

Daniel Marcos: Your role as the leader is to be able to bring the best in their capacity for whatever you're hiring them, and then help them run as a team and really operate as a team. And that's leadership.

(Intro Music)

Robert Glazer: Welcome to Elevate, a podcast about achievement, personal growth and pushing limits in leadership and life. I'm Robert Glazer and I chat with world class performers who have committed to elevating their own life, pushing the limits of their capacity, and helping others to do the same.

Welcome to the Elevate podcast. Our quote for today is, "The difference between who you are and who you want to be is what you do." Our guest today, Daniel Marcos is an expert on growth, both personally and in business. He's the co founder and CEO of Gazelles Growth Institute and is a leader in online executive education for C-suite level executives. He's also an internationally renowned speaker and maintains a very popular blog that we'll make sure to provide in the show notes. So, Daniel, welcome, it's great to have you on the podcast today.

Daniel Marcos: Thank you, Rob, thank you for the invite.

Robert Glazer: So one thing I learned, chatting right before we started here, is that you are quite a global citizen and have lived and worked all over the world; can you give us a quick overview of all the different places you've been?

Daniel Marcos: So I was born in Monterrey, Mexico, North of Mexico in a very industrial city, but I really grew up in Mexico City, my father was invited to work for government there. So I lived most of my time there, but then, when I was between high school and college, I was really not ready to go to college and my father said, "Hey, why don't you take a year?" And I was like, "Yeah, but what will I do that year?" And he said, "I am working with this English company in the insurance market, why don't I try to get you an internship there?" So I lived in London, working at Lloyd's, for a year. They have this thing they call the couriers, and you run through all the market with the insurance slips, so I did that for a year and then came back to Monterrey, precisely my hometown, to go to college.

And then, after college, my first job was working for the Mexican government in Hong Kong, precisely when Hong Kong was going to be part of China, the transition year, 2007. It ended a lease of 99 years that was to England and it passed back to China, and I was responsible for the Mexican delegation for that year. So I lived in Hong Kong for a couple of years, really understanding Asia and how the Mexican government could align with the new Chinese rulers in Hong Kong.

And then came back to Mexico, did a startup company, grew it, sold it, we did really well with that one. And then, after that, took a year off, traveled a little bit around the world, and then landed in Boston for my MBA, in Babson. And then went back to Austin for 15 years, and I lived in Austin, did a couple of companies there, and recently I moved to Toronto, I've been in Toronto eight months now. So a little bit around everywhere.

Robert Glazer: You've got it all covered. Now you mentioned ... I think you started your first company in Mexico back in 1999.

Daniel Marcos: Correct.

Robert Glazer: Tell me a little bit about what was that business and what drew you to entrepreneurship in the first place?

Daniel Marcos: So when I was a kid I did all these kind of businesses; I had an auto detail franchise, I did an aquarium, I sold T-shirts, everything. And when I was in college I was looking to do another business, and my father was worried that I was going to get too distracted and fail college, so he asked my brother to help me get a job. You know, whenever your father tells you something when you're a teenager, everything is wrong.

Robert Glazer: Yeah, do the opposite.

Daniel Marcos: My father said if I recommend him to get a job, he will never get the job, so he got my older brother to guide me on that. So my older brother helped me get a job in a brokerage house, and I became a trader in the Mexican stock market and we did a lot of trading of stocks in the US. And I did that for my last two and a half years in college. So, when I finished, went to Hong Kong for two years, and I was reading all these magazines, 1998, 1999, about all these kids in the US making billions with their internet companies, so I resigned to my job and came back to Mexico, and the one thing I knew how to do was stock trading, because that's a two and a half year work that I did before college, or during college, sorry.

