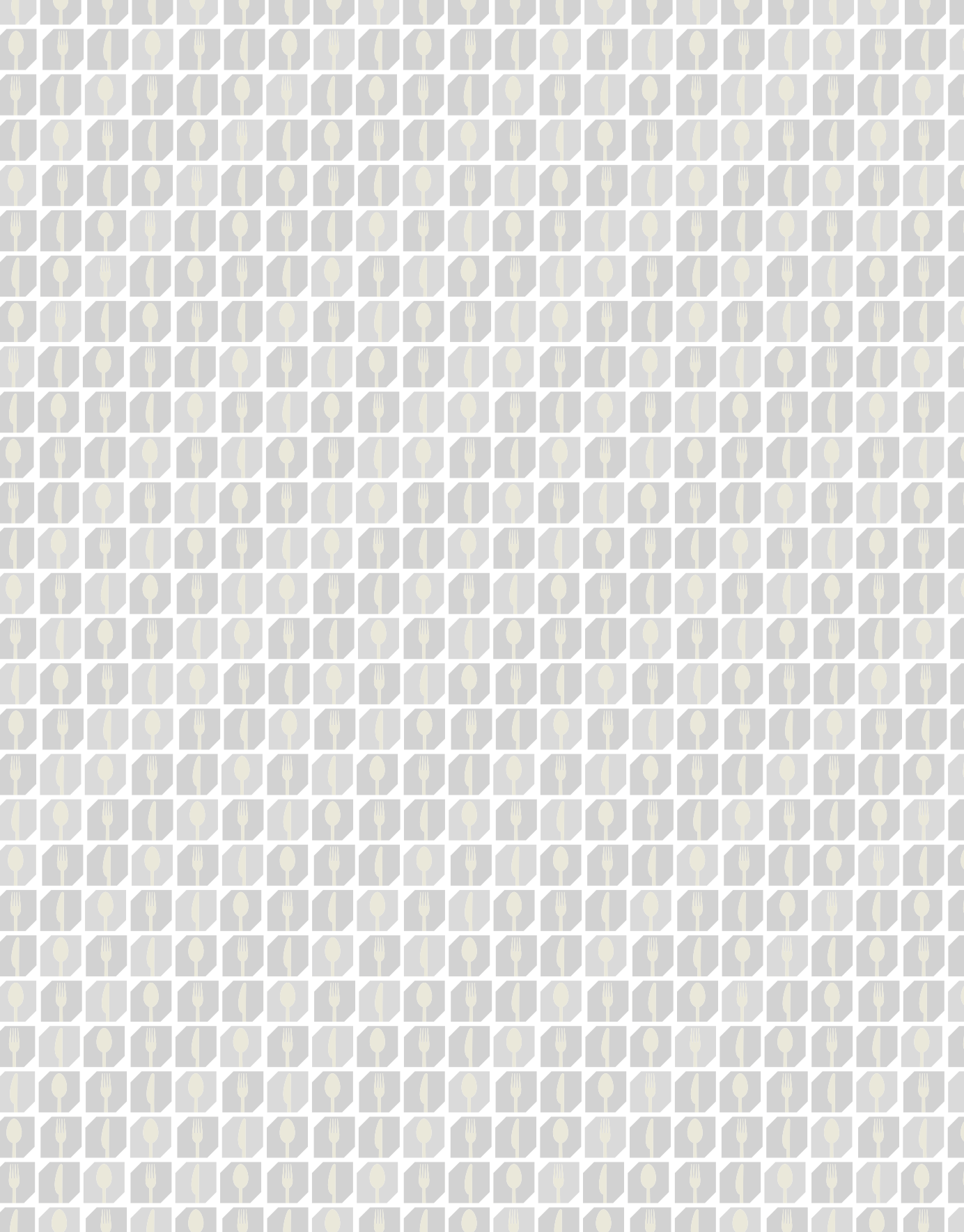


Restaurant  
*Success*  
Stories 2019



THE ESSENTIAL BOOK OF  
CATERING INSPIRATIONS





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Majority of the restaurants are losing money and small amount are successful and making money. The concept is to reverse that by highlighting success stories.

## Foreword

The industry is full of wonderful stories, history and background. To encapsulate these wonderful stories of our fellow businessmen in the catering business we have created this inspirational book of success stories. Not only does it inform us of the journeys we have been on but also the delightful memories we have and can now share.

