's Den investments through there. And if I invest in other companies, and I'll do it through this, I'm an investor in Huel, which is one of the things it is now the fastest growing ecommerce company in the country internationally. I'm an investor in lots of big sort of biotech firms in the mental health space. I'm an investor in the biggest psychedelics business in the world, worth 3 billion now, I'm also a creative director there as well. So that's just an investment vehicle. The two businesses that I'm probably focused on one of them is called Flight Story, and it helps companies that are about to IPO and go to the public markets. That's a new business, it's doing very well, it'll list on the stock exchange itself very shortly. And I think the valuation of that business will be just under 100 million, and it's only the businesses that are 12 months or will be 12 months old when it is. My other company is called access PACs, which is in the blockchain space. So this new emerging world about decentralisation and crypto etc. Develop with a team out in San Francisco, who are the technical experts, the hub of expertise for our business. And it's building new applications in the NFT blockchain space, which you've probably heard a little bit about in the press and stuff. Yeah, that businesses just raised 5 million or 50 million valuations. So that's another very exciting project that I'm that I'm thinking about. And there's my two central businesses flight story and NFT labs, and its first application is called access packs. And then outside of that, yeah, my life is really diverse. Obviously, the podcast I do is a business in of itself, employees, maybe 10 people full time, I DJ, I wrote my book, I've just agreed a deal with Penguin to do, I probably shouldn't be announcing this, as I've said yesterday, but who cares? I just agreed to deal with Penguin to do to two more books.

### **Claudia Winkleman**

Fantastic. I mean, on the subject of books, your book, Happy Sexy Millionaire early this year, was the Sunday Times bestseller. And as you mentioned, you have your own hit podcast, it's huge, The Diary of a CEO. What was the motivation behind creating those? Is it that you want more people to join you? You're saying, this is possible? Come with me, look what I did? Or is it you're interested in talking to others who might have had a similar journey to yours?

### **Steven Bartlett**

It's Yeah, it's definitely all of the above. So. So there's like, there's a couple of things here. So the first thing is that I write about this in the book as well, I genuinely I am really focused on like, resisting all labels. So I come out of Social Chain, people could in the world could call me a social media CEO. But that's just not true. And I think there's this weird thing that humans do, where we try and label ourselves to make us understood and to fit in, but it actually ends up in my view being quite harmful to do that. So I will say I am a x x, I am a black entrepreneur, CEO, social media, when we try and give ourselves those tags. And then we, the problem is when we when we label ourselves, it's like putting yourself in a box, you have to follow the implicit instructions that come with those labels. So I am a mother, I am a poor, you know, like in and that I find confining because the reality is we're all very well multi dimensional. And so when I came out so she and I made a very conscious decision that I'm going to be the label that I'm going to adopt is my name like I'm Steven and I, I love music. So now I've learned to DJ I love theatre. So I put on this big show called the diversity alive with you know, there's 30 cast, about 50 in total, but there's 30 of us on stage. And it's the actual musical in this explosions and, and the my podcast is I love meeting people and having those conversations and talking and the curiosity of it. So I do that. And my book is just this medium in which I can investigate topics that mean a tonne to me and questions I want to answer and the psychedelics thing is I'm fascinated by mental health. So I went and became the, I'm still the creative director of a \$3 billion psychedelics business that's curing mental health disorders and addiction. And like Huel, as well, I joined the board there because I'm into fitness and being healthy. And it's a big part of my life now, and I am just doing whatever the F I want to do. And I'm, I'm just pursuing it all at the same time, with a level of focus in there, because I luckily have teams, but that's what I'm doing in this phase of my life. I'm unlabel-able.

### **Claudia Winkleman**

What is it about being an entrepreneur that you love?

### **Steven Bartlett**

Freedom? Definitely. Because any I know that because any point in my life where I've not had freedom, I've had a really bad allergic reaction, a very deep, allergic reaction. And then I'm probably fundamentally like unemployable in the sense that I will just make my own rules. And then I think that's probably those are probably the two things and then also, the possibility of really exponential like really exponential crazy returns. If you are to be successful. Maybe there's a bit of a gambler in me in that regard where I'd rather risk it all. For a biscuit. You know what I mean? As opposed to playing it safe. I'd really like I always reflect on this moment when I was 14 years old, and I'm sat on this wall in my street. Looking at my house which was smashed to pieces and windows were broken and It's like the grass is six foot high. And then looking up and seeing this plane, and I'd never been on holiday, I'd never been on holidays. We never went off holiday as a family and thinking, and just almost this juxtaposition between the people in that plane which I assumed were going on holiday, and then the lifetime, like we were living as a family and just thinking like, why what's the difference between me and those people on that plane? And thinking that there, I wonder if my family and the people that will like me, they wanted this from their life, do they want to not go on holiday and not to have nice things. And I remember thinking that I was I just would do anything to be the person on the plane going on holiday somewhere. All of this was like, This is why at the start this conversation I talked about insecurities because people never really talk about it. But insecurities are probably one of the greatest drivers of motivation for people. It's that like desire to escape the inadequacy of thinking that you are different. I'm

the only black person and always school or I'm the only poor person in a middle class area. That creates a real sense of an attempt to escape psychological discomfort which looks like motivation and drive. People say you're so ambitious, it's like no, I'm so insecure.