So, I said I'm going to do the first financial website that focused on the Mexican financial market. And we did kind of an e-trade and Yahoo! Finance thing with games and blogs and articles and everything online, on how to trade stocks. And we built the first one in Mexico, we sold it pretty fast to an Argentinian company, and then, this is a great story. So, an Argentinian entrepreneur, very similar to me, he already had Argentina, Chile and Venezuela, and he went to J.P. Morgan in New York and asked for all this money to be the dominant player in Latin America in the financial markets. And J.P. Morgan said, "Hey, we like what you're doing, we like the Monterrey thing that you have put on, but if you're in Latin America and you don't have Mexico and Brazil, you're no one. If you really want to be an original player, you have to have a dominance in Mexico and Brazil." So J.P. Morgan said, "We would like to give you 50 million

dollars, to invest 50 million dollars in your business, but you have to have Mexico and Brazil and be dominant there."

So, he called me from New York and said, "Hey, I'm flying to Argentina now, you and I have seen each other on the news, I'm the biggest website in Argentina, Chile and Venezuela, you're the biggest one in Mexico, I call you and the biggest guy in Brazil, I'm inviting you to come to Argentina and let's put together these regional players and let's go back to J.P. Morgan to get the money." So I flew to Argentina, sold my company that night, it was a pretty fast deal, and we joined this organization. We were probably a hundred or so employees altogether, the three companies, and we went back to J.P. Morgan a couple of weeks later, presented the full strategy for Latin America, we raised 53 million dollars from J.P. Morgan, Goldman, Microsoft, Intel; it was the best run you could ever dream. And we grew that to 1200 employees, operations in nine countries, and then sold it to Santander, the thirteenth biggest bank in the world at that day.

Robert Glazer: Wow, that is a great story.

Daniel Marcos: It was pretty exciting.

Robert Glazer: And you mentioned your MBA, now, you decided to pursue the MBA after launching a business, in part, I read, because you wanted to help relate to your team. It's a little out of order, so how does-

Daniel Marcos: Yes, it's out of order. When I was in FinanzasWeb and then Patagon, we were the darling internet company of Latin America, we were in the newspapers and magazines and speaking in all the places, and I had all these kids graduating from Harvard and Stanford and Kellogg asking me for a job, so I begin giving jobs to all these MBA grads. And they were talking this language and using these words that I felt very uncomfortable, I had no idea what they were saying. I felt that they knew more than I knew, and I'd been reading all these books, that's when I met Verne Harnish and YEO and all that, but I was really feeling uncomfortable that my employees knew more than me, at least in these kinds of subjects. So I said, "Whenever I sell or whatever I would do with Patagon at that time, I'm going to go back and do an MBA," so I could really understand all this jargon and feel that I understood it.

And here's one more thing; being an entrepreneur from Mexico, I wanted to do world business, and I kind of felt that was growing up in kind of a third world country and seeing the US so big, and Europe, but I wanted to be able to have the same knowledge, or at least the same level of understanding of the business world if I wanted to do business in the world. So I applied to Babson, at that moment, and still, the number one business school for entrepreneurs, and did my MBA there and graduated with honors, by the way. I loved it. I barely passed college, because I hated college, but then I really loved going through my MBA, I learned a lot.

Robert Glazer: And you're a lifelong student, is what we'll get into. So I think it was your next experience was a little opposite; your first American company collapsed in the 2008 financial crisis.

Daniel Marcos: That's correct.

Robert Glazer: Tell us a little bit about that and how it affected you, and did you consider giving up on being an entrepreneur after that, or it was pretty hardwired?

Daniel Marcos: You can't imagine how many times. After being, what I thought, a very successful entrepreneur, right, we really got very lucky; at that moment, if you had a .com last name in your business, people just threw you money. And we really never understood how to do a business. So, after that, took a year off, traveled the world, went to my MBA, and then I said, "I want to test myself, or prove myself, in the US, in a world business." And I chose Austin. In that moment Austin was a very small town, but it was starting to be entrepreneurial, and we moved to Austin and opened a mortgage bank serving the undocumented Hispanic market.

