

Ep. 112: How Running for Office Helped Zulma Lopez Double Her Revenue



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Rachel Rodgers

[Hello Seven](#) with Rachel Rodgers

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Rachel: Projects expand as much as you allow them to expand. So if we say I'm going to give myself to the end of 2023 to get this done, guess what? You're going to take till the end of 2023 to get this done because the work will just expand and it'll seem like, oh, I can only get it done if I take 10 months or however long to get it done. If you give yourself a week you could get something out in a week, right?

You want to make more money? You are in the right place. Welcome to the *Hello Seven Podcast*. That's seven, as in seven figures. I'm your host, Rachel Rodgers. On this show, it's all about you and your money. We talk about how to maximize your earning potential, how to make better financial decisions, and how to find your million-dollar idea, that genius business idea that's going to make you a whole lot more money. I'm here to show you how to expand your income and expand your confidence, power, and joy.

If you are a woman, a person of color, a queer person, if you're a person living with a disability, or you don't fit the stereotypical image of what a millionaire is "supposed" to look like, this show is for you. No matter who you are or what you do for a living, you could be earning a lot more than you currently do. Your journey to wealth starts right here.

Rachel: Hello, hello, and welcome back to the *Hello Seven Podcast*. I am so delighted today to be joined by one of my amazing clients, Zulma Lopez. She is the owner of an amazing immigration practice called Lopez Immigration. Did I get that right?

Zulma: That's right.

Rachel: Okay. And get this, she's also a former Georgia State House Representative. Amazing. So I'm so excited to dig in with Zulma, and I'm going to coach her a little bit today as well. So let's get this party started. Thank you for being here.

Zulma: Thank you. I'm excited to be here, Rachel. Thank you so much.

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Rachel: Welcome to the Rodgers Ranch. Now you get to see it in the flesh.

Zulma: Right, right.

Rachel: So we were recently together at ROI. Tell me, what was your experience at ROI The Millionaire Summit? You were a VVIP.

Zulma: I was.

Rachel: Yeah, so you were like, "Listen, I deserve the best."

Zulma: Exactly. It was amazing. I mean, when you pull off in Puerto Rico, and I am from Puerto Rico originally.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: So going back to the island and seeing this after so many things that we've gone through in the last few years, holding a conference like this with over 1,000 women.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: With that energy and that level of detail and empowering, it was really, I think all of us are still emotionally there, even two weeks after.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: It's just incredible.

Rachel: I love it. I'm so glad you had a good experience. It was magical for me too. I mean, I just felt like this is like the best party I've ever been to.

Zulma: Exactly. Exactly, is this a conference or are we just having fun?

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Rachel: Yes. What were some of your favorite takeaways? What were one or two takeaways that you took from the conference that you're like, okay, I want to go home and do that, or this is an action step, or I'm just going to keep this in my mind?

Zulma: Two I would say. Going into the conference, and once I was there it was crystal clear for me that in our real lives we're not able to have these types of conversations because it's weird.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: You know, we're not used to talking freely about this is my fully ambitious self. I want to do this. I want to create this. And they're like, of course, yes. Do it. And that's not normal.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: That's not normal in our daily interactions. And so I got there thinking this is going to be a really safe space. And it was.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: And then the second is the energy.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: The energy, I mean, you can feel it. I can still feel it. And I went back home and I was just boom, boom, boom in this momentum that is going to carry me through until next year.

Rachel: Yes, I love that.

Zulma: Until January when we have the next conference.

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Rachel: It's so true. I think that's the whole goal of events, right, is to feel like reignited, reconnected to your goals, reconnected to your purpose and your mission and what you're here to do. And then just fire it up and get excited. That energy can carry you so far in terms of getting things done, tackling big projects and making progress on everything that you want to make happen.

Zulma: Absolutely, and it did that for me.

Rachel: I love it.

Zulma: And I'm sure for 1,000 plus women.

Rachel: Yes. Okay, so you are really badass. So tell me about the journey. You're from Puerto Rico, but you live in Georgia now.

Zulma: Correct.

Rachel: Okay. So you decided at a certain point that you were going to run for office.

Zulma: I did.

Rachel: Tell me about that. Like what was your life like at the moment? What was your every day? And then what made you say, okay, I'm going to take this on?

Zulma: So I moved to Georgia 15 years ago, and I was already a practicing attorney in Puerto Rico.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: And when I moved to Georgia, got licensed, and started practicing law. And that led me to focus my practice in immigration, which I love and I'm passionate about, but it's hard work.

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Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: During the last administration it was particularly challenging for immigration lawyers.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: And there were even lawyers that were deciding to leave the practice, it was so hard.

Rachel: Wow.

Zulma: And that and the interactions that I was having with my clients led me to think, well, I can do more. Like we always say I want to serve more, I want to give more of myself.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: At that point, I had been in that same district living and raising my family for 13 years. And I felt strongly that I have something to share, I have a voice. And I was, at the time, the only Latina running for office statewide.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: And so I did, I put myself out there and knocked on over 2,500 doors personally and had conversations one on one and did it.

