



Foreword

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This book stands as a tribute to those who have paved the way and as a source of inspiration for those just starting out.



As we celebrate ten years of Catering Circle, we reflect on a journey filled with innovation, resilience, and community spirit. Since our launch, we've witnessed how much can be achieved when passionate individuals come together with a shared purpose.

This fourth edition of *Restaurant Success Stories* continues our mission to honour the people behind the UK's vibrant food service industry. From bustling cities to quiet villages, the stories in this book highlight the diversity and dedication that define our sector. Whether through family traditions, bold business decisions, or perseverance through daily challenges, each Life Member featured has built something meaningful and lasting.

What makes this edition special is its focus on people—not trends or headlines. These are individuals who've earned reputations through word of mouth, supported their communities, and remained humble as their businesses grew. Their journeys remind us of the values that matter most: consistency, commitment, and care.

In a constantly evolving industry, it's easy to overlook the hard work and determination behind every success. This book stands as a tribute to those who have paved the way and as a source of inspiration for those just starting out. With the launch of Season 9: The Restaurant Startup Show—where a panel of investors (our very own dragons) will back bold new ideas—we're doubling down on our mission to empower young talent and shape the future of hospitality. Alongside the continued growth of our community, we aim to shine a light on both the well-known and the unsung heroes who make this industry thrive.

We hope these stories encourage new generations to take up the mantle and remind seasoned professionals of how far we've come. There is still much to do—but there is also much to celebrate.

Md Abdul HaqueFounder, Catering Circle



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Built from the Heat

A dacade of profiles, passion and purpose

It's hard to believe it's been ten years since we started Catering Circle—what began as a conversation about challenges in the industry has grown into a national platform for sharing solutions, experiences and success.

This book, now in its fourth volume, is part of that legacy. Every story in this volume has been built from the heat—not only the literal heat of the kitchen, but the intense pressures of business, the crucible of challenge, and the fire of ambition. Each year we've brought together the stories of people from across the country who've made a real difference—not just in their own businesses, but in their communities. These aren't just stories about food—they're about family, hard work, and holding on through tough times.

A lot has changed over the past decade. We've seen new trends come and go, we've faced big setbacks—from staffing and supply issues to the pandemic—and yet, this industry has kept going. Many of our Life Members have been at the heart of that journey. Their profiles in this book speak for themselves—decades of experience, generations of pride, and the willingness to try new things while staying true to their roots.

As always, this collection includes only a few stories—there are many more out there—but we hope it gives a strong picture of what's possible

Editorial



From high street kitchens to established brands, every story matters

when people keep learning, adapting and supporting one another. From small kitchens on local high streets to larger, established businesses, every profile in this book is a reminder of what makes this industry special.

To everyone featured, and to all those still building their own story: thank you. This book is for you.

Towhid ShakeelPublications Editor



Welcome to the sizzling world of Catering and Hospitality, where innovation and evolution are always on the menu. The Curry Industry, a colourful and flavourful element of British culture, is undergoing a metamorphosis that promises to redefine its place in the world. From the upheaval of the COVID-19 pandemic to the increasing significance of sustainability and environmentally responsible practices, the industry is being subjected to an array of pressures and influences.

At the forefront of these transformative times lies the Curry Industry, an essential element of British culture that is currently undergoing an unprecedented crisis. With a valuation of £4.1 billion, the industry is teetering on the brink of collapse, with no clear path forward in sight.

An acute shortage of chefs, escalating business costs, tax rises, and the proliferation of technology are all contributing to the gradual decline of traditional curry houses. For the Bangladeshi community, whose hardworking entrepreneurs have played a pivotal role in shaping the industry, this is a matter of great concern. The Curry Industry is in dire need of a resurgence, and the

media platform Catering Circle is stepping up to address these challenges head-on, working closely with experts to find sustainable solutions.

Why is the Curry Industry so important, you may wonder? It's not just about the delicious food. British Bangladeshis have made an indelible contribution to British society through their creation of this vibrant industry. Curry has emerged as one of Britain's most beloved cuisines, and the curry house has been a vital stepping stone for many Bangladeshi immigrants to build their futures and those of their children in Britain. Today, the Curry Industry is a proud symbol of their history and heritage, generating an astounding £4.1 billion for the economy, with over 12,000 outlets across the UK. With an average British adult spending £1,260 per year on curry and a weekly consumption of 18 tonnes of Chicken Tikka Masala, it is clear that the Curry Industry is an integral part of British culture.

In the short term, the industry needs an immediate boost to overcome its present challenges. This includes

■ improved health and safety training



- effective marketing, branding, and PR campaigns
- nurturing homegrown talent with the potential to establish Michelin Star chefs.

Furthermore, the industry must adapt to the shifting landscape,

- embracing technology and
- demystifying it to cater to modern customer preferences and demand.

To secure the Curry Industry's future, long-term plans have been put in place, including

- making the industry "fit for purpose,"
- developing strong leadership, and
- strengthening relationships with the banking sector to facilitate business expansion.

Other plans include

- creating training manuals, supporting training,
- engaging with ministers and politicians,
- promoting the catering industry to attract the younger generation,
- engaging with suppliers,
- raising the industry's profile to establish its

global leadership and

sharing best practices with others in the catering industry.

In conclusion, the Curry Industry is an invaluable part of British culture and a significant contributor to the country's economy. With Catering Circle leading the charge in finding sustainable solutions, the Curry Industry can be given the boost it requires to overcome the challenges it faces and ensure its continued success for generations to come.



Join us on a flavourful journey as we explore the challenges facing the Curry Industry and discover sustainable solutions to keep it alive and thriving!



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

AND THE FUTURE OF RESTAURANT MARKETING



Artificial intelligence
will revolutionise
how restaurants
design menus,
personalise
marketing and even
forecast consumer
demand.

It is only in recent times that a restaurant has had to think about not just the food quality, management and physical branding, but also crucial digital aspects such as SEO (Search Engine Optimisation). Two restaurants could be serving exactly the same food, yet one could have greater visibility in the market and reach more people, just because it ranks higher in search results with relevant keywords that the target audience are already searching for. Increasingly, artificial intelligence is helping restaurants optimise these keywords automatically and generate insights that would once have required specialist teams.

This may seem intimidating for new restaurant owners: while the total pool of consumers has indeed grown, the barrier to entry for competition

in the fierce market (as a result of new essential costs arising) have increased too. But the good news is that like never before, restaurants can digitally market to their desired target audience in a way that was not previously heard of even a few decades ago. Al tools now allow smaller restaurants to compete with larger chains by running efficient, data-driven campaigns with minimal staff input.

Despite a growing global population, competition for restaurant brands to have a premium reputation remains intact. Of course, if a restaurant offers delicious food but invests little time into its marketing strategy, how will anyone know about it? Al-powered analytics can now highlight gaps in marketing efforts and even suggest strategies that align with customer behaviour patterns.

Consumers in the 21st century (of both food and services so pun intended) are growing increasingly accustomed to viewing adverts for restaurants on screens, whether this be embedded in websites and apps or displayed on video streaming platforms. Yet if we cast the needle of time back by a few decades, we will see that the media through which consumers have been targeted has changed immensely. In the next few decades, this will shift even further as AI personalises advertising in real time for individuals, recommending restaurants based not only on location but also on mood, previous spending habits and even dietary goals.

Restaurants can draw up their target audience by age, location and even interests, then enter those specific demographics into social media marketing platforms before releasing a paid advert. Not only does this age of social media marketing mean a target market can be more easily reached and celebrity endorsement has a greater effect, it also utilises the fact that with eating at restaurants being a largely social activity often published afterwards, the word spreads further through location tagging of the restaurant. Al further enhances this process by predicting which demographics will respond most positively to endorsements, making each campaign more cost-effective.

Two restaurants could be serving exactly the same food, yet one could have greater visibility in the market and reach more people, just because it ranks higher in search results



This is hugely advantageous as restaurant marketing can be funnelled towards those most interested in certain cuisines based on existing statistics. This can in turn aid revenue. However, one stark reality remains:

A few decades ago, restaurants would not have set funds aside for digital marketing strategies such as SEO optimisation. In a few decades' time, technology will evolve at an expeditious rate. Artificial intelligence will revolutionise how restaurants design menus, personalise marketing and even forecast consumer demand. Thus the only way for restaurants to survive in the future is to keep up with the latest trends and technologies.

Dr Zaki Rezwana Anwar FRSA, MBBS, DTM&H, MS & PhD



DON'T GET LEFT BEHIND

Why UK British Bangladeshi Restaurants
Must Evolve to Stay Alive?



You've already done the hard part — now it's time to evolve, not erase. Keep your roots, just grow new branches. Running a restaurant has never been easy, and in today's world, it's harder than ever. Customer habits are changing fast. Costs are rising. Competition is everywhere. And with people spending more carefully than before, even your most loyal regulars are thinking twice about where they eat.

In times like this, standing still just isn't an option. You must adapt, or risk slowly disappearing, just like the dinosaurs.

If you're part of the British Bangladeshi community, like so many who've built the UK's Indian restaurant scene from the ground up, I want you to hear this: you've already done the hard part. You've given people

a place to gather, share, and connect through food and culture. You've built something lasting.

Now, the challenge is building on that legacy in a way that works for today, not yesterday.

The Honest Truth: The Customer Has Changed

Many restaurants are struggling right now, and not because the food isn't good. The food is still full of heart, flavour, and tradition.

The problem is the customer has moved on. And too often, the restaurant hasn't.

Today's diners, especially younger ones, want more than just a meal. They want lighter options, plant-based choices, street food flavours, better presentation, and places that look good in a photo for their Instagram. They want to know the story behind what they're eating. They care about where their food comes from and how it fits their lifestyle.

If your menu hasn't changed in a decade, your interiors haven't been updated since the early 2000s, and your social media has gone quiet, they'll walk straight past, even if your food is brilliant.

But here's the good news: you don't have to change everything. Just enough to show that you're listening.

It's Not About Your Taste, It's About Theirs

Here's something difficult but important to accept you are not your customer.

You might love a rich, traditional, oily dish that reminds you of home, or think a certain colour scheme or décor style is perfect. But what you love isn't always what your customers will pay for.

And that's what matters if you want to survive and thrive.

Your personal preferences are valid, of course. But if the people walking through your door want healthier options, a more modern feel, or a different experience, you need to meet them halfway.

Because in the end, they're not just looking for your food — they're looking for something that fits their life.

Understand Your Local Customer

The most important thing you can do right now is get curious about your local customers. Not everyone in the UK is the same, and what works in Brick Lane won't necessarily work in Birmingham or Surrey.

Start simple:

- Talk to your regulars. Ask what they'd like to see more (or less) of.
- · Check your online reviews. Even the bad ones can teach you something.
- Look at what's trending near you on Uber Eats, Deliveroo, or Instagram. What dishes are getting attention?

Once you understand what people in your area are looking for, you can make small, meaningful changes that show you care, not just about your cooking, but about their experience.



A Few Small Tweaks Go a Long Way

You don't have to redesign your restaurant overnight. But thoughtful updates can breathe fresh energy into your space and your menu:

- Add a few vegan or gluten-free dishes.
- Try a "street food" menu section with smaller plates.
- Refresh your menu design with cleaner fonts and simple, engaging descriptions.
- · Introduce warmer lighting or a feature wall,

something your customers might photograph and share.

These don't require big budgets, just attention to detail and a willingness to try something new.

Let Technology Help You, Not Stress You

Running a restaurant means long days and even longer nights. Who has time to write social posts, respond to every review, or design a flyer?

This is where AI tools like ChatGPT can genuinely help:

- · Write your social media posts in minutes.
- Help you respond to reviews quickly and professionally.
- Draft emails, flyers, menus, or even special offers.

It's not about losing control, it's about saving time and making your voice stronger.

You might decide this advice isn't for you, and that's completely fair. Every business owner knows their own challenges best.

But at Accor, I've had the chance to advise over 5,700 hotels and many restaurants worldwide, including in some of the most competitive and culturally rich places like London, Dubai, Singapore, Mecca, and Medina. I've seen what helps businesses grow, and sadly, what causes them to quietly fall behind. It always comes back to listening, observing, and evolving.

And I don't say this from a distance. I say it as the daughter of Mohammed Siraj Ali, a well-known British Bangladeshi restaurateur who has dedicated over 50 years to this industry. I've seen first-hand how my father's success came not just from hard work, but from his willingness to evolve. He never assumed he knew it all, he stayed open to new ideas, listened to others (especially the younger generation), and adapted when it mattered.

That mindset, learning, listening, and changing, is what I now see echoed in the thousands of hotel General Managers I work with today. And it truly makes a difference, because competition out there is fierce.

Your Story Is Your Strength

People don't just want to eat, they want to connect. And you already have a beautiful story.

Maybe it's your father's recipes. Maybe it's your mother's daal. Maybe it's the years you spent building something from nothing.

Share that story. Put it on your menu. Talk about it online. Let your customers see the heart behind the food. That's what makes you different, and what keeps them coming back.

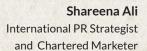
You Don't Have to Change Everything, Just Enough

British Bangladeshi restaurants are part of this country's story. You've helped shape how Britain eats and connects around the table. That's something to be proud of.

But if we want this legacy to continue, we have to meet the moment.

Start small. Stay proud. Keep your roots, just grow new branches.

Change doesn't mean losing your identity. It means making sure more people get to discover it, and love it, just like you do.





Celebrating the Culinary Architects of a Diverse Britain

It has been a pleasure and privilege to be so closely involved with Bengali cuisine from when I first opened an office in Sylhet as Chief Executive of the Immigration Advisory Service in 2000. Since then, I have continued to build my friendships with so many talented Bengali and Indian Curry Chefs and others who produce such high quality and complex international cuisine. Prominence was given to this style of cooking when the then Foreign Secretary the late Robin Cook in his speech the following year to the Social Market Foundation in London expressed the desire to celebrate Britishness in all its diversity and that pluralism is an immense asset that contributes to the cultural and economic vitality of our nation. He famously stated that Chicken Tikka Massala is now a true British national dish, not only because it is the most popular, but because it is a perfect illustration of the way Britain absorbs and adapts external influences. It was, of course, invented in the UK and not in the Indian sub-continent!

My participation in the Catering Circle has been instructive, enjoyable and given me so much respect for those restaurateurs who strive for excellence in every field of their business. The inventiveness, expertise and experience that I see resulting from what, in my capacity as chair of judges, we closely scrutinise in choice of ingredients, the subtleties, presentation, flavour, taste and method of preparation in terms of strict hygiene, choice and storage of the complex constituent elements of the dish is demanding at best - but when it is done against

the clock in cramped culinary conditions (often with some equipment malfunctioning to add to the stress!) it becomes a triumph of organisation as well as planning and innovation that stands equal to the most complex manufacturing business experience.

Those chefs from all over the world who make it to the finals in either the awards or the Catering Circle competitions have been hardened and trained in the unforgiving hot crucible of the kitchen with years of experience behind them. Sadly, in a British educational culture obsessed by paper qualifications (which are no indicator of executive expertise) rather than lived experience we still discriminate in visa terms against those who have learned the hard way by trial and error. That must change in every sphere for the economic health of the nation. Give me any day a chef who has that experience under their belt rather than one who can only quote the theory! I can only hope that our Indian chefs will be the ones who not only continue to give pleasure to a family outing to a restaurant at a cost that can be afforded but also teach us more about the meaning of life – we have much to learn from them.

> **Keith Best** Former Conservative MP





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A restaurant
has had to
think about...
food quality,
management and
physical branding

"Staff retention matters as it is the single most important factor determining whether staff are fully competent in their business. Employers spend significantly on recruiting and retaining staff, but in many cases staff are not staying long enough to recoup these costs and fully contribute to the business. People 1st's conservative estimate is that labour turnover is costing the hospitality and tourism sector £274m per annum."

People 1st Insight Report - 2017

"There are very few female role models, CEOs and Chairmen in the sector:

...A significant number of small- to medium size businesses do not think there is an issue regarding gender imbalance, nor see it as a priority;

...The sector attracts a high number of female graduates, but it is not doing enough to retain them;

...A lack of flexibility in working conditions and/or support for women balancing careers with family is systemic;"

WiH (Women in Hospitality) 2020 Review, Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC)

The sector has little trouble attracting the women at entry level, yet despite this, many leave at middle management level.



Attracting, engaging and in particular, retaining female employees is one of the biggest issues facing hospitality today. The stats are pretty self-explanatory and still, as we enter 2023, we see only very small movement based on previous reports.

So why is it so hard to keep the female employees once they've been recruited?

Having spoken to a few of my colleagues in the sector and done a google search on the topic, it's apparent that one of the crucial sticking points for most women is the lack of understanding and inflexible approach to family and work/life balance.

It's no surprise then that when many women in hospitality go on maternity leave, very few return.

"There is still a significant lack of women in the top commercial leadership roles, and very few as CEO or Chairman. The sector has little trouble attracting the women at entry level, yet despite this, many leave at middle management level."

Sarah Lim, Managing Director and Head of UK Consumer, Korn Ferry

Women see hospitality as a valuable career choice and work hard to get to a good management role. However, once in their 30s, and the potential to grow a family becomes important, many feel their employer is not supportive enough in listening to their needs.

Whether you are a small, medium or large sized employer, it's important to engage with your staff, particularly

those in under-represented groups including gender and diversity, to understand their needs and why, if they're leaving or have left, what was the main reason they didn't stay.

Just as we serve our customers and are concerned with fulfilling their needs, we must also fulfil the needs of our staff for it is those employees that ultimately ensure your business is operating at its highest, most effective level.

Here's a suggestion:

- Create a focus group of past and present employees that represent diversity in your organisation
- Engage with their views and uphold what they are suggesting
- Encourage more women into the workplace, offering flexible working hours and job shares
- Offer childcare support, financially and practically
- Shout out loud to your peers to do the same

Unless we all get on board and create a workplace that welcomes all, we will never see the changes that are so vitally needed.

Hulya Erdal

Hospitality Professional,
Transformational Coach, Educator





ADAPTING TO NEW NORMS:

Maintaining Restaurant and Kitchen Hygiene Post-Pandemic



And what can you do to make your workplace a more attractive career choice?

The Asian restaurant industry is a very important and valued contributor to the national economy. It provides variety, offering a range of meal experiences and therefore important to national and local communities.

The hospitality industry has been particularly hard hit by the pandemic, with many businesses struggling and some closing. The ones that have survived focussed most of their efforts on take away and delivery, resilience became the order of the day! Now is the time to bounce back, and take the lessons that can be learnt from the pandemic and remodel the business to allow for growth and expansion.

A mini boom is expected in the UK moving forward from the pandemic, as people want to celebrate and eat out again, and so it is important to be ready by having all the hygiene and appropriate systems in place to deal with the increase in business.

It is becoming evident that we will have to live with the virus and that viruses are not going to go away, this means that hygiene in the kitchen and restaurant becomes even more important. Kitchens will not iust need to be cleaned but sanitised thoroughly.

All restaurant staff will be required to wash and sanitise their hands more regularly. Many customers will expect hand sanitisers at reception, and hand sanitisers on every restaurant table, perhaps branded with the name and logo of the restaurant.

Good hygiene conscious restaurants will add a hand sanitiser wipe in the take away packaging, with the sterilised disposable wooden cutlery. More and more customers will expect this, hygiene and health safety are a key selling point, a good marketing tool and can be associated with a strong brand.

