

INTRODUCING OUR CHAPTER PARTNER, CONTACTUALLY

My name is Zvi Band, and I'm the co-founder and CEO of Contactually, a relationship marketing platform (putting the 'R' back into CRM), whose greater mission is to help professionals build and maintain personal and authentic relationships with their clients and partners.

As I write this, our fifth birthday is coming up, but in the early days, reaching this milestone seemed unfathomable.

Let me explain why and how our **tipping point** came in to play.

Raising capital is one of the most daunting challenges a startup faces, especially at an early stage, because there's so much internal uncertainty: will my idea pan out, who is going to help me with this, what does the product look like?

And on top of this, I faced having to raise outside capital as a young, relatively unproven entrepreneur — necessary capital in order for the founders to make ends meet, hire an initial team, and start to get the product into market.

Investors typically want to invest in one or a combination of three things: the track (there's a big market), the horse (the company), or the jockey (the team). We had none of these, and it was showing because we were getting no, after no, after no.

As much as one shouldn't take these personally, each 'no' felt like a personal rejection, and soon desperation kicked in.

But then we noticed a change, and this is when our **tipping point** came to be; shortly after our first yes.

Beyond the actual capital, the message that came along with it resonated with me deeply, as it read, "I don't know much about what you are doing, but I believe in you and think you'll figure it out."

He was betting on the jockey (me), and I all of a sudden realised that this was possible, and that I would be able to raise the necessary capital to grow Contactually, and that I didn't have to have a clear idea of what the next ten years would bring for us, because all I needed to show was the strength and willpower of our nascent team.

Come hell or high water, we were going to be the team that got something done.

We got that round closed quickly, and with momentum now on our side, we closed the next one; and the next one; and the next one. To date, Contactually has raised over ten million dollars in capital, built the team to 70+ people, and, most importantly, achieved our mission for many thousands of customers.

These days, things are more established, and investors can clearly see our market opportunity and bet on the track, and see the success of our execution to date and bet on the horse. But at the end of the day, what they are investing in remains the jockey; the team and company culture we've created that will power us to achieve our massive vision.

That's one area, despite any ups or downs, I have learned to never stop investing in. And it was this **tipping point** that allowed us to get to where we are today, and continues to push us towards new and exciting opportunities tomorrow. With this in mind, I'll pass things over to Matthew, and Stage Five: The Tipping Point.