Rachel: How did you learn how to do it? What were the things that you have to do to actually win a political election?

Zulma: Well, a little bit of context, my husband was a judge in our county. And in Georgia he had two contested elections.

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Rachel: Okay.

Zulma: So as a family we have gone through that process twice.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: Of course, it's not the same to be the spouse than to be the actual candidate.

Rachel: Yes. But you had seen it.

Zulma: But I had seen it and I had felt that bubbly excitement around it. But this was a completely different campaign.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: It was not neutral. It was, I'm a Democrat and I ran as a Democrat. So that was part of the whole thinking through before announcing.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: There was a woman that had been there for 30 years. So I had to make a decision, well, do I wait my turn or do I run for something else?

Rachel: First of all, I love this so much because that is such a part of our lives as women of color, right? Like, do I wait my turn, right? That's what we're always told to do.

Zulma: Exactly.

Rachel: Wait your turn, pay your dues, get to the back of the line.

Zulma: Exactly. Maybe the next cycle.

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Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: Why don't you wait until she retires?

Rachel: Yes, and it's not just in politics, but in business and so many different contexts it's like wait, wait, wait.

Zulma: That's right.

Rachel: Wait till your kids are older, wait till this, this and that, right? There's always a reason why we can't pursue our goals.

Zulma: Absolutely.

Rachel: So that's really amazing.

Zulma: And also, but then we have that guilty kind of little voice, well maybe I should.

Rachel: Yes, exactly.

Zulma: Maybe I should because she's also a woman. And it's just those struggles, but just the thought process making that decision.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: Ultimately I said, you know what? I'm going to do it.

Rachel: Yes. Yes.

Zulma: And so the wonderful part of that, and that's part of our democracy, right?

Rachel: Yes.

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Zulma: Having conversations, and being challenged, and putting up new ideas, like just discussing them. So once I announced, two other women, two Black women, jumped into the race.

Rachel: Wow.

Zulma: So it was so fabulous.

Rachel: So you actually, you inspired other people to run.

Zulma: Exactly.

Rachel: Wow.

Zulma: So, of course, it made it more challenging for me. But just as a woman, I just was like this is wonderful.

Rachel: Yes. So it was four women running against each other for this seat?

Zulma: Four women.

Rachel: Wow.

Zulma: So I announced in 2019, the election was in May of 2020.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: Luckily we lawyers are very focused and prepared.

Rachel: Exactly.

Zulma: I did all my fundraising in the beginning and started knocking on doors. And a lot of people told me, well, you have time, what are you

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worried about so much? You're like, no, it's one and done to me. It's always like that, I'm going to do everything I can.

Rachel: Yes. Okay, first of all, can we just, this is so good because you're saying like, one, I'm going to be prepared. I'm going to start early. I'm going to start before other people are. Other people are not like, okay, it's go time. And you're like, it's go time.

Zulma: It's go time, right.

Rachel: And you're also saying, I'm going to give it everything that I got, so I can start early and get ahead and really be on top of it, that is the approach you want to have when you're trying to reach your goals, right? Not waiting till the last minute, not saying oh, "I'll throw something together." But really being on it, being prepared and striving for excellence to accomplish what you're trying to accomplish.

Zulma: And also, if I'm going to put my family, because we all have families.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: If I'm going to put my family through this and I put my business through this, because I had employees.

Rachel: Exactly. Yes.

Zulma: It's not that I was just doing nothing and then being at home.

Rachel: Yes. And let's be clear, you have four children.

Zulma: I have four children, so we are not part of that club.

Rachel: Yes, exactly. So you have four children, some people struggle to get out of bed with four children. And you have four children and you're

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running a business, a practice with clients, with employees, and then you are also running for office.

Zulma: Who is that person? I don't even know her, you know?

Rachel: She's badass, let me tell you.

Zulma: Yeah, so then COVID hit in March of 2020.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: At that point I felt confident, not that I was going to win necessarily, but I was good and at peace with myself. I did the bulk of what I needed to do to be in this moment. And no one knew at that point what was going to happen.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: The election was pushed a little bit because of that. But after that I didn't have to fundraise, we all obviously stopped one on one conversations. In Georgia if you don't get over the 50% threshold, you go into a runoff, and that's what happened.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: So the incumbent and myself, we went to that runoff election in August.

Rachel: Wow.

Zulma: Which this is the summer.

Rachel: This is a lengthy process.

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Zulma: And I was elected in August.

Rachel: Wow. Amazing.

Zulma: And so I'm just completely grateful for my constituents.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: For trusting in me, for me, it was just an incredible honor.

Rachel: Yes, that is so epic. And then, so you held the office, and what was that like, kind of managing a home, business and being a politician? Did you enjoy the process? Was it very exciting? Like, tell us a little about that experience.