So, when you go through your MBA they teach you how to read trends and all those things. So there were two big trends in the US at that moment; one was Hispanics, there was a big realization of the importance of the Hispanic market and how much the consumption they have and all that. And the second thing was housing, there was a really, really big push of housing to get the housing ownership in the US four or five points higher. So they were really throwing you money to buy a house and the Hispanic market, I said, "I'm from Mexico, I understand that, so I'm going to build a mortgage company, or a mortgage bank, to give loans to undocumented Hispanics."

I knew how to do financial services online, so I thought I knew how to do financial services to the Hispanic market in the US. And boy, was I wrong, it's completely different. We, through a friend in San Diego, got a line of credit with Goldman Sachs for 500 million dollars to give loans to undocumented Hispanics, we began giving a lot of loans. It was having a lot of challenges in my business, it really took me some time to understand the business, and by the time I was really understanding and getting it, that's when the financial crisis came, and I was very weak. I was first the sub prime ... or, sub prime. There was no one more sub prime than me, so I was completely destroyed there. But also, my company was very weak, and here I had a lot of learnings, going from an internet company to a mortgage company, and it was night and day. I hated my job, I hated my day, and I really didn't do what I needed to do to really build the company. So, if you asked me my biggest learning on building companies, it was that. The company was called [inaudible 00:10:52] and then [inaudible 00:10:54] one to three, and that was a really, really good school on how to build a business and how not to build a business.

Robert Glazer: So more expensive but equally valuable as your MBA?

Daniel Marcos: Oh, probably 25 times more expensive than my MBA. I lost all the money that I'd built on the first one, and then I finished being a million dollars in debt when I ended up closing it. So it was very painful and it took me a year to kind of accept myself. And entrepreneurs, we tend to rank how our successful our company is to how successful we are personally.

Robert Glazer: Yeah, exactly.

Daniel Marcos: If your company goes under, you feel yourself like a failure. I took it really, really hard on me that my company went under and it was not easy, I went through a really rough time in my life.

Robert Glazer: Yeah, one of the things that I say a lot is I think entrepreneurship is sexy in the rear view mirror, a lot of times people just see the end result of 10 or 15 years of ups and downs and failures and they see the highs but they don't see the lows, and the more entrepreneurs you talk to, I mean those lows are real and often they exceed the highs, it's just how the story ends, not how the story went. But it's all tied to a story and right at that time I think you got connected to Verne Harnish, right, and he said some things to you that put you on a different path.

Daniel Marcos: Thank you for that. After I closed my business I was ... I didn't went to bankruptcy, but I got a significant loan from a couple of family members to be able to pay everything, and I was really feeling bad, I was overweight, overstressed and all that, and I got several calls from people, and that's when you realize who are your friends and who's there for you. And I got several calls from people, and one of them was Verne. Verne heard through a friend that I had gone under and I was having a really hard time, so Verne called me. I met Verne 10 years before in Birthing of Giants, or Gathering of Titans, this program in MIT, and then I went to some of his seminars and things like that, but we were not really friends, it was just more a business relationship and he coached me in some things.

Robert Glazer: And Daniel, can you just share who Verne is for everyone who may not know?

Daniel Marcos: So, Verne, he's the founder of YEO, entrepreneurial organization, the most influential entrepreneur network in the world. He wrote the book Mastering the Rockefeller Habits, and then the book Scaling Up, he's a really big player in the entrepreneurial community, in the world, and the scale up community. And Verne, he's a big guy, he founded YEO, he was a columnist of Fortune magazine, a really, really influential guy. And when I was in my worst moment he took the time to call me and see how I was, and that really ... at first it was very surprising, and then it was very humbling to see that he took the time to talk to an entrepreneur that he was in his worst moment, and really be able to talk with him and help him understand that it was not me, and separate my business from me, and that was really, really big for me.

Robert Glazer: So where did you guys go from there.

Daniel Marcos: So on the call he said, "Hey, how are you?" And I began complaining and I even cried on the call, and you have to imagine, it was a really bad situation and-

Robert Glazer: It wasn't pretty.