**Claudia Winkleman**

How do upir family live now out of interest?

**Steven Bartlett**

It's interesting, so like my brothers and sisters are really good. And I support them in any way I can, whether that means paying rent or whenever else for them. But they're all very smart and their own people. And my my mum and dad is interesting, so they won't let me like buy them a house. They won't let me like but you know, they weren't I mean, like buy them a house.

**Claudia Winkleman**

I want to call them. They need a gold jacuzzi, but they won't.

**Steven Bartlett**

They don't they won't. I've been very I don't know how else I meant to deliver that. Maybe I just send the gold hot into the house. But if I remember sending a message to my dad, like even last week saying, if you want me to buy your car or house or you're on holiday somewhere or anything. Just help Just tell me Well, I would love to do that. It'd be my pleasure to do that was the quote in the email. Oh, sorry. Pay for look, you know, I provide their food every week. And like my mom wanted some teeth. So I just wanted her teeth done. So I just had teeth and things like that. But yeah, it seems like they are quite content with where they are.

**Claudia Winkleman**

Of course. I love your dad for not replying. Yes, I'd like to go to Barbados tomorrow. I quote like the look of Park Lane.

**Steven Bartlett**

I've asked them every year.

**Claudia Winkleman**

Lovely family. You have received so many accolades, a Sunday Times bestseller. You've won a gazillion entrepreneur awards, you appeared on Forbes 30, under 30. Less and more what single achievement if you can just give me one, what, what means the most?

**Steven Bartlett**

If we're talking about like awards, weirdly, the one that always springs to mind, in terms of awards, right is the Manchester the City of Manchester and the mayor put me into the Hall of Fame in the city, which is that was just really cool. Because I love the city and I built my life there. I built my businesses there. And so for them to put me in a Hall of Fame alongside some of my idols like Rio Ferdinand and stuff was amazing. One of the greatest moments in my life, I have to be moments where it had a great impact on other people. So actually, my mindset, this podcast, the podcast that I do, just because I

know how many people it reaches. And then some of the bigger speaking events I've done, I did one in Barcelona, in particular, where I referenced where there was 10,000 people in this arena. And that was just magical. There's nothing like that it takes me like a week in solitude just to recover from all the emotions. So yeah, probably those those moments. Yeah.

**Claudia Winkleman**

Before you go some quickfire questions, Stephen. What three words would you use to describe your businesses, your, the future of your businesses, if you like?

**Steven Bartlett**

Sure. So innovative. And I use that word, because the world is changing quickly. I operate in ever changing landscapes. So we always have to be innovative in our businesses, which means constant, constant change and designed for change, like change, love excited by it. The next is, the word that came to mind was family, which was just like the type. And this is super cliché, we're getting a family there to work like, No, you could be spending 10 years together. So you want to be surrounded by people that you have a family style relationship with, which is centred on reciprocated mutual care. And then lastly, I would say ambitious, which again, like if you want to be happy in your life, you should probably, for most people, be striving forward and challenging yourself. And so having a worthwhile challenge with people that you love is for me the real path to fulfilment,

**Claudia Winkleman**

What three things couldn't your businesses live without?

**Steven Bartlett**

Yeah, I mean, it's almost it's crazy. It's almost the same answer, which is the people, right? So the first thing is, by definition, Oxford dictionary definition. The definition of the word company is group of people. That's exactly what a business is. It's just a collection of people and their ideas and the way you bind them together with culture. It couldn't live without its philosophy. I think underpinning and what brings those people together is they all have a set of like shared values and philosophy. That's what binds them together and produces their ideas and the way they interact with themselves and clients. And then I'd say I would say inspiration, which is just the fresh new. And that's probably I'm probably speaking to the point of innovation there. But yeah, it couldn't live without inspiration from its people from new things from other areas, topics, industries. So yeah,

**Claudia Winkleman**

We're so grateful you spoke to us because you are so busy, and you are flying. And we're incredibly grateful here at Vodafone Business. So thank you so much. Thank you.

**Steven Bartlett**

Thank you for having me. It's an honour.

**Claudia Winkleman**

How inspiring was that? What a joy to speak with Stephen about Social Chain and the entrepreneurial energy that floods all the various things he does, and also hear how he's trying to use his status and

influence to open doors to others who may traditionally feel that they're excluded from running their own successful companies. Make a date to join me next time is I'll be joined by another brilliant founder, this time, Michelle Kennedy, who created the dating app Bumble, she then moved on to found Peanut an app for women that aims to make sure none of us have to navigate life alone, especially the hard parts. But that's next time. Thank you so much for joining us today for Business Unusual. We'd love you to rate and review the podcast and while you're there, please do subscribe. To hear more from the UK is most inspirational founders in this series from Vodafone Business.