Zulma: It was. It was very exciting. So in my office I prepare my staff. I had, at the time, a full-time paralegal, which is my right hand.

Rachel: Yes. Oh my God, paralegals are a godsend for every attorney.

Zulma: And she was all in. She was on board, like, yes, you have to do this.

Rachel: I love it. I love it.

Zulma: She was so excited that she was able to help me so much with my clients. And I also put some boundaries about the types of cases that I was going to take moving forward to control it, because the session is from January until March and you're full on at the capitol. I mean, with Zoom and video we can obviously communicate with our clients, but it's not the same. I was basically out of the office for three months.

Rachel: Yes.

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Zulma: So that was a very, very rewarding experience. Now, at the same time, I guess because of COVID and we were in lockdown and I started listening to podcasts, my business started transforming.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: And so I remember driving to the capitol listening to this podcast.

Rachel: No way! And now you're on it.

Zulma: I used to drive to the capitol listening to you.

Rachel: Wow.

Zulma: And I'm thinking to myself, what is this? What is this information that had been kept from me? I don't know this. Again, obviously, we were dealing with very serious issues at the capitol and we had a hard debate around very conservative issues that I am opposed to. And so part of my energy was there.

But I was also feeling, oh my God, I've never thought about me as a businesswoman this way. I've never seen the possibility. I always thought, because I serve such a vulnerable community, my approach to it was of serving, of caring.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: Like we do.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: Not about, listen, this is about making money.

Rachel: Yes.

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Zulma: And it was incongruent to me in the beginning, until I was able to reframe it with I am providing such an amazing value and I am giving it all.

Rachel: Exactly.

Zulma: My staff is giving their all, we're giving our time, our energy, getting amazing results. Our clients are telling us you've changed my life.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: Yet still I am under charging.

Rachel: Yes, exactly.

Zulma: And so it was really a transformative period overall for me.

Rachel: Yes, I'm sure. And the thing is, it's like you also are deserving of serving and caring, right? It's like all of us need to be served and cared for. And I think sometimes we say, oh, we want to serve the population that we serve. And we think that the only way to serve them is to not serve ourselves, right? To sort of be the martyr, right?

Zulma: Yes.

Rachel: And it's like, we don't name it but that's literally what we're doing.

Zulma: That is what it is.

Rachel: You know what I mean? We feel obligated to serve.

Zulma: We're drained.

Rachel: Yes. And then it's like, how long are we going to be able to serve? Because, like you were saying, right, some immigration attorneys were

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closing their offices during this time, right? The work was challenging. And the work is always challenging.

Zulma: It is always challenging.

Rachel: Yeah. And so we need to be paid well for that so that we are taken care of, our families are taken care of, and then we also can take excellent care of ourselves so that we can go out there and have the energy to continue to do this work long term, right?

Zulma: That's right.

Rachel: And so yes, I'm so glad that you started to get that lesson.

Zulma: Absorbing.

Rachel: Yes, exactly. And so you're a politician, and your business is growing at the same time.

Zulma: My business was growing. And it was part of me absorbing the information and then implementing little by little.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: And the changes were so dramatic, even with those small changes. Like, for instance, one of the first things that I did was raise my prices, which you always say raise your prices.

Rachel: Yes. Make me so happy.

Zulma: And so now I look back into old finances and I'm like, oh my God, I charged payments for years.

Rachel: Literally.

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Zulma: So I sat down, these are the cases that we do, this is the new price. And, again, it's just emotional around those topics, right? For whatever reason it's ingrained in us that it's greedy and not what you're supposed to, but whatever. I put it in writing so I wouldn't sabotage myself because I knew I was going to do that.

Rachel: Yes. Oh my God. First of all, that's such a good tip. You mean you put your new prices in writing?

Zulma: In writing.

Rachel: Yes, so you couldn't punk out.

Zulma: And every time I went into a consultation I would pull it up, like, well this is what I charge for everyone and this is it.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: I have two really good examples. One, well this one, I started implementing the chart that I created, but I would still sabotage myself sometimes because I would have, you know, my clients are not wealthy.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: And so I had a conversation and I had an immigrant in front of me that works, you know, cooking in a restaurant, or cleaning houses, or in construction, and that's my typical client. And I would, depending on that energy, sometimes still sabotage my prices.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: So I had a couple and they came to me in this really interesting case, I really wanted to help them. And I was thinking, well, I don't want them to go to someone else that will really not give the care that they deserve.

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Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: They're in a very vulnerable situation. So I started that sabotaging down spiral and thinking, well, I haven't done a pro bono case in a while. I'm going to do this pro bono.

Rachel: Okay.

Zulma: And so I pitched that and they said, "No, no, no, we want to pay you."

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: I'm like, okay, that's fair. I'll do it low bono. I'll charge half of what I typically charge. And that's what we did.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: This particular couple, they cleaned houses. So we started working on their case, as they would have paid me the regular, obviously, quote we started working. A few months later, they come by the office. I don't even remember what they were doing there. But they came and I just went to say hi, hey, how are you doing?

