

EMPOWERING. STRATEGIC.



# STEVE VIVIANO

## Orchestrating a better way

### Steve Viviano

**TITLE:** Founder and CEO

**COMPANY:** QBFox Healthcomm

**EDUCATION:** B.S., Pharmacy, Rutgers College of Pharmacy

**PERSONAL AWARDS:** Agency of the Year, MedAdNews; Agency of the Year, MM&M; Agency of the Year, PharmaTimes (London); QBFox 2019 Innovative Start-up Company of the Year, PM360; QBFox 2018 Agency to Watch, MM&M; QBFox Grand Prize Convincemetovax Creative Contest, MM&M, 2019; PharmaVOICE 100 honoree, 2012

**GIVING BACK:** Kiva

**HOBBIES:** Playing guitar

While leading QBFox Healthcomm through the pandemic, Founder and CEO Steve Viviano found his center through one of his favorite practices. “Playing guitar has always been my creative outlet and stress reliever,” Steve says. “I have several of my guitars hanging on the wall in my home office, which during the pandemic allowed me to simply turn around and grab one for a quick interlude between meetings.”

At first, Steve thought about taking the guitars down to create more of a “work environment” for video calls. “But in the end, I left them because they are part of who I am,” he says. “And everyone loved it and this made everyone feel comfortable when facets of their own lives crept into meetings.”

Steve says working from home has given people a chance to share more of their “authentic” selves with teammates and colleagues. “Whether on purpose or not, a barking dog, a child walking into a Zoom chat, or even what we have on our walls in the background — all have given others a unique glimpse into ourselves. And I say bravo! It’s important to see what makes others tick, and that includes who they are when they are not just in the office.”

In keeping with his musical passion, Steve says he views being a CEO like being the conductor of an orchestra. “I don’t play all the instruments, but I am surrounded by top-level musicians,” he says. “My job is to lead them in a beautiful concert by understanding each of their strengths and knowing them well enough to understand how to bring the best out of each of them.”

Colleagues say Steve is a master at recognizing and assembling good talent that quickly gels into a cohesive, supportive team.

Steve says he likes to work with people who are great at what they do and bring a high

level of expertise to everything they touch. “I also like people who care about others and who care about the work product that they and the team put out,” he says.

Trust is also important to Steve. “I do my job and live my life in a way that I hope shows people they can always trust me and what I say,” he says. “I expect the same from people I work with as well.”

Steve is a big believer in making the work fun. “In the end, we need to enjoy what we are doing, and I like to work with people who get that having fun is super-important,” he says.

This ability to have fun and not take any one issue too seriously has proved to be one of Steve’s most powerful assets during the pandemic. “I joke around a lot in the office to keep things light, even when deadlines are upon us or issues seem crazy,” he says. “I think in the beginning of COVID there was a lot of uncertainty about a lot of things: the health of everyone and their families of course, but also concerns about job security and even whether clients would be able to get through this. By continuing to keep the same fun approach to things, even as we all shifted to working from home and away from each other, kept our entire company inspired and motivated.”

Steve’s leadership style is collaborative, and he seeks everyone’s input even if the final decision ends up being his own. “Good, talented people appreciate that their voices and expertise are always being considered, and I find that the decisions are better when all points of view are listened to and considered,” he says.

Steve has run healthcare ad agencies for more than 20 years, and his agencies have been honored with agency of the year awards, as well as scores of creative awards and recognitions for brand performance. Amid all the accolades, he says creating QBFox has definitely been a

career highlight. “While I have certainly enjoyed the success from the CEO vantage point at large agencies, the favorite part of my day has always been working directly with clients and helping them successfully drive individual brand performance — getting my hands dirty, as they say,” he says. “It’s something that CEOs of agency networks don’t get to do too often.”

Many of Steve’s former clients have remained friends over the years.

“When a couple of them approached me and asked me to start my own shop, it provided a terrific opportunity for me to get back to putting my own ‘hands in the soil’ and work closely again with my senior team of Chet Moss and Stacy Patterson,” he says. “Beyond that, starting QBFox has let me create the kind of agile, client-focused agency I always envisioned.”

Steve draws on his creative spirit for team motivation. “Part of inspiring others is getting them to see or feel what it would be like to do things the way you are suggesting,” he says. “I use the guiding phrase, ‘Imagine what we can create together’ as a way to make sure I am always reaching people where they are — whether it is getting my staff to work in a new and better way, or getting clients to sign up as partners with us.” PV