Bowls of nuts and crisps on the bar for customers to help themselves will become obsolete. Individual wrap packaging will become the norm. Some restaurants will find it advantageous to publish their hygiene policy alongside the scores on the doors. The policy may contain the restaurant's health policy on vaccinated staff for example some Asian countries require all waiters and food servers to be double vaccinated.

Welcome Skills is a national training organisation specialising in restaurants, they are accredited by Craft Guid of Chefs of Great Britain, and offer a range of training programmes in Food Safety in Catering, Health and Safety and Licensing. They are able to assist restaurants with Environmental Health Inspections and Premises License applications.

More and more customers will expect this, hygiene and health safety are a key selling point, a good marketing tool and can be associated with a strong brand.

Professor David Foskett MBE Welcome Skills Consultant





Three Evergreen Trends

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How exactly do you adapt to this new world and keep customers interested through Marketing and PR? With the tremendous upheaval and constant change that happening in the UK hospitality industry and in particular, the Indian and Bangladeshi Restaurant industry, it's no wonder that there have been extremes in severe ups and down in recent years.

However, there are several key factors that will remain constant, and will in fact grow in importance, this year, as well as in the coming years beyond 2023. Insights into upcoming trends and forecasts show that a select number of key trends have emerged as being evergreen' - always in demand with customers, but allowing the Restaurant and Takeaway to add their own 'twist' to it and make it look 'new' on a regular basis, therefore enabling this small change to be used as a selling point or marketing tool to their existing client base and as a way to attract new customers.



Here are the Three Evergreen Trends that will always keep your finger on the pulse, making you look like you're ahead of the curve, but will also keep your establishment on top of trends without having to keep up to date with constant changes in customer tastes and interests:

1. A Focus on Sustainability and Using Climate-Conscious, Eco-Friendly Packaging:

'Sustainability of ingredients' and eco-conscious packaging (whether it is recyclable or if its production causes low environmental damage) are key focuses for 2023 and future years. The provenance of ingredients, (with customers' interest in eating dishes that contain ingredients that have a shorter 'farm to table' journey) can help to attract the increasingly climate-conscious customer. This focus is more important in the takeaway sector, with customers keen to feel as though they are not contributing to environmental damage with their takeaway packaging.

Not only will the hospitality industry's focus on improving in this area help to attract new customers, but it will also help retain existing clientele, particularly if the restaurant emphasises a reduction in carbon emissions, and thereby help to eventually lower cost during the current energy crisis. There does appear to be a major interest by customers, in opting for locally, or nationally, sourced seasonal ingredients instead of the more expensive, and environmentally damaging,

internationally sourced ingredients. This will in turn, also help to ensure better quality and freshness of ingredients for the customer, therefore aiding healthy food claims by the restaurant, and enabling this to be used as a marketing ploy by the restaurant or takeaway.

Collaborating with, or supporting local suppliers (especially during the current cost of living crisis) can help to ensure that restaurants and takeaways differentiate themselves from their competitors. and appear more 'on the pulse' of the current 'environmental' and 'cost of living crisis' zeitgeist.

It will also demonstrate to the clientele, an active involvement within the local community by championing local or national businesses rather than obtaining supplies internationally. Additionally, using plastic-free and/ or recyclable packaging where possible, can also create a selling point to the everincreasing number of climate-conscious customers.

2. Plant-Based is Still Popular

Consumers' interest in plant-based foods has only grown stronger since the Covid-19 pandemic. Customers are now keen to improve and maintain their health, and the number one way they are doing this is through what they eat. However, the cost of living crisis and the pandemic has moved the focus



onto plant-based comfort foods rather than what they consider sparse 'health foods'. This is where Indian and Bangladeshi Restaurants and Takeaways can take full advantage of this trend by combining the fantastic variety of flavours of South-East Asian cuisine, in a fusion concept or as traditional dishes, and also as street food style dishes.

There is a plethora of South-East Asian Vegan and Vegetarian recipes available that can be used by establishments, and many do not need adjustment for the hospitality industry unless required by the establishment for creative purposes. Plant-based options can be added to the menu in a variety of ways. This can involve the 'Indian Street Food' and 'Indian Fusion Food' options which are quick to make as well as costeffective.

Furthermore, using healthier ingredient alternatives (e.g. using Olive Oil or Coconut Oil instead of Vegetable Oil or Seed Oils) and marketing to customers the fact that the

dishes use healthier cooking techniques, that also prevent 'overcooking' the ingredients and therefore maintain the nutrients of the ingredients, is an extra selling-point that can be fully utilised by the restaurant establishment. The Plant-based and vegan trend is definitely here to stay and it would be wise to take advantage of it due to its ability to attract new younger clientele as well as retain existing customers. An increasing proportion of customers from the younger age group will continue to demand such options on the menu.

3. Simplify the Menu And Clear And Simple Messaging To The Customer:

Adopting a Minimalist Messaging approach to the customer base, in all of the restaurant or takeaway's menu and advertising, will help to reduce confusion about the establishment's menu offerings and services, as well as connect more strongly with the customer. A clear and simple message also helps to build the restaurant's brand as it has more of a memorable impact.



Another benefit of adopting a minimalist approach overall in terms of reducing the list of menu offerings and reducing the complexity of dishes is its effect of reducing the impact of increased costs and supply chain disruption, and staff shortages - particularly important during the current cost of living crisis.

Research also shows that a complicated and extensive menu can cause customer confusion. and leads to a lower possibility of the customer completing an order, compared to a more focused, simplified menu, particularly a menu that offers dishes that contain seasonal ingredients -(customers view this as a more palatable menu of dishes containing ingredients that are of higher quality and greater freshness).

A simplified menu will always help customers to decide and order more quickly; and it also enables the establishment to keep reducing its stock of perishable, therefore reducing costs and enabling a regular change of the menu's latest offerings. This creates a more dynamic brand image of the restaurant or takeaway in the customer's mind.

The ability to offer fresh new dishes on a simpler, clearer menu on a regular rotation in accordance with the 'season' - (especially using seasonal ingredients) is an excellent marketing tool. It will also create a 'limited-time offering' or a 'limited edition' factor to the dishes on the menu, which acts as a unique selling point to ensure customers have the 'Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)' effect and therefore making customers more likely to order.

Shahena Ali **Nutritional Therapist** and Naturopath





Effective Marketing Tips

for Restaurants that Yield Results

Restaurant marketing is tricky.

Fierce competition, tight margins, ever-changing trends; restaurant marketing isn't for the faint-hearted. And now you've got to deal with digital marketing too. But there is a silver-lining. Countless restaurant owners and marketers have already tried and tested every digital strategy and marketing platform out there and we've waded through the results to bring you 6 of the most effective restaurant marketing tips.

1) Be instagrammable

Instagram is a restaurateur's dream. It isn't just millennials who love snapping pictures of their food to post on Instagram. Over a third of all Instagram users in the UK are aged over 35 and with 22 million users across the country, you're certain to have a sizeable Instagram audience in your local area.

Before you start posting on your Instagram account, here are a few words of advice to nail your restaurant PR:

All of your dishes may look great but it's worth creating a signature dish or drink; something creative that is unique to your restaurant which you can really go to town with on Instagram.

Make sure all of your foodie photos are of a high quality. This means clear, clean, sharp images with no glare. Good lighting is key, so find a spot in your restaurant where natural light floods in. (Pro tip: don't take pictures on the pass under heat lamps. The orange glow makes the pics look bad!)

To break up the parade of foodie pictures, include photos of the inside your restaurant so your audience can get a feel for your dining atmosphere. Also, include photos of your staff; front-of-house, chefs, KPs, the whole team. Showcasing the friendly faces that make your restaurant will make it more inviting.

Create a hashtag that is unique to your restaurant and use it consistently. Don't forget to add in geographical hashtags so you can draw in a local crowd.

Instagram is a 2-way street when it comes to restaurant marketing; it's just as important to get your customers posting. Here are a few ways you can make this happen:

- Create Instagrammable food; food that stands out in some way, whether it's through eye-catching colours, interesting textures or intriguing ingredients.
- Create an Instagram dessert menu as part of a limited time offer. If customers take a picture of their dessert and post it on Instagram with your restaurant hashtag, they get it for free.
- Find local foodie influencers on Instagram, individuals who have a large following on Instagram (and love good food) and as such have sway when it comes to recommendations they make. Invite them to your restaurant and ask them to post photos of their dining experience

including your restaurant hashtag.

- Celebrate your restaurant's birthday with an Instagram giveaway. Put out a post asking people to like your account for the chance to win a free dinner for themselves and a friend. Include a deadline for your giveaway and make sure people stand a good chance of winning by handing out your prize to multiple winners.
- Get even more interactive with Instagram giveaways and nurture new customers into becoming loyal customers by running contests that offer free meals or dishes if, for example, customers post photos with their favourite waiter or waitress at your restaurant (similar contests work just as well on Facebook).

Remember to repost photos from your followers to show that you're grateful for their contribution.

2) Respond to reviews

Customers looking for somewhere new to eat will often turn to Google searching for reviews. Yelp, Facebook, Google, TripAdvisor reviews and the like will be listed in their search results. If you're not on these platforms, you could still be racking up reviews. To stay in control of your reputation it is therefore important to claim your space on these platforms and put up as much useful information as you can: photos, opening hours, your location, a mobile-friendly menu, price ranges and other facilities you have (WiFi, parking, outdoor seating etc).

Next, set up Google alerts, so whenever your restaurant name appears somewhere new online, you'll know about it. Good restaurant marketing isn't just about creating positive chatter about how great your restaurant is, it's about dealing with negative reviews in a way that can turn

an unhappy customer into a happy one. Reply to negative reviews quickly, politely and in a friendly manner; apologise for a customer's bad experience and offer to redeem things with a free meal or discount.

3) Up your local ranking

Once again, Google reigns supreme when customers are looking for a restaurant near them. Local marketing for restaurants is made easy with Google Maps. If you can nab one of the top 3 spots in Google Map's results panel, you're certain to get more traffic to your website.

To be featured on Google Maps you need to set up a free Google My Business account and populate it with all the information a customer would find helpful: your opening hours, address, contact information and photos. Reviews will also show up here, so make sure you follow tip #2 too. It also helps to keep your website updated and all of your restaurant details consistent across platforms.

4) Set up a loyalty programme

Keep your customers coming back for more with a simple loyalty programme. The lure of getting something free still works but today any decent loyalty programme needs to be digital.

Digital loyalty cards come with the added benefit of giving you data on what keeps your loyal customers coming back. Offer an incentive for new customers to sign up when they're at the till, such as a 10% discount off the bill they are about to pay. Finally, make sure you promote your

loyalty card perks on your social media accounts, in your email campaigns and on your table tents

5) Get on board with Facebook check-ins

Facebook is still the biggest social media platform out there with arguably the most powerful reach. Facebook check-ins are an easy way to promote your restaurant by getting your customers to do much of the legwork.

A Facebook check-in is a type of post that highlights where someone is located and when. For businesses it acts as a personal endorsement. By encouraging your customers to check-in on Facebook when they visit your restaurant, you'll get instant exposure as Facebook check-in posts are on average seen by 150–200 Facebook friends of the customer who checks in.

No matter how finessed your restaurant PR is, there is nothing quite as powerful as being recommended by a friend or family member. In fact 92% of people trust family and friend recommendations, which is why Facebook's algorithm is now more heavily weighted to these recommendations over what businesses advertise.

6) Get Smart: Link Your Social With Chatbots and Email

We find you can get incredible results by getting joined up: don't just rely on social media, enhance your presence with a paid-for ad targeting your local geography and fans of your type of food.

Then, link that post with a chatbot. A chatbot is simply software that automatically carries out an



on-line chat 'conversation' via text message to your potential customer. As part of that process, you can request the customer's email address, and incorporate them into your email marketing so you can start to build a long term relationship with them too.

Below are some ways we use Chatbots and Email to get results for restaurants:

Viral Giveaway Campaign

One of the most effective campaigns is a viral giveaway. These get you a huge amount of attention from new potential customers using an attractive giveaway offer posted to Facebook.

You can then convert a significant amount of them into immediate paying customers using a clever Chatbot sequence. When the user comments on your giveaway offer, you can set it to open up Facebook Messenger and prompt them to pass on their email address (so you can add them to a mailing list) and you can offer them vouchers for their next purchase. This means they aren't just there for the free prize draw.

Birthday Bot Campaigns

Birthdays are a great opportunity for restaurants to get group bookings.

You can target potential customers who have a birthday coming up, reach them with a great offer to encourage a group booking, and convert them into paying customers. Set it up using Facebook ads and a smart Chatbot sequence that utilised Facebook messenger, and keep the campaign running in the background with fresh content each month.

VIP Clubs

Social media is great for reaching your fans but you are always beholden to the dreaded algorithms - or worse, getting your account suspended.

We always advocate encouraging your customers to join a 'VIP club' for your restaurant - essentially an email list that allows you to communicate directly and provide loyal customers with great offers and regular announcements. Set up a great VIP programme that encourages people to join and builds an email marketing and messenger contacts database allowing you to reach them with great offers and new dishes directly.

We regularly get 40-60% open rates on emails and 80-90% open rates on messenger, so you can start turning social media 'interest' into bums on seats.

BONUS TIP!

7) Ask for help!

If you're not sure sure how to get going with Facebook check-ins, social media marketing, chatbots or email you're in luck! At RFS Marketing we offer a tailored Facebook checkins programme that has every angle covered:

- · We'll encourage your customers to check-in on Facebook via attractive promo signs designed for you
- · We'll run monthly contests to encourage repeat business and more check-ins
- · We'll regularly change your check-in promo signs with fresh offers
- We'll re-share and engage with your customers' comments on your page
- · We'll even train your staff on how it all works and keep them motivated.

It's a great starting point to getting great results on social media. To find out more about this allinclusive programme, and our other restaurant marketing services. Visit RFSmarketing.co.uk

There you have it, six restaurant marketing tips you can get started on right now. And a bonus one! It's a recipe for digital marketing success.

Richard Forshaw Smith MD. RFS Marketing



14 INDICATORS OF A GREAT RESTAURANT BEYOND THE QUALITY OF FOOD

The Catering Circle has been a game-changer in the Curry Industry, providing solutions to the real problems faced by restaurants. With innovative ideas, challenging perceptions, and transforming menus, the Catering Circle has been a source of inspiration for the industry. With the upcoming Season 8 of the Catering Circle, supported by its large and active team throughout the UK, there is no doubt that the platform will continue to be a valuable resource for restaurants.

However, beyond the quality of food, there are small things that make a restaurant great. Most restaurants rely on regular customers who expect the same level of service, quality, and taste every time they visit. To keep these customers coming back, the restaurant needs to have a great atmosphere, good service, and a clean bathroom. Additionally, restaurants need to be accommodating to their customers, offer healthy options, and have knowledgeable and authentic servers. In this article, I reflect on these 14 signs that make a restaurant great, beyond the quality of food.

- 1. Clean Bathrooms: A clean bathroom is a reflection of the restaurant's attention to detail and also gives an indication of kitchen cleanliness.
- **2. Quick Service:** A server should come over quickly after seating, avoiding frustration for the customer.
- **3.** In-Season Ingredients: The menu should feature in-season ingredients and use local groceries whenever possible.
- **4. Good Acoustics:** Diners should be able to hear their table companions, with sound design and fewer tables in high-end restaurants for better acoustics.
- 5. Knowledgeable and Authentic Servers: The best restaurants have servers who are familiar with the menu and able to answer questions without consulting a notebook.
- **6. Accommodating:** Restaurants should be accommodating to customers, as long as it's reasonable, and provide a friendly response to special requests.
- 7. Healthy Options: Restaurants should offer a range



of healthy options to accommodate the increasing demand for healthy food choices.

- **8.** All dishes served at once: Good restaurants ensure all dishes are served at the same time for a coordinated dining experience.
- **9** Prompt but not rushed clearing of plates: Restaurants should clear plates quickly but not so quickly as to rush diners.
- **10.** Little details: Small gestures, such as sending guests home with a muffin or introducing them to the chef, can greatly enhance the dining experience.
- **11. Professional but friendly service:** A good restaurant will have professional and knowledgeable servers with a friendly and approachable demeanour, providing attention without constantly hovering.
- **12. Regularly changing menu:** A restaurant's menu should change regularly, showcasing new and interesting ingredients and dishes to keep the dining experience fresh and exciting.

- **13. Unique atmosphere:** A restaurant's atmosphere should be well-designed, comfortable, and tailored to the cuisine served, setting the tone for the meal.
- **14. Focus on quality ingredients:** A good restaurant will have a strong focus on sourcing high-quality ingredients to create delicious dishes.

In conclusion, there are many factors that go into making a good restaurant. From the service to the atmosphere and the focus on quality ingredients, each aspect plays a role in creating a memorable dining experience. Keep these factors in mind when choosing your next restaurant, and you're sure to have a great meal!

Professor Dr Sanawar Choudhury Entrepreneur







The ability to understand what is food safety and health and safety are as important as driving revenue.

I would say this is a serious issue in lesser known hotels and restaurants.

Leadership comes from the top and the culture is filtered down.

It is a no brainer how important these aspects are in the food business. Not many owners/chefs/managers take this seriously until something major happens. There should be weekly and monthly audits to keep a tab on due diligence.

It is not only the due diligence, it is about understanding the process and reasoning behind HACCP.

Education and training is a must at all levels. It is also the pedigree of chefs recruited. For instance, an owner would like to save a few grand and recruit less able staff to run the business. This over a period of time has a negative impact on the business. Today so many nationalities work in the food industry, many of whom have no experience at all. This can be dangerous for the business.

The ability to understand what is food safety and health and safety are as important as driving revenue. Unfortunately, owners or managers or chefs are NOT ignorant but take shortcuts to complete their daily tasks.

Many food businesses run at a fraction of staff actually required due to high wage costs. It is a difficult balance of recruitment, understanding, training, logic and common sense, an initiative by the top management or owners. Ignorance is not an excuse. It may affect the lives of staff members and customers equally.

Arup Das Gupta Executive Chef





Indian & Bangladeshi Cuisine:

From Legacy to Survival & Future Growth

Survival sparks innovation The story of Indian and Bangladeshi cuisine in the United Kingdom is one of triumph against odds. What started as small family businesses decades ago has grown into one of Britain's most loved and celebrated industries. Curry has become a cultural icon, but today our restaurants face the toughest test in living memory.

The Past: Our Community's Culinary Legacy

The early pioneers—our fathers and grandfathers—established restaurants when curry was unfamiliar to British diners. With resilience and hard work, they transformed simple menus into national favourites. Chicken Tikka Masala, Lamb Bhuna, and Vegetable Curry became household names, while restaurants provided jobs, built communities, and became lifelines for immigrant families

"Curry built bridges between cultures and gave immigrant families a future."

The Present: Hurdles in a Changed World

The last few years have reshaped the industry forever.

Resilience is the secret ingredient of our industry.

The Covid-19 pandemic forced closures, strained cashflows, and changed consumer habits. Just as the sector began to recover, the cost-of-living crisis hit hard. Energy bills have skyrocketed, staff wages increased, and ingredient prices surged.