Daniel Marcos: It wasn't pretty. So I probably complained and made a mess for a half hour and cried and all that. And after the half hour Verne said, "Okay, great, what's next?" And I was all, "What do you mean?" And the guy said, "Yeah, what are you going to do next?" And I was like, "Verne, you haven't heard that I don't believe myself, I have a million dollars in debt, and you want me to do another company?" And the guy said, "Yeah, why not?" And I was like, "Verne, you're crazy, I don't trust myself," and the guy said, "Here's what I recommend," and I said, "What?" And he said, "You have to become a CO coach, you have to coach entrepreneurs." And I said, "You're crazy, I don't even trust myself to be an entrepreneur again." And he said, "That's precisely why. You went through such a hard time and process that you have to make sure it doesn't happen again to any other entrepreneur. You went through some process that you have some signs and some things that went through your life that you could be very, very valuable for entrepreneurs, precisely for them not to go through the same process." And I said, "Hey, Verne, I really appreciate your confidence in me and all that, but I really need to go back to Mexico and get a job."

Back then, I don't know if you remember, the US in 2008 was going through a really, really rough patch, so for me, as a Mexican, getting a job or an income in the US was really hard. So I said, "I'm going to go back to Mexico to get a job, pay the school for my daughter, I had a very young, couple of years, daughter, and I need to pay for school." So I went back to Mexico, and he said, "Okay, great, go back to Mexico, get your job, but begin coaching on the weekends." And I was, "Verne, I just can't do that." And he said, "Hey, how are you going to pay your million dollars?" And I was like, "Yeah, get a job, I will never pay that." So he convinced me to begin coaching and in six months of coaching over the weekend I was making more money on the two days of the weekend than the whole week. So I resigned to my job and became a CO coach back then, and the rest is history after that.

Robert Glazer: So, now you're the CEO of Gazelles Growth Institute, so can you explain both what that is and then also how that came about and the evolution of working with Verne and his organization?

Daniel Marcos: So I became a Gazelles coach back then, and, by the way, I couldn't even pay for the fees to pay Verne and all that, so even Verne sent me a plane ticket to fly to get trained with him. And I begin training and helping work with Latin America and all that, and I ... after four years, by the way, I paid 100% of my loan, the million dollars, and I was having a decent life back then, but the last year that I was a full-time coach I slept away from home 250 nights out of the year. It was a crazy travel time.

And I came to Verne's, said, "Hey, Verne, I'm done, I'm resigning." And he said, "What do you mean? You're one of the most successful coaches that we have on the network." And that year I had made more money than the coach in New York and the coach in Dubai, but I was in Latin America, in a different plane every day. And Verne said, "Why?" And I said, "First, because if I continue I'm not going to have a wife, and I just had my second son and I need to be a father, so I need to be home more. And second, I love what we do in Scaling Up, and we help our clients with a lot of things, but there's a lot of things that we don't control and that will have a significant impact on scaling, like topgrading, like negotiations, and other methodologies that we were not experts. And I was flying all over Latin America and the US with books on my bag, giving to my clients, and saying, "Hey, after implementing Scaling Up you have to do topgrading, or you have to do high stake negotiations, or you have to implement [inaudible 00:17:50]."

Robert Glazer: So you were a traveling book salesman?

Daniel Marcos: Yeah, but I was giving all these books away to my clients and no one was reading them. And I was telling them, "Guys, it's very important that, if you do scaling up, you also do all these things. That's what's going to complement all the building blocks that you need to scale your business." And they didn't have time, they didn't have the money, so Verne and I had to have discussion that night, and said, "What can we do to be able to bring all the methodologies to mid market companies in a way that makes sense in price and format?" And that's why we built the Growth Institute; we believe scaling up, the methodology that Verne invented and discovered, it's really one methodology, that it's a great way to take control of your business and put systems and procedures and all that, but if you don't have a great team it's really, really hard to scale your business.

