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THE JOURNEY OF A PAY PER CALL ENTREPRENEUR

The Manny Zuccarelli Story

 Ringba

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Meet Manny Zuccarelli, founder and CEO of Quote Velocity. I met Manny at an industry event several years ago when he was running a successful affiliate network. Since then, he has built an incredible company that employs hundreds of people and does 9 figures in revenue. This is his story...

FOUNDING QUOTE VELOCITY AND DISCOVERING PAY PER CALL

Before I met Adam and learned about pay per call, I was deeply involved in the online marketing space. I had co-founded an affiliate network with some close friends, and we offered technology to help affiliates link their ads to the offers in our network. We were doing well, but it was largely in the data-focused side of online marketing..

Was I happy then? Not exactly. I was running a successful company, but there was little close interaction with team members or deep connections with the people using our technology. It felt more like a lifestyle business, and I really wanted to build something more meaningful. My dream was to create a place where people could grow their careers, where the team could develop together, and where we could create substantial enterprise value.

It was really scary leaving that company behind. I had invested years into it, and worked alongside colleagues I deeply respected. I questioned my sanity more than once over the coming years. How could I just up and leave on what seemed like a whim and a prayer?

To make matters worse, I made a conscious decision to cut off any possibility of returning. Some people called me crazy. I had a wife and a child to provide for, after all. But I knew if I left myself a back door or plan B, I would probably retreat back to my comfort zone when the challenges inevitably showed up.

My wife was incredibly supportive, but as I immersed myself in building Quote Velocity, I wasn't exactly the model husband and father. I really wasn't present with them, and honestly, I regret that. It's so easy to lose sight of what truly matters when you're intensely focused and, admittedly, a bit scared of failing. My business focus pushed my marriage to the brink of failure. Thankfully, we were strong enough to work through the storms. But it was a massive wake-up call about the importance of balance and the value of the unwavering support system I had at home.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

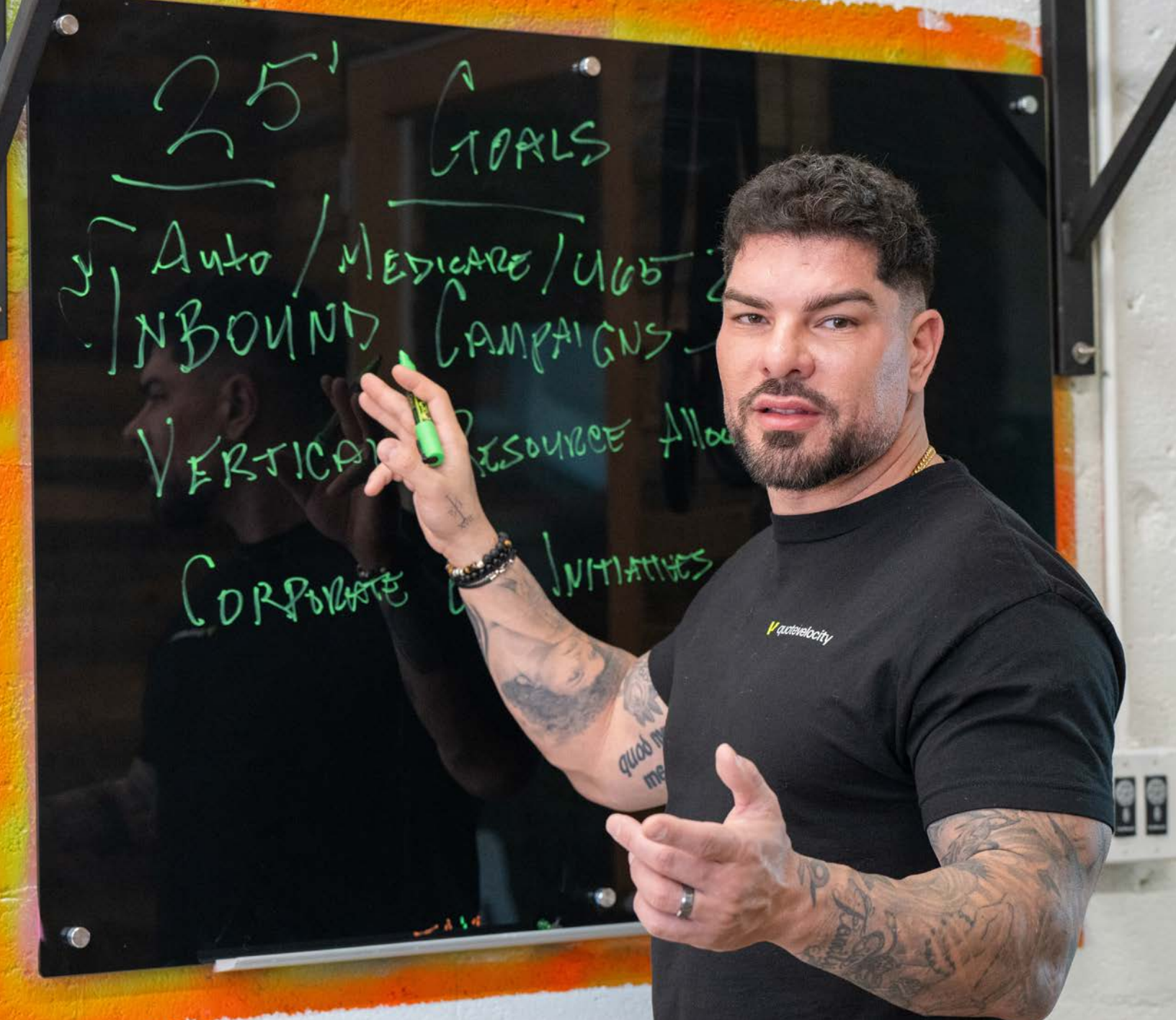
The transition to pay per call marketing was more challenging than I anticipated. It required a new understanding of lead generation and a different approach to managing relationships. During those early days building Quote Velocity, I faced a lot of physical and mental strain. I found self-doubt and anxiety around every corner. Even just walking felt like a monumental effort. I was so scared of making a mistake that could bankrupt everything. It's impossible to describe how low I could spiral on the bad days. I could paralyze myself with just my thoughts.