For many restaurants, margins are tighter than ever. Customers are eating out less often, yet expecting better service, healthier food, and full value for money. The truth is, our industry is in survival mode—but survival also sparks innovation.

"Survival sparks innovation."

"Resilience is the secret ingredient of our industry."

Survival Tips for Restaurateurs

To withstand the storm, businesses must adapt quickly. Here are key strategies every restaurateur should consider:

- 1. Menu Engineering Focus on fewer, highmargin dishes while reducing waste.
- 2. Smart Technology Digital menus, Aldriven ordering, and automation reduce staffing pressures.
- 3. Energy Efficiency Switching to energysaving equipment can cut costs significantly.
- 4. Customer Loyalty Introduce reward schemes, community events, and personalised service to keep regulars coming back.
- 5. Diversify Income Retail sauces, meal kits, catering services, and takeaway options widen revenue streams.

"Curry is no longer just food; it is resilience on a plate."

The Future: A Stronger, Smarter Industry

Despite today's pressures, the curry industry has a bright future. Technology, sustainability, and creativity will shape tomorrow's restaurants. From AI systems that track customer preferences to healthier menus designed for wellnessconscious diners, the opportunities are vast.

But above all, it will be our heritage and authenticity that keep curry at the heart of British dining. By blending the timeless recipes of our ancestors with modern innovation, we can ensure our cuisine not only survives—but thrives.

"The future belongs to those who can mix heritage with innovation."

Conclusion

We honour the past, we endure the present, and we embrace the future. The curry industry has overcome every hurdle before, and with courage and innovation, it will do so again.

Altaf Hussain **Executive Member** Catering Circle











Foysol Choudhury MBE MSP

The first Bangladeshi-origin Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP) for the Lothian region

> Britannia Spice Edinburgh EH6 6LB

Foysol Choudhury MBE has been involved in the restaurant business since 1990, but the business has been in the family since the 80's. Growing up he used to help and naturally began to enjoy as well as show a keen interest in the field. He was always interested in Politics and the restaurant was the place for conversations, discussions and meetings. The restaurant became a meeting place not just to socialise, and talk about ideas but share visions and find new ways to do business and new technologies and techniques to discover. For him, it wasn't just a business but a way of life.

His favourite part of this business is meeting new people. Over the years it developed his confidence as he had to socialise and meet all kinds of people and he enjoyed it very much. It made him realise he enjoys helping people and being an active member of the community not just a business owner. The business helped improve his communication skills which allowed him to do charity events, help those in need as he had the skills and expertise to do so as well as arrange fundraising for many causes. The restaurant was never just a restaurant for him but a place where he grew as a person and gained many skills which have made him the person he is today.

In choosing menu and ingredients, he discusses this with his chefs and together they brainstorm and research new dishes and ingredients. Their signature dish, Foysol confirms, is, "the Jalfrezi because it's traditional and tasty and one of my favourites. We want to keep the food authentic, fresh and true to its roots, so it's important for us to produce these to the best of our abilities rather than losing them by changing or evolving them into something else."

The staff in his restaurant are all trained and he tries to ensure they are happy to be part of the business and have a passion for the industry. They are aware of maintaining good standards and excellent customer service. Foysol loves what he does and hopefully they see that and are inspired to enjoy the work and always treat their customers with the utmost respect, care and attention.

They use social media for the businesses and try to interact with the public with promotions and advertising. "When everything's online you have to move with the times. We have modern equipment in the restaurants and ensure we are up to date with technology. Internet bookings and online services are a vital part of daily life now so we try to stay current and maintain a presence online," says Foysol.

Social media, he says, is good for reaching out to large numbers of people quickly. Before this they used local news to advertise the businesses. They can interact with people online now, take orders and bookings quicker. "So the internet is probably most useful tool for us," he says, "rather than posting out paper menus or leaflets to homes." They have a database of clients so they communicate with them with deals, events, and offers as well as help celebrate their special days such birthdays and other important days they may have. This allows them to not only build relationships with their customers but also keep them involved with the business.

"The biggest challenge to not only my business but majority of restaurants and businesses is the competition offered online by sites such as Groupon and other food sites which provide cheap alternatives," says Foysol. "I value quality over quantity and our food will always be the best we can offer and that won't be compromised. We also find that it's a challenge getting the best quality produce and spices for reasonable prices."

The hardest part of the job or being a manager, he says, is getting the right staff for the job. He finds this to be the toughest bit because he wants the person to be right for the job and keen as well as passionate and this can be difficult as not many young people especially ethnic minorities are choosing this as a career path.

The key ingredient to Restaurant's success, according to him, has to be good tasty authentic food, reasonable prices and great customer service and standards.

Foysol is always concerned about the industry and its people. "I would love and hope that colleges and other agencies would do more to promote this field and make it more appealing as a career and a business. We don't want to lose this industry, so more needs to be done to make it appealing and interesting to future generations. It's not just about food but skills, which need to be preserved."





Eftar Hussain

Shelford SpiceCambridge CB22 5LZ

Eftar Hussain's path into the world of hospitality was forged through early adversity and an unshakable work ethic. Raised in Cambridge, Eftar lost both his parents at a young age. Their absence shaped his outlook—but it was his older brother's guidance and his mother's encouragement to save and invest that became the foundation of his drive to succeed.

At just 13, Eftar took a job at a busy Greek restaurant. By 14, he was managing the shop floor, leading a full team in a 100-seat dining room. That early exposure to leadership, pressure, and the rhythm of restaurant life set him on a course that now spans over 36 years in the industry.

Today, Eftar is the founder of Shelford Spice, a business that redefines the takeaway experience by delivering fine dining standards in a casual format. From curried noodles and mussels malai to his signature 18-inch naan and show-stopping LambKhalaBhuna—slow-cookedintwotraditional pans—his food blends heritage with innovation.

But it's more than the menu that sets Shelford Spice apart. "I want every customer to feel as if they're leaving my home," he says. That ethos of care and consistency is extended to his team too. Staff are motivated through meaningful incentives—from monthly outings to badminton nights—and a culture of mutual respect. "We thrive because we enjoy what we do," he adds.

Eftar has embraced modern technology to sharpen efficiency. From Rational steam ovens that reduce fat without sacrificing flavour, to a fully integrated branded app, he's kept operations smart and seamless.

Marketing-wise, he's found success on platforms like TikTok and Instagram, engaging younger audiences with behind-the-scenes content, while traditional Facebook ads proved less effective. Local community groups, however, have helped foster a loyal customer base.

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We thrive because we enjoy what we do. I want every customer to feel as if they're leaving my home.

Despite rising costs and industry-wide staffing shortages, Eftar's outlook remains optimistic. He is now focusing on giving back—mentoring, supporting local charities, and working with organisations like Give Us a Lift, linked to Cambridge Central Mosque.

His advice? Stay rooted in your heritage, invest in your people, and never stop evolving. Eftar Hussain's story is one of resilience, resourcefulness and a relentless passion for food—and proof that with purpose and heart, success is always on the table.





Abdul Rahman

Taste of Nawab London N10 1LR When Abdul Rahman opened Taste of Nawab in Muswell Hill in 1996, many said it was a mistake. An Indian restaurant in this quiet North London neighbourhood? "Bound to fail," they warned. But Abdul saw it differently. He wasn't opening just another curry house — he was building a place where people felt truly looked after. Nearly three decades on, Taste of Nawab has become a beloved fixture of the community, known for its rich flavours, heartfelt hospitality, and remarkable consistency.

His journey began with a simple dream: to be his own boss and serve others. What he created instead was something far greater - a restaurant where customers feel like family, staff are treated with respect, and the food is crafted with uncompromising quality. "It was never just about food," Abdul reflects. "It's always been about people."

That people-first approach is what makes the Taste of Nawab experience stand apart. The menu is built on bold, distinctive recipes — no short-cuts, no generic flavours. Each dish is thoughtfully created, using premium ingredients and top-quality spices, even when cheaper alternatives are available. "You can taste the difference," Abdul says. And diners agree.

What also sets him apart is his commitment to community. From fundraising for Save the Children to supporting local schools, feeding the homeless, and stepping in quietly when neighbours are in need - Abdul doesn't advertise his acts of kindness. He simply gets on with it. "We've always been part of this community. Giving back is just what you do."

A hands-on leader. Abdul motivates his team not through pressure, but by example. Many of his staff have been with him for years, drawn by the culture of respect and shared purpose. "If you treat your team like family, they take pride in the work. And when your team's happy, that shows in the service."

The recipe for success is no secret. It's care, consistency, and community served generously, everyday.

Technology has found its place with iPads replacing order pads, helping streamline service and reduce errors. "Small changes, big impact," notes.

After 29 years in the trade, Abdul's focus now is on expanding into catering, bringing the Taste of Nawab experience to larger gatherings. "We've built something meaningful here. Now, I want to take that same standard share bevond the restaurant."

For Abdul, the recipe for success is no secret. It's care, consistency, and community - served generously, every day.





Sufian Miah

Shampan Group Kent, TN16 2HX

Sometimes the best journeys begin without a plan. For Sufian Miah, hospitality wasn't part of the script. As a student in the early 1990s, he took a part-time job at the original Shampan to support his studies. What began casually soon became a calling. Drawn by the energy, the people, and the rhythm of restaurant life. Sufian found himself not just working in hospitality—but falling in love with it.

By 1995, he had stepped into management, and in 2001, launched Shampan Bromley—the first chapter in what would become the Shampan Group. Today, the brand is recognised across Kent and London's suburbs for redefining Indian hospitality.

For Sufian, Shampan was never just about food. It was about creating spaces where people feel connected, welcomed, and inspired. "Dining should tell a story," he says. "Every plate, every glass, every detail should add to the experience." This philosophy has shaped Shampan's identity: authentic Indian flavours served in contemporary, design-led settings that feel both timeless and modern.

The menu reflects this balance. Signature dishes like Tandoori Lamb Chops with Kashmiri chilli and roasted spices, or Seafood Keralan King Prawns layered with coastal flavours, are guest favourites, Butter Chicken Makhani, enriched with fenugreek, offers comfort with elegance. Sourcing is equally thoughtful—spices from trusted Indian growers, meat and produce from British farms. with freshness and sustainability at the core.

Yet for Sufian, food is only part of the story. What excites him most is crafting experiences that linger beyond the meal. At Shampan, service is treated as an art rooted in care, "We see ourselves as one family," he says. "When staff feel respected and valued, they pass that warmth on to guests." Many long-standing team members reflect this culture of loyalty and pride.

Dining should tell a story. Every plate, every glass, every detail of the room should add to the

experience..

Running multiple restaurants brings challenges from staffing and training to maintaining consistency. Sufian embraces these as part of the craft. "The hardest part is balancing long-term vision with daily realities," he admits. "But it's also what keeps us sharp."

Technology plays a role, with advanced kitchen equipment and digital reservation systems enhancing precision and guest experience. But the focus remains on people. "Technology should support hospitality, not replace it," he notes.

What sets Shampan apart is not just refinement, but integrity. Every detail-from the food to the interiors-carries intention and care. "It's not about following trends," Sufian says. "It's about creating something lasting."

After more than three decades in hospitality, Sufian remains as passionate as the day he first donned a waiter's uniform. With Shampan continuing to grow and set benchmarks for Indian dining in Britain, the story is far from over. "The next chapter," he says with a smile, "is only just beginning."





Tofozzul Miah

Bayleaf London N20 9HH

Installing an advanced EPOS system has enabled Tofozzul Miah's Bayleaf to boost sales and cut labour costs during peak times. A staunch believer in IT. Tofozzul has been leveraging sophisticated EPOS solutions since 2001 and has since collected over 12.000 customer data points. This rich database fuels a three-pronged remarketing strategy—via SMS. Email, and Direct Post—that safeguards profits against the soaring fees of third-party online companies. "This system not only streamlines operations during busy periods, but it also empowers our waitstaff to manage more tables." Tofozzul explains.

A visionary entrepreneur, Tofozzul is the founder of both the award-winning Bayleaf brand and Carplanet Trading Ltd, with establishments in Watford and Barnet. His early ventures in the labourintensive world—from the rug trade and Sunday markets to launching his first Indian restaurant in South East London at the age of 17-shaped his understanding of every business facet. Despite an initial setback, he honed his craft with invaluable experience in a Punjabi-owned restaurant, eventually partnering in a struggling North London restaurant and transforming it into a profitable venture.

Recognising an untapped market, he boldly ventured into food delivery in the 1990s with Bayleaf Takeaway on Whetstone High Road-a move that garnered multiple awards and accolades. In 2013, seizing the gap in fine dining Indian cuisine, he opened Bayleaf Restaurant, where a dedicated focus on both culinary excellence and impeccable presentation has cemented its success.

Parallel to his restaurant triumphs. Tofozzul's foray into the automotive world commenced as a homebased hobby in 2006. Impressed by early returns, he expanded first to a forecourt of 20 vehicles, and then to a car showroom in 2009. This evolution led him to establish Hiltop Motors—a premier German car dealership—and today he serves as the Chairman of Carplanet, a car supermarket with over 1,500 vehicles, operated alongside his 3 sons. Beyond business. Tofozzul is deeply involved in local charities

This system not only streamlines operations during busy periods, but it also empowers our waitstaff to manage more tables.

and voluntary work, currently serving as President of BBCA, Vice Chair of Historical Bangladesh Centre, and founder-trustee of the Bangladeshi Welfare Society of Barnet.

Tofozzul's journey is a testament to his relentless drive and passion for innovation. His ability to identify and capitalise on emerging trends has not only propelled his business forward but has also set new standards in the industry. The Bayleaf brand, known for its exquisite flavours and exeptional service, has become synonymous with quality and sophistication.

Beyond his entrepreneurship pursuits, Tofozzul is committed to giving back to the community. He actively supports local charities and initiatives. believing that success is measured not just by profits but by the positive impact one can have on others. His story is an inspiring example of how vision, perseverance and a heart for service can transform challenges into opportunities and dreams into reality.

As Tofozzul continues to innovate and expand his ventures, there's no doubt that his influence will be felt for years to come, inspiring the next generation of enterpreneurs to dream big and work hard to achieve their goals.





Touris Ali

Eastern Eye Newton Abbot TQ12 2EU Touris Ali started his career with restaurant job in 1982. Food is his passion and he loves to cook. He wanted to be his own boss and hence started restaurant business and materialised ideas he has gained from many years of experience in hospitality.

Established in 1990 in Newton Abbot's Queen Street, he has been successfully running his restaurant Easter Eye. From last 29 years under his ownership, they are busiest and first Indian restaurant in South Devon. In 1990 Eastern Eve started with 12 tables. In 2003 Touris refurbished and expanded the premises with 31 tables and celebrated an opening party for three nights inviting all of their loyal customers. Once again in 2013, they expanded the sitting capacity to 41 tables and refurbished the restaurant with an interior decoration. Now they can accommodate up to 160 persons in the restaurant.

Touris loves to face constant challenges in his business. Every day is different. Every shift has a new surprise, and he enjoys the challenge of handling them. He also likes how he improves more with each one. He always handles a new situation better than the last. Sponsoring local sports, supporting local charities, special compliments for customer's special occasion, buying best quality ingredients, Social Media - these are his brand building and marketing approaches.

They have designed their menu with selective dishes from South India, North India, West Bengal and coastal area. Their most popular signature dishes are Komla Chicken, Murgh Ghassi, Chicken Angara, Chicken Chengazi, Rajasthani Laal Maas, Sri Lankan Sefood Curry, Chennai Ghosth, Westbengal Murgh, etc.

Touris is well aware that employees can make or break his business, so he motivates them by telling them they are doing a great job and giving surprise bonus when an employee does a great iob, and he also mentions that he feels very lucky to be working with them. He frequently communicates with his employee, let them know how the business is progressing and takes 10

Every day is different. Every shift has a new surprise, and he enjoys the challenge of handling them. He also likes how he improves more with each one. He always handles a new situation better than the last.

minutes briefing every day before they start work.

Touris uses innovative technology and modern equipment for his kitchen and front of the house. He advertises and promotes his menu items through live events, email, website, facebook, twitter, free Wi-Fi splash page, which attracts and reaches to the customers quickly and they get quick response.

Long time working experience staff, family involvement, keeping adequate funds in reserve, getting a memorable logo, ensuring a unique menu card, investing on customers, having responsive website and social media pages, these are the key ingredients for Eastern Eye's success in South Devon in last 29 years. The business has given him much social recognition. He is currently the vice chairman of Devon Bangladesh Association and a trustee of Bishwanath Education Trust.





Jassim Hussain

Shoreditch Fish & Chips
117 Redchurch St
London E2 7DL

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Born in the bustling city of London, Jassim Hussain, the son of Haji MD. Rafique Hussain, follows in the footsteps of his grandfather's legacy as a prominent business figure in the family. He is the grandson of Haji Aman Ullah, the founder of the well-known Karimullah Market and Aman Ullah convention centre in Sylhet. With a background in Optometry, Jassim's journey in the world of business began after a brief stint working for the NHS.

Taking on the challenge to manage his father's property portfolio, Jassim quickly rose to prominence in the property rental industry. However, he was not content to rest on his laurels, and soon set his sights on a new frontier - the food industry. With his brother's idea and guidance, Jassim launched Shoreditch Fish & Chips in 2018, a unique take on traditional British cuisine that quickly gained widespread recognition and accolades.

Undeterred by the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, Jassim seized the opportunity to explore another market and founded Holy Smokes BBQ in 2021. With a focus on smoked brisket, ribs, and Americanstyle burgers, Holy Smokes BBQ quickly became a staple of the food industry.

Jassim's business acumen and focus on halal trading with barakah (blessings) in its earnings have earned him widespread recognition, including a win in the Catering Circle Talent Show in 2019 and a finalist award in the Restaurant Star Creative Dish Competition in 2023. With a team of 18 dedicated employees and a passion for finding new ventures, Jassim's future in the world of business is bright and full of promise.

Jassim's business acumen and focus on halal trading with barakah (blessings) in its earnings have earned him widespread recognition, including a win in the Catering Circle Talent Show in 2019 and a finalist award in the Restaurant Star Creative Dish Competition in 2023.





Nurul Hussain Kadir

Moghul 99-101 Main Road Sidcup, DA14 6ND Nurul Hussain, known to many as Kadir, embarked on his journey in the culinary realm in 1985. He took a job at the Moghul restaurant in Sidcup, a place that would become an integral part of his life's story. A year into his employment, he ventured to Bangladesh for a family holiday, only to return and be offered a partnership with his previous boss. With a bit of hesitation, but trust in his former employer, he accepted and opened his first business in North London in 1987.

However, the initial years were far from easy, as the country was facing a deep recession under the leadership of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Despite the challenges, Nurul persevered and sold the business, though at a loss. He decided to pursue a new career path and became a driving instructor, honing his skills and learning to survive in a challenging role.

In 2000, fate intervened in the form of a friend and successful businessman, Jamal Hussain, who offered him another opportunity to be in partnership with him. Nurul, who had worked in the restaurant before, eventually agreed to the challenge and took on the role of managing the struggling business.

Years of hard work and competition with established Indian restaurants in Sidcup paid off, as Nurul and Jamal expanded their restaurant by acquiring the property next door in 2007. Despite facing another recession in 2009, they persevered and merged the two buildings into one, finally opening their expanded Moghul in 2015 to great success.

Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, Nurul managed to keep his restaurant open for takeaways and all his staff employed, thanks in part to the support of the government. The chancellor's Eat out to Help initiative was a big success for the Moghul, and Nurul is determined to continue offering good food and service that customers have come to expect from the restaurant.

Nurul believes in the power of self-belief and doing one's best. As he wisely states, "My belief has always been to believe in yourself, do the best of what you know, and keep going, and don't try to copy others. Do your best in what you do best. That is better than trying to copy someone else."

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Ataur Rahman Lyak

Rajdoot Tandoori 220 London Road Guildford, GU4 7JS Ataur Rahman Lyak is far from your average restaurateur. He's a passionate chef, a savvy entrepreneur, and a devoted foodie. With over three decades of experience in the restaurant industry, Ataur has carved out a legacy built on dedication, innovation, and a deep love for food.

His journey began in 1992 with the opening of his first restaurant, Rajdoot. But the spark ignited earlier—in 1988—when he first worked in a restaurant and discovered the potential of the food business. "I realised the restaurant industry had high profit margins and low management hassle. I knew I could make a success of it," he recalls.

And succeed he did. Ataur's favourite part of the business is being on the restaurant floor, engaging with customers, listening to their feedback, and turning their ideas into action. His commitment to creating a unique dining experience is evident in his carefully curated menu, featuring signature dishes like Tandoori Mushrooms Dupiaza, Murg Malai Sag, and Handi Lamb. These offerings are not only customer favourites but also deliver flavours that are truly one-of-a-kind.

His guiding principle is simple: "Buy fresh, sell fresh." Ataur believes that freshness is the cornerstone of great food and a successful restaurant. This philosophy extends beyond ingredients to his entire business model, which prioritises simplicity, quality, and consistency.

One of the biggest challenges in the restaurant industry is maintaining high service standards. Ataur tackles this by investing in modern technology and high-tech kitchen equipment, making operations smoother and more efficient for his staff. From Epos systems for order management to remote access tools and tablet-based ordering, his embrace of digital solutions has streamlined service and enhanced customer convenience.

Marketing, for Ataur, is rooted in community engagement. He sponsors local football clubs, provides charity meals for schools, organises fundraising events for churches, and actively participates in social initiatives. His online presence is equally strong, using platforms like Facebook, Google, and TripAdvisor to promote his restaurant and connect with customers.

Despite his success, Ataur acknowledges the challenges of sourcing quality food and energy supplies at competitive prices. Yet, he remains optimistic, believing that with hard work and smart management, these hurdles can be overcome.

When asked about the secret to his success, Ataur offers timeless advice: "Buy fresh, sell fresh, and have fewer items on your menu. Your customers will love the taste of freshness. Be humble and friendly with everyone. Word of mouth takes it a long way."

Looking ahead, Ataur is cautiously optimistic. He's waiting for the economic climate to improve before launching his next venture, recognising that rising living costs have impacted consumer spending. He believes timing is crucial and is prepared to act when conditions are right.

Ataur Rahman Lyak's story is a powerful example of what passion, perseverance, and community spirit can achieve. His commitment to quality, innovation, and customer satisfaction has made him a respected figure in the restaurant world. His journey reminds us that success in hospitality isn't just about great food—it's about building relationships, embracing technology, and staying true to your values.

As Ataur wisely says, "Word of mouth takes it a long way"—and his thriving business is proof of that.





Abdul Karim

Mahdi Lounge 32-34 Cinque Ports Street, TN31 7AN When Abdul Karim arrived in England from Bangladesh in 1977 at the age of 12, he had no experience in the restaurant industry. But just two years later, a part-time job at Darbar restaurant in Bayswater, London, would change the course of his life. Karim fell in love with the hospitality world and, after completing his GCSEs in 1980, joined Darbar full-time. From there, he embarked on a journey through several restaurants—including Wimbledon Tandoori—where he honed his skills as a waiter, manager, and kitchen worker, driven by a deep passion for cooking.

Karim dreamed of owning his own restaurant but understood the risks of going solo too soon. In 1986, he made a strategic move by partnering with others to open Kent Tandoori (later renamed Baadshah) in Tenterden, Kent. The restaurant was a resounding success, and Karim spent most of his time in the kitchen, introducing traditional Indian and Bangladeshi dishes that were new to the region.

As his family grew, so did his ambitions. In 2002, he opened Mahdi Spice—named after his third son—in Rye, East Sussex. The location was daring, just steps away from a well-established curry house, The Gandhi, and another competitor nearby. But Karim was undeterred. He poured his energy into every aspect of the business, ensuring his personal touch was felt in every detail. His relentless pursuit of excellence paid off: Mahdi Spice quickly became the top curry house in Rye, winning multiple awards in its first year, including the prestigious Curry Award.

Karim's success is rooted in two key principles: outstanding food and exceptional customer service. A firm believer in 100% customer satisfaction, he goes above and beyond to accommodate every request. His mission is simple—ensure every guest leaves happy and eager to return. And they do. His reputation for quality and hospitality soon led to the closure of the two competing curry houses nearby.

With Mahdi Spice thriving, Karim's three sons joined the business, each bringing their own strengths. Jakaria, the eldest, holds a business degree; Mahee studied computer science; and Mahdi, the youngest, is pursuing business

management at the University of Canterbury. All three have grown up immersed in the restaurant world, learning the trade from their father through hands-on experience both front-of-house and in the kitchen. Karim has not only built a successful business but also nurtured the next generation of restaurateurs.

Despite his achievements, Karim remains deeply connected to his roots. In 2010, he founded the Dighal Bak Union Development Association, UK, and currently serves as its Vice President. In 2016, he established the Greater London Nabiganj Welfare Association, which focuses on improving conditions in his hometown—particularly in areas affected by seasonal flooding and monsoons. His charitable work addresses critical social issues, with a strong emphasis on education and youth development. Since 2006, he has been actively involved with the Zukta Razya Nabigonj Education Trust.

Karim's contributions extend to the broader Bangladeshi catering community. He is a founding member and Executive Member of the Bangladesh Caterers Association and has been part of the British Bangladesh Caterers Association (BBCA) since 2012, where he currently serves as a Senior Vice President.

Now, with his sons gradually taking on more responsibility, Karim quietly hopes to begin planning his retirement. Yet his presence remains a cornerstone of Mahdi Spice. Whether greeting a familiar local, a curious tourist, or a solo diner on curry night, his warm smile and generous hospitality embody the spirit of South Asian culture.

Recently, Karim transformed a four-decadeold restaurant into the upscale Mahdi Lounge, a bold move that signals his continued drive to innovate and elevate the dining experience. His journey—from a teenage kitchen hand to a respected restaurateur and community leader is a testament to hard work, vision, and heart.





Aki Rahman

The Don
Milton Keynes MK9 1LR

Aki Rahman accidentally fell in love with how dynamic the Indian restaurant market was whilst working for his uncles. Any effort that was put into aspects such as marketing and tweaks to service was rewarded by increase in custom straight away. He gained enough trust over time and they gave him carte blanche with regards to business policy.

With the advent of social media slowly starting to make a bigger impact on revenue Aki saw this as his chance to cash in on this cow that is the volatile Indian Restaurant game and started planning for his very own establishment.

He's loved every minute of it and has no regrets, even though he entered into it without the full blessings of his parents. They wanted more for their son who they privately educated. The education he received from his time at secondary school and college has set him up and influenced many aspects of how he view life and go about doing business.

Their marketing, ranges from closing the restaurant and renovating for 1 night on Halloween to scare the living bats out of their customers in the dark with night vision cameras to giving away a £1000.00 diamond ring during Valentines. They've attempted drone deliveries of their curry, which made national news being invited onto the This Morning Show with Phillip Schofield and Holly Willoughby broadcast on ITV. Modern innovations and technology have shaped their business from state of the art Epos systems and top end marketing companies to help spread and establish the brand.

Don Utd & Don Fc football teams have gone onto win many tournaments under the stewardship of Johirul Islam and Aki, respectively. They even organised their first tournament in 2019, raising £500 for Selfless.

Aki's business partners Hussain Chowdhury & Aziz Miah, together have created countless menus with their ideas coming from visiting the very best restaurants across the country, Amaya in Knightsbridge being their particular favourite. Thank you mum and dad for putting up with me and my wife and for always being there through thick and thin.

Aki is always grateful to the Almighty for his success - "Allhumdulilah all 4 businesses have been successful and I give all thanks to Allah but I feel our creator cannot be happy that I have been profiting from the sale of alcohol and that is why I feel it's time to hang up my boots." "I've been part of the industry now for 6 years and initially my reason for diving head first into it was purely as a means to an end. The end being, Film making and Documentaries with the means being the income from the restaurants," he adds.

He has other big projects planned. One of them being a restaurant consultancy and marketing business called Isaacs Projects and another, which he hope to be a Just Eat killer.

His passion for film making has lead him to forming a film making production company called Aki Films. He also has a successful photography business called Aki Vision.

"Anyone going into the industry, persevere and put in hard work and effort into marketing and vour venture will be fruitful In Sha Allah," assures Aki Rahman.

I fell in love with the hustle of the restaurant game—every tweak, every campaign brought instant results. With faith, creativity, and grit, success followed. Marketing is the heartbeat of this business.





Akthoraz Miah

Radhuni Restaurant Bucks HP27 9AA

Radhuni Restaurant Bedford, MK40 3PF

Akthoraz Miah has been in the business for 30 years, allowing him to build up a wealthy bank of expertise on how to run a business.

He was very passionate about food and cooking and wanted to move into this industry to make a contribution with his creativity and ideas that cultivated his current restaurant, Radhuni.

His favourite part of the business is creating new innovations over time and how it brings a young and thrilling feeling to his business. Also, it brings iov to socialise with his customers over food and to hear about their satisfaction with the service the business offers!

Akthoraz and his chef partake in lots of important research in how they can bring new dishes that is formulated out of special spices and fresh and locally sourced ingredients. He emphasises, "It is really important to ensure that our dishes are made with creativity and not something that is very common. This is what makes some of our highly rated signature dishes."

When asked how he motivates his staff to keep a constant service ethic, Akthoraz replies, "The business ensures that the staff are always updated in our regular staff training, to ensure that staff do not forget what standards should be set in providing customer service and keeping hygiene top notch."

They use Epos system and online ordering service to provide their customers easier ways to eat their food guicker and in convenient places. Akthoraz is very happy embracing these modern technologies, as he believes, "When customers look back on their experience with you, the customer service will be as crucial as the food. Few customers are willing to rave about a dining experience where the food was delayed or the service poor, no matter how good the dishes were. How customers experience the service at your restaurant will also have a key role to place in how they review you online and whether your restaurant is recommended to friends."

For marketing and advertising they utilise social media such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to help other people know about them. "Current customers are able to send links to their friends and families to our page, which allows them to know more about the business and thus be more inclined to try it out" says Akthoraz.

There are always challenges in food service business, as he mentions, "Some of the challenges involve being ready and quick to solve any problems that may arise any time. Another challenge would also be keeping hygiene standards, as well as making sure cashflow is positive."

The key ingredients to his Restaurant's success are - innovation, determination, good communication and social skills, and most importantly, passion about food.

"Thinking about you would like to be served and what atmosphere you'd like to feel when you walk into the restaurant - apply this to creating the perfect restaurant experience," he advises. And, "The first step if you are going to open a restaurant is to draw up a plan - a business plan. It starts and ends with a plan; because it is the plan that lays out the roadmap to take you from where you are to where to go."

"I am very happy with where I am in the business, as I feel successful in reaching my goal towards creating a successful business, making loyal customers happy with their food and earning recognition for my staff and their hard work over the years. There's always room for improvements in the future, no matter how perfect the business is - at the moment the business is running smoothly," he confidently proclaims.

His favourite part of the business is creating new innovations over time and how it. brings a young and thrilling feeling to his business.





Ashraf Talukder

Tamasha Group Lindfield, Haywards Heath RH16 2HH Ashraf Talukder followed his hobby into the trade, and when he started he could see how lucrative the trade was and his passion for customer service and also the quality of food which the chefs provide. "I could see where I could improve, and well, the rest is history."

Passion for food, diligence in service and welcoming ambience, he says, are three key ingredients to creating a successful restaurant. He always put food first. Authentic flavours are at the heart of his restaurants and the recipes he creates are based on Asian traditions in hand with modern twists to create signature dishes. But he is well aware that "Your restaurant may have great-tasting food, but if the atmosphere is bland or distasteful, it will overshadow the quality of the meal. On the flip side, a great restaurant atmosphere will keep your customers around longer and ensure that they'll return again and again."

He looks at his competitors and sees what he and his team can do different. He creates a system that allows him to remain consistent in everything he does. He has kept all his restaurants with the same concept of dishes. All his chefs are trained in the same style. They have a very unique menu and customers can taste this when they come and dine with them.

"You must rely on your own passion to drive the passion of your staff." He gives emphasis to both a passion for food and an agreement of how food should be prepared. He wants them to agree with what he is telling them. If they do not agree they will not be able to prepare truly delicious food. It is about the recipe, but it is also about how it is prepared. With discipline you have consistency so that when customers who order something one day can come back and think, "Ah yes, this is the taste I remember." He is very innovative and hence, he says, he was one of the firsts if not the first to bring out Theme Nights or Tribute Nights within his establishments.

Ashraf treats each member of his team in the same fashion and expect each customer to be treated the same as well. At the table the customers must receive attention quickly and the food must arrive with perfect timing with consistency in the preparation and delivery. They should feel welcome and well fed. He does team building sessions in his business, where he asks his colleagues for their views on how they did and also where they can improve, plus he has incentives in place to reward his employees who go above and beyond.

He uses online ordering plus an epos system where his colleagues can take orders and he is looking at investing in the top of the range software so their efficiency gets better and they can concentrate on the customer.

What kind of marketing and advertising initiatives have worked for you? What haven't?

Word of mouth has been his best marketing and it's free. Sending newsletters out to customer base has also been a key element. Newspapers have gone down and marketing with it due to the digital age.

Retaining staff is a challenge for him at the moment. As the business grew, so did the necessity of putting together a qualified staff. Says Ashraf, "You have to make sure you have the right people for the job." Everyone wants to be next to family and they are finding it hard and he also can see that the volume of new recruits to the trade is very low. He says restaurant business always has unanticipated issues. He emphasises the importance of planning anyway. "You can usually overcome a couple of nuances or a couple of wrinkles, but you can't overcome a lot of them," Ashraf says. "So having a plan where there are fewer unforeseen challenges is the way to go."

Customers are doing favour to you by choosing your restaurant. In turn you have to be ready to provide them with the quality food and service they have come to know. Your customers trust you and they put their faith in your skills to bring a new and unique plate that offers them a chance to experience something special.

Ashraf has been in the restaurant business near about 25 years if not more. Now he is thinking of semi-retirement: "So to do that I must pass down my experience to my protégé, so he or she can carry on with the reigns - If ever I can do that..."





Atik Rahman

Graam Bangla London E1 6RL

"What I share with restaurant owners is how everything they do and every decision they make affects the bottom line," says Chef Atikur Rahman. As a consultant chef, all he can do is offer guidance and recommendations that will help the restaurant meet or exceed its goals. He understands that structure and systems are vital to a restaurant's success.

Atik was born in August 1977 in Moulvi Bazaar, Bangladesh. He came to this country with his family at the age of 19 and now lives in Chelsea with his wife Lina and son Samuel. Atik developed his passion for curry at the young age of 12. There, when he saw his mother cooking, his first curiosity about the journey of spices and ingredients began. He would always give a hand in the kitchen and it was then he had a great passion and immense interest in everything related to food and ingredients.

Celebrity chef Atik Rahman started of this culinary journey working at the famous blue bird restaurant located in Chelsea (the heart of London). With his growing passion for food, Atik passed his NVQ level3 (professional cookery) at the Hammersmith and West London College. He also opened his own food education class serving individuals determined to learn the secrets of spices. To compliment his skills and talents, he provides chef consultancy, training and other curricular activities to develop the craft of cooking.

Chef Atik has been honoured as the private chef of the great Sheikh Bin Zayed who is the king of Arab Emirates. His first major achievement was when he won the 2007 Chef Award, and the following year he also won the British Chef of the year. "There's a big demand for Chefs to reach celebrity status today and I have had my share of attention... This meant a lot as it is a privilege to be nominated by your peers as someone who is making a different in a very competitive industry. However, for me, it is all about the cooking not about fame" says Atik.

His own show called Atik's Recipe, aired every Sunday on Channel 9. This was his main show alongside NTV's Atik's Kitchen and Roshoighor on Bangla TV. All of these programs allow viewers to learn Atik's unique culinary skills. He has an outstanding and high-profile career providing food and hospitality consulting services, an extensive network and deep knowledge of the consumer and B2B sectors.

Cooking is an art, not a race. Every dish deserves care, and every decision in a restaurant from service to sourcing-impacts the bottom line. Quality must always come before profit

In addition to being a food and restaurant reviewer for several media outlets, he is also a regular contributor to a variety of publications including Restaurant Magazine, H-The Hotel Magazine, BBC Food, Pub Chef, Eastern Eye, The Asian Age and Tandoori Magazine. Chef Atik has also worked as a freelance restaurant inspector for Caterer & Hotelkeeper, covering a wide range of topics such as home delivery, how to train staff to increase sales, how to handle awkward customers, and many other informative features.

From restaurants to convenience food to consumer tastes, his understanding of the Indian and European food scene is extraordinary and is considered one of the leaders in this subject in the sector. Cooking is an art to him, and he considers each dish a masterpiece. That is why it is difficult to be faced with the need to work guickly when you want each dish to come out beautifully. This demand has allowed him learn a few very important skills he uses at his restaurant. Atik believes, "when restaurants are too focused on profits they make sacrifices to quality that will not provide customer satisfaction. Restaurants have to believe that it is not about saving money but about quality over price."





Iftekar Rahman Shawon

Mumbai Wokingham Wokingham RG40 1XJ Iftekhar Loves food tasting, he has passion for creating new dishes in his spare time. His parents' homemade cooking has inspired him to start cooking. He has been in the industry for the last ten years as an amateur working and supporting the family restaurants, however involved independently in the last two years with his own business, Mumbai Wokingham. His father and uncles were very supportive and provided invaluable advice as they have decades of experience in the catering industry which started from his grandfather in the late 60's in Britain.

They are always trying new and improved methods when it comes to food ingredient and good quality poultry and produce at their business. They promote healthy eating by offering vegan options on their menu, plenty of vegetarian and light snack options. Their menu is very different and dishes are incomparable and unique to their local competition. They are able to offer customers light snacks such as Mumbai sandwich, Tortilla wraps, healthy baps and burger alongside the usual traditional curries.

They used leaflet distribution as a marketing strategy since opening of the business. The quality of the print makes a huge difference in making impact, vibrant colours, smooth texture and good quality menu has helped them stand out against other companies using leaflets as their marketing tool. Online presence has really helped them from website views, instagram followers, facebebook pages and weekly updates via sms marketing by promoting and keeping in touch

In the last two years being able to adopt with changes for Coronavirus and all the variant restrictions under the government guidelines has been very difficult but they have followed through. Mumbai Wokingham had all social distance measures and guidelines rules followed.