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: And they're like, well, we're doing well. We're doing well. I'm like, okay, that's wonderful. What's going on? No, no, we're doing well. I said, okay, tell me. What's going on? Well, we've grown our business and we have 200 houses.

Rachel: Wow, amazing.

Zulma: And 60 employees.

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Rachel: Oh my God, I love it.

Zulma: And I'm thinking to myself, and I brought all those biases into our consultation and undercharged. And here, they're teaching me a lesson.

Rachel: Exactly.

Zulma: That was the day that I said no more.

Rachel: Yes. Oh my God, so many lessons there about, first of all, not making assumptions, right?

Zulma: Not making assumptions.

Rachel: You don't know what house cleaners make, right, and how they're doing it and what their operation looks like, right? That is a recession proof business if I've ever heard of one, okay? That's amazing. I love that story and it's such a good reminder, right? We have to make sure that we're taking care of ourselves and not making assumptions about what our clients can or can't pay, right? And not making assumptions that they cannot afford the operation that it takes to deliver the service, right?

Zulma: To deliver the service, absolutely.

Rachel: Because you have to pay people, right?

Zulma: And we have a lot, you know, the case management and the experience that we provide them. Going through an immigration process in itself is very frustrating.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: Our top priority is for them to have a smooth journey.

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Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: And in order to do that, that costs money because the platform that we use and all the resources that we provide them so it's a very smooth process.

Rachel: Plus your skills and experience, right? I mean, law school wasn't free.

Zulma: Exactly.

Rachel: I know that for sure.

Zulma: Yeah, another story about raising my prices, and that's something that I learned from you, is that I had one price per case.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: But I always provided payment plans.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: And so you said you have one quote for upfront paying clients and a higher amount for payment plans. I said, you know what? That's an interesting idea, I'm going to start implementing that. And the very few times that I try that it went like this, I would quote the price.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: And just stay quiet.

Rachel: Just be quiet. Don't explain. Don't justify.

Zulma: I was a very different Zulma back in 2019.

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Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: I would stay quiet and just wait. And then I would see them fidgeting like, oh, well, I wasn't expecting that. And I'm just waiting. And then they will say, "Well, can I pay in the payment plan?" I said, "Oh, of course you can. Then the amount is this."

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: And they will do, "Hmm, well, I guess I have to pay you up front."

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: And I'm like, what just happened? What just happened?

Rachel: Exactly.

Zulma: Putting it in practice and seeing it in real time, it was just, oh my God, of course.

Rachel: Exactly. And it's exactly what you said about working at the state house, right? You put boundaries in place like the kinds of cases that you were going to take on just to control the flow. And you can do the same thing with pricing and with your money, right? You're saying like, hey, here's the boundary. If you want to pay me over time, that means that I'm essentially financing this service for you.

Zulma: That's right.

Rachel: That costs me money. It costs me like in my cash flow, because cash flow is the lifeblood of a business, y'all.

Zulma: Absolutely.

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Rachel: You could have money due to you, but if you don't have money today when the bills are due, right, you got a problem, right? If you don't have money on the day that payroll is supposed to go through, you have a problem, right? And so cash flow is something we really have to protect in our businesses and make sure that we have the cash that we need to operate the business on a daily basis.

And so yes, and when you give people that choice, like, hey, it's going to cost me more in money management and billing and all of those things to offer you a payment plan, so I'm going to charge you for that. Or you could pay up front and not take on those costs. And they're like, done.

Zulma: And they're going to make that decision. Their choice is there.

Rachel: Exactly.

Zulma: Whereas before, I would think, well, I've already raised my prices to this point, how am I to even tell this a different amount? Like no, no, no, their choices there.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: I am going to provide an excellent service.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: And I am going to change their lives because I am going to work to get a good result.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: And so then when you take that pressure out of me, you know, and yourself, and then it's just the client making that decision, I've seen it again and again, and again.

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Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: And absolutely, it makes a difference when you have X amount of clients paying up front, and then you can use that for marketing and for other things that you have to do.

Rachel: Exactly. And do you have any clients, like I imagine that your clients are not saying, “Zulma, her practice wasn’t worth it.” Right? What are they saying at the end of working with you?

Zulma: At the end, I’ll give you an example from last week. I was working with a young man. And he was always very tough and very poker face like.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: At the end, when we got him approved, he was just crying like a baby.

Rachel: Wow. Wow.

Zulma: And he told me, “I will never forget you.”

Rachel: Oh, wow.

Zulma: And that’s what fuels the practice. Like I share that with my team and they’re excited.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: All the things that we’ve done in all the work that we do daily, which can seem sometimes like, oh my God, it’s just up a hill, this is –

Rachel: It makes it all worth it.

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Zulma: It makes it all worth it.

Rachel: Yes, I love that so much. So good. And I also think, too, that if you charge the price that you need to charge so that you can make a profit as a business owner, so that your business is healthy, so that it can continue to grow and you can reinvest in the business as well, take good care of yourself and your family, when you do that you also have opportunity to give right? The more well off you are, the more successful you are.

