

# Investing in People

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.*

**How do you define Bruin Capital's culture and how critical is culture to the firm's success?**

Having a great culture is an x-factor in realizing the full potential of a business. At Bruin, we've developed an ideas-driven, operationally focused organization that partners with leadership teams. This partnership is a meaningful distinction about Bruin. When we back a company, we see it as an investment in people, and to support them we have a team of operators who have run highly successful global organizations. We've walked in their shoes, built the plans, and made the tough decisions. It means we can relate to them in ways beyond strictly financial operations and cultivates a trust that's really the rocket fuel for growth. It's one of our greatest strengths and why companies are interested in working with us.

**Will you highlight Bruin Capital's business and how you define its mission?**

Bruin is an investment and operating company with a mission to build high-performing, high-value global sports companies that deliver significant returns to our investors. If we are not adding measurable value to our portfolio companies, then we aren't doing our jobs. Every day, we ask ourselves how can we help our portfolio companies. Is there a door we can open, an introduction we can make, or an acquisition we should target that will accelerate their goal trajectory? Then we go to work.

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**Will you provide an overview of Bruin Capital's portfolio companies?**

We now have seven companies in our portfolio; most offer state-of-the-art technologies that enhance the ways fans experience and enjoy sports. Their services include live streaming, gambling intelligence, advertising technology, consumer data and intelligence, sports simulation, and training. These are the growth areas within the new, highly diversified global sports and entertainment ecosystem. Virtually every major sports entity uses one of our companies to connect with their global consumers. Now, billions of fans interact with their favorite sports, teams, activities, and interests through our companies' technologies and services.

**How have Bruin Capital's portfolio companies adapted the way they work to address the challenges caused by the pandemic?**

You learn a lot about a company during disruption, and we are incredibly proud of how our companies navigated the pandemic. In the early days, while it all was unfolding, it was clear that it would not be business as usual for a long time. We dug in and worked with our companies every day to ensure they had the necessary resources, capital, and operational infrastructure to support their personnel and clients. Now, as we move back toward a sense of normalcy, our companies are emerging stronger. This is a testament to their leadership and we are quite proud of them.

**Bruin Capital is headquartered in New York. What is your outlook for New York's recovery and rebuilding from the pandemic?**

New York will bounce back as it always has, and we're starting to see that already. It's important to remember that the pandemic is not a New York crisis or an indication of something fundamentally wrong about the city. New York thrives on its culture of social experiences. Pressing pause on all of that had a profound impact, but we also saw some innovative ways that industries and businesses combatted their challenges and reinvented themselves. Now, with significant pent-up demand from people to get out and be social, they'll turn to all that New York has to offer.

**How important is a strong public/private partnership for New York's future success?**

Public/private partnerships can serve cities, including New York, very well. There's a constant tension around a municipal budget and some critical projects are inevitably deprioritized from a lack of capital. A public/private partnership can step in and address those shortfalls very effectively. They are successful because both sides share the risk but also bring more expertise and resources against realizing a project's goals. As such, the returns far transcend just capital. The legacy of a public/private partnership can help the city operate better and that's good for everyone.

**What advice do you offer young people beginning their careers at this uncertain time?**

Keep your eyes wide open. Disruption and transformation are really opportunity in disguise. There's a huge appetite for new thinking and new approaches across every sector and that is what you represent. Your value to any business is far more than just a salary, it's who you are, your values, interests, and experiences, especially now. Remember, change equals opportunity. ●