Alumni Spotlight: Rodrigo Guevara C’05, Founder and CEO of Abogato

Rodrigo Guevara C’05, is the Founder and CEO of Abogato, an online start-up where workers can understand their legal and employment rights. Abogato seeks to address the non-payment of wages. He states, “I’m passionate about solving this problem because I believe all workers deserve a fair day’s pay for a fair day’s work.” Read more to learn more about our inspiring classmate and what you can do to help.

P’05: What was your motivation to become an attorney?  
Rodrigo: As a Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE) major, I was passionate about political philosophy. Majoring in PPE gave me the insight and the opportunity to explore the ideas of justice and fairness; two ideas that I care deeply about. Like most of our classmates who majored in PPE, I was a product of my major and went off to law school where I had the opportunity to explore these concepts and questions surrounding the law related to equity. After law school I worked for a firm in their employment litigation practice, building my expertise in employment law by representing large companies.

P’05: What is Abogato?  
Rodrigo: Abogato seeks to mitigate wage-theft (non-payment of wages) of low-wage workers in California through online tools and video content that allow workers to better understand wage and hour laws and to know that the law does protect them. It also helps them easily understand their legal rights and connects them with resources and attorneys that will allow them to enforce their rights.

P’05: What was your motivation to start Abogato?  
Rodrigo: In 2014, I became President of San Diego’s Latino Bar Association, placing me at the center of the discourse on Latino issues and keeping me informed on economic, political, and social justice issues affecting Latinos. During my tenure, one thing that became exceedingly clear to me was that low-wage workers are not getting paid fair wages. A 2015 study found that 77% of low-wage restaurant workers in San Diego are not getting fully paid and part of the reason is that workers are fearful of enforcing their rights to payment. Through speaking with local members of the Latino community, I was able to learn how much of an opportunity and a need there is for change.
**P’05: How does Abogato address these issues?**

*Rodrigo:* It was apparent to me that workers do not know about their legal protections and the best avenues to seek redress. Workers may lack knowledge of their rights or they are fearful of the consequences of asking for their full wages. On the other hand, employers might also not know what the law is on payment of wages, or if they do know, they still refuse to pay as it lowers their labor costs by not having to pay workers for something like overtime. Abogato seeks to educate workers in California about their rights and connect them with attorneys to help them resolve these issues.

**P’05: What type of impact does your startup seek to make for Latino workers in California?**

*Rodrigo:* The breadth of the problem far exceeds the existing efforts to address it, so I hope to empower the Latino community and Latino workers through the unique video content on the Abogato website as a means to changing the status quo.

**P’05: How ’05 can support your work?**

*Rodrigo:* I would love to hear from people who use web-based and social media tools to educate individuals, organize communities, and connect groups to resources. I would like to learn more from our classmates on the best way to reach people and deliver the type of content that Abogato seeks to share. Also, I’m happy to connect with folks who would like to know more about the process of getting my start-up off the ground and to also be a resource for people interested in the non-profit and community sectors in California.

**P’05: Anything else that you’d like our classmates to know about you or about your work?**

*Rodrigo:* Looking back at Penn at this point in my life, my professors were a huge part of helping me shape my life to do something good for the community. I look fondly at my time at Penn.

Rodrigo can be reached at [rguevara@gmail.com](mailto:rguevara@gmail.com)

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Looking to get involved? Drop us a line at UPennClass05@gmail.com

**Have a great summer!**

Our quarterly newsletters will be back in September but we’ll still be online. Be sure to send us a note, UPennClass05@gmail.com and also keep in touch:

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Send us a note, a photo to share on our social media outlets, or an idea you’d like to see happen. We look forward to hearing from you.

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