

An Interview with Paul Medina

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### **Introduction**

Paul Medina is the Founder and CEO of Capital Energy Training, an in-home personal training company based in Washington D.C. Opened in the spring of 2013, CET works tirelessly to create customized fitness programming for groups and individuals—with an emphasis on proper progression and technique—to create a safe and challenging exercise experience for a diverse community of clients.

I have the good fortune of knowing Mr. Medina through a mutual friend; so while our phone call was engaging and informal in nature, it was in no way bereft of relevant content and practical strategies for taking an idea from conception to creation, and then growing that vision in a competitive metropolitan market.

Before starting CET, Mr. Medina was a professional trainer for 10 years, having earned a degree in Kinesiology and Exercise Science from Towson University, near Baltimore, Maryland. His vision for a mobile training company was born from the very bedrock he's built his life on: staying disciplined and eliminating excuses. He believed that if he could figure out a way to bring the gym to people—instead of asking people to bring themselves to his gym—he might be able to carve out a niche in some small corner of the fitness market and profoundly impact the community surrounding him.

So like any good success story with humble beginnings, he gathered up the few necessities he thought might be useful—a bag of resistance bands, some towels, dumbbell blocks and a physioball—and in just over three short years and almost 200 clients later, his “small corner” of the market has grown into an entire wall.

### **Scope of Business and Daily Operations**

As the sole proprietor with very little start-up cost, Mr. Medina was profitable in his very first year of business. While making money almost immediately was nice, arriving at his target market took a bit more trial and error during those early months of operation. Since then, Mr. Medina has identified his clientele as professionals whose jobs are mostly sedentary, as well as other individuals who feel that they do not get enough activity in their daily routines. This is the demographic, he’s realized, that most-graciously welcomes the chance to exercise on their own terms and in the setting of their choice, even if that means paying a little extra. And because he has so meticulously mapped his travel routes all throughout the Greater Washington D.C. area, Mr. Medina is able to train anywhere between five and ten clients a day—in their homes, at their workplace, in the park—wherever they prefer.

Although some days are packed to the brim with sessions, he cautions that a volume-based business model often leads to poor service and a decrease in product quality, and he’s adamant that CET will never align with such an approach. By keeping his client-base manageable and recently hiring one additional part-time trainer, he is able to offer every single client the red carpet experience that has become synonymous with the CET brand both within and outside of the industry at large.

While it's no surprise that Mr. Medina, himself, is the face of the company, he's quick to point out that the team around him is the backbone behind the company's success. And like any honest man might, he credits his wife for giving him the nudge to get started and the balance to keep going. "She's definitely my anchor in this whole thing, there's no doubt about it," he assures me with unparalleled conviction.

Aside from her, Mr. Medina articulates the importance of having a well-seasoned accountant and a judicious financial advisor to offer him professional expertise on all economic matters. From there, he discusses the team of practitioners he's partnered with to offer his clients the full spectrum of allied health services. "I know enough to understand when I'm beyond my scope of practice," he asserts.

To that extent, he works closely with a registered dietician, a somatic movement specialist, and several doctors and therapists on a daily basis. For privacy reasons, he doesn't wish to mention their names but acknowledges that his team is on display at the company's website ([www.CapitalEnergyTraining.com](http://www.CapitalEnergyTraining.com)).

At present time, CET only offers training services, though future plans are loosely in place to create ancillary revenues such as merchandise and diet programming.

To facilitate consumer relations, Mr. Medina has not yet been compelled to allocate any room in the company's budget for advertising and marketing. Instead, he happily takes advantage of the many free social media avenues available in today's increasingly "plugged-in"

world. His business advice here is simple, albeit easier said than done: “Instead of spending money to gain a following, offer your services in such a way that monetizes your following.”

Thus, he credits many client leads to his presence on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn, where he has gathered quite a large following relative to his time active on each of these platforms.

He is also a proud member of the church, where he regularly lectures and is enthusiastically involved in affiliated community outreach initiatives in and around the D.C. area. (In fact, we had to reschedule our initial phone appointment because his volunteer work at a local soup kitchen went longer than expected.)

In addition to his degree from Towson, Mr. Medina holds several professional certifications from the National Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM), and is an advocate for Functional Movement Systems (FMS) training. To stay current on the industry and satisfy required continuing education credits, he completes coursework and attends various seminars throughout the year, which he affirms are “necessary and terrific networking opportunities.”

Recently, he’s contributed several articles to Ngoma Reader Magazine, a local bi-monthly publication that focuses on Washington D.C.’s lively dance scene.

### **Reflection and Conclusion**

Though brief, my time getting to know Mr. Medina has been loaded with fruitful conversation and well-intended advocacy. He has been a mentor to me from afar, and having the

chance to hear from him directly about where his company is headed is something that I won't ever take for granted.

Tactically speaking, I think his execution of strategy works perfectly to compliment his vision for health and wellness. Operating a flourishing business in an area where the cost of living is among the highest in the nation—and doing so on a small budget—is no walk in the park. That alone speaks volumes of his resourcefulness and resolve. It's abundantly clear that his sensibilities as a modern business owner are grounded by an uncompromising standard of quality.

I continue to be intrigued and impressed with this approach to business. While this model offers the consumer [not only] something of immeasurable value, it incorporates a level of convenience that should not be understated in today's busy climate. People want to be healthy and fit; but let's face it, they want to put forth as little effort as possible to get there. In such a breakneck world, the ability to under-promise and over-deliver is critical in separating a successful company from one that underachieves.

Mr. Medina couldn't have been more gracious to give me over an hour of his time for this project. As an aspiring coach—admittedly, I have no desire to open my own business—I am continually moved by his humility and conviction in his work and throughout his community. While I know it's not as easy as he communicates it to be in his laidback, straightforward tone, it's no surprise that his company is thriving within an increasingly noisy industry.

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**Paul Medina, Founder**

*Capital Energy Training, LLC*

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