



Ron Ricotta

CEO of Century Mold

*"Destiny is not a matter of chance, it is a matter of choice;
it is not a thing to be waited for, it is a thing to be achieved."
William Jennings Bryan*

Ron Ricotta's turning point ought to be one that many of us can easily identify with. As a child, he had worked the same odd jobs as his friends, with the exception that he did two or three times as many of them, giving up the opportunity to play in order to focus on his work. His work ethic was astonishing, and no one ever doubted that he would put in the effort that was required to secure a good job and make an excellent living at it. Ron, however, wanted something more than that. More than just a lucrative job, more even than just a partnership in a profitable firm, Ron wanted independence and freedom. He wanted to own his own business so that he could work for himself, set his own terms, and keep the entirety of the fruits of his labor. When Ron was 36 he would see his dream come true; it was the major turning point in his life. To fully understand the context of that changeover and what it meant to Ron, we must go back a little and start at the beginning.

When Ron left college, he went straight into accounting in the hopes of making the most of his degree and education. He made a pretty good living, but there was something missing. Ron realized a crucial difference between working for someone else and working for himself; namely that in one instance, one's capacity to earn was limited, while in the other, it was dependent entirely on how much work one put in. Determined to fall into the latter category, Ron resolved

that by the time he was thirty, he would become a partner in his accounting firm, effectively able to control his own destiny.

Ron did eventually meet his goal and became partner at his accounting firm, as he had expected to. However, Ron always had it in the back of his mind that this was only a momentary stop on the road; he might be in a better position, but he still hadn't reached his ultimate goal of working for himself in a company of his own.

Ron worked in the accounting firm for a total of thirteen years before he decided it was time for a drastic change and submitted his resignation. Throwing himself into the void to either sink or swim is what he describes as his turning point, the point when he knew that either his principles would pay off and he would be a success, or he would be mistaken about his own abilities and become a failure, left with nothing. Of course, Ron had already achieved a great deal of success in becoming a partner, so it's no surprise that his dedication to hard work and steadfast advancement paid off once more.

During Ron's stint as a public accountant, he spent much of his time working with manufacturing companies. As a result of that experience, he felt that this would be the best avenue he could go down after leaving the firm.

He went to work for a company called Nationwide, a privately held firm owned by the Nuccitelli family, and became partner. He was asked to help save an ailing sister company called Parlec and help turn it around. He worked with Mike Nuccitelli, who handled the sales and engineering side of the equation, while Ron handled the operations and finance side. Before long their efforts started to see results, thanks to a strategy they implemented of rearranging the work force to have certain people work in the areas they were best suited for. The combined companies went from a 16 million dollar business to a 55 million dollar business in only six years.

It was a success as they had been hoping for, but Ron wasn't finished yet. Fresh from his successful turnaround of the company, the Nuccitelli family was approached with an offer to sell Nationwide, and they accepted it. Ron stayed on for two years as president, working under the new owner. However, he realized that **once you have a taste for your own business, it is hard to work for someone else, and there's no going back.**

So Ron went back to Parlec to work with Mike, but unfortunately this was just before September 11th. The industry again went through a hard time, and the company was in need of saving once more. After two years of tough times, they managed to bring the company back once more.

Thus emboldened by his success, Ron and Mike would go on to purchase another manufacturing company, this one called Century Mold. It was essentially in the same industry as Nationwide, only it was involved in plastics rather than metals. Here, Ron's dedication, work ethic, and doing things the right way won him his most profound success ever. While Century Mold was originally a 27 million dollar business when he walked into it, Ron turned it into an 85 million dollar business in only 5 years.

Ever since then Ron has continued to work as his own boss, setting his own terms and constantly pushing forward, never satisfied to let things stay as they are. Though he's now in his fifties and certainly has the capital that would let him retire comfortably, he doesn't even consider it an option. For him, it's not just about the money, but rather the thrill that he gets from committing to his own decisions and then seeing them pan out successfully. Ron describes that the biggest mistake he has made in business is not following his own gut instincts.

"I would say when something feels a little uncomfortable and I get talked into it, those have been my biggest mistakes."

When things run smoothly as a result of his organization, he says, that's the greatest high that he can imagine. That's one of the major appeals in working for himself, and not something that he's ready to abandon.

When asked about the secret of his success, Ron is very straightforward. He says simply that he believes in hard work and doing the right thing. He makes quality products because those are the kind of products that he himself would want to buy, and the commitment to quality has paid off massively. To put it in his own words:

"When you have to make a decision, just do the right thing."

Simple advice, perhaps, but sometimes the simplest approach reaps the biggest rewards. It certainly has for Ron Ricotta.