

Premier League stars in talks to invest in Anthony Joshua-backed Pulseroll

Sitting at a kitchen table, a soon-to-be dad wrote the name of Anthony Joshua on a white board.

He had always dreamed about working with the boxing superstar but his IT company wasn't exactly the right fit.

Little did Paul McCabe know that in a few short years, the two-time former heavyweight champion of the world would not only be an avid user of his gym products, he would also have become an investor.

Manchester-based Pulseroll started out with a trip to China and its founder spending all the savings he had on what his wife called a crazy move.

But the business is now worth £10m and is in the middle of its first fundraising round with hopes of securing investment from Premier League footballers and private equity firms.

Its long list of customers includes the likes of Sale Sharks, Burnley FC, Salford City FC as well as British Rowing and Leicester City FC.

In an exclusive interview with BusinessLive, Mr McCabe reveals his 'eureka' moment when he realised he had a successful business on his hands, how he managed to persuade Anthony Joshua to invest in the company and his future plans.



Paul McCabe and members of the Pulseroll team
(Image: Pulseroll)

“Going back to the start of Pulseroll, I was about to get married and have a child and I thought that I needed to have a really strong plan B”, Mr McCabe said.

“I went over to China to a big innovation event in a place about 30 times as large as Manchester Central.

“I’ve always been to the gym and suffered from sore muscles.

“When I was over there I saw a small exhibition stand and a

guy was there with the first idea of a foam roller which vibrates.

“I tried it and straight away it was one of those ‘eureka’ moments where I thought this was the future.

“Foam rollers have always been popular but they are painful to use and they are a bit of a hassle.

“I came back to the UK and sent over £5,000, which was all of the money that I had, to buy as many of these products as I could.

“My wife thought I was crazy and said that I should be careful as I didn’t know what I was going to end up with.

“But I just thought that this was the time to back myself and really go for it.

“The products turned out exactly as I’d hoped and my plan was to sell them in bulk orders to gyms.

“I reached out to all of the mainstream gyms but none of them were interested because there was no awareness about this type of product.

“I had no contacts, no brand or market awareness and no budget so that idea fell straight back onto its bum.

“I started going to events at the NEC where people can try the products.

“People loved the products so I realised then that I was on to something.

“From there we launched new products and started to work with GB Boxing to get some credibility. “It has escalated and grown from there.

Pulseroll hit the headlines in [July 2021](#) when it announced a major investment from Anthony Joshua.

The superstar, who has been using Pulseroll's full range of vibration massage devices for nearly five years, also joined the company's board of directors in an advisory capacity.

He was first introduced to muscle recovery technology when he met Mr McCabe during a fight camp.

Now for the first time, McCabe has revealed how he managed to persuade him to invest in Pulseroll.

"The big man himself, Anthony Joshua, decided to put in his cold hard cash last year which was a dream come true", he said.

"I was at the EIS Centre in Sheffield where the GB Boxing team train and I was giving some products to Lawrence Okolie who is also now a high name boxer.

"In the corner of my eye I saw Anthony Joshua walk in with his entourage. He was there preparing for the Klitschko fight.

"It took me six hours to work through and befriend everybody from his team, one by one.

"I picked off all of his team and it got to 10pm and I still had not spoken to AJ.

"We eventually got chatting and from there I got products to him but I also started sending products to all of his team so over the next six to nine months all of the people closest to him were using them.

"It was always a dream to work with AJ and I actually put his name on a white board when I first set up the company.

"AJ loved the products, he was using them all of the time, and I think they liked the 'best of British' story that I was building."



Pulseroll founder Paul McCabe with members of British Gymnastics

(Image: Pulseroll)

Now with a team of 25 people up from the nine it had before the first UK lockdown in March 2020, Pulseroll's founder said it is "only be a matter of 12 to 18 months" before the company employs more than 50 members of staff.

Mr McCabe also said he expects its turnover to reach £2m for the year to August 2022, up from £2m last year and from £1m in the year before. His aim is to reach £20m in the next two to three years.

He said: "Our first year, when I was operating from my kitchen table, we achieved a turnover of £65,000.

"We're now in year six, which will finish in August, and we are expecting to finish at about £3m.

"That's up from last year when it was £2m which was also up from £1m in the year before.

“The company is profitable but I put all of that back into the business.

“Within the next two to three years I would expect us to be doing £10m to £20m in turnover.

“In five years I’ve not really taken a salary from Pulseroll. Every single penny that I earn is reinvested in building the foundation and the structure of the business.

“I’ve got a side-line company which I have used to finance Pulseroll.

“It’s an IT asset management company and since starting Pulseroll started I’ve put in £100,000s from that firm into the new business.

“I guess you could say that I’ve been at the poker table, all bets in, for the last five years.

“I’ve been able to live off my IT business while everything has been able to go into Pulseroll.

“The great thing for me is that the IT business only takes up about 1% of my time.”



Pulseroll founder Paul McCabe with England rugby league internationals

(Image: Pulseroll)

To help fund the expected growth, Mr McCabe launched the company's first fundraising round which is due to close by the end of the summer.

Aiming to reach £1m, it has already attracted interest from Premier League football players, private equity firms as well as an investor in the US.

Mr McCabe said: "We're half way through our first investment round at the moment. To date I've financed Pulseroll on my own.

"We're looking to raise £1m and we're in talks with some Premier League football players, private equity firms as well as an investor in the US.

"I'm looking to get a blend of AJ-type investors who are sporting icons mixed with strategic investors who can open up

various markets around the world.”

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