



## PAUL RYAN

founder, Intouch Finance

The former co-founder of Wizard Home Loans has launched an app in just six months that marries financial literacy with lead generation. He shares what motivated him to launch this tech-savvy idea

● When you think about an app developer, you imagine a 20-year-old tech nerd, a Mark Zuckerberg-like figure looking to break his way into the digital world. But with 30 years' financial experience behind him, Paul Ryan is anything but. The founder of Intouch Finance has successfully launched a community platform, which allows consumers to have their finance and credit-related questions answered by users of the service, made up of mortgage brokers, bankers and other industry professionals.

"Unfortunately, we all get caught up with our day-to-day work. We get too busy and then, when we make a call, it often goes to voicemail and it takes the person two or three days to return our call. The app is a way in which people can simply, in the palm of their hand, ask questions and receive answers to enhance their financial literacy," Mr Ryan says.

While reviewing a number of different insights, consumers are able to see the thought processes of brokers, the quality of their answers, and make a judgment on their consistency.

"That helps the customer connect with more finance professionals and helps them understand more about their finance and credit options," Mr Ryan says.

If that's not enough, the Echo me app has a vital key point of difference in how it provides leads to brokers.

"If a consumer chooses to make contact with a particular finance

professional they can request contact by phone, SMS or email," Mr Ryan explains. "A push notification goes to the finance professional so they can obtain an email with the customer's contact information."

The app is free for consumers and free for finance professionals to download and use. However, a monthly fee buys you additional features such as push notifications when a user asks a question and the ability for users to share your Echo profile on social media.

Mr Ryan sees the platform as being an avenue for brokers to become community leaders by advertising their service levels through consistent, quality responses.

"Anywhere where you can enhance your community awareness and social equity has got to be a positive," he says.

"Potential borrowers are getting the opportunity to see how you communicate and your expertise and – depending on how you would like to participate – the cost is either free or very minimal."

Mr Ryan says a major focus for him this year is to build a web version of the Echo me app.

"The big focus for 2016 is to build the brand so that people are using Echo and benefitting from the service as well as building the mobile web version," he adds.

"The overall benefit of the Echo community is the answers are posted by real people and the answers are independent, transparent and timely."



## MARSHALL CONDON

founder/CEO, Neue Black

An Elite Business Writer and young broker, Marshall Condon has just launched a new brokerage targeting Millennials. He tells his success story to *The Adviser* and the big plans he has coming up

**Q. You've just launched a new business, talk us through your career as a broker up until this point.**

I started in the mortgage broking industry when I was 18. I was a loans consultant at a successful company, where I learnt a lot from some really good operators. From there I went into banking in both the business and commercial divisions. Following this, I owned a Mortgage Choice franchise for three years.

I started Neue Black so that I could build a financial services company that was for the next generation of Australians trying to build their wealth.

**Q. What motivated you to start your own business?**

I am passionate about assisting my generation get access to great products and services to aid them in getting ahead at a younger age. The purpose of Neue Black is to deliver these products and services as well as the education that this generation is looking for.

**Q. Where does the name Neue Black come from?**

I came up with the idea of New Black with our creative company. It is a bit tongue-in-cheek but the positioning is that we, the business, are the new black being the in-fashion business in finance.

Our creative company then suggested the spelling be Neue, which in German means newcomer, and black being the reference to being 'in the black' which is, of course, being in the positive.

So it has a bit of a dual meaning. We

really wanted a different name and one that does reflect the premium nature of the business.

**Q. It's still early days but what are some of the benefits of starting your own business?**

We can deliver on our purpose of building our clients' wealth with products and strategy outside of just property investment. We will have other asset classes and education on these for them to be able to diversify their portfolio.

**Q. What are some of the challenges you've faced?**

Developing a great strategy to deliver a differentiated service offering to the market. I am combatting this by surrounding myself with good people to deliver on this strategy. I also have a strong belief that what I am doing is the right thing and I am genuinely adding value to my clients.

**Q. You've previously told *The Adviser* that you want to educate the younger demographic about making financial decisions and growing their wealth. How do you intend to do this?**

We are using digital mediums to distribute educational content as well as hosting seminars with key referral groups. Also the way we structure our meetings and the proprietary tools we use help our clients understand the drivers that will impact their finances not now but in the future.