So we invited, in this case, Brad Smart from topgrading, and that was the first class we had outside of scaling up, and we said, "Hey, you need to be able to hire a great team and maintain a great team." And then we went to Jack Daly and said, "Hey, you have to teach our students how to be better sales managers and build a great sales organization." So we got Jack Daly for that. And then we got [inaudible 00:19:01] we met him at Similarity, and how to transform your organization into an [inaudible 00:19:05] organization. And like that we begin inviting all our thought leaders, today we have around 110 thought leaders, and we believe we teach you what you need to know to scale a business.

And here let me go back to my MBA. When I left my MBA I was super excited and yeah, I've got my MBA, and Babson and all that, and when I went back to run my business I realized I have learned very little tools to really scale my business. For me, the MBA is amazing to help you have critical thinking, or develop critical thinking, and kind of understanding the economy in the world and all that, but they give you very few tools to really scale your business. And I love the quote from [inaudible 00:19:47] that says, "No MBA teaches you how to do an Uber." All the MBA are teaching how to do General Electric or Coca

Cola or all these legacy businesses that today are very strong, but they really don't tell you how to build a business for the future.

Robert Glazer: Or how to make payroll, that's one I've heard.

Daniel Marcos: Or how to make payroll, yes, how to get a loan, how to make payroll, how to read your financial statement. It's crazy how little you learn how to read your financial statement in the MBA. So we said, "Let's build a program that any leader or C-level executive of a mid market company will have to go through to really be an expert on scaling companies." And that's what we built at the Growth Institute, and one of the programs that we have is called the MBD, the Master of Business Dynamics. We teach you how to manage the dynamics of growth. We know that with fast growth you get a lot of drama, in your life, on your operation, on your employees, and you need all these other tools to be able to complement that.

Robert Glazer: So you've spent years, personally, in your executive education programs, trying to help business leaders scale their business, and one the things you've said is people need to stop being entrepreneurs and start being leaders; what's the difference between the two and why is that so important?

Daniel Marcos: So, this is one thing that I've been developing, I'm writing my book on that, though it's not published yet. But how to really evolve from entrepreneur to CO. We wear this hat, that we're entrepreneurs and we're very proud of being entrepreneurs, we have to change the way we lead our teams, and I've developed or discovered these four stages; start up, grow up, scale up, and then dominate your industry, and you really have to scale your company on stage three, what I call stage three, the scale up. You really have to first be an entrepreneur and really understand your product and your market and the market dynamics and things like that, then, on stage two, you really have to start developing your systems and procedures to really be able to take your company to the next level.

And in stage two, instead of being an entrepreneur and be doing everything, you have to learn how to be a leader. But on stage two you're a leader one to one, every employee reports to you on a direct basis, and being a leader one to one, it's pretty simple, because you can sit down with a person and they could see your feelings and you could have dinner with them and you kind of could take a lot of time, and a little bit of what you and I talked before the interview. For me to give a course of two days is very easy to prepare, for me to give a TED Talk of 10 minutes is really hard. But the same thing happens when you're a leader on stage two, it's like you have two days to be a leader per person. When you're on stage three and four it's like you have to be a leader like in a TED Talk, you have two minutes to be a leader and that's it, so it complicates your leadership significantly.

Daniel Marcos: So the best description that I heard from stage two to stage three, is on stage two you play checkers, and on stage three you're playing chess.

Robert Glazer: How do you know you're at those stages? Are they revenue, are they number of employees, where-

Daniel Marcos: Number of employees.

Robert Glazer: Okay, number of employees, yep.

Daniel Marcos: You got it right. So people said, "Hey, it should be revenue," and I was, "No." And they said, "Okay, it should be the amount of years it takes you." No, some companies take five years, some companies take six months. What complicates your operation is the amount of employees that you have in your business. So I believe stage one is one to five employees, stage two, it's six to 15, and you could get up to 15 people reporting mostly directly to you. After 16, 20 employees, now you have to build the first layer of management, and that's what I call stage three, and that's where you have to play chess. And let me explain this a little bit more.