Moreover, the rising prices of good means their margins are small. The rising inflation means they are constantly challenging and menu prices are constantly under review. At this backdrop, "the hardest part of the job would be dealing with staffing issues. Labour shortages, shortage of skilled workers and commodity price rises means less choice and higher prices and struggling to healthy profit," says Iftekhar.



The quality of the print makes a huge difference in making impact, vibrant colours, smooth texture and good quality menu has helped them stand out against other companies using leaflets as their marketing tool.

Iftekhar's SUCCESS TIPS:

Teamwork: Working as a team has certainly lifted the business. They treated their employees like a family and took care of them. Employee incentives and all personal support motivate employees, which has a positive impact on their day-to-day operations and thus a positive impact on their business.

Customer service: They like to hear from their customers and always make sure customer have a smile. Unhappy customers are always contacted further to continue with them.

Product and Cost: Having confidence in their products and knowing the real cost of their raw food against menu price, they follow a standard formula for pricing food by gross profit margin.

NEW BRANCH!

Mumbai Rickmansworth...is opening soon!

It's been a great journey, a journey which has been very pleasant and fruitful. From starting at home kitchen to a shop front is proud moment for Iftekhar: "This achievement shall create a great example for our new generation who are looking to start up their own journey to the curry industry."





Julal Syed

Taj Tandoori Cambridge CB1 7AA Julal Syed has been running the Taj Tandoori in Cambridge for 16 years. This is a familyrun business. After completing his BSc in Computer Science at the University of Leeds, an opportunity came across his way to take over his father's business. That was in 2004. Julal says his business grew because he heeded the advice of his father and other older executives who told him, "Concentrate on progress rather than perfection."

Favourite part of his business, he says, is the education he receives from it. "Whether that is creating new dishes on the menu, strategizing the latest marketing techniques or working out clever ways to save and make more money." Being tenacious was one of the strategies Julal used to break into the business. He always advises others, "Don't give up. Be persistent." Also, having the best tasting products with the most expensive ingredients allows him to charge more. "You have to compete on the quality, because big businesses can't mass-produce that," he adds. "That's what sets us apart."

Their menu is a mix of both authentic and fusion street food. "We take our inspiration from the influences we have had in our lives." One speciality that is very popular among their regular diners is their Lamb Rogan Shepherd's Pie!

They have a family based culture at the restaurant. Everyone is aligned with the vision that they promote, "This makes the staff genuinely care which in turn provides a great service ethic throughout the team," says Julal. "Good people make all the difference."

"Epos, food processors, cutlery polishers, dishwashers, combi ovens, digital loyalty schemes are all utilised to make the restaurant as efficient as possible," says Julal.

Using a marketing company has helped propel our business to new heights. They showcase everything we do using original, fun and creative content.

Running a restaurant is not always easy. Working evenings and weekends as well as managing everything in the day are quite challenging, "One of my biggest hurdles," says Julal, "is systemising the restaurant to a standard that I am happy with - pulling together all the elements, from turning

Whether that is creating new dishes on the menu. strategizing the latest marketing techniques or working out clever ways to save and make more money." Being tenacious was one of the strategies Julal used to break into the business.

your concept into a working model to cultivating your employee base." The best advice Julal got when he started his restaurant is, "Do not take no for an answer. Overcome the obstacles set by others who try to talk you out of it."

"Increasing my knowledge continuously has been a huge part of the success of my restaurant," says Julal. He gives value to what experts say, "Don't get in the same swimming pool with the sharks." And urges aspiring restaurateurs to know their competition. "You have to know who you are up against. The best thing is to make sure you create a unique niche in the industry before you go forward. And always moving forward and keeping up to date with the latest trends and techniques are paramount." The basic truth of the restaurant industry, he says, is, "You are only as good as your last meal. And there is really no substitute for that."

Systemising the Operations, Marketing and Financials of the restaurant is Julal's goal. "Once this is done I will replicate the processes for new ventures as well as helping others with the knowledge I have gained."





Kamal Rob, Ambrish Joijode and Mofazzul Hussain

Khau Galli Royton OL26AB AJ — Came from a business family background and who are inro business from last 80 years in India. He has clear ethos in life when it comes to business. He has always been passionate about food, being born and bred in Mumbai where street food has been the backbone of people coming from all walks of life.

KR — Came from a marketing background. He's been a very successful entrepreneur with a clear vision for success. A Bangladeshi and the youngest of the family, he grew up watching his brother work in the hospitality industry. He has always been fascinated by cooking. In the past, his family owned several restaurants and eateries, where he gained much knowledge over the years.

MH — Came from the wedding management industry. He has always been keen on opening a restaurant since realizing at the age of 16 that without food there would be no wedding. He has worked part-time in restaurants and loved every minute of it. When his friend Kamal approached him about investing in Khau Galli, he didn't hesitate knowing it was a great idea from the start.

They opened their restaurant Khau Galli in 2019 just before pandemic — 1st restaurant business for all partners. The favourite part of their business is to see a satisfied smile on their customers after they relish Khau Galli's food. They and their motivated staff live for that moment. The traditional recipes sourced from AJ's mother in Mumbai are as authentic as it can get with an adaptation of our local customer's palate. The idea is to make the customer feel closest to the street food available on the streets of Mumbai. Green Lamb Chops is an ideal example as their signature dish, thanks to AJ's mother in India who is the inventor of this dish.

"Work environment has to be a happy always," says Kamal Rob. "We provide fair salary with shared tips for all staff. We have star waiter/waitress for the front of house and star worker in the kitchen monthly with performance bonuses also a yearly star performer with a big performance bonus. They rely on technologies to run my restaurant efficiently and effectively. Everything is well structured with the right technology in place to save time and money while having peace of mind.

Cloud-based phone helps them collect data, control

66

The traditional recipes sourced from AJ's mother in Mumbai are as authentic as it can get with an adaptation of our local customer's palate. The idea is to make the customer feel closest to the street food available on the streets of Mumbai

their phone system from their mobile and makes their business look professional with waiting music and giving information while customers are waiting on the line, such as opening hours and special announcements. They have done a lot of research when it came to finding the right EPoS and Online Ordering solutions.

They have a device (Waiter paging system) in their main reception and smartwatches on their waiting staff which signals when a customer presses a button on their table notifying the customer needs their attention. This simple piece of tech saves me time, money and more importantly, service improves a lot.

The combination of a smart alarm system, cameras and password-controlled access to the restaurant makes their life so much simpler and easier as their staff can access the restaurant without them. Kamal and his team make use of any tech that automates and makes the business self-sustaining and self-running. They have their own server installed in their restaurant that controls most of the tech they used and this is part of the plan to expand their business and manage all their future sites too. Well-structured business plan with scalability is the key here.





Poly Rahman and Family

Palm Tree London, E7 9HA

Poly Rahman has always been involved in catering business since a very young age. She gained experience by working at Indian, Indonesian and Greek reataurants. Her passion about food business has always been on top of her agendas. She opened her own first restaurant in London in 2010 with her life partner Nadir Mazumder. Which was a very successful in its own terms. It was a Turkish and Greek restaurant. And in 2016 she had her 2nd business, an Indian Takeaway, in north London. She also started production of Gawa ghee in the UK in 2018. Later on she had teamed up with Dean Chowdhury to open her catering business for weddings and special occasions.

Dean Mahdi Chowdhury who was trained to be a successful Restaurant owner by his father Mr Mohib Chowdhury, starting from a family business "Akash" an Indian Restaurant in west London. Dean was always eager to take new challenges. In 2011 he ventured out with "Palm Tree Banqueting Hall". Where full event management is taken care of, whether indoor or outdoor.

Dean Chowdhury had teamed up with Poly Rahman and Nadir Mazumder in their Ghee production business branded as "SALWAH." since 2018 its been very successful and still growing.

Nadir Mazumder, after his graduation went to India to train as a chef. Spending 6 years in Delhi and Mumbai at five star hotels facilities with Micheline star chefs he had gained the knowledge of north Indian cooking.

Dean, Poly and Nadir have started their own catering business "Panache" kitchen, providing food to "Palm Tree" and other venues. As a strong bonding as business partners and their individual skills together making the business very successful and still growing.



As a strong bonding as business partners and their individual skills together making the business very successful and still growing.

As a team they believe, to be successful in any business, there is a need for 3 key ingredients.

- 1. Passion
- 2. Skills
- 3. Execution

Most importantly, a good team and team work.





Mohammed Shahidur Rahman

The Rajdoot London W1U 4HW Shahidur Rahman has been in the restaurant business for over 24 years. He initially chose to start his restaurant business as a means of supporting his family, and he learned over the years how to make a business a success before opening his own restaurant with three brothers and a son. Then he translated those ideas into serving the local community with fresh, delicious food with impeccable service.

What he enjoys most is seeing how good food can bring people together, as he loves serving customers. According to him providing excellent customer experience in a restaurant is key to building restaurant community and repeat business. In an industry that is constantly changing, Shahid and his team are able to adapt to modern times while maintaining the traditional cooking methods and recipes that have made them so successful and Shahid belives this is the best part of the business.

They choose their menu and ingredients with care. It all starts with the seasonality. They only use the best produce available at the time from their local suppliers, and freshly ground spices that allow their dishes to speak for themselves. Their menu is inspired by dishes across the region of South Asia, and they place great value on authenticity, with dishes such as the popular Bahari Lamb, a dish of lamb that has been marinated for 24 hours in a complex masala, then cooked and served in a thick spicy sauce that will leave you wanting more.

Shahid always motivates his staff to keep a constant service ethic. Their staff are trained to be professional, attentive and always willing to go the extra mile for their customers.

It is no denying fact that, he emphasises, "one of the most important factors to consider when running a restaurant is the quality of the customer service you provide. Good customer service includes providing courteous and quick service to meet customers' needs during their dining experience, which can determine whether or not someone becomes a recurring customer."

He believes:

- "Happy customers generate more positive feedback and reviews for your restaurant.
- Excellent customer service can increase revenue.
- Satisfied customers are more likely to become regular customers.



We use tablets to seat customers according to their reservations, and systems that enable us to process bookings and online orders quickly and efficiently

The longevity of a business usually relies on good customer service."

"While we consider ourselves traditionalists in terms of the curry house experience, I quickly recognised the need for modernisation and keeping up with the times. We use tablets to seat customers according to their reservations, and systems that enable us to process bookings and online orders quickly and efficiently", says Shahid.

They often utilise social media platforms such as TripAdvisor, Facebook, Google and Yelp as they believe they play a huge role in showcasing a restaurant's online presence and its popularity. "We have been constantly ranked as one of the best Indian restaurants online as a result of this focus and attention to detail, while offering special discounts from time to time to those who follow us on social media, and for special occasions."

What are some of the challenges of being a restaurant owner and manager? What's the hardest part of your job? Shahid replies, "There are a number of staff shortages across the industry, as it takes a lot of skill to train as a chef at an Indian restaurant and I believe the government should consider allowing restaurants to bring in skilled workers from the region as Indian restaurants have been the backbone of the service industry for many years, and we have been one of the biggest contributors to the British economy."

Shahid wants to serve the community, nationally and internationally, to those in need, as his parents taught him the importance of giving back at an early age, and that's what he's always pushed for in his business and will continue to do so in the future.





Abdur Rahman (Mona)

The Grand Sultan
Port Talbot SA13 2PA
The Chillies Indian Rest.
Pontarddulais SA4 8TH
Chilli Two
Swansea SA6 5LH
Chilli Express

Swansea SA4 8SY

The business was started by his family. Growing up he used to help and naturally began to enjoy as well as show a keen interest in the field. He was always interested in Politics and the restaurant was the place for conversations, discussions and meetings. The restaurant became a meeting place not just to socialise, and talk about ideas but share visions and find new ways to do business and new technologies and techniques to discover. For Mona Miah, it wasn't just a business but a way of life. The business has been in the family since the 80's but he's been involved in it since 1990.

Mona Miha's favourite part of this business has to be meeting new people. Over the years it developed his confidence as he had to socialise and meet all kinds of people and he enjoyed it very much. It made him realise he enjoys helping people and being an active member of the community not just a business owner. The business helped improve his communication skills which allowed him to do charity events, help those in need as he had the skills and expertise to do so as well as arrange fundraising for many causes. The restaurant was never just a restaurant for me but a place where he grew as a person and gained many skills which have made me the person he is today.

He discusses this with his chefs and together they brainstorm and research new dishes and ingredients. Their signature dish would be the Jalfrezi because its traditional and tasty and one of Mona Miah's favourites. They want to keep the food authentic, fresh and true to its roots so it's important for them to produce these to the best of their abilities rather than losing them by changing or evolving them into something else.

The staff are all trained and he tries to ensure they are happy to be part of the business and have a passion for the industry. They are aware of maintaining good standards and excellent customer service. Mona loves what he does and his staff see that and are inspired to enjoy the work and always treat their customers with the utmost respect, care and attention.

They use social media for the businesses and try to interact with the public with promotions and advertising. "When everything's online you have to move with the times," says Mona. They have modern equipment in the restaurants and ensure

they are up to date with technology. Internet bookings and online services are a vital part of daily life now so they try to stay current and maintain a presence online.

He believes, Social media is good for reaching out to large numbers of people quickly. Before this they used local news to advertise the businesses. They can interact with people online now, take orders and bookings quicker. So the internet is probably most useful tool for them rather than posting out paper menus or leaflets to homes. They have a database of clients so they communicate with them with deals, events, and offers as well as help celebrate their special days such as birthdays and other important days they may have. This allows them to not only build relationships with their customers but also keep them involved in the business.

"The biggest challenge to not only my business but majority of restaurants and businesses is the competition offered online by sites such a Groupon and other food sites which provide cheap alternatives. I value quality over quantity and our food will always be the best we can offer and that won't be compromised. We also find that it's a challenge getting the best quality produce and spices for reasonable prices."

"The hardest part of the job or being a manager is getting the right staff for the job," Mona find this to be the toughest bit because he wants the person to be right for the job and keen as well as passionate and this can be difficult as not many young people especially ethnic minorities are choosing this as a career path.

To gain success in the business, "it has to be good tasty authentic food, reasonable prices and great customer service and standards," he says.

Mona Mia is a visionary businessman: "I would love and hope that colleges and other agencies would do more to promote this field and make it more appealing as a career and a business. We don't want to lose this industry so more needs to be done to make it appealing and interesting to future generations. It's not just about food but skills which need to be preserved."





Sajjad Rahman

Taste of India Sheerness ME12 3JD Sajjad Rahman was only 10 years old when his father opened the business and he still remembers that very day. He loved everything about the business and he knew he wanted to be a part of this someday, to follow in the footsteps of his father as a businessman. He joined the industry from a tender age of 13, working part time as a waiter in his father's takeaway. He had to beg his mum to persuade his father to allow him the opportunity.

Inspired by his upbringing in the bustling kitchen of this family-owned takeaway, Sajjad has a strong passion for the food and flavours of traditional home cooking. Since opening the restaurant doors they have been proudly dishing up traditional Indian sub-continental food in its most authentic form. Dedication to their cultural roots and cooking all of their food the traditional way is at the heart of everything they do.

Their menu is simple and doesn't have many special dishes but whatever they make, they do it to a high standard. You won't find any pastes, powders or colours in their kitchen. From their variety of all-time favourites plated straight from the tandoor to their wide selection of starters or side dishes to accompany your meal, their menu built from a long-established history of family cooking is guaranteed to have something to your taste.

Their business embraces modern technology. They have online ordering with their own bespoke App, front of house is all digital, and they are constantly looking to use technology to their advantage. They are currently running various online advertising on different platforms. Doing so has helped them stay ahead of their competitors. "We typically don't like to do any advertising that we cannot track our metrics," says Sajjad.

When asked how they motivate their staff to keep a constant service ethic, he said,

"We have a family like relationship with all of our staff, we laugh and joke whilst maintaining good practices in the workplace."

There is a list of challenges that he faced throughout his entire career in this business. But, "the biggest challenge is finding competent staff who can carry out their duties to a high standard.

Those who have to deal with changing markets and consumer behavior as well as other external factors such as the economic environment must come up with the best business ideas and solutions," he believes.

The hardest part is getting people to see things as you do. It takes a lot of skills and dedication to run a business in this industry. Problems will arise along the way, so you have to solve them to the best of your abilities," says Sajjad.

His success tips are simple. Consistency and continually evolving the business has been key to their success. According to him, restaurant ownership is more than just a career, it's a way of life. It will require you to get used to something that you're not used to doing. "The flexibility and adaptability of restaurateurs are what make them one of the most prevalent types of entrepreneurs. Those who have to deal with changing markets and consumer behavior as well as other external factors such as the economic environment must come up with the best business ideas and solutions," he believes.

"I want to be able to help fellow business owners get an advantage through digital advertising, most don't realise how powerful it is and that you can actually see real results, track metrics to see profitable return on your advertisement.

Perhaps, I should launch an agency service!"





Shamsul Islam Shelim

Viceroy of Windsor Windsor SL4 3BP Shamsul Islam Shelim began working in the restaurant industry in 1980, as a part time waiter in Beaconsfield while enrolled at College doing Business Studies. He moved to Henley in 1982 to support a new Family Restaurant and enrolled in High Wycombe College to study Engineering. By his third year, he realised that he was more interested in his work than his studies and he wanted a challenge. This led him to working more hours at the restaurant. Eventually, he opened Carterton Tandoori in 1985 where he would get his first taste in management. His early years saw huge success. Business was booming.

Then he moved to Windsor and opened the Viceroy of Windsor, in 1987. The first restaurant was very small. They would have regular queues out of the door and around the block. Needing extra space, they relocated down the road in 1994 and have been there ever since.

Since then, he has opened numerous other restaurants across the country but he spend most of his time there in Windsor, as he has also been the local Councillor for the local area for over 5 years.

His favourite part of his business is being an integral part of the community. Restaurants are the hearts of towns, where local people get together, to catch up with old friends, for business meetings, date nights, and most importantly great food. He takes great pride in being at the core of this community.

In all his years, he has never been afraid to experiment and try new things, but there must always be balance. "Keeping ingredients fresh and recipes simple is the key to good food. Overcomplicating dishes for the sake of wanting to be different can sometimes be more of a hindrance than a smart move," he says.

From the waiters to the chefs, his staff are his family, "For an effective and motivated workforce, you must respect them as individuals and in turn they will respect you."

They have increased their online presence in the last few years. They have redesigned their website using modern tools for an accessible and engaging website, and have also embraced social media. In particular they have targeted Google Reviews and TripAdvisor where they interact with their customers and generate feedback in areas they want to improve. It hasn't been a surprise that using these methods have directly translated to a large increase in online bookings and orders.

They also implement the EPOS system for takeaways increasing the overall efficiency of the restaurant by managing the amount of orders going into the kitchen.

The internet is increasingly important for attracting a new generation of customers, but Shamsul still prefers word-of-mouth for recommendations. "As part of the community, their customers treat my restaurant like their own and as a result they will speak highly of you and recommend your restaurant to other locals and tourists."

There are many challenges and difficulties in the restaurant industry. "The biggest sacrifices, I believe we make, is having our work take over our lives," says Shamsul. "Working long hours and weekends takes away from your social life and the time you do have free is when everyone else is working. This can be the same with family; you do not get to see your partner or children as often as you like and the free time you do have is spent doing the day-to-day necessities of life," he adds.