Majority of the restaurants are losing money and small amount are successful and making money. The concept is to reverse that by highlighting success stories. This year we are launching *Restaurant Talent Show 2019* every fortnightly, which is designed to highlight the success stories and at the same time focuses on cost saving ideas and revenue increase.

We will be running the *Restaurant Talent Show* on all 12 issues we found during our road shows, which includes menu innovation, healthy options, new concepts, technologies, marketing, staff issues, financial planning, training, competition, compliance, etc.

We are also aware that not all successful restaurateurs can take part in the live television shows, especially older generation or camera shy people, so this year we have launched and are publishing a book of success stories with a very few selected profiles.

Our team has collated stories from all over the UK – from Scotland to Southend, from Bristol to Birmingham and from the villages to the big cities.

Curry is everywhere and so are we! The universal theme throughout each story has been one of hard work, dedication and sheer determination to make the business work. I hope you enjoy reading through the Success Stories of our industry and that it reminds you of all that we have achieved.

These superb personal stories are hugely motivating for the valuable and vital work we must continue to do in order to maintain the industry at its most successful and prosperous.

Md Abdul Haque  
Founder, Catering Circle





[www.cateringcircle.co.uk](http://www.cateringcircle.co.uk)

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## success stories

# THE POWER OF POSITIVE THINKING



Channel S viewers of the Catering Circle Live Shows constantly tell us how much they like learning about what other independent operators are doing in their restaurants that's working and helping them achieve better results. We do this by a series of live TV chats and by showcasing our restaurant show participants' best practices and accomplishments in our *Talent Shows*.

Our live reality shows give us the opportunity to showcase the achievements of our show participants and provide real world instruction and inspiration to other independent operators.

As our curry houses face mounting pressures on immigration, recruitment, rising costs and weakening consumer confidence, it is becoming more important to provide additional reasons to visit. Modern dining concepts that focus on healthy food, communicating good food hygiene and offering leisure experiences should support growth but stand to impact on independent players.

As such, this '*essential book of catering success*' raises a glass to those whose innovative thinking, tireless efforts and dedication to the industry will lead to the creation of some unique dining places. Today more than ever, you need to create a

memorable customer experience. The good news is that many independent operators are creating a "wow" factor in their restaurants to avoid the doomsayer predictions of a restaurant business cannibalised by other food service options. And the great news is you don't have to reinvent your concept to be outstanding. It could be as simple as changing or enhancing one aspect of your restaurant.

We hope you'll enjoy learning about what our life members are doing to improve their customer experience, operate more efficiently and build a better, more successful restaurant business. This book is a launching edition with a few stories.

We'll add more success stories annually, so please check back often!



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## About Us

Curry has become an integral part of British culture yet the Curry Industry is currently facing an epidemic crisis. The £4.1 billion industry is being threatened with no future in sight unless issues are addressed. Lack of chefs, staff shortages, tax rises, escalating business costs and the emergence of technology has meant the traditional curry house is slowly dying out. Successful enterprise has always been important to the hard working Bangladeshi community and the industry needs a boost and revival. The media platform Catering Circle aims to address the issues within the industry and work with experts to find solutions.

### Why is the curry industry so important?

British Bangladeshis have been at the forefront of contributing to British society by creating this vibrant industry. Curry has become one of Britain's most loved cuisines.

With many Bangladeshis arriving in Britain in the 1950s the curry house was the first stepping stone to building their futures and that of their children's in Britain. It now stands as a symbol of pride in their history and heritage. Currently it boasts a huge industry generating over £4.1 billion for the economy. There are over 12,000 outlets in the UK. 18 tonnes of Chicken Tikka Masala are consumed every week and on average a British adult will spend £1,260 a year on curry.