Now you're in a position that if somebody comes in with a story that you really want to support and you really want to help them, first of all, maybe have them fill out a form so you know what their income level is first. But you could take on some pro bono cases if you want to.

Zulma: That's right.

Rachel: And not in a way that costs you more than you can give, right?

Zulma: Right.

Rachel: And so it's like we have to, it's just that same old adage, right, or put on your mask first, right? We have to take care of ourselves first.

Zulma: Right.

Rachel: Then when we have access, now we're in a position to be able to do important work and volunteer work and give back.

Zulma: Or give to candidates that we want to support.

Rachel: Exactly.

Zulma: That was one of the things that I was – So in 2022, my second and last session, I struggled with making the decision of not running for reelection.

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Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: I could have. I mean, I had no challengers, I've done a good job.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: But again, my business was growing so fast. And I felt guilt about leaving the state house because I was the only Latina, so I had a lot of issues that I had to resolve there. Like, it doesn't have to be me because I choose, at this stage in my life, to focus on this.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: But it also, working on the money mindset also made me realize, well, there's so much energy and time, this is a very time consuming position that I have. Whereas I use that energy and time to grow my business and be creative and make more money. I can support the candidates that I want. I know they need the money, because that's what a candidate needs.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: And I can support the ones that I know for a fact that are going to make a difference and make an impact.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: And they're choosing for their lives to spend their time and energy doing that.

Rachel: Yes, I love that. And it's like you get to decide what your role is going to be. I love that, number one, you said, okay, I made an impact. I held this role for some time, and I'm deciding that I'm going to focus on my business and not continue to do both of these things.

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Zulma: Right.

Rachel: Right, making that decision for yourself, not feeling obligated, right? You get to decide what you do with your time and your career. And we all have a role to play, right? There's activism that happens in the statehouse, and then there's activism that happens outside of the state house, right? And it needs funding.

Zulma: It needs funding.

Rachel: Both of them need funding.

Zulma: And it's a radical statement, it is also a very radical statement that I am a Latina business owner and that I'm making money.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: I think that's as radical as me being the only Latina in the state house because we don't see examples of that.

Rachel: Yes, exactly.

Zulma: So that's something that I learned.

Rachel: Yes, that's amazing. One question that I have for you is, what are some of the, like the strategy of getting people to know who you are, voters to know who you are, and to get excited about voting for you and getting them to actually go to the polls and choose you and vote for you? I imagine that that's a similar effort. Like the effort required in doing that, it seems similar to the effort required to get clients, right, like marketing.

Do you feel like there were parallels there with the efforts that it took to become a politician, an elected official, right?

Zulma: Absolutely. And it boils down to being your full authentic self.

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Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: Because people can see through a fake.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: And so what I did is I rallied volunteers, but I was willing to do the work.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: And they saw me knocking on doors. They saw me every Saturday, every Sunday, every afternoon knocking on doors and having conversations and not being afraid. By the second month I didn't know who was going to open the door, but it didn't matter because I was so like, here I am. This is who I am, this is why I'm doing this. And people were excited.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: Actually, most people said no one has ever knocked on my door before.

Rachel: Wow.

Zulma: I've never talked to my representative.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: And my district is a very diverse district. It runs like a worm with all the lines, how they are drawn. And I went to million dollar houses and I went to very low income neighborhoods. It didn't matter, I was going to be there.

Rachel: Yes.

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Zulma: And I think that that obviously paid out. Otherwise you would think it's really tough to convince someone to just put their trust in you.

Rachel: Yeah.

Zulma: But when they're having one on one, there's no better meeting someone and knowing them, and that authenticity coming right through. And it doesn't matter if you're in person, or you're doing a video, or you're doing marketing efforts.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: I had one, I remember one gentleman that I knocked on his door twice, I didn't realize that. So I knocked on his door, apparently the first time, I don't remember the exact interaction. But I remember the second interaction because it was after the primary. And so I went to this house, knocked on the door. He opens the door and says, "Oh, you made it." Because he knew I made it. "You know what? I was not convinced the very first time. But now that you're here, I'm going to vote for you."

Rachel: I love it.

Zulma: And so that was really, yes, the fundraising was critical to support the campaign. And that was, funny enough, I was not afraid to ask for money for my campaign.

Rachel: I love it.

Zulma: Because I always felt like this is not for me.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: This is for having someone that's going to do a good job and I'm putting my energy and my time and effort into doing this. But still having

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money mindset issues in my business because it felt, for whatever reason, more personal because it was mine, the service that I was providing.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: So fundraising was important, but one on one conversations were key.

Rachel: Yes. Well, I think there's so much to take away there for building a business, right? I think we could all stand to approach getting clients and getting our business out in the world the same way that you approached becoming a politician and getting the trust of voters. That's what our clients want.