He has been in the industry for almost forty years now and his personal key to success comes down to hard work and dedication. He has been an honest businessman, worked hard to serve his community, both here at the restaurant, and as councillor for his borough, listening to the concerns of the people and how to improve his community. He has taken this further by being greatly involved in local charities and tackling the homeless issue.

In terms of the restaurant industry, he has always done his part to create a community for all of us working in the industry, trying to unify our goals and discover solutions to tackle the many problems our industry is facing. By involving himself in so many different avenues has given his life a purpose, and that is what carries him from day to day.

"Lastly," he remarks delightfully, "I should emphasise the utmost importance of family. Without the support of my family, my wife, my brothers and uncle, as well as my children, I would not have been as successful.

"I would like to retire before too long to spend more time with my family, and hopefully pass on the business to the children and grandchildren one day.

"Looking back, I am pleased at the rapid improvement our industry has seen over the decades, and hope that this evolution will continue with future generations."





Shanoor Miah

Café Zeera Harpenden AL5 4ST Throughout his life Shanoor has been passionate about food and creating innovative dishes. He's been doing this since childhood when he used to watch his mother cooking food and was fascinated by what she created. He gets excited about cooking every day and feels so lucky to have been able to parlay his passion into a successful business. Inspired by his mother's cooking, he started working in restaurants when he was a teenager, but always had a dream of opening his own business and offering something new and exciting to his customers. And as the years have gone by he has just got better and better. The key is to keep moving with the times, to keep innovating – which Shanoor has done.

"Customer experience plays a major role in your success," he believes firmly! Talking to the customers and listening to their feedback is his favourite part of this business: "Their compliments are wonderful to hear and it makes it all worthwhile. The numbers of times I've heard people say they've had their best meal or they've never had something so full of flavour before is amazing. I love what I do and this makes me very happy."

Their unique selling proposition, Shanoor says, is their ability to evolve, to find out what the customer likes, what works well and to change if necessary. He adds, "We have many regular customers and we're able to remember their favourite dishes. Everything is cooked from fresh so we can make our dishes to the customer's preference."

From years of growing up in a family of cooks and from travelling around the world he has gained experience of how to choose his menu and ingredients: "We talk to chefs from all over the country and from places in other countries, we share tips and advices and in our spare time we apply them to find out what works and what doesn't."

"The ingredients must always be fresh and high quality, which makes a huge difference," he says. They have recently changed their menu and introduced new dishes which people in the region won't have seen before. The chef specials are many favourite dishes that take traditional Indian cuisine to a new level of intensity. These dishes are very popular with their customers.

To Shanoor, the kitchen staff are extremely important, from the KP to the tandoori chef. "They

are the cogs to the engine and without them we don't work. I have no doubt that they love what they do and enjoy it but they also have families. Families and happiness come first always and we are very accommodating to ensure there is a work-life balance."

Personal relations strategy and marketing are of paramount importance to Shanoor and his partners. They know each restaurant has a story to tell but without a strong PR strategy, that story may never reach your customers. PR helps the brand authentically connect with your customers, increase your visibility and elevate your credibility, keeping your brand out of the advertising abyss. One of the investors in the business runs an awardwinning PR and marketing company. They manage their press, adverts, events and social media. Shanoor and his team consider this as the key to bringing customers in.

They are innovative working with local partners, like the council, to try new initiatives, which is great for community engagement. They often get asked for vouchers by schools and people setting themselves challenges which they are always happy to offer as it supports the community and gets their name out there.

The hardest part in his business, Shanoor thinks, is when a customer doesn't have a good experience for whatever reason: "It doesn't happen very often but when it does you take it personally and you feel that you have let them down. It may be no fault of yourself or the staff, it might be that the person is not terribly friendly but you still take it personally."

Shanoor is very clear on simplicity. 'Work hard and listen' is his philosophy: "There are many people out there that have years of experience. Listen to them, take advice, share your own, and never be afraid to learn."

During the pandemic he sold his shares after a fouryear partnership business at Maya Indian Kitchen & Bar. Currently, he has started a new restaurant called Cafe Zira on the basis of partnership. "We're a two-year-old business and there are new ways we can improve, grow and develop." Shanoor wants his new venture to be one of the best celebrated restaurants in the country and he won't stop until it is.





Motin Miah

Bangkok Lounge Harpenden AL5 2SP Motin's family had never owned a restaurant, but they were heavily involved in restaurant life. Members of his family all worked in various capacities within the trade. As a Bengali, food was always an important part of family life so this ritual became combined with his ambition to have his own business. He felt that the market was a little saturated with Indian restaurants, but it was on a return trip from Thailand that he decided Thai cuisine was what he wanted to get involved in.

The business model he had was applicable in any restaurant but there was a huge learning curve in understanding the cuisine, flavours, ingredients even the culture and the philosophy of the Thai people. He had to get this right in order to succeed. His professional job allowed him to bring in the experience of anagement and his due diligence filled in the gaps.

Motin is a bright, hardworking and a very ambitious individual who has gained experience in people and project management. He has a long track record of ensuring projects are delivered to the highest quality, within budget by effectively organising, managing and utilising all resources. He is able to lead teams on commercial and industrial levels. He is always actively involved in all aspects of the project life-cycle and can deliver high-value projects in matrixed organisations and across different disciplines. His work is based on setting realistic targets and working hard to archive these. The expertise and knowledge that he has gained allows him to drive profitability and improvement through strategic growth plans. "Every decision, good or bad, has been a learning experience and has brought me to where I am today" he adds. Motin is a BSc Hons graduate in Computer Science.

BUSINESSESES: Past and Present

2003: Opened Blue Orchid Thai Restaurant, Aspley Guise, UK. Within a space of 5 years he had expanded this brand to 7 totalling 11 restaurants. In July 2007 he sold the brand so he could concentrate on property development.

2007: Opened Bangkok Lounge Thai Restaurant, Harpenden. This was expanded to include a further 2 outlets. Bangkok Lounge has been recognised as one of the top 3 Thai restaurants for vegan foods by Metro newspaper in 2016 and more recently 'Best National Thai Restaurant of the year 2019'.

2013: Import and export of commodities worldwide. This was a short term venture and has since been sold on



Those who have to deal with changing markets and consumer behavior as well as other external factors such as the economic environment must come up with the best business ideas and solutions," he believes.

2014: Executive producer involved in Asian films and Arts projects

2014: Founder member of British Bangladeshi Caterers Association (BBCA)

2014: British Bangladesh Caterers Association. Joint Treasurer

2016: Director of Windsor Hotel and Resort

2016: Life Member of Bangladeshi Cricketer Supporters Association UK

2018: British Bangladesh Caterers Association. Membership Secretary

2018: Director of World Glazing

2019: Managing Director of BioGrade Solution

Motin is affiliated with the following charities: CAP(CommunityAgainstPoverty-Ambassador), Amir Khan - Water AID, Macmillan, RFC (Ramadan Family Commitment - Ambassador). He is also hoping to launch a foundation in the memory of his late father AI Hajj MD Aziz Miah. His work within the community involves monthly immigration surgery attendance along with other BHC embassy staff.





Mohammed Abdul Lais

Eurasia Food Service Reading RG7 4PW Tadley Tandoori finds success and is making more money by following an interesting strategy: not going after money. Since the opening of his establishment, owner Mohammed Abu Lais's goal has been to offer diners high quality, traditionally cooked foods. "We dominate on customer service, too, but our target is total quality" he adds. "I personally interact with customers and have paid close attention to their feedback."

Mohammed Abul Lais is a successful businessman, outstanding community organiser and well-known philanthropist in Berkshire. He left for the UK when he was only 16 and entered professional life. For his sincere and hard labour on the one hand he attained success in his business and on the other being the elder son of the family he educated all his brothers and sisters. He was born in Sunamgoni, Bangladesh. His father late Alhai Abul Bashor Md. Mashuk Miah was a restaurant trader in the UK. He was a philanthropist who came over to the UK in 1963. After sitting the SSC Exam in 1975, Mohammed Abu Lais left for the UK along with other family members. On arrival in the UK he started serving in restaurants and at the same time continued his studies.

He opened his first business, Curry Garden, in 1978 in Newbury, Berkshire, which was later established in Tadely, Hampshire in 1982, on a partnership basis. Then again in 1991 he opened Curry Garden in Reading. In 1985 he established 'Rajdoot Restaurant' in Cirencester Town in Gloucestershire on partnership. In 1991 he established a company named Eurasia Food Service. He established a first Thai and Bangladeshi restaurant named 'Café Blue Cobra' in the small-town Theale in greater Reading area in 1996.

Mohammed Lais is one of the founders of Basingstoke Islamic Society. Initially he was the founding secretary of this organisation and later on he served as president for 3 years. He is the founding member of Reading Central Jame Masjid, member of Basingstoke Chambers and Commerce, Thames valley Chambers of Commerce, and a founder of British Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce in the UK. He has made special contributions towards the establishment and development of Amria Mosque and Amria Madrassa based in his own village. In

66

For his sincere and hard labour on the one hand he attained success in his business and on the other being the elder son of the family he educated all his brothers and sisters.

2016 he built an academy building in Amria Madrasa, which was opened by M A Mannan MP, the then Deputy Finance Minister of Bangladesh. During the devastating flood in 1988 and in 1991 he raised funds £1400 and £11,000 respectively and sent it to Bangladesh through British Red Cross Society for the flood affected people. Mohammed Abul Lais and his brother Absar Md. Waess have established a family trust after their father's name - Alhaj AB Mashuk Miah Foundation. Mohammad Abul Lais is the trustee of this Foundation and his siblings are members. Mohammed Lais is a founder trustee of Bangladesh Female Academy in Derai. He served as the president of Dakshin Sunamgonj Upozilla Association UK.

Mohammad Lais got married in 1984 to Nazma Khatun Qureshi, and they are blessed with two daughters and one son. First daughter Shumana Lais obtained Honours degree in Investment Banking and Finance, from Reading University, worked for KPMG as an auditor and also completed ACA. Shumana is married to Dr Omar Siddique and blessed with one son. The other daughter Sameera Lais is studying at Aston University. Son Shumel Lais, graduated in Business and Marketing from Bournemouth University, worked for Sachi and Sachi and currently running his own business in Marketing. His company Apsumer Ltd is listed on startups 100 in 2017 and 2018 respectively.





Jamal Uddin Mokoddus

The Garden of India Harlow, CM18 6PA Jamal Uddin's career in the restaurant industry started shortly after his arrival in the UK, twoand-a-half years to be exact. He opened his first restaurant 43 years ago in the Town of Harlow, Essex, which he now calls home. At that time there were not many Indian restaurants. So he wanted to be one of the first few around the country. He has always had the entrepreneurial mentality from a young age, that never goes away. He thought by being the first person to introduce curry to Harlow he would be able to dictate the market price and be able to capitalise on it.

Jamal Uddin's Unique Selling Proposition (USP) is himself, his personality. He is the brand, he has built his businesses around his name being synonymous with premium quality. For all the restaurants he has at the moment that is the fundamental USP.

- The Vojan Ongar is the flagship (220 covers).
- The Raj Epping is a traditional and cosy in spirit, yet contemporary in design and food.
- The Raj Lodge Old Harlow is the eldest in his group of companies at the moment yet contemporary and modern in design.
- The Garden of India Harlow is the one that attracts everyone for the quirky menu. Also has the most modern, sophisticated interior out of the group.
- Sanuk High Ongar is a Thai restaurant in a grade 2 listed building he opened in 2006.
- He has a hotel in Royston.
- He also has a restaurant in Hillingdon.
- His Cash & Carry M18 in Harlow is now as spacious as 12,500 square feet, which serves locally, in surrounding areas and the wider restaurant community around the country.

Jamal Uddin has a secondary school fully funded by him in his birth place in Bangladesh established in 2000. He is the founding director and current chairman of Adventure World -66

He is the brand, he has built his businesses around his name being synonymous with premium quality. For all the restaurants he has at the moment that is the fundamental USP.

Sylhet. He is also the founding director of Homeland Life Insurance Bangladesh.

The favourite part of his businesses is the opportunity to turn nothing into something. Charity has become a habit of Jamal Uddin. He supported many families who are in destitute condition. Being inspired by Jamal Uddin, many are doing big things in their fields. Also he is grateful to the Almighty that he is able to show his sons the way and install the entrepreneurial skills needed for them to succeed. Through them he can keep his desire alive for the family empire to grow. Jamal is truly blessed to be in the position. The property portfolio is growing, the businesses are growing and his sons are both involved in the family empire.

As Jamal Uddin looks ahead, his vision remains as bold as ever—expanding his Cash & Carry, exploring new cuisines, and continuing to innovate across industries. But beyond the ventures and accolades, his greatest achievement lies in the legacy he's building: a family empire rooted in integrity, generosity, and ambition. With his sons by his side and a lifetime of experience behind him, Jamal's story is far from over—it's simply entering its next chapter.





Shamsul Alam Khan

Haldi Restaurant
Portsmouth PO5 2SG

"Merely offering good food and good service is not a guarantee of success in traditional dining. Your marketing goal should focus on repeat business", says Shamsul. "Today more than ever, you need to create a memorable customer experience."

As marketing strategy, Trip Advisor and Google as well as menu innovation and leafleting have worked for him. Newspaper ads don't always work, as he says.

Like many other successful entrepreneurs, he gives great value to customer experience, and says, "You can have the greatest concept, recipes and talent but if your restaurant can't deliver a quality customer experience consistently, people won't come back."

He adds from his experience, "Better systems not only ensure a more predictable customer experience, but also make the restaurant less dependent on the owner's constant involvement in daily operations."

Shamsul Alam worked as a waiter in various restaurants. Gaining skills and knowledge in running a restaurant gave him motivation to start his own business. He has been in the business for 10 years now.

Meeting and generating new customers and general public, introducing new dishes in a modern twist to traditional curry house are his favourite part of this business. He has created dishes using vegetables from Bangladesh such as uribisi/sim bichee, shatkora, etc. His popular signature dish is Sylhet Gosht.

Their multi-award winning and 27 years experienced chef, has put together a delightful menu that gives their customers a wide choice of delicious meals.

Shamsul Alam's staff are always valued and they have input in providing good quality food. "Your employees are your most important asset because it takes happy employees to create happy customers. Your employee experience drives your customer experience and your customer experience drives customer loyalty, word of



Meeting and generating new customers and general public, introducing new dishes in a modern twist to traditional curry house are his favourite part of this business.

mouth and sales", he emphasises on.

According to him, the key ingredients to restaurant success are:

- Creating a loyalty card to reward customers by offering a free dish on their 5th visit to the restaurant
- Promoting more offers and discounts
- Offering training and work experience to students wanting to learn the restaurant trade
- Serve non-greasy fresh quality food by using local organic produce for better taste

Samsul says, "healthy eating promotes a healthy successful business". To him, having professional skilled staff, giving his 100% to provide quality food and services and support from family are some other keys to success.

Shamsul intends to open traditional Bangladeshi/ Indian homemade style cafe serving breakfast and lunch.

You can have the greatest concept, recipes and talent, but if your restaurant can't deliver a quality customer experience consistently, people won't come back.





Ana Miah

Juboraj Rhiwbina Cardiff CF14 6HG

Ana Miah started in the industry as a teenager working in a local Birmingham restaurant. He made the decision to do the very best he could and after a few years his family opened their first restaurant in London in 1982. He moved to Cardiff and opened his first restaurant as an owner in 1989.

Of all the enjoyable aspects of running a restaurant, such as the financial reward, there is little more rewarding than building relationships with local customers that can develop into real friendships. Ana thinks they manage this in the Juboraj by focusing on this relationship. They work hard to make the couple-of-hours customers choose to spend with them a special experience and by providing consistently good food.

Ana likes trying foods in different restaurants looking for new ideas. When he finds something that he likes he takes the idea back and work with his chefs to add a Juboraj twist and create something new. They have a few unique dishes on their menu. Most notably the Chicken Kolapuri, their biggest seller and the Jamdani Hash, a duck dish they created in the early days, made famous by Ruth Jones in her enormously successful television show Gavin and Stacey. Although there are now many restaurants serving a Jamdani Hash, people come from all over the country to taste the original at the Juboraj!

The Juboraj Restaurant Group is one of the oldest, and almost certainly, one of the great Indian and Bangladeshi restaurants in Wales having won numerous awards. For well over 20 years there has been a Juboraj in Cardiff of which the Rhiwbina restaurant with its sumptuous Georgian interior is one of the originals. The Juborai pride themselves on combining traditional authentic dishes with a fresh new contemporary approach bringing you the best flavours the Indian sub-continent has to offer. The Juborai Guarantee ensures that only the highest quality New Zealand lamb and Welsh beef, and the finest 100% fresh chicken breast and freshest seafood available, is used in their dishes. With a warm welcome and friendly attentive staff you can be sure that time spent at Juboraj, whether it be a light lunch or a candlelit evening meal, will be time well spent.

Apart from TripAdvisor, which Ana finds too open

Ana likes trying foods in different restaurants looking for new ideas. When he finds something that he likes he takes the idea back and work with his chefs to add a Juboraj twist and create something new.

to abuse, one of the most challenging parts of the business is keeping the staff happy and then, once they are fully trained, keeping them permanently. You can't run a restaurant by yourself. You need good quality reliable staff. He thinks it's down to the manager to be on top of their game and that example passes to the staff. They hold a monthly meeting to highlight problems or come up with ideas for improvements.

Juboraj team use a website with online booking and ordering and they keep in touch with their customers using social media. Of all their marketing initiatives he finds the big sport screenings they put on very successful. People enjoy them and pass on the experience by word of mouth. In the same way Ana has always been a big part of the local community, getting involved in festivals and sponsoring sports teams, and the like. Even if it's a simple gift voucher for a local raffle. The kind of recommendations community work generates are priceless.

Ana strongly feels the industry needs to work closely with government to make it easier to bring skilled staff from outside the UK and to enable training initiatives to work with and encourage future business owners by making the industry more attractive to them.





Dr Siraj Ali

Maharaja Restaurant Benfleet SS7 1BG

Dr. Muhammad Siraj Ali came to the UK when he was 11 year's old, and worked in his teens whilst he was studying in school, at his older brother's restaurant, The Curry Centre, in North London. Back then, this was the only option in terms of a career move for many Bangladeshis.

However he wanted to move away and find an unsaturated market, and chose a small town in Essex to open his first restaurant. He becomes a pioneering force behind the introduction of Indian cuisine in the Essex region. He has opened 8 restaurants in Essex. In his successful 48-year career, he introduced Indian food to Thurrock, and has used his success and experiences to broaden cultural understanding and raise millions of pounds for charities in Bangladesh and the UK.

His passion to build bridges between cultures and communities has seen him become an ambassador for multi-cultural integration and charity work. Since 1995, Siraj has raised over £3 million for charity, with his charitable efforts having even seen his dishes flown to 150 UN troops in the Congo.

Dr Ali's successful restaurant was chosen by MPs to cater for the first ever Bangladesh Festival of Food and Culture at the House of Commons in 2001. In 2008, Dr Ali won the British Bangladeshi Who's Who 'Outstanding Contribution' Award. In 2009, he was a winner of the Channel S Awards for his long standing contribution to the British Bangladeshi Community. In 2011, Siraj received the British Bangladeshi Who's Who Award and in 2015, he was awarded by Currylife magazine for contribution to the catering and hospitality industry.