So, when you play checkers you see your board and every chip is exactly the same color and exactly the same size. And you have full control of what happens with the chips, and you move them around and do whatever you have to do on the game to win. When you're playing chess you look at your board and every player has strengths and weaknesses, every player is different. And now you have to say, "Okay, if I have a queen, I have a king and I have a tower, what's the best I could do to put them on a position to use their strengths the best, and then, with the rest of the players, or the rest of the chips, cover their weaknesses?" And that's exactly what you have to do in stage three. You have to really understand your team, understand their strengths and weaknesses, and be able to help them use their strengths the most and cover the weaknesses the most.

Robert Glazer: In that example, where the company goes from one to two to three in 12 to 23 months, I've always said every time a company doubles you break half the system and half the people and people need to get that much better just to keep their job. I mean what kind of personal leader does it take to be able to run a 10 person company and then a 100 person company a year or two later? I assume it's actually a small percent of people that can make that adjustment, or do you think it's higher if they have the right training?

Daniel Marcos: So, several things, and I'll go back to one statistic I saw the other day in Silicon Valley; from all the venture funded companies, 80 or 90%, they get sold or closed before they do two or three million in revenue. It's really, really hard for a human being to be able to take a company above that level, and the amount they're sold, maximum, it's 30 million dollars. Most of the venture, VC backed companies, they get sold or closed below a valuation, let's say, of 30 million, because a human being doesn't have the capacity to be able to lead a team bigger than that.

And, for me, the most important thing between stage two and stage three, it's you have to be humble, you have to accept that a company is not about you, it's about them. The biggest shift you have to do as a leader from stage two to stage three is to understand that now you work for your employees. Until stage two they work for you, on stage three, now you work for them. You work to make them successful, you work to make their life easy, you work to give them the tools they need to be successful. The more that you help your team be successful, the more they will make your company successful.

So in stage three and four it's not about you, it's about them. Indeed, what I do with my clients that I'm coaching is I turn their organization upside down and I put the CEO on the bottom of the organization, and the job of the CEO is to help the first line of leaders, for them to become great leaders and lead each of the divisions of the company, to help the next level and the next level, and the level on the top, your frontline employees, are really the employees touching your clients and really doing the business. So the more that you understand that now you work for them to make them successful, the more your company is going to be successful.

Robert Glazer: Yeah, one of the things that I've been writing about a lot and saying the command and control leadership is dead and not even the military uses it anymore because it doesn't work, and with generational changes and the speed of business, but there are still a lot of companies out there just running an authority based leadership system and I don't think there are going to be that many left in five to 10 years.

Daniel Marcos: There won't, yeah, I completely agree with you.

Robert Glazer: And another thing you said that I'm curious, because, again, it's counter-intuitive, but what is the limitation that companies face when they're only focused on getting team players, rather than trying to attract the best talent and create a team?

Daniel Marcos: Thank you very much for that question, I think that's really important. So this comes from a learning that Jim Collins found on the Good to Great book, and all his learnings; he said you first have to decide who to bring to an organization and then where do you have to go? And the best movie that I've seen to talk about this, I don't know if you remember a movie of the US hockey team, it's a Disney movie.

Robert Glazer: Yes, the famous Olympic story, Miracle On Ice.

Daniel Marcos: Miracle On Ice, thank you. Your role as leader is to bring the best goalie, to bring the best players, and then help them play as a team, and that's where leadership comes. And I love the movie because at one moment they have one of the team members that they love, but that team member is not pulling their weight, and he said, "I'm going to bring someone to replace it." And everyone

said, "No, no, we want our friend." And he said, "Yeah, but our friend is not pulling their weight, we're going to have to lose him. Or you help him pull their own weight or I'm going to remove him." And they bring this other kid, that they tell the kid, "Hey, you're not going to be on the team, but we're going to tell everyone we're going to put you on the team, for them to defend their team members." And it's crazy, when you bring an outside villain, let's say, to the group; the group, if they're a great group, they begin defending each other and helping each other be better. And that all happens in that movie, I think it's a great leadership movie.

And your role as a leader is to be able to bring the best in their capacity for whatever you're hiring them, and then help them run as a team and really operate as a team, and that's leadership.