Our clients need to be able to trust us, our potential clients, right? Before they're willing to say yes and spend their money, they need to trust us. And so what are we doing to build that trust? That's what we have to ask ourselves, right?

And so things like this, right? Like having a podcast where someone gets to hear from you week over week and gets to know you over time, having a book, talking on social media, right, like having one on one consults, right? These are all things that we can do to build that same trust, so that over time people are willing to vote for us with their dollars, right?

Zulma: Exactly.

Rachel: And so I think there's so many parallels there.

Zulma: I believe so.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: And even with your marketing, it was the same approach when I was putting out a post about my campaign, and then putting out a post

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about my business. It's me and you are hearing, I'm not seeing what everyone else is doing, what I should be doing.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: No, this is what feels comfortable for me, and people are going to be attracted to that.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: You just have to trust that the clients that you're going to get are the clients that are going to be attracted to that, and that's what you want. You want to work with clients that you want to work with.

Rachel: Exactly. Exactly, people who are going to be happy when the outside is the same as the inside, right? When they interact with you in one place, and then they start working with you and it feels the same. That's how you know they're going to be happy, right?

Zulma: Right.

Rachel: Versus trying to win over everyone. There's no point.

Zulma: There's no people.

Rachel: Some people, you're just not their person, for whatever reason.

Zulma: Exactly. And a lot of my clients, I mean, there's a lot of competition. There's thousands of lawyers.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: And I live in Atlanta, so there's a lot of other people putting out that content, they have more marketing funding or what have you. But I have a

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lot of clients that tell me, you know, I was just following you for a while. And I would just see online someone else, but I'd always come back to you. And then I made that decision to come and see you in person.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: So it works in different ways and you never know that client journey to you.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: But you just keep being yourself, I believe that's the best strategy.

Rachel: I agree. I completely agree. And you just keep showing up and the people who are meant to find you, and that's the thing. When we're doing our marketing, it's not really about being pushy and selling our stuff. We have to think about who is that person out there who we are going to create a miracle for them?

Zulma: That's right.

Rachel: Like we are going to change their lives with our work. And so they're looking for us and we need to make sure that they can find us.

Zulma: Yeah, exactly.

Rachel: So tell me, what are your goals for 2023? What's one or two of your business goals?

Zulma: Yes, so I'm very excited to create an immigration course that's going to supplement my practice.

Rachel: Yes.

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Zulma: And I came to that idea because the clients and the cases that I work with, there's no middle ground. There's either you pay me at a premium, or you get your advice from TikTok and YouTube.

Rachel: Those are the only options.

Zulma: There's no middle ground.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: Or I get clients that come to me and they've already started their process, they messed it up and then they are hiring me. I charge them, we're starting from zero.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: And it is more difficult to unstick a case than to start it from the beginning. So that's the idea. And I'm very excited, I think that this is definitely – Because I could have grown my business even further in 2022 because we started tracking all the data. That's one thing that I learned.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: I became a data expert. I want to know who's calling, which country? What's my conversion rate? I mean, everything. I want to know it, and I want to know it now. I want to see it in a graph.

Rachel: Exactly.

Zulma: And so that led me, with the amount of calls that we were referring, some cases that we don't take. If I take those cases, I get to where I need to be.

Rachel: Yes.

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Zulma: But I don't want to do that because those cases are very draining to me.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: Instead, I think that there's a lot of potential with the clients that I have, the types of cases that I have to create this online course and see what happens.

Rachel: Yes. I think it's really interesting, I remember when I was a judicial clerk working for a judge right out of law school in family court. And I used to feel the same way. It's like you could either pay whatever it was, \$350 an hour for an attorney to handle your family law case in whatever format it is, right? Or you basically have no help and you represent yourself and you don't know what you're doing.

And I remember sitting in the courtroom sometimes with my judge, and there would be a case and there would be a pro bono litigant in front of them. And he's saying the wrong things and I'm like, just tell the judge this. It's like, I almost wanted to be whispering, "Say this. He needs this piece." Because they want to tell their whole story and it's like, it's not about the story. The judge can't make the decision based on the story. It's like, what are the criteria based on the law? Just hit this criteria and you're golden, my friend. But it's like they just don't know what to say.

Zulma: You're not going to convince me otherwise, just tell me how your case falls into –

Rachel: Exactly. They don't know how to sort of check the boxes. And so it's like, oh, if I could just tell them. I wish I could tell them, right? Of course I couldn't, in my position. But it made me think like this is, the legal industry is ripe for disruption, right? And there needs to be a third option, another opportunity there.

And the only people who really get help, like pro bono lawyers are people who are really, really low income. So it's like if you are middle class or even

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lower middle class, you're not getting a free lawyer, right? And you can't afford the hourly rate either, right? And so there's so much challenge there.