In 2018, Siraj was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Essex for his distinguished career, joining Rt Hon John Bercow MP, Speaker of the House of Commons, Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, Speaker of Jatyo Sangshad, (Bangladesh Parliament), former UK Prime Minister Harold Wilson and former President of Chile, Her Excellency Michelle Bachelet, whose achievements are recognised by academics.

Dr Ali's successful restaurant was chosen by MPs to cater for the first ever Bangladesh Festival of Food and Culture at the House of Commons in 2001. In 2008, Dr Ali won the British Bangladeshi Who's Who 'Outstanding Contribution' Award.

In Bangladesh, Dr Ali is a director of the Metro Hotel and Conference Centre, founder and proprietor of the Crescent Hospital, Mirabazaar,

now City School, a trustee, co-founder and sponsor of Balagoni Sixth Form College and the Osmani Nagar Girls College, co-founder, trustee, secretary of the Haii Soved Ali Memorial Trust. co-ponsor of the Haji Soyed Ali Memorial Trust Anwarul Uloom Jamia Academy and Haji Soyed Ali Primary School, and Co-Founder of the Haji Soyed Ali Memorial Trust and Anwarul Uloom

Jamia Hostel for orphans. Siraj Ali is also the owner and chairman of the Al Siraj Plaza, a multipurpose building in Goalabazaar Sylhet which includes the 10,000 square feet Siraj-ul-Uloom for Quran and Hadith Research Centre and Library, the 3rd centre of its kind in Bangladesh.

In Essex, Siraj is the Founder Chairman of both the Thurrock Bangladesh Welfare Association and the Thurrock Islamic Educational Cultural Centre, former general secretary and founder member of the Essex Jamme Masjid in Southend on Sea, as well as the Chairman of the Advisory Committee of the Essex Bangladesh Welfare Association (Essex) and former Vice Chairman of Bangladesh Catering Association Essex region.





Abdul Karim Nazim

Maharani Camden London NW1 7JN It all started in 1963, when Abdul Karim Nazim's father and uncle opened Maharani Camden. At this point the Clapham branch was already opened but his father was not involved. His father was his role model as he was growing up so he wanted to get involved in the family business, too. As he was growing up, he started learning more and more about the Indian food industry and in 1984 he joined the family business and have been involved ever since. They are a familyowned and operated business.

Since being involved in the business, there are a lot of things that motivate him but also make him smile. For example, being based on Camden High Street, he gets to meet new people from different backgrounds everyday as Camden is a huge tourist attraction now. Also, being able to maintain a good relationship with his regular customers and local businesses would be his favourite part in having the business. Furthermore, being one of the oldest Indian restaurants in Camden, more and more people wish to come and visit them, making their loyalty to Camden High Street their unique selling point.

As he has worked in Indian restaurants from a young age, he understood the industry a lot more and realised that he would need to create some different flavours in order for him to stand out. As he is from Bangladeshi heritage, he knew about the ingredients used in an Indian restaurant which is why he was able to create his speciality dishes with ease. They cater for all palettes, whether you like your curry extremely mild, or extremely hot with a desi twist.

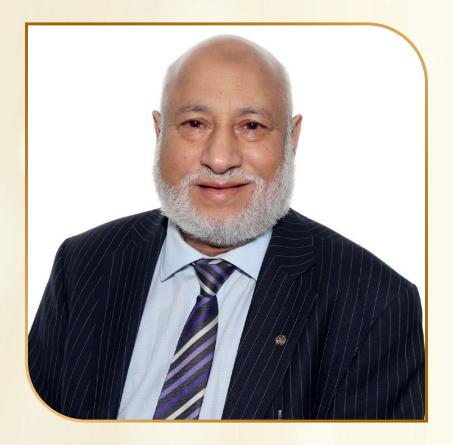
Motivation plays a big role in any business, and it is up to the owner/manager to ensure that the staff are motivated. To be completely honest, wherever you go, money will always be a big factor of motivation. However, he likes to keep things different here as he gives his staff a bit more responsibility than being a simple employee. Loyalty is important to him and any business owner will tell you, loyalty is key to running a successful business. His head-chef has been with him for over 20 years now as long as one of his waiters. Due to this loyalty, he makes sure they enjoy working at Maharani.

Motivation plays a big role in any business, and it is up to the owner/ manager to ensure that the staff are motivated. To be completely honest, wherever you go, money will always be a big factor of motivation.

As this is the 21st century, it is crucial to be using and keeping up to date with modern technology. They started off with using the basic Just Eat machines but as social media is a huge thing now, they are slowly getting on to social media platforms. They are already on Instagram. They also use modern technology for their online orders and marketing. Marketing on social media is vital as it is the only way to attract an audience. Back in the day, let's say in 2011, marketing was done by going door to door and posting leaflets, but this is not as effective as advertising on social media.

Being a business owner comes with many challenges: the hardest would be during the quieter seasons as it does mess up the cash flow. Quieter seasons would be the first few weeks of January as Christmas and New Years just pass, and also during summer. It is not easy to run a successful business but the key ingredient to doing so is being patient and love what you are doing. If you do not love the industry you are in, you will not love your business enough to make it successful. Also, as they are a family-owned and operated business, it was important for them to stick together.





Manik Miah

Maharani Ipswich, IP1 2NJ Manik Miah has over 40 years of experience in the restaurant and takeaway sector within the UK. He has had a few restaurants over the past 40 years. His experience, ability and wealth of information about food is credited as responsible for the many prestigious awards his previous restaurants have achieved. A wealth of management and operational experience is in the forefront of his contribution to the Maharani.

Manik Miah is from a family background who had an Indian Restaurant before the Second World War in the UK. His uncle opened the first restaurant before the Second World War in London (Earls Court). In that time, he had 5 restaurants. They still own the restaurant in Earls Court and is run by their family. This is how Manik was encouraged to become a restaurant trader because he wanted to introduce Indian/ Bangladeshi cuisine to the Western people and make the Asian food more popular, which is now the most loved food in the UK. He has his own restaurant in Ipswich. His brother had a restaurant here that's why he moved to Ipswich in 1989.

Enjoying and mixing with the customers, making friends through the restaurant, customers enjoying the food and service returning back for more quality food are the traits he is fond of. His unique selling point is the excellent quality of food, as well as being a good host and being friendly with customers.

Nowadays customers are looking for quality and different types of new food. Manik Miah and his award-winning chefs are well aware of this. To meet and exceed customers satisfaction they always use fresh products, locally sourced, where possible. They have more than 15 Speciality Dishes, two of these are the Haandi which is mainly cooked home-style in a casserole pot, and the Bangladeshi Macherbiran Bhuna, and in all these are used ingredients such as meat, chicken, prawns each cooked with fresh herbs, spices, mustard oil, etc. The restaurant caters for vegan and vegetarian diets and for other dietary needs.

All their food is cooked in the traditional way. using traditional methods of cooking, including the clay ovens. They use technology to promote the restaurant through their website, on social media and on Trip Advisor. They still find most new customers

The greatest challenge as a restaurant owner is delivering an excellent customer service and food to all customers every time they visit.

are recommended by their existing customers. They sometimes advertise in local papers, also in the cinema and theatres. They advertise their business online through a local business directory which promotes local independent businesses through their website and their social media channels, to help us reach a wider audience.

The greatest challenge as a restaurant owner is delivering an excellent customer service and food to all customers every time they visit. But Manik's staff are very loyal to him, all of them have been working for him for the last 18-20 years. Any good performance and best services are recognised and rewarded. They work hard for the business to succeed.

Manik's restaurant provides good quality food and good service at competitive prices and his wish is to be a good host to all his customers. It is also about being part of the local business community, being well respected, and being part of the wider Bangladeshi and Ipswich community. He also actively supports local, national and international charities, and he supports local education as a member of the Corporation at Suffolk New College. He is also on the Board for the Users Group at Ipswich Hospital.

Manik would like the Maharani to continue as a popular community focused restaurant, and personally he would like to increase his charity work.





Mohammed Abdul Ahad and Brothers

Millennium Balti Leamington Spa, CV31 3AG While all new restaurant ventures are risky. they may be one of the most unlikely restaurant success stories that we've ever interviewed. Ahad started working with Indian restaurants and takeaways at a very early age. He worked for different branches of Millennium Balti, which was opened in 2000 (Nuneaton, Hinckley, Leamington, Coventry). Then in December 2014 they bought one of the branches in a very busy area, Leamington. It was very difficult, a lot of major improvements were needed to the actual building as well as menu, etc. The business wasn't good, there was so much competition, they struggled a lot in the early days. But they didn't give up, his family supported him at every step of the way. All four brothers motivated each other, every member of the family contributed in their own wavs.

The restaurant required improvements inside building as well as increasing customer base. He did his research by asking the public and checking out other competitors. He and his family did all the works of refurbishment and menu innovation. Their menu is extensive and there is something for everyone. But they kept the design, layout and descriptions simple and easy to read and understand. They built the business up slowly but strongly - taking extra care of all the ingredients, using fresh produce and maintaining the quality. The food price is standard and reasonable, but the quality of their food is very good.

Their restaurant has a very friendly environment where all customers enjoy the food and the atmosphere. They now have a huge regular customer base. Most of the customers they know personally and know their likes and dislikes. For example, some of their customers when walk in, they know what they will order without asking! They are impressed with their memory and service. They look after everyone with love. Forming personalised relationship with the customers is all the more important given the restaurant's decidedly intimate appeal.

They have passion and willingly provide the best possible food and service to their customers. They do everything with love. That's their secret ingredient "love". Well not secret anymore! Quality speaks for itself. You can taste the difference in their food compared to others. They

They have passion and willingly provide the best possible food and service to their customers. They do everything with love. That's their secret ingredient "love".

look after everyone, whether new or regular customer, however small or big order. They also cater to individual tastes and preferences. For the health conscious they have a wide range of healthy vegetarian dishes and grilled food where oil is very minimum, and they use low-fat yogurt. The extensive menu, that they have, caters for all tastes, flavours and textures.

Though not on Just Eat, they have built up a fantastic customer base for their delivery and takeaway service, where a majority are now regulars. Even they are getting new customers through word of mouth. As its family run business, all members come to rescue if required. Everyone in the family helps each other and providing the best for their customers. They always take part in charity events.

They give free meal vouchers, donate money, sponsor cricket team, football team, medical team. They are always looking for ways to improve. Recently in August 2017 they attended a culinary workshop in Newcastle where they met various Michelin Starred chefs, executive chefs and managers and learnt a lot. Also they participated on a live Restaurant Talent Show on Channel S. They have won many local and national awards for their excellent customer support. hard work, quality food and service. They have also been recently appointed the official Youth Ambassadors for the Asian Restaurant Owners' Network.





Ziaur Rahman Choudhury

Montaz Newmarket CB8 8DN Ziaur Choudhrey, who is one of the cofounders of Montaz, a popular modern Indian restaurant in Newmarket, Suffolk, started his career at a restaurant called The Merryland Tandoori in 1992.

He soon established himself as a key member of the business and was offered a partnership in 1997. It was a time when the restaurant sector was in good stead and banks were forthcoming with finance, suppliers helpful in giving credit and staffing levels adequate.

With Ziaur's strengths being in menu innovation, interior design and above all customer service, these important aspects encouraged him to oversee many projects, starting from Montaz St.Ives , Montaz Bourne, Montaz Ely, Masala Lounge Rugby, Chai Kai Tea House St.Ives, Chai Kai Tea Company and Montaz Newmarket.

Ziaur says, "I have worked with many different budgets to open different sites, but key to all is good simple food using great produce, excellent and friendly customer service along with presentation of your food and your restaurant. A key factor of Montaz Newmarket's success is to use local suppliers providing quality local produce and on trend, sustainable fish and meat with the latter for example being used in our award winning signature dish "Slow Roasted Ox Cheek."

He adds: "What I enjoy the most is the evolving nature of our menu, taking traditional recipes and giving them a modern spin, which in turn also creates stories for marketing the restaurant as I believe the old way of newspaper ads and leaflet drops are long gone. I believe strongly that creating such material on where perhaps you may have travelled and been inspired to create recipes or even having something on my staff like staff days out, gives the marketing material an emotional depth and personalises everything to the extent that your brand becomes very liked by your clientele. It gives them a connection."

Like good, contemporary and knowledgeable

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restaurateurs, Ziuar takes his inspiration from both recipes of long ago to current ones from Michelin starred chefs because he says, "it gives me an understanding of how food has evolved, how recipes and cooking techniques have changed along with how customer tastes have developed and adapted. Add to that the fact that Britain has such wonderful ingredients and we can utilise them in our cooking to show to the rest of the world."

With the wealth of experience under his belt, Ziaur next intends to create a rollout brand within the catering industry so watch this space!

I have worked with many different budgets to open different sites, but key to all is good simple food using great produce, excellent and friendly customer service along with presentation of your food and your restaurant.





Mohammed Siddiqur Rahman

Raj Garden Watford WD23 2DQ Mohammed Siddigur Rahman had worked in Indian restaurants for many years and wanted to apply the ideas he had developed - that was his main motivation. Serving his customers and seeing them happy and very satisfied are his favourite part of his business. The unique selling points of his business are consistent and great customer service with excellent and unique cuisines.

Siddigur and his team choose the menus from their own ideas developed over many years taking inspiration from traditional Sylhety cooking. They specialise in Traditional Bangladeshi dishes with a modern twist and key is fresh produce. Their signature dish is called Rajestani Chicken and HariAli Chicken.

Siddigur's team have constant training and customer feedback and also they have a friendly and fun atmosphere in the restaurant. The marketing and advertising initiatives have worked for him are leafleting, local press and social media but most importantly word of mouth has been a great driver of his business.

To face challenges of being a restaurant owner and manager, he says, "You have to wear many hats, you are the manager, the chief taster, the supply checker, the bookkeeper and also the inspector of hygiene - all these things you have to be on top of everyday routine." The hardest parts of his job, according to Siddigur Rahman, are maintaining staff and hygiene of all areas of the restaurant on a daily basis. He considers the key ingredients to his Restaurant's success have been consistently delivering good service and food that customers love to recommend.

Siddigur Rahman was born in 1971 in Luton, Bedfordshire. He completed his GCSEs' in Denbigh High School in 1987. At the age of 16, Siddiqur started working part time at an Indian restaurant which initiated his interest in the restaurant trade. At the age of 19 he opened his first thriving business, an Indian takeaway which he later converted to a restaurant in Oxhey, Hertfordshire called Curry Cottage. After the success of Curry Cottage, in 1997 he went on to open another Indian restaurant, Raj Garden in Bushey, which became his most successful venture, receiving many awards for their service and support of the community. Since then, he has opened several other restaurants around the country but in 2002, he decided to diversify and invest in another

The marketing and advertising initiatives have worked for him are leafleting, local press and social media but most importantly word of mouth has been a great driver of his business.

industry.

In 2002, he began his career as a property investor buying houses to re-develop them and put them on the rental market. This has enabled him to develop his property portfolio and diversify within the property industry. He is the director of Luton Property Management Ltd and the senior negotiator for Simply Move, overseeing the management of properties. This business is fast becoming one of the busiest property management companies in its area. He is also the owner of M.S Rahman Properties (Real Estate) and S&Z a property development company.

In addition, he is a member of several business associations such as one of the Directors of the UKBCCI and an EC member of BCA. He is also a member of the National Landlord Association and a member of the ARLA which is an association for residential lettings. He believes giving back to society is a vital part of life. Therefore, he is the secretary of Jalal Pur Welfare Association which gives unprivileged children in Bangladesh a chance to transform their lives. He is also a part of the advisory board at Dhokin Surma Committee. a role passed on from his father. In the UK, he is a dedicated member of charities such as the Peace Hospice and local charities especially in the Watford area, for which he has gained certificates and awards from local MPs and Mayors.





Shajanur Raja

Sopna Indian Restaurant Caernarfon LL5 2BB Shajanur Raja loves to work and mingle with people and he knows that the restaurant business is a people business, which makes forging good interpersonal relationships between restaurant staff and customers critical. Shaianur points out that he has always treated his employees well and considered them like family. "Great employees are happy and successful, which in turn creates pleased and loyal customers", he adds.

His award-winning restaurant Sopna Tandoori is well known for quality, variety and hospitality. Set in beautiful rural Caernarfon, 8 miles from popular Llanberis, Sopna Indian Restaurant delivers authentic home style Indian cuisine with a taste of distinction. From its signature dishes to its beautiful atmoshphere and a large variety of Bangladeshi, Indian and some fusion food, it goes out of its way to make certain that it has something for everyone.

Their chefs use only the highest quality seasonal produce, locally sourced wherever possible, and pride themselves on creating delicious food that tastes good. From the spicy, aromatic notes of Sher-E-Bangla to the sumptuous textures of our Lamb Jaflong; from a rich Sopna Special Biryani to the fragrant King Prawn Dilraj they are proud to share an array of enduring classic dishes alongside some of the most visionary contemporary Indian cuisine to be found anywhere in the UK today.

"Warm hospitality is at the heart of everything we do," says Shajanur. "Because we are familyowned and operated, we personalise your visits and attend to special needs. Our staff is our greatest asset, and we work hard with them to create extraordinary dining experiences." He is indeed a hard-working honest businessman.

Shajanur was born in Salamitila, Moulvibazar and he came to the UK in 1989. He used to live in Oldham (1989-1991). In 1991, he moved to North Wales and started working in a restaurant. After that he worked for several restaurants in North Wales. He started restaurant business at Pwhelli North Wales in 1996. Since then he did not have to look back. His hard work, honesty, sincerity and good community works took him to this position very fast. From one restaurant, now he is the owner of five outlets, a Takeaway and a Cash & Carry under the name of Sopna group. Also he has

From its signature dishes to its beautiful atmoshphere and a large variety of Bangladeshi, Indian and some fusion food. it goes out of its way to make certain that it has something for everyone.

some property businesses near his all restaurants and in Bangladesh. One of his restaurants, Sopna Tandoori gained Wales Curry House of the Year Award in 2007 and 2010. In 2011, he opened the first Bangladeshi Cash & Carry at Bangor in North Wales. He has a good reputation with local Muslim community and also with local Welsh people.

Shajanur loves to do charity work and donated lots of money for the people in need in Moulvibazar, Bangladesh as well as in North Wales and different parts of the UK. Currently he is the Founder Chairman of three charity organisations - Bangladesh Womens Aid, Britain Bangla Social Development Foundation (BBSDF) and Nasiruddin Hafizia Madrasa at Hiyala Shahebbari in Hobigonj District. Every year he organises charity night at each of his restaurants and raises money for his charity works. He is also involved in many local and social activities both in the UK and in Bangladesh. He is the Director of the Exposure Developments Ltd, which is based in Bangladesh since early 2009. He is currently working with a project of building a private hospital in the name of Hason Raja and Jubeda Vanu Hospital, in his birthplace in Bangladesh. He is the member of Greater Sylhet Council UK and acts as the Vice-president of its Chester and North Wales Committee.





Mujibur Rahman Junue

Spice of India
Twickenham Tw2 7LB

A restaurant is a public space, where people come to eat food and interact. It is all about socialising, community spirit and making people happy and energetic. Mujibur Rahman Junue realised that this 'character and spirit' of the restaurant business really matched with his personality and ever since he wanted to run a restaurant. Although he wanted to open a restaurant to start off his career, the first opportunity that came on his way was in the form of an off-license, which he ran for 6 years successfully. He was able to fulfil his dream of opening his own restaurant within 3 years running the off license. It was a great learning experience managing both the businesses at the same time. However, he gave up the off-license to fully concentrate in the restaurant business which was his passion. He spent the last 23 years turning his restaurant into one of the best restaurants in the area. He has two more branches, where one is leased out currently.