### What can be done immediately?

- Improved Health and Safety Training
- Marketing, branding and PR including the importance of social media
- Demystifying technology
- Nurturing home grown talent with the ambition to establish Michelin star chefs





### **What is happening to the catering industry?**

- Businesses are suffering from a lack of well trained staff and the government's strict immigration policy
- The Industry is being squeezed by the recession
- Growing technology means that customer preferences and demand have changed
- Online ordering and competition has revolutionised the industry. Traditional curry houses are struggling to keep up with demand

### **What are the long term plans?**

- Making the industry "fit for purpose"
- Developing leadership within the industry
- Strengthening the relationship with the Banking sector so that businesses can expand

- Developing training manuals promoting, supporting and encouraging training
- Continuing engagement with ministers and politicians
- Engaging with key stakeholders such as suppliers
- Raising profile for the catering industry
- Promoting catering industry in a way to attract the younger generation
- Becoming global leaders – sharing best practice with others in the catering industry



## ATTRACTING THE YOUNGER GENERATION

When you're in the hospitality business, particularly if you're running a restaurant, how do you keep ahead of the game? Well, in today's market it's not just about having tasty food or a trendy décor. With so many discerning diners to please and the competition increasing day by day, there's a lot more to running a food business than you thought.

Attracting and keeping your customer will always be a number one priority for a restaurant business because your customer is king and as long as he's buying, your business can keep operating. With this in mind, who is your ideal diner? It's no surprise to hear that age has a huge factor to play here. Whereas generations ago, it was usual for the diner to be of a mid to older age group of people, maybe with kids, and who had the funds to eat out, to then dictate restaurant protocol. Over the years the development of technology, job sector and finances now means

it's a more youthful diner that dominates this area through both food taste, cost and design expectations. The 'younger generation' can be described as those aged between 18 and 34 years and generally known as 'millennials' meaning they were born between 1982 and 2004, and entering adulthood at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. It's been widely recognised, through proven research and statistics, that this particular section of the public are shaping our lifestyle habits from how we shop to where we eat to the technology we use. Many millennials will profess to eating out up to 3 times per week. That's a lot of dinners to cater for. With so much pressure on restaurateurs to keep their business thriving and fresh, it's no wonder many are keen to capture this influential sector of the community. So what do you need to do to get a share of this superhuman pie? Here are some tips to get your restaurant noticed.



# PROVENANCE AND TRUST

## ARE REAL BUZZ WORDS IN THE SECTOR RIGHT NOW ...

It turns out that a huge proportion of this younger group love to attend foodie events such as festivals and food shows. With this in mind, it might be worth having a stand as a great way to promote your brand and give people a taste of what you do through a few select dishes.

If you've been on instagram, facebook, twitter or other on-trend social media platform then you've undoubtedly seen the vast amount of food accounts, pictures and videos circulating the world wide web. It's through this social media generation that you can raise your profile and create a little buzz about what you do. It's well known that millennials love to follow well known names and interesting chefs. Create a quirky story behind your chef and you're on to a winner already.

Provenance and trust are real buzz words in the sector right now along with diets and healthy



Convenience and packaged products will always have a place in the restaurant scene, especially since we live in an ever increasing fast paced environment.

eating. If you're open and honest about where you source your ingredients and are willing to go the extra mile to get the best quality, be it from a particular farm or making sure all dishes are seasonal and locally produced, then you can almost guarantee yourself a favourite slot amongst the millennial list of best restaurants. Likewise, offering a selection of dishes that can cater for a variety of diets and lifestyle, will gain you additional brownie points and head of the class status.

Convenience and packaged products will always have a place in the restaurant scene, especially since we live in an ever increasing fast paced environment. With so many people either working freelance, flexible hours, rushing from job to job, they will always look for great dishes, packaged well and easy to transport to the desk or next location. Just look at places like Itsu, Wasabi, Leon and Pret a Manger if you don't believe me. Making sure you have a delivery option in place and an easy buy option available, will facilitate a continued sale stream.

Whatever you adopt, it's important to keep both eyes open in today's modern food market, adapting your product, growing your brand, utilising social media and making sure the food still tastes fantastic!

**Hülya Erdal**  
Chef, Teacher and  
Consultant





## FOR IMPACTFUL LOCAL MARKETING **EMBRACE THE POWER OF PLANTS**

It isn't enough anymore to offer the same old tired veggie curry as the meat-free option on your menu and expect to keep customers happy. Or keep customers at all for that matter.

With the exponential growth of Veganism, since 2016, to an estimated 3.5 million of the UK's population, customers' expectations - when it comes to vegetarian and vegan food - have never been higher. Plant-based dishes must feature widely, be healthy, make a positive environmental impact, look good enough for the 'gram and on top of all that, taste delicious.