And so I saw one example of an attorney who did this, like he taught you how to do your own uncontested divorce. And he showed you the paperwork and gave you the templates and said, "This is how you fill it out and this is what the judge needs to know." And it's like, it's a course walking you through how to do it so that by the end you can file your paperwork. And there were even some Q&As that they would occasionally have, right, so you could ask a lawyer a question if you get stuck on something. And I'm like, this is brilliant.

And that course blew up, I watched it, right. So I think this is perfect to do in immigration as well. It's like assisted DIY, right?

Zulma: Right, exactly.

Rachel: Where you're doing it yourself, but somebody is actually guiding you so you do it the right way.

Zulma: It's organized and also honest, because I do believe that a lot of what – Even my clients, I know they're going on YouTube, and so that's why I know that the video format is perfect for them.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: Because they would tell me, oh, I'm going to be deported. It's like where are you getting that information? From YouTube. Like stop, you hired me. Don't do that.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: So they're really thirsty for information and unfortunately there's so much confusion out there that I think it's going to be very valuable. I'm really excited.

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Rachel: I think it's going to be really good. Okay, so what's stopping you from getting this out?

Zulma: So two things. One, even though it's a good idea, even though I've worked so hard on my money mindset, it creeps out in the creeps of my subconscious because, you know, I'm going to do it. Of course I'm going to do it, even though I'm scared I'm going to do it. And I'm determined that 2023 is the year. But I sometimes think, well, will people buy this? Will people, even though I know it's valuable, that's still a conversation in my head that sometimes happens.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: So that's one thing that I have to challenge myself all the time to recognize, huh-uh, no I'm done with you.

Rachel: Okay, I have a solution for that. So, one, we all ask that question when we're creating something new, is someone going to buy this, right? We all have that fear. And the bottom line is, there are no guarantees that people are going to buy it, right?

Zulma: We don't know.

Rachel: That's what we do as entrepreneurs. We have decided to take on a life of nonstop risk. Welcome. Welcome to our lives, right?

Zulma: It never ends.

Rachel: Yes, it never ends and so we have to just choose to be okay with that and operate within that risk, right? But you can mitigate the risk. And so what I would do is, I would put it out there however you communicate with your clients.

Even if it's just having the folks who answer the phone at your office, or emailing your past clients and saying, or people who have inquired about

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working with you, “This is something I’m thinking about doing. Do you know someone who would benefit from this? Does this sound interesting to you?” Almost like just taking a poll or doing a survey. Data, right?

Zulma: That’s a good idea.

Rachel: And saying like, is this of interest to you? Would you be interested in something like this, a way to solve this problem at a lower cost? And see what they say.

Zulma: That is an awesome idea.

Rachel: Yeah. And then you can say like, this is who it’s good for. Like maybe these more really complex cases, you truly do need an attorney. But if your situation is this, you could solve your problem for, you know, a couple thousand dollars, for the price of this training program, right? Would you be interested in doing that? And see what they say.

And if they say, “Yes please, go make it right now.” You could even say, great, give me a deposit of \$1,000, or whatever, the course will be ready on this date. And then you could pay the balance, or you could pay the whole thing upfront, whatever it is. And that’s what it’s called pre-selling. And a lot of people do that. Tesla is doing that, right? You buy the car, you put your deposit down before the car is even built, right?

And so it’s the same thing. It’s like saying, hey, are you interested in this? I’m putting it out there, would you like to purchase it? And letting some people buy it before you even make it. And then you know, okay, I’ve got buyers. Now you’re motivated to go make it because you know, okay, they’re expecting me to deliver it by this date. I need to get it done, you know?

Zulma: I love that. I’m going to implement that, absolutely.

The second thing is that I still have employees.

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Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: And I still have to produce.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: And so carving the time. And I'll make the time, it's just that that's also, not necessarily a problem, but it is something that I know is going to be challenging. I've talked to my team, and they're excited. But it's not the same as I'm running for office. They know what that is.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: But building a course, it's just what are you talking about? What is this? Has she lost her mind? You know, I'm trying to say like this is going to be good, and I'm trying to explain to them.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: So it's part of keeping the team with me and the energy and like, hey, we have to still take care of our clients. I need some time to work on this.

Rachel: Yes. Okay, I've got some solutions for that too.

Zulma: Awesome.

Rachel: So here's what I would do if I were you. One, I think shrink the timeline, right? Projects expand as much as you allow them to expand. So if we say I'm going to give myself to the end of 2023 to get this done, guess what? You're going to take till the end of 2023 to get this done because the work will just expand and it'll seem like, oh, I can only get it done if I take 10 months or however long to get it done. If you give yourself a week you could get something out in a week, right?

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And so I think shrink the timeline. Some people are like, “I’ll get to a million in five years.” Okay, or could we do it this year, right? Like, what are we waiting for, right? Because if you give yourself five years, it’s going to take five years.

Zulma: It’s going to take five years. And you never know, I mean, things change. You know, now you have the time, the energy, the circumstances like right there.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: So I like that.