Mujib's favourite part of the business is being of service to his customers. "I don't compromise on staff strength and quality of service which made us very consistent all these years. Being consistent made our customers, very confident that they can depend on us, any time, any day", he added. They aim at 100% customer satisfaction by providing unmatched customer service and exceptionally tasty food. His unique selling points are consistency, quality of the food, service, and decor. He chooses his menu by assessing his competitor's offerings, their prices, and the dishes. He tries to be different and unique than what they do. His signature dishes are Lamb Shank, Shukran Chicken, Murg Khandani and Sho-Coo-Tee Chicken.

"Stress, anger and Negative attitude are contagious. I never allow this to pass onto my staff. I stay positive and pleasant all the time, which makes my staff very open to me" says Mujib. "I motivate my staff by demonstrating leadership qualities and showing how to put customer needs first, by having regular meetings with them", he adds.

Mujib is very much interested in the usage of modern technology in his business. Right now he has his own online order system and Booking system that help him save money, and help his staff work efficiently. He has his own self-checkout system being developed, for Takeaway collection

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orders. This free up his counter staff on busy evenings. Customers can come, order a takeaway and pay using the integrated card machine, all by themselves. Right now, he is waiting for a demo of his Restaurant's new dine-in management system which will use cloud-based technology and latest payment system such as Google Pay and Apple Pay. With this, he is aiming for faster service for his customers and an efficient work environment for his staff. Also, his technology providers are doing some research on Bluetooth beacons, which will provide him Live data about his business on his mobile, such as air quality, temperature, how busy the shop is etc. These data will be analysed to find business insights later. Facebook Boosting and Google Adwords have been really helpful. Even though they are paid promotion, return on investment justifies them.

Mujibur Rahman Junue is the Deputy Secretary to Bangladesh Catering Association (BCA) and General Secretary to West Bangladesh Welfare Association. He is the General Secretary of Boliar Bhag Madrasah Committee (UK), in Bangladesh which is responsible for a lot of charitable work. Also, he is the Deputy Secretary for Richmond and Hounslow Islamic Centre.

His next move would be to increase his property portfolio and open a fast food grill restaurant.





Abdus Shahid

Valley Connection
London N9 7EP

Ballingdon Valley
Suffolk

Abdus Shahid is a multi-award winning cook. He was born and raised in a rural village in Bangladesh. He recollects how his mother would grow all her own vegetables and use them; fresh from the ground to the plate. This is what he wishes to closely emulate in his own restaurant. His earliest memory of cooking is when he used to boil fresh potatoes with his mother on an open fire outside. His mother would finely chop shallots, coriander red dried birds-eve chillies, and smother the potatoes with this mixture. She would also add some salt and mustard oil which was the piece de resistance! His siblings and he would always be hanging around the kitchen. Hence, his inspiration for cooking has originated from his childhood. However, when arrived in the UK, Shahid was amazed by the beautiful creations of the chefs in

His first kitchen post was in a restaurant in Stoke Newington in Hackney. He worked as a kitchen porter but very quickly the chef realised that Shahid had the skills to become a chef. He encouraged him to assist in the food preparation and eventually allowed him to cook when he was on leave. It didn't feel like hard work as Shahid was so impressed by his newly learned skill and creations; making rice and curry look like a piece of art!

all the restaurants in London.

This is what inspired him to open his own restaurant. He discovered that he had the skill. work ethic and professionalism to run his own restaurant. He has three restaurants now -Ballingdon Valley, Moza, and Valley Collection all based in Suffolk with menus created by himself. Valley Connection is one of Bury St Edmund's largest and smartest Indian restaurants, with award winning chefs. Recently renovated this elegant and stylish restaurant can accommodate up to 110 diners in sumptuous and contemporary surroundings, setting the tone for an up market dining experience with menus that focus on Indian continental dishes to Bangladeshi cuisine. Atul Kochhar is Shahid's food hero. Atul, he says, has promoted Indian food to a level that has historically occupied by predominantly European chefs.

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Shahid's restaurant serves a delightful selection of traditional and Bangladeshi meals. He always endeavours to use fresh ingredients to create dishes that are exquisite in taste and visual. "My food is completely different. I make my own spices – this is my secret. I buy all fresh ingredients and make my own recipes and people like my food. When I received my awards, my customers say we are not surprised," says Shahid.

His favourite dishes from his current menu are Hariyali Chicken Masala (fresh spinach with succulent pieces of boneless chicken in mild spices), Jingra Kal Mirch (king prawns tossed with shallots, ginger, tomato, peppers and garnished with coriander and fresh green chillies – medium hot) and Dum Lamb Achari (a lamb curry bursting with pickle spices, fairly hot) - something for everybody!

When asked which three store-cupboard ingredients he could not cook without, he said 3 staples need to be onions, garam gasala and a good mixed curry powder. You can create a curry with just about any type of vegetable or meat using these ingredients.

Shahid has achieved several awards such as the Tiffin Cup 2018, Eat out Eat well West Suffolk Silver Winner, BCA Restaurant of the Year 2017, South Asian Curry Awards 2015 and many more.





I never dreamed about success. I worked for it.
- Estée Lauder



TOP TIPS



Keith BestPanel Judge,
The Restaurant Talent
Show Awards



- In furthering Unity and Collaboration it is my belief that the major representatives of the industry should come together regularly and discuss the different issues (such as recruitment of chefs, pricing policy, procurement of ingredients, joint marketing etc) and agree to share certain information which is not especially commercially sensitive.
- There should be agreement on a common line to take and some joint resources should be committed to achieving that aim with clearly set objectives and timeline there needs to be an agreed strategy. The time for talking and disagreeing is now over and the time for joint action is long overdue.



Shahagir Bakth Faruk Panel Judge The Restaurant Talent

Identify and control hazards in order to make safe foods

Show Awardsv

Be proactive and take preventative steps

Get used to a management system

HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical
Control Point)



Pasha Khandaker MBE

Panel Judge, The Restaurant Talent Show Awards



- Be optimistic and involve your customer to lobby the government
- Grow with the flow Food Management, Technology, Food and Hygiene etc
- Modernise the cusine by making it very appealing and presentable and at the same time keeping it healthy



Dr Wali Tasar Uddin MBEPanel Judge,
The Restaurant Talent

Show Awards



- Effective marketing and promotion strategy
- Team work with dedication and determination
- Train quality chefs who then will lead the kitchen team and generate better creative dishes and presentations



Mahbub Reza Chowdhury TV Producer and Film Maker



Dr Zaki Rezwana Anwar Special Judge, The Restaurant Talent Show Awards



Adapt to emerging technologies

Aim for exceptional customer service and presentation.

Make the innovative menu a priority.



Listening to customer feedback is crucial for the growth of the business

Accept the realities of a changing socio-economic climate and act with an adaptable mindset

Improve the service/interface with customers and clients - both virtual and face-to-face



Oli KhanSpecial Judge,
The Restaurant Talent
Show Awards



Mujib Islam
Special Judge,
The Restaurant Talent
Show Awards



We need to focus more on skills and the curry industry needs to take on more apprentices

Proper hygiene is very important when it comes to food preparation

Minimise your menu and only sell popular item from your menu



Evolve with current market trends. Try and understand your customer

Price your menu based on location and customer base

Engage in social media and digital marketing



Cllr Ayesha Chowdhury Special Judge, The Restaurant Talent Show Awards



- Promote curry industry to the young generation/newcomers by using all possible techniques and use of media
- Lobby government (under effective leadership) to bring skilled staff/chefs
- Use of technology is a must and so is staff/management training to improve and learn new skills



Altaf Hussain Special Judge, The Restaurant Talent Show Awards



- Enthusiasm and passion boost your business
- Amending training process and staff management systems
- Keep up to date employment related documents for all employees



Helal MalikSpecial Judge,
The Restaurant Talent
Show Awards



- Understand customer behaviour and deliver beyond expectation
- Engage customers through social media. It's a tool to impress and inform
- Dining is a passion. Your menu reflects your creativity and skill. Implement new industry trends



Forhad Hussain Tipu Special Judge, The Restaurant Talent Show Awards



- Shorter version of menu and Innovation
- Own online ordering facility hub
- Giving importance of digital marketing



Ruhul Shamsuddin Special Judge,

Special Judge, The Restaurant Talent Show Awards



- Identify your target audience. Look at your local market and tailor your style to appeal to them. All towns have a different community and culture, make sure your restaurant suits their needs
- Shape your concept. Do not be afraid to market yourself as a Bangladeshi cuisine restaurant. Be confident to promote and show off the Bangladeshi food and culture to educate your customers
- Create a restaurant theme suitable to your market



Ana Miah Special Judge, The Restaurant Talent Show Awards

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Train staff on regular intervals

Reduce menu content and upgrade regularly

Embrace social media and make it part of your marketing strategy



Atikur Rahman Special Judge, The Restaurant Talent Show Awards

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- Good food hygiene is of paramount importance for the pleasure of your customers and the continued success of your business
- Have adequate public liability insurance and right paperwork
- Complete the SFBB (Safer Food, Better Business) folder thoroughly and ensure the opening and closing checks are undertaken on a daily basis



Farhan Masud Khan Head of Programmes Channel S

- Be ready to evolve, especially the chef as customers demand and wants are changing constantly with new diet trends
- Management training has become a big part of our future for the industry, to learn and implement
- Communication with employees has to be improved. A training session should take place once a month with all the staffs for better understanding of running of the restaurant



Minara Uddin-Meghna Special Judge, Catering Circle



- Rethink and smart design your menu creatively and wisely, streamline the dishes this will help in ways to reduce food wastage and save money. This improves better execution of dishes cooking times and flavours.
- Leverage your loyal and customers, give them discounts which is an incentive for repeat visits and takeway orders.
- Look for cost efficient good technology in EPOS/POS and Kitchen Management System (KMS). Compare management system prices as these services will enable staff to work seamlessly better, in turn customers have good experiences.



Mohammed Jubair President, London Bangla Press Club



- Understand your locality and prioritise the customer's point of view
- Respect your staff and pay reasonable salaries
- Activate as an organisation or group to address the curry crisis together sharing ideas and experiences



Abdul KashimWinner,
The Restaurant Talent
Show Awards 2017

- Share your thoughts and ideas with your staff and understand their needs and aspiration
- You and your staff have a common goal and that is the success of the restaurant, if you benefit so should they
- A happy team has a direct effect on productivity, which in return means a successful restaurant



Mohi Sami Uddin Winner, The Restaurant Talent Show Awards 2017

- Make sure you invest time in training your team on the technology you have implemented
- Explore ways to segment data from your systems to help your business analysis
- Social media tech will enable you to reach a far bigger crowd, so learn how to use it



Fahad IslamWinner,
The Restaurant Talent
Show Awards 2017



Ash MiahWinner,
The Restaurant Talent
Show Awards 2017



- Stick to your style that works for you and don't compromise your ethics
- Indian food is healthy as long as you remove the unhealthy elements
- Always buy quality products and fresh ingredients to get the best nutrients



- Investing in staff training and management with a particular focus on HACCAP will provide organisations with greater knowledge in food safety
- A diverse workforce helps strengthen equal opportunities in the establishment. Simplified menus help embrace a healthy eating lifestyle
- Using the EPOS systems is fundamental in greater transparencies and management



Tofozzul Miah Winner, The Restaurant Talent Show Awards 2017



Safwaan Choudhury Winner, The Restaurant Talent Show Awards 2017

- Invest in IT this includes having your own website, mobile app and online ordering system. This will improve efficiency for customers and avoid having to face the breathtaking fees charged by third party online companies
- Collect customer data via EPOS systems.
 Using Twitter and Instagram provides a whole new audience for your business to target
- Avoid door to door leafleting. Instead, online marketing tools are much more effective

- Create engaging marketing campaigns and utilise social media platforms to keep customers up to date
- Use TripAdvisor and other reviews and give staff the feedback
- Have a clear and precise menu with accurate descriptions



Murad Ahmed Finalist, The Restaurant Talent Show Awards 2017



Innovation required to improve the image of catering industry

Employment rights for staff

Pension rights for long term employees



Shathil Islam Winner, The Restaurant Talent Show Awards 2017



Bring new concepts like lunch-time trade, street food, stone cooking (Hot Rock), different Build Your Own (BYO) food experiences

Create an attractive atmosphere.
Consider human senses - taste, sight,
lighting, table layout, painting, colours,
cooking process, sound, music, smell,
aromatic scents

Customise menu according to the survey responses from your diners



Rehan Uddin Winner, The Restaurant Talent Show Awards 2017



Ziaur Choudhrey
Winner,
The Restaurant Talent
Show Awards 2017



Do not accommodate and feed staff.
Instead rent out the accommodation and
do not include breakfast, lunch and dinner
for free. You will save 40k in one year

Receive prepped product daily from your supplier. Chicken, lamb, onions, vegetables.
Reduce prep time and pay by the hour

Vegan customers now make up 7% of the population a new core market. Create new vegan menus



Work with your chef to keep food cost down, use local produce where possible and price accordingly if using expensive ingredients

Use social media to reach younger audience lifestyle magazines for older generations. Twitter is my go to place

Till systems, online booking and ordering, kitchen equipment all lead to efficiency and reduced staff costs



Aki Rahman Winner. The Restaurant Talent Show Awards 2017



- Plan and design your menu very carefully and keep your menu size in check. Categorise menu items according to profit and popularity levels. Maximise income from high margin products
- In your menu, showcase your culinary philosophy and brand attributes featuring traditional healthy dishes and ingredients
- Know your customers. Be attentive. Make your service exceptional



Tania Rahman The Restaurant Talent Show Awards 2017

- Focus on talent and invest in your team by training passionate chefs to your standard of cuisine ultimately benefiting the business in the long term
- Make technology your friend by investing in state of the art Epos system
- Keep it simple by focusing on quality of produce and ingredients rather than quantity of items on your menu



Adnan Hussain Winner. The Restaurant Talent Show Awards 2017

- Stay one move ahead i.e. observe what other restaurants are doing, sales patterns in the market and how you can adapt
- Always have trust in yourself so never doubt what you can accomplish. Forget all the 'buts' just because previous generation did not use similar ideas
- Always be innovative with your menus. People like an imagination and being in an industry where everybody copies each other, be original and separate yourself from other places



Aziz Miah Winner. The Restaurant Talent Show Awards 2017

- Reach out for support from the local council, i.e environmental health department and premises licence department
- Regularly check and test employee's knowledge and provide training where necessary
- Do not stand still, enhance your own training and knowledge



Sadia R Hussain JP BEM Host, Catering Circle, Essex



- Offer incentives to employees, flexible hours and more diverse workforce
- Reduce menu sizes and create better working environment
- Transparency in terms of accounting and tax matters



Sabbir Karim
Special Judge
Catering Circle

- Be passionate and provide excellent customer service and always listen to your customer's feedback, it's the key to success.
- Your team is your strength, value them, be a good communicator, regular briefing, and training your team motivating to create a positive diverse working environment. This will benefit your business and grow loyal employees.
- Be prepared to make changes and evolve with the time & food trends.



Foysol Choudhury MBE, MSP Host, Catering Circle, Edinburgh

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- Develop a professional and positive marketing strategy
- Form a national committee to lobby regional and national governments
- Introduce modern Information Technology in areas of service, sales, procurement and training



Raza Miah Senior Food Safety and Licensing Officer

- Better food safety standard, better business compliance
- Clean your hands regularly, prevent cross contamination risk
- Regularly monitor food safety, preventing food poisoning incidents



Cllr Parvez Ahmed Former Mayor, London Borough of Brent



- Grow together as one team
- Build, improve and develop relationship through coaching, constructive feedback and opportunities
- Create the environment of trust, acceptance, respect, understanding and courtesy to build and maintain strong relationships



Faruk Miah MBE
Special Judge
Catering Circle



- Create the right product (creative menu, great flavours, concise menu)
- Use modern marketing methods eg. Food bloggers, social media, promotions
- Provide great customer experience, no point having a great product, decor or menu if you don't serve with a smile or attend to customer needs.



Oliver Ranson
Pricing Expert



- When it comes to pricing forget about costs it is what your customers are willing to pay that counts
- Experiment with new promotions, price increases and special offers to test how your market responds to price changes
- Offer special prices only when the restaurant is not busy



Ashraf Ahmed
Community Activist



- Train educate and inform young people of traditions and new catering methods and practice
- Make industry more attractive for them and their needs
- Encourage them to flourish and create next generation, of restaurants based on past and present



AH Afzal Mahmood Finalist,

The Restaurant Talent Show Awards 2017



- Keep consistent in your quality of service with every customer
- Food quality must be at its peak all time, not on just some dishes but ALL
- Cleanliness and hygiene must be a top priority at all time



Aminur Rahman
Director of IT,
Purple-i Technologies



- Avoid being listed in third party online ordering and online booking companies' website
- Invest in reputable companies: Digital goods such as an EPOS and order online services are long time investments- go to companies with a long standing reputation within the sector who will give you good customer service and training
- The Electronic Point-of-Sale (EPOS) is not an option in the 21st century it's an absolute must for curry houses. It saves time and money, reduces paperwork and creates a customer database giving you better cash control



Zakaria Chowdhury

Finalist,
The Restaurant Talent
Show Awards 2017

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- Better food safety standard, better business compliance
- Must provide at least Level 2 Food Safety in Catering training to your staffs
- Get a 'CATERING GUIDE', which has legal requirements, 'Guide to Compliance' and 'Advice on Good Practice'



Abdul HalimDirector
Nawab Lounge

- Learn how to cook even if you are not planning on being the executive chef at your restaurant.
- Acquire experience in all areas of the restaurant business if you want to be a successful restaurateur
- Never stop learning about your industry so you are familiar with the latest and greatest trends



Ahad Ahmed Senior Producer, Channel S



- Understand customers, products, and business
- Identify the actions needed to reduce waste, engage staff, and use local resources
- Redesign and refurbish your restaurant for greater efficiency



Shafi Ahmed eCommerce Expert, dineNET.co.uk



- Take control of your own business. Use your own online ordering system on your website.
- Ensure your order online site is
 Responsive Ensure your online
 ordering system has a mobile App site
 or native mobile App
- Ensure your online ordering system site is integrated with your EPOS



Suhana AhadDirector,
Pearl Advertising



- Never start without the big three.
 Great chef, great location and a great concept
- Be ready to evolve, especially the chef as customers demand and wants are changing constantly with new diet trends
- Keep you brand alive on social media.
 It is a must and the best way to attract new customers and retain them through online promotions



Poly Rahman
Life Member,
Catering Circle



- Focus on offering high-quality food by using only the best quality ingredients.
- The chef you employ needs to have diversity in their skills and creativity.

 And train the service staff on a regular basis. In order to provide the best customer service.
- Keep your menu simple and specialize in a particular type of cuisine or dishes that is unique to your restaurant to differentiate yourself from competitors.



a media platform for the eatering industry



SOLUTIONSTO THE CATERING INDUSTRY