Diced vegetables in gravy seriously won't cut it anymore.

Indian restaurants have, perhaps more than most, an exciting opportunity to embrace the

**LOCAL FRUIT  
AND VEG SELLERS  
WILL THANK YOU FOR  
KEEPING YOUR MENUS  
PLANT-BASED AND SEASONAL**



“

Once you have your exciting and mouth-watering new vegan dishes in place you'll have something newsworthy to shout about.

wonderful plethora of naturally vegetarian and vegan dishes the subcontinent has to offer and bring them centre stage to satisfy an ever-increasing demand in the UK for animal protein-free food.

A serious approach to creating vegan dishes placed prominently on menus might be the smartest marketing strategy you adopt this year. Veganism and Vegetarianism aren't a fad limited to #Veganuary. The facts tell us otherwise: *Pret a Manger* has opened its first vegetarian outlet in London's Soho with more in the pipeline and supermarkets are now selling vegan ready-meals faster than their meat-based ones. In the meantime, sales of kidney beans, lentils and chickpeas are outstripping purchases of fish and meat.

Because eating a diet free of fish and meat makes a positive contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, it is inevitable all round that environmentally conscious customers will be demanding top notch vegan meals.

But it also makes great business sense to create an exciting array of vegan dishes rather than the usual one or two veggie options found on a menu: pulses are so much cheaper than

meat, leaving you, the restaurateur with happy customers and better margins. And local fruit and shahena sellers will thank you for keeping your menus plant-based and seasonal.

The good news is that Indian restaurateurs need look no further than their own country's mind-blowing repertoire of naturally vegan (and vegetarian) recipes to entice customers already vegan and newbies willing to give it a try.

Once you have your exciting and mouth-watering new vegan dishes in place you'll have something newsworthy to shout about. Posting attractive food images on your Instagram feed while at the same time posting incentives for people to try them on your Facebook pages are a great way to start bigging up your vegan offering. Make this your local marketing activity for 2019 and by #Veganuary2020 you'll have given yourself a massive headstart.

Helen Hokin

Managing Partner, Golborne  
Nash PR and Digital Marketing,  
London





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Demands are being made by consumers for restaurants to include more vegetarian and vegan dishes on the menu

## THIS YEAR'S FOOD TRENDS AND THE LATEST IN HEALTHY EATING

It seems that we may not see the continuous flow of big trends as we have seen in the past; in fact, it has almost become trendy to become untrendy. However, one trend that appears to be growing at an exponential rate is that of consumers becoming more conscious of what they eat, whether due to health concerns that are publicised in the media or because of eco and environmental concerns held by the general public. As a result, sustainable foods, organic foods and seasonality of foods are highly valued by customers as they perceive them to be 'pure' and better for their health with less preservatives as well as better for the environment.

There is even more focus on British produce and seasonal ingredients, especially with the issue of Brexit; and casual dining concepts with an emphasis on a combination of some key traditional dishes with healthier ingredient alternatives (e.g. using fat free *crème fraîche* instead of full fat yoghurt, or using probiotic fortified yogurt instead of the ordinary style of yogurt, olive oil instead of vegetable oil) offered alongside, or in place of, the traditional heavier dishes will be a way of keeping up with the new demands of customers. These factors can also be unique selling points for a restaurant's menu. 2019 will also be about going back to



basics; food will be all about '*provenance - where it's from*', healthier cooking techniques (here Indian restaurants have a brilliant advantage in the tandoor oven as a healthy cooking method compared to other cuisines that use unhealthy techniques such as frying) and being flavour-focused with simpler dishes (that have the advantage of being less time-consuming to prepare and with less ingredients). The focus will continue on combating waste and reducing meat consumption.

In addition, there is a growing interest in customers of the need to eat a more plant-based diet. Due to this, demands are being made by consumers for restaurants to include more vegetarian and vegan dishes on the menu, especially by female clientele and the millennial generation of customers who are increasingly aware (as a result of the media) to eat a cleaner diet and improve their lifestyle.

Indian food, with its spices, tandoor oven cooking methods and its history of delicious vegetarian foods, ticks the boxes for the new interest in super-foods, healthy cooking techniques, as well as in plant-based and vegan dishes that are particularly tasty and creative.