Rachel: So what I would do is like, literally block a week on your schedule in the next couple of weeks and hire a videographer, right? Hire a copywriter to help you with coming up with the scripts, right? Hire the people and the support that you need, because that’s what you said, right?

I heard you say, I had support when I was running for election. I had people supporting my campaign financially. I had support from my office. I had support from my family. And that helped me do it. So get yourself some support for this project as well. And block a week, schedule the people and just say we’re doing it, right? And just show up and record for five days, you know, you could do a couple of hours a day. And by the end of the week, it’s done.

Zulma: It’s done. I love it. I’m thinking like, okay, I’m going to be scheduling that. I’m going to be blocking that time.

Rachel: Yes, exactly. Just do it. And here’s the other thing, I think having your team on board is crucial, right?

Zulma: It is.

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Rachel: When you have a team, you want everybody to be on the same page and everybody to understand, here's why we're doing this. And honestly, as CEOs of our companies, we're also salespeople. We have to sell our ideas to the team, right, and say, "Here's why we're doing this."

Zulma: Trust me. Trust me on this one.

Rachel: Yes, exactly. Here's what it's going to do for us as a company. And so I think one of the ways that we do that is we have a project plan that we create. And so I'll say, okay, there's something that I want to do that's not our normal day to day business. And I will write a project plan.

So I'll say, here's the name of it. Here's my vision for it. Here's why we're doing it. Here's how it's going to benefit us, here's how it's going to benefit our clients. And here's the steps that we have to take to get it done.

Zulma: I love that.

Rachel: And here's my ideal scenario at the end. Like where would we be? How many would we sell? How many customers would we serve? What kinds of clients would we get for it? How much money would we make from it?

Zulma: I love that because that will put it in such perspective. Like it's not in the clouds, it's here.

Rachel: In the clouds or just an idea you're mentioning.

Zulma: I love that.

Rachel: When you put it to paper, you make it real. And so create that plan and then present the plan and go over the plan. Give everybody on the team a copy, set a time for a meeting, walk them through it, and let them feel your enthusiasm and excitement for it, right? And then they'll get excited.

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Zulma: I think so.

Rachel: And then they'll be like, "We want to help you. I'll take this part. I'll do this part," right? And then everybody can jump in and take the pieces that work for them. And you could even have, maybe some folks are just staying focused on the law practice and serving clients and other folks are part of this create this course task force.

Zulma: I love it.

Rachel: So it's just about shifting the approach a little bit to make it. And once you sell the idea to your team, they're going to create momentum because they're going to be like, let's go, what are we waiting for?

Zulma: Right, right.

Rachel: And then you can schedule the date and you can pre-sell it. And it's like all of those things are going to help you take it from, okay, this is an idea I have that maybe I'll have done in 12 months to let's get it done by the end of Q2. You know what I mean?

Zulma: I love that. Thank you so much. I think that putting it in writing like I've done with implementing other strategic ideas would give them that, okay, now I see it.

Rachel: Now I see it.

Zulma: People have different strengths and my team have different strengths and I'm the visionary.

Rachel: Yes, exactly. And sometimes people are not with us in our vision.

Zulma: They're like, they're doing and I'm here.

Rachel: Exactly.

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Zulma: But that's definitely going to help.

Rachel: Yes, exactly. It's just like getting that vision out into the world in a tangible way with your clients and with your team to help you execute.

Zulma: And my clients too.

Rachel: And I think sometimes it's just fear, like not fully believing in our ideas or not fully committing to them. It's like all you have to do if you want to accomplish literally anything is truly commit, right? That means committing our time, committing our energy, committing our dollars, right, committing by putting ourselves out there and saying it out loud. Just that commitment alone can create momentum that gets it done.

Zulma: I totally agree with that. Even investing in all of this, you know, when I first heard your book and was listening to the podcast driving to the capitol, you know, those are the choices that we make. And then one thing leads to the next, and particularly when finances are involved, when you have to put here no, this is something that I'm going to commit to.

Rachel: Yeah, nothing says commitment like putting dollars down.

Zulma: Yeah, here's my money, my hard earned money. But it's an investment in you.

Rachel: Yes, exactly.

Zulma: You're betting on yourself.

Rachel: That's right.

Zulma: And so I'm excited.

Rachel: I'm excited for you. Okay, so tell everyone where they can find you because they're going to be looking for this course because they're ready

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for it. They probably got a friend or a cousin or someone they know who needs this.

Zulma: I know, I love it. Well, I'm based in Atlanta but I serve clients all over.

Rachel: Yes.

Zulma: Immigration, as immigration lawyers we can serve clients everywhere in the US and abroad too. And you can find me online lopezimmigration.com and in social media Lopez Immigration or in Instagram, [_ZulmaLopez](https://www.instagram.com/_ZulmaLopez).

Rachel: I love it. And Zulma with a Z.

Zulma: With a Z.

Rachel: And we'll put all the links in the show notes as well. Thank you so much for coming. This was amazing.

Zulma: Thank you for having me.

Rachel: You inspire me, truly.