Robert Glazer: Very well said. Well, on a lighter note, tell us a little bit about your blog, which has seemed to become pretty popular.

Daniel Marcos: So, and here's something we learned in these six years in marketing, and this is something Evan [inaudible 00:29:09], and I don't know if you've met Evan, talk about what he calls 'move the free line'. Before the internet you gave very little free and then you'd want to charge the other 90% of your business or whatever. Now the internet really changed that. On the internet people are expecting to get a lot for free, and if you don't give them a lot for free you will not create that trust with people.

So we learned from a company from Poland, from all places, we did first a catalog of classes, and you came to Growth Institute and we were just giving classes away, or selling classes, and we could not win the trust of the people and really understand what we teach. So we said, "Hey, no, we need to give a lot for free, we need to give a lot of great training for people for free, and whoever wants to go to the next level, then they're going to come to our classes." And it's crazy how our revenue doubled the year, the year we started a great blog, and really put everything on the blog. You can't imagine how much money we spend, and dedication and time, to build a great blog for people to really get a lot of value, and they get a lot of value and we get a lot of emails and communications saying, "Hey, thank you very much, I came to your blog, got this video, or this article, I got everything I need." And we said, "Hey, come to the class," and some said, "Hey, I got enough," and some people said, "If you gave me all of this for free, imagine the course," and then they come to the course and they're blown away.

So we really put a lot of time and attention in building great free resources where we're creating a community of C-level executives all over the world, coming to learn together, and we're building a community around that, and now they're helping each other on how to scale companies, and they're beginning to have a common language and a common methodologies that they're using. And it's crazy what is happening when you give all this content, how a community begins building around that.

Robert Glazer: Yeah, I mean because I'm in the affiliate world I have lot of people reach out to me and they're like, "I want to make money with a website, what type of site should I start and how do I monetize it?" And I'm like, "You've got it all backwards, the people I know making a lot of money have found a way to create a tremendous value for people, create a community, give first, get the trust of the people, and then they focus on monetization." And it's hard to do that if you're not passionate about it. So what's the blog, before we forget, the URL?

Daniel Marcos: So, the blog is ... we have it in Growth Institute. If you go growthinstitute.com and then go to the blog. Whenever I'm seeing my stats in my Google analytics and all that probably over half of our traffic, or more of our traffic, is people on the blog, and they just come and learn. And we have people coming, learning and learning and learning, and sometimes they take six months, sometimes they take a year, some they take even longer, and then they come to our programs after that. So if you go to growthinstitute.com, go to the blog, and you will see the dedication and the level of learning that we have in our articles and our blog posts, and it's really amazing what's happening.

And here let me just add one more thing. We never understood the importance of the community online. So we teach this class that we call a Master's program, it lasts three months, and on the three months we give you ... so, an example, on Scaling Up with Verne we have nine hours of video with Verne and then you get eight group coaching calls, all the students together, 50, 75 students, and then you have your one on one coaching calls, and some exercise and all these kind of things. And the students begin saying, "Hey, but I need to talk to other entrepreneurs really implementing the way I'm implementing and my level of knowledge, to really be able to debunk the issues of implementing all these methodologies." So now that we've built a great community around that, that started with the blog and then they became students, they said, "Hey, the content is amazing, the coaching calls are great to give us guidance and all that, but where we get the most juice is with other executives all over the world, learning the same methodologies with our companies."

Like I have a company that, as an example, we had a student in Iran doing steel, and then we had a company in India doing marketing and a company in China doing whatever, and they all come together and help each other with all the complications of how to implement all these methodologies, and how to do it on their own. And it's crazy how much they love the interaction within them more than they like coming to the course. So they come to the course, and so that gave us the common language, or knowledge, but where we really get the juice is helping each other implement in our businesses.

Robert Glazer: Yeah, that is a big playbook I think a lot of mastermind groups are taking, that it's really about the exponential power of just putting the people together.