Having just one or more of these options on the menu, either temporarily or permanently, can be an added advantage to any restaurant as these dishes can be used as marketing tools to gain exposure in the media for the restaurant's innovation and ingenuity, to increase the customer base and to reach other, newer demographics which will have a higher 'spend' and who may not usually eat many of the highly calorific traditional Indian dishes. It will appeal to and satisfy the growing demand for plant-based foods by non-vegetarian customers who are increasingly health conscious, and also the growing vegetarian client base in the UK. With a few tweaks, Indian cuisine can be made to fit the criteria of 'clean eating' that many of the younger

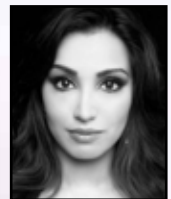
customers, and female clientele in particular, are interested in.

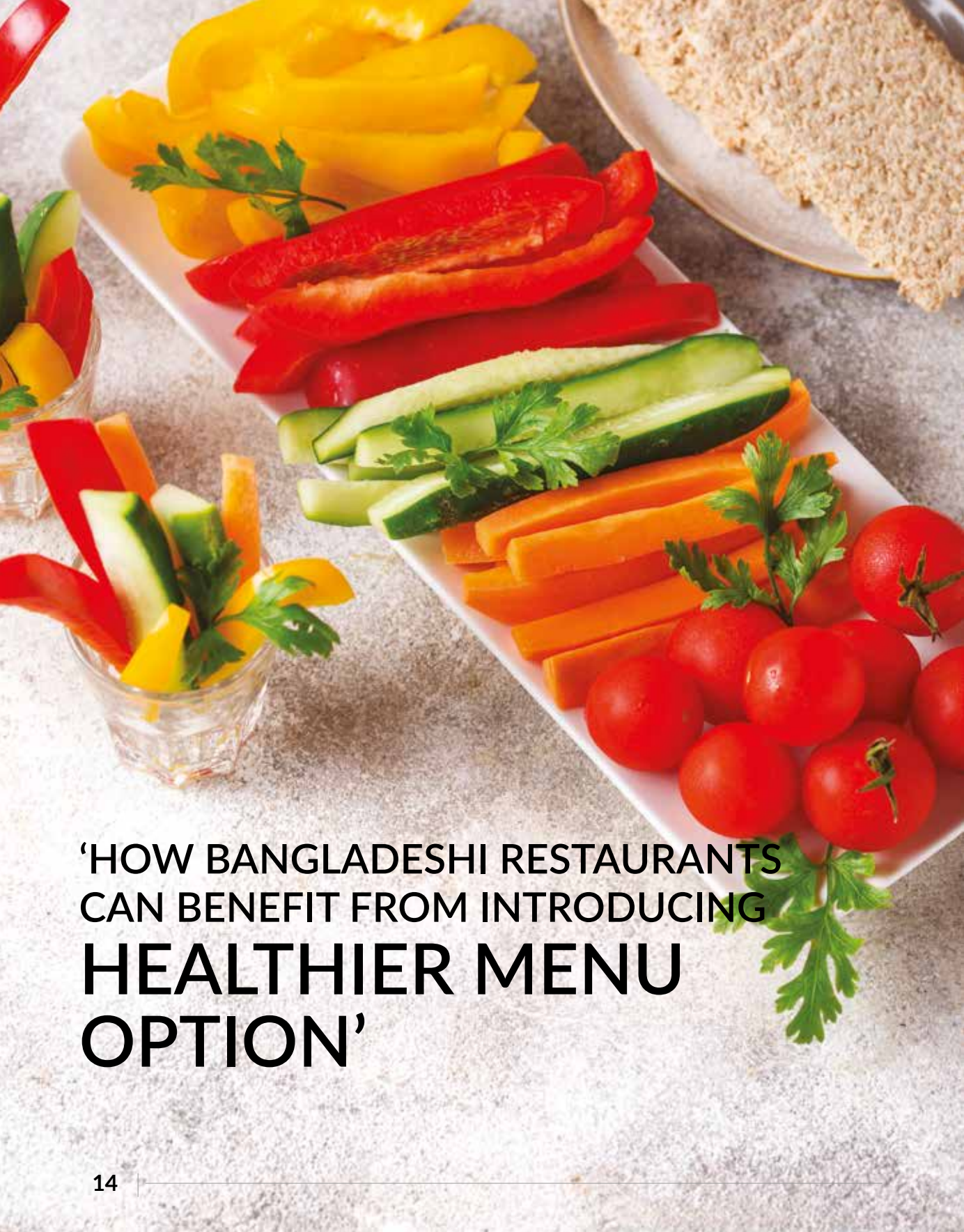
Aside from the heavier, more time-consuming traditional dishes, there is an extensive variety of quick, delicious, inexpensive and easy to prepare vegetarian dishes that are available in Indian cuisine, compared to other types of cuisines.

