

Connecting Talent, Events, And Brands

An Interview with Mike Principe, Chief Executive Officer, GSE Worldwide

EDITORS' NOTE Mike Principe is one of the sports industry's most experienced operators, with more than 25 years of experience building and scaling global sports and entertainment businesses. Over the course of his career, he has led or played a material role in more than 60 acquisitions across talent representation, live events, media, and sports IP, giving him a panoramic view of how the industry has evolved and where it is heading next. As CEO of GSE,



Mike Principe

Principe leads a diversified platform that spans elite athlete representation across multiple sports, ownership or production of emerging leagues and events, experiential marketing, hospitality, and brand consulting. Prior to GSE, he served as CEO of TLA Worldwide, Managing Director of Blue Entertainment Sports Television, and Executive Vice President of SFX Sports Group. Principe earned an AB degree from Washington University in St. Louis and a JD from Washington University in St. Louis School of Law as a Welborne Scholar.

AGENCY BRIEF GSE Worldwide (gseworldwide.com) is an industry-leading, fully integrated sports and entertainment marketing, management, and talent representation agency. The firm represents high-level sport, entertainment, and broadcasting personalities, advises brands and businesses in their marketing and business objectives, and delivers world-class sporting events. Led by a group of seasoned veterans

with deep industry experience, GSE Worldwide is distinguished by providing a right-sized agency feel coupled with large agency capabilities across on-field, off-field, sales, production, talent procurement, hospitality and management including digital presence and branding. Headquartered in New York City, GSE Worldwide has a global presence of clients and operates across the United States, Latin America, and Europe.

Will you discuss your career journey?

I was an M&A attorney by training, which gave me a strong foundation in structure, strategy, and long-term value creation. I began my career with The Sillerman Companies, a private investment firm focused on media and entertainment, where I gained early exposure to the intersection of capital, content, and talent and to the importance of building scalable platforms. From there, I was on the team that built SFX Entertainment, and my particular focus was executing on the firm's sports roll-up strategy, which in a period of 18 months became one of the largest sports agencies in the world, SFX Sports Group. During my time at SFX, I held senior leadership roles including Executive Vice President, served on the Executive Committee and in the Office of the Chairman, and was deeply involved in the business, legal, and ultimately operational growth of the organization during a period of significant consolidation. I later went on to found or lead multiple

agencies, including founding and serving as CEO of TLA Worldwide, a global sports marketing and management company with operations across ten offices and a roster of more than 750 clients.

Over the course of my career, I've led or played a material role in more than 60 acquisitions and dispositions across four agencies in the sports and entertainment sector. Those experiences ultimately led me to GSE Worldwide, the successor to TLA where we have been able to bring together everything I've learned about talent, events, and brand-building under one integrated vision.

How do you define GSE Worldwide's mission?

GSE's mission is to deliver meaningful, long-term value to our stakeholders, including clients, partners, investors, and consumers. Talent is our DNA, and it's the foundation that enables us to do that – whether by creating authentic touchpoints for brands, owning and operating our own events, building lasting relationships, or identifying and seizing opportunity across the sports and entertainment landscape.

By combining the agility and personal touch of an independent firm with the deep resources and reach of a global agency, we operate with the flexibility to innovate and the scale to deliver at the highest level. Our focus is on connecting talent, events, and brands in ways that drive relevance, unlock opportunity, and create measurable impact in a rapidly evolving industry.

“Our focus is on connecting talent, events, and brands in ways that drive relevance, unlock opportunity, and create measurable impact in a rapidly evolving industry.”

“From brand partnerships and digital growth to athlete-owned media platforms and long-term career strategy, GSE helps talent and brands navigate a rapidly evolving landscape with focus and intention.”

Will you provide an overview of GSE Worldwide’s services and capabilities?

GSE Worldwide operates across three core pillars: talent representation, events, and brand consulting. At the center of the business is talent representation. GSE represents more than 270 clients across golf, tennis, football, basketball, NIL, racquet sports, broadcast, culinary, and digital talent. The agency’s roster includes many of the most influential and marketable figures in sport today, such as Bryson DeChambeau, JJ Spaun, Jessica Pegula, Tommy Paul, and emerging NBA and NFL talent, alongside iconic legacy athletes including Bo Jackson, Steve Young, and Jim Furyk. This breadth allows GSE to support both next-generation careers and long-term brand building at the highest level.

Beyond representation, through an unbelievable collection of the industry’s top event production executives, GSE has built a fully integrated events platform which leverages its access to world-class talent to create premium experiential, hospitality, and made-for-television events including category-defining properties such as the Pickleball Slam. These experiences provide authentic, high-impact touchpoints for brands and fans, reflecting the growing importance of live, talent-led engagement in today’s experience-driven economy.

Complementing both is GSE’s brand consulting capability, where the firm serves as both strategic advisor and execution partner to blue-chip brands and Fortune 500 companies. From brand partnerships and digital growth to athlete-owned media platforms and long-term career strategy,

GSE helps talent and brands navigate a rapidly evolving landscape with focus and intention.

Together, these capabilities allow GSE to deliver integrated touchpoints across representation, events, and brand strategy – giving talent and brands a single platform to build, scale, and activate across the sports and entertainment landscape.

How critical has it been to build the GSE Worldwide team?

It’s the most critical element of the business. We are not focused on chasing EBITDA or client volume for the sake of growth. Instead, we prioritize building the right team. When you have exceptional people, which we do, who are aligned culturally and strategically, which they are, everything else follows. Four members of our senior management team have worked with me for more than 25 years. That continuity creates trust, efficiency, and a shared understanding of how we operate, which is invaluable as the organization grows and evolves.

How do you approach your management style?

I describe my management style as mindfully aggressive. It has evolved into calculated risk-taking by listening carefully, informing myself continuously, and then acting decisively. Ultimately, I’ve learned that prioritizing people is the most effective way to build a durable business. When teams feel trusted, supported, and aligned around a clear vision, performance follows. Investing in people isn’t just good leadership. It’s a strategic advantage that drives long-term success.

What advice do you offer to young people beginning their careers?

Invest in yourself early. Develop a skill set that differentiates you and makes you valuable in your environment. Be intentional about learning, and don’t be afraid to take on responsibility before you feel fully ready. You will make mistakes; that’s how you grow, but understanding the risks allows you to avoid the disasters.

Equally important, build relationships before you need them. Networking without an immediate agenda leads to more authentic connections, and those relationships will prove invaluable over the course of a career.

When you look to the future of the industry, what excites you the most, and what concerns you the most?

The transformation of college athletics is incredibly exciting. Athlete empowerment, NIL, and new commercial models are fundamentally reshaping the landscape. I’m also encouraged by the continued growth and well-deserved recognition of women’s sports in the global marketplace.

At the same time, I am concerned with the rapid expansion of AI. Particularly when paired with social media, it raises important questions around authenticity, ownership, and responsible use. Separately, the continued growth of sports betting presents its own challenges, especially when it comes to misuse and protecting the integrity of competition. Innovation is essential, but it must be balanced with responsibility to safeguard athletes, fans, and the broader industry. That said, sports betting has dramatically increased the number of people following and interested in sports, which in itself has been a great tailwind for the industry. ●

“We are not focused on chasing EBITDA or client volume for the sake of growth. Instead, we prioritize building the right team. When you have exceptional people, which we do, who are aligned culturally and strategically, which they are, everything else follows.”