Daniel Marcos: That's correct. And we discounted the importance of that, even Verne, we didn't thought it was part of the model, now we know it's an integral part of who we are.

Robert Glazer: Well I hope people can learn from that mistake. And, on that note, I'd like to ask for the last question, and you may have already touched on this, or maybe you have a new one, but what's a personal and professional mistake that you learned the most from?

Daniel Marcos: I'll give you two quick ones, and they will both be related to my company, my mortgage company. So, first, instead of doing what I loved, that's what I'm doing now and what I did on my first company, I did what the trends and the market told me to do. All the people that I talked to in the US and all that, they said, "Hey, you understand the Hispanics, you talk the language, you have to work in the market." And the second was real estate, and here's what I learned in real estate; every rich or wealthy individual that I know made their money, or multiplied their money, in real estate, but working in real estate is very different, and here's my second, and that was the hardest part for me in real estate.

Usually, in the mortgage industry and the realtor industry, works people that they could not get a job anywhere else in the world and they go to that industry. So I came from working with the highest, for learned, dynamic people in the internet time, in the 2000s, and then I went to work in real estate, and I coached a lot of COs, several of them on real estate, and the standards of the average employee in the industry are very, very low. So I went to work with the people with the highest standards in the industry or on the market, to go with the people, some of them, with the lowest standards. I hated my job because I was in a group of people that did not fit me mentally, I could not have these kinds of conversation like the one we're having now in a day to day, and I was only trying, fighting, to raise their standards.

And it was really, really, really tiring. I remember when I went to my [inaudible 00:35:52] and said, "Hey guys, this is time to close," I will show them all the data and everything. And one of them said, "Okay, Danny, what would you do?" And I said, "I think we should close." And he said, "Because of the data?" And I was like, "Yeah, the data, it's a big one. But second, I hate my job." And the guy said, "But you're an entrepreneur, you invite us to invest here." And I was like, "Yeah, but I didn't understand the importance of the community that you live when you do your company, and the standards of your community." And I really had a really, really hard time being on this side of the industry. I work today with two real estate investors, really big real estate investors, and we share the same things. Sometimes with realtors or people doing insurance for the housing and all that, they're so used to have a job that you have to go through them because it's a standard or it's a requirement and all that, and their standards of development are really low and it's really hard to work in that industry when you have, in the industry that you are, the people with really, really high standards, learning a lot, reading books every week.

Like I have one client today that he pushes himself to read a book a week. So every week we have a call talking about every book he read. Like when I was talking with some realtors, I said, "Hey, what was the last book you read?"

"Well, it was two or three years ago or five years and I've never read a book since I left college." It was really hard. So really understand who is your tribe and stay around your tribe, that will feed you dramatically, your mindset, your state of mind, your wellbeing, and that's a really big one I learned the hard way. And not everyone, of course, in the industry has low standards, but the average standards in the real estate industry in the US are really low, and it was hard, it was really, really hard for me to be there.

Robert Glazer: Well those are some wise words and lessons there and the real estate industry in the US has certainly been a boom and bust industry for the last few decades. Daniel, where can people find you?

Daniel Marcos: In our website, growthinstitute.com, or they could send me an email, daniel@growthinstitute.com. Happy to help, I'm a coach at heart for the last 10 years, so happy to help you understand how to scale your business or what's the right thing you have to do or the next step to take your business to the next level.

Robert Glazer: All right, well Daniel, thank you for taking the time to join us today. You're an inspiring story of perseverance in the face of struggle, owning your own path and sharing your knowledge with others on a massive scale through Growth Institute.

Daniel Marcos: Robert, thank you, really appreciate the invitation.

Robert Glazer: To our listeners, thanks for tuning in to the Elevate podcast, we'll include links to Daniel, Gazelles Growth Institute, and his personal blog on the detailed episode page at robertglazer.com. If you enjoyed today's episode I'd really appreciate if you could head over to the Apple Podcast, Stitcher, or your preferred podcast service and leave us a review. You can also learn how to review us by following us on the link on the podcast page, and until next time, keep elevated-