These can easily enable an Indian restaurant to expand their repertoire in a simpler way by introducing (and promoting via social media), a monthly or fortnightly healthy 'Special' vegetarian option for a limited time, with which the restaurant can trial test a dish for its demand and saleability. And by changing that dish for another healthy 'special' for the next month, after obtaining feedback from customers via sales numbers and comments, it will enable the restaurant to obtain more traction inexpensively, with the increase in new customers as well as satisfying existing customer's desire for new options and renew their interest, without a large initial outlay. This will also drive renewed interest in the restaurant by attracting new clients, especially by adding dishes (either temporarily for a limited time, or permanently after obtaining feedback from existing clients and via social media), such as those in the Indian street food and snacks genre. Dishes such as vegetarian filled *roti* or wraps can be made with either gluten free or whole-wheat wraps; these dishes will also easily, quickly and inexpensively enable the Indian restaurant to fill the gap of slow afternoon sales figures without much initial outlay, skill or specialist equipment required.

**Shahena Ali**

Nutritional Therapist  
and Naturopath





# **‘HOW BANGLADESHI RESTAURANTS CAN BENEFIT FROM INTRODUCING HEALTHIER MENU OPTION’**



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With improving economic condition, many customers are willing to pay extra for higher-quality food.

We live in the twenty-first century where restaurant food is a part of life and nutrition of restaurant food could not be more important.

Nutrition is becoming a part of the national dialogue but unfortunately, till now, when you think of restaurant food, it is probably safe to say most of you would not associate it with being healthy.

According to a recent report, fresh and organic foods are more preferred in millennial than it is among the baby boomers. Also surveys reveal that concerns are moving millennial away from industrially produced food and food which contains preservatives. In 2014, McDonald's suffered the most as the preference of the younger population continued to shift towards healthier food. Now most fast food restaurants including McDonald's are introducing menu items, which are healthier, preservative free and do not contain artificial ingredients. With improving economic condition, many customers are willing to pay extra for higher-quality food. McDonald's is an example of how menu

## **NUTRITION IS BECOMING A PART OF THE NATIONAL DIALOGUE**

innovations and introduction of healthier and fresh food can also help earnings.

Bangladeshi restaurant owners have to bear in mind that millennial prefer both quick service and healthy food. Fortunately digital innovations have also ensured that the convenience factor is taken care of, so even if the healthy food takes longer to prepare, customers do not have to wait for long to get their orders if they order online before their arrival. As the lines between quick service and fast casual blurs, I believe that Bangladeshi restaurants will benefit from serving healthier food and this will contribute to the long-term growth of the catering industry. However, with more buying power than the baby boomers, the millennial will continue to shape the British restaurant industry and in order to meet customer preference, the change appears to be essential.

**Dr. Zaki Rezwana Anwar**

Community Activist







## SECRET OF SUCCESS

# ALWAYS EMPLOY PEOPLE BETTER THAN YOURSELF

As business leaders one of our key skills is finding, developing and continuing to motivate people, because it is our employees that maximise our income and minimise our costs. We have nearly 500 people working for us across a portfolio of businesses in the UK and Bangladesh.

Here are a few tips that can inspire employees to do their best work.

### **Inspire yourself first**

Ask yourself how passionate and excited are you about your business? Employees take what is given to them. If you want them to charge their batteries and be all pumped-up about going to work, inspire yourself first.

Set up an example by being excited about your work. Talk about the future projects and the plans you have in the pipeline so that your excitement and enthusiasm gets transferred to them as they say motivation is contagious. It's a

great way to re-energise your own commitment for your business and give them a reason to look forward to working. For example, our people make the difference between us at SW Car Supermarket and other car dealerships and the result is evident in our phenomenal growth over the last five years.