Looking back, I realize the importance of acknowledging and sharing these feelings, particularly as a man in the business world. It's not always easy to open up about these kinds of things. Fortunately, I had incredible friends and mentors who supported me. One of my sources of inspiration was Ben Horowitz's book, *The Hard Thing About Hard Things*. It was instrumental in helping me maintain my sanity during those tough times, and hasn't left my desk in over six years.

So, how did I keep going? It's crucial for entrepreneurs to recognize and cherish the small victories! For me, motivation came in two forms. Initially, I was driven by a kind of defiant energy, especially after a friend suggested I should shut down the business. I wanted to prove them wrong and succeed out of pure spite. It sounds odd, but that was a powerful motivator.

I also clung tightly to the occasional words of encouragement from people within the industry, affirming that I was on the right path. I cannot express how much those little bits of kindness meant to me, reminding me of the potential success that lay ahead.

Building a company in your 30s, especially with a family and significant responsibilities, is vastly different from doing so in your younger years. Your risk tolerance changes; the stakes are higher. It's hard, but I believe it's so important to keep that youthful optimism, even though you have more to lose. Without it, the challenges will just drag you down further and further until you can't see the light at the end of the tunnel.



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VALUES AND REPUTATION

When it comes to growing a business, I firmly believe that reputation plays a crucial role, and this has been especially true for Quote Velocity. Over time, our commitment to doing the right thing has significantly contributed to our success in attracting clients and fostering growth. It's not about consciously choosing to be ethical; it's more about ethics being an intrinsic part of who we are and how we operate.

Of course, the business world is not without its temptations. There are always quicker, perhaps less ethical paths to success that can seem alluring. The desire for quick wins can be compelling, but leaders must make sure they don't dictate direction or compromise integrity. At Quote Velocity, we pride ourselves on being a high-performing, honest, and compliant operation, and that's a direct result of consistently choosing the ethical path over expediency.

Our company values are not just words on a wall for us; they are principles that actively shape our culture. Transparency is key in our organization, almost to a fault. We foster a high-performance environment, with a strong emphasis on empathy. When a team member struggles, we rally around them to provide the necessary support, no matter what the issue may be.

I've noticed that the company is, in many ways, an extension of myself. Personal development is crucial, and the growth of the company is often directly proportional to my own growth as an individual. Conversely, when I falter or neglect my personal habits that contribute to growth, I see the repercussions in the business. There's a delay, of course, but the impact is there. It reinforces the idea that as a leader, my personal integrity and development are integral to the health and success of the company.



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COMMUNICATION AND GROWTH

At Quote Velocity, we have a unique structure. On one side, we operate with a couple of hundred call center agents, but if you look at the core operations team, including engineering, marketing, compliance, administration, and business development, we're under 40 people. So, by headcount, we are still relatively lean. But our success is not just about size; it's about how we operate as a team, especially in terms of communication.

Despite our focus on transparency, there are always times when our communication falters. It's weird that as a company enters a high growth phase, internal communication can start to slack off. This usually happens because when everything is going well — strong margins, happy clients, good performance — there's a sense of implicit trust in each team member's work. As a result, regular check-ins and detailed communication can decrease because everyone trusts that things are running smoothly.

However, when challenges arise, communication suddenly ramps up. It becomes crucial to address issues and find solutions together. Looking back, if there's one thing I wish I had done differently over the past year, it would have been maintaining a stronger focus on communication throughout the organization, even during times of rapid growth.





