

Redefining the CEO Title

An Interview with Jake Kloberdanz,
CEO and Co-Founder, ONEHOPE Wine,
and Katie Allen, National Director, viaONEHOPE



EDITORS' NOTE Jake Kloberdanz has been recognized by Businessweek as one of the "Top 25 under 25," OC Metro's "Top 40 Under 40," and was the youngest nominee for Entrepreneur of the Year by Ernst & Young. A graduate of UC Berkeley, he has served over 5,000 volunteer hours since 2001, and has been widely referred to as an expert in cause marketing and branding.

Katie Allen has held her current post since July 2014. Prior to this, she was the Prima Senior Leader at Ruby Ribbon, Inc., an Account Manager at Novartis, and Market Sales Manager at Mars Inc. Allen has more than 15 years of experience in both corporate and direct sales. She graduated with a B.A. in Journalism from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and is passionate about helping entrepreneurs.

COMPANY BRIEF ONEHOPE (onehopewine.com) is a social enterprise that integrates causes into products and services to make a social impact. ONEHOPE has quickly become one of the most recognizable cause brands due to the success of their cornerstone product, ONEHOPE Wine. Produced in collaboration with Rob Mondavi, Jr., the award-winning portfolio makes an impact with every bottle sold by donating half of the profits to partner causes. Today, ONEHOPE consists of the following products and experiences: ONEHOPE Wine, ONEHOPE Coffee, viaONEHOPE (viaONEHOPE.com), and ONEHOPE Foundation.

Jake, how has the business evolved?

Jake: The first stage was building our wine brand and we're proud to have grown into one of the top 300 wineries by volume out of over 8,000 in the U.S. We just bought our first property and vineyard in Rutherford, Napa, next door to iconic brands like Robert Mondavi, Cakebread, and Opus One. It will soon be home to our flagship winery.

In addition, we're growing other areas of the business, like gifting and gourmet coffee. Most people know us as a wine brand and some think of us as a lifestyle brand, but, over the next few years, people will think of us from the perspective of a huge community of businesses, small and large, that are doing business in a different way. If we can accomplish that, people will start to think about us more as a platform rather than just a wine brand.



Jake Kloberdanz



Katie Allen

What was the vision around viaONEHOPE and where does it stand today?

Katie: The mission of ONEHOPE Wine is to make the world a better place through beautifully crafted products and experiences, and the mission for viaONEHOPE is to empower entrepreneurs to be able to do that same thing.

We're giving individuals the opportunity to be a part of a really special and exciting thing: viaONEHOPE gives others an opportunity to get involved in the wine industry, and our movement and culture of giving back. Through viaONEHOPE, when someone hosts an in-home wine-tasting event, we give our hosts the ability to fundraise for the cause of their choice. As their guests enjoy the evening and purchase their favorite wines, we donate 15 percent back to make a local impact in their communities.

We are not alone in this world of direct in-home selling. When the downturn started around 2007, direct sales really took off as traditional businesses suffered.

We're part of an industry that is growing and providing a lot of opportunities for people who may not be interested in working a full-time corporate career but still want to earn an income.

How do you build awareness for this brand?

Katie: We're in a social selling environment and social media is one of the biggest ways people are finding out about viaONEHOPE. Our CEOs – which stands for "Cause Entrepreneurs" – build their business by sharing the opportunity with others to join their teams and become a part of viaONEHOPE.

We envisioned viaONEHOPE because people loved what we were doing and really wanted to get involved with our brand beyond

just being able to order a glass of ONEHOPE at a restaurant or purchase a bottle off of a retail store shelf.

We started this as more of a brand ambassador program that was promoted via word-of-mouth with people sharing ONEHOPE wine with their friends and telling our story. This took off to the point where we have expanded the viaONEHOPE opportunity beyond just doing in-home wine-tasting. We also have a gifting catalog of over 50 beautiful items, like wine-and-cheese sets.

We are turning the world of direct-selling and in-home sales on its head in a few ways: first, we take it beyond the living room. Our CEOs can approach corporations and nonprofits to sell gifts for their clients. We can also work with nonprofit organizations and larger companies for any fundraising events they do.

Jake: We created a magnetic brand and there were so many people who wanted to get involved that it occurred to us that this was bigger than direct-selling. This was a way for people to connect with our brand and the social and meaningful lifestyle it represents.

We have created a way for them to make money while making an impact. We really believe that the only sustainable way to scale the positive impact is to do so within the confines of what we know works: commerce and capitalism, and a combination of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators.

Is it difficult to get the message out about the quality of your products when there is so much competition?

Jake: Communicating the award-winning quality of our products has always been a challenge because there are a lot of other unique and exciting elements to our brand that tend to draw people's attention first. People get excited about the impact that we are making and often times the fact that Rob Mondavi Jr. is creating our wines becomes secondary. Hundreds of medals, 90+ point ratings, and placements in top-rated hotels and restaurants nationally have gotten consumers to focus on our exceptional products and the experience we are providing rather than just the impact. But one thing always proves true: regardless of whether consumers first find out about us because of the cause or the quality, they come back for both, and that's how we have continued to have such strong growth year in and year out. ●