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RINGBA'S IMPACT AND THE POWER OF SUPPORTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Initially, I partnered with another call tracking platform geared towards larger enterprises. But I quickly found out that they couldn't provide the level of support I needed. They were expensive, and their response times were slow, leaving me feeling stuck and unsupported.

My introduction to Ringba changed everything. I met Adam at a conference in mid-2018. He was showcasing Ringba, and even as a relatively new company, the technology and team behind the software were impressive. The decision to switch to Ringba came at a critical point. I needed a team that would actively engage with me, answer my questions, and help me understand the nuances of call tracking and the business. Ringba provided this support brilliantly!

Ringba's impact was immediate and profound. Their technology, particularly in managing number pools and providing complete visibility into call routing, was a game-changer. It allowed me to see the full picture of our operations, something I hadn't experienced with the previous platform. Adam assured me that switching to Ringba would reveal insights I was missing, and he was right. The visibility Ringba offered was crucial, especially in those early stages when every call and every connection mattered so much.

I must have driven them crazy with all my questions, but they were always there, helping me navigate through each challenge. Adam even wrote me a letter, which I still treasure, saying how happy he was to partner with us and how pleased he was with our growth.

Switching to Ringba didn't just enhance our operational capabilities; it gave me a newfound confidence. It was such a relief to move away from an unresponsive ticketing system to a platform where I felt heard and supported. In time, my relationship with Adam went way beyond technology. His guidance and advice have been invaluable in growing Quote Velocity, offering support during times of doubt and reinforcing my commitment when I thought about quitting.

Ringba's distinction lies in Adam and Harrison's relentless pursuit of excellence. Their obsession with improving their product, and their deep caring for the industry and their clients. Their commitment to outperform any competitor is driven by a genuine passion for what they do. It's funny, but their dedication inspires me and challenges me to aim higher. Conversations with Adam often realign my perception of what's possible, pushing me to set loftier goals and not settle for mediocrity.

In many ways, Ringba's drive for growth and innovation propels Quote Velocity forward. It's not just about keeping up with the advancements in technology, but also about being inspired to exceed our own expectations. This ethos of pushing boundaries and striving for greatness is something I now try to impart to others facing challenges in their businesses. It's about believing in their potential and encouraging them to persevere through obstacles, just as Ringba has done for me.

THE FUTURE OF THE INDUSTRY AND QUOTE VELOCITY'S PATH FORWARD

The pay per call industry, as I see it, is vast and ever-evolving. There's no doubt that increasing regulatory influences will have an impact. But I believe that will only make our business better by ensuring a stronger consumer experience.

As regulations become more common, I foresee a widening gap in the industry. There will always be those who operate unethically, and they will find it much more difficult to succeed. But for companies like ours that are committed to compliance and building a valuable, sustainable enterprise, the opportunity is still huge. There's room for more players, because consumer demand isn't going away.

My advice is to focus on excelling in one vertical before diversifying. Establish a reputation as experts in a specific area, like we have done with Medicare calls at Quote Velocity. It's tempting to chase lots of verticals and see which one does best. But a focused approach has been key to our growth and reputation.

In the next few years, I envision Quote Velocity as a leader in leveraging technology to enhance the consumer experience in the insurance sector. Our focus will remain on building innovative solutions that not only meet the needs of today but also anticipate the demands of the future.



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REFLECTING ON FAMILY, TEAM, AND THE ENTREPRENEURIAL JOURNEY

Over the years, my team at Quote Velocity has become a second family. We've been through tough times together, supporting each other through personal and professional challenges. We don't do it for public accolades but because it's the right thing to do. We genuinely care about all our people. The wall in my office is covered with messages, emails, thank you notes from our team members. Each message holds immense value for me. Constant reminders that we're doing things right.

I get a little choked up when I think about how far I've come from those stressful early days. If I could talk to the Manny from five or six years ago, I would urge him to trust himself more. I would tell him everything is going to work out brilliantly. But above all, I would urge him not to lose focus on family. I would tell him to remember why he started, what all the hard work is really for—his team and his family's happiness.

This might sound a little strange, but I kind of miss those early days sometimes. The constant stress, the relentless work hours, and the fear of failure created an intense focus. The chaos and challenges provided a form of comfort, a sense of purpose that's hard to replicate in more stable times.

This doesn't mean I'm yearning for turmoil, but it highlights something many entrepreneurs share — the thrill of overcoming obstacles, the drive that comes from navigating through uncertainty. That survival mindset brings a familiar clarity and focus. So whether you're in the thick of it, or you're already super successful, I think it's okay to appreciate the harder times.

The entrepreneurial journey is a complex one, filled with highs and lows, successes and near-failures. It's a path of constant learning, not just about business, but about oneself, about what truly matters. And as I look to the future, I carry these lessons with me, ensuring that the growth of Quote Velocity never comes at the cost of what's truly important — family, health, and the well-being of the team that has become like a second family to me.



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