**Provide meaning, purpose, and sense of belonging to them**

People often ask me how to get employees excited to work on your projects, products, or business? My only answer to them is to share the mission, purpose, and goals with them. It would not only instill their belief in the company's vision but would also give them a sense of belonging and an idea of the bigger picture.

Trust me, professionals look forward to work with companies or startups who have their values and work ethics in place. Plus, working on something that employees can relate to would



## APPRECIATE A JOB WELL-DONE

People often ask me how to get employees excited to work on your projects, products, or business? My only answer to them is to share the mission, purpose, and goals with them.

give them a sense of contribution which is much higher than higher salaries or other factors.

### Drive their fear away

I'm sure employees have a bucket full of ideas as they are the ones actually working on a product day in and day out. The biggest reason that restricts them to share those ideas or even have a general conversation with you might be your "stereotypical boss image".

If you wish to encourage them to come up with innovative ideas, work on your image. Maybe Shajahan at front of house has some great ideas but his hesitance or your bossy image is stopping him from expressing them. Start engaging them in small talks, know what they like to do, how their family is doing, and drive the fear away so they don't have second thoughts to approach you for whatever reason.

### Show them your trust and they'll give you results

Let's face it: You can only produce valuable employees if you instill trust and confidence in them to become one. Employees crave trust and affection from their seniors, managers, and bosses. Research shows around 69% of employees would work harder if they were better recognised and trusted at work.

### Appreciate a job well-done

You have no idea what random praises and compliments can do to employees. This can not only boost the morale of employees but also inspire them to work harder. Unfortunately, if we look at the numbers, we would realise that a staggering 81% have a longing to be appreciated and recognised for the efforts at work.

Don't be too general or vague while appreciating them. Be specific and take their names. Express the qualities or the work they did that made you appreciate them. When you revisit their triumphs and professional victories, it leaves a positive impact on them as well as on others that leads to a happy workplace environment.

You don't need a magic wand to infuse inspiration, motivation, and happiness at your workplace. Constant motivation, little changes here and there, celebrating their success and contribution at work would do wonders to inspire them to do their best work.

### Dr Sanawar Choudhury

Chartered Accountant,  
Entrepreneur, Philanthropist







# THE TAKEAWAY REVOLUTION

The takeaway sector has been one of the strongest performing areas of the UK economy in the last ten years with takeaway businesses increasing by 10% to 36,855. Spending on takeaways has grown by 34% in seven years from £7.46bn to £9.9bn in 2016. There has been a 12.1% growth in the portion of household food expenditure. Takeaways now play an important part in contributing towards a modern healthy balanced lifestyle. 41,000 new jobs have been created in the sector since 2009 now employing 231,350 people in the UK and that is more jobs in telecom and advertising. The new wealth created by the takeaway sector has contributed £4.5bn to the UK economy since 2016 with is 13.2% of the entire food service sector and resulting in £1.63bn take revenue in 2016.

It is estimated that over the next five years total spending on takeaways will grow by 13% to £11.2bn by 2021 creating a further 30,000 hospitality jobs. The Indian and Bangladeshi takeaway sector should be very proud of contributing towards this amazing success and need to continue to make improvements because they slightly lag behind Italian Pizza and Chinese takeaways.

In order to support this success we need to address the challenges such as the shortages of skilled staff, innovation and digital technologies, VAT, business rates and the tax regime. The bond between the customer and the takeaway has become stronger in the community. Takeaways sponsor local sports clubs, support charities and have improved local activities. In



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New apps, new cuisines and healthier options have helped to drive up demand for takeaways...

## RESTAURANTS AND TAKEAWAYS WHO HAVE WEB AND APPS **INCREASED THEIR ORDERS**

many cases the takeaway side of the business has financially bailed the Indian and Bengali restaurant out in harsher uncertain economic Brexit conditions.

New apps, new cuisines and healthier options (e.g vegetarian, low fat and low salt options) have helped to drive up demand for takeaways. There is also a substantial growth in non-traditional takeaways options such a morning fast food breakfasts to lunchtime sandwich orders from operators such as KFC, Burger King and McDonald's. The Indian and Bangladeshi industry must change by:

- Investing in new technologies, online apps and digital systems to keep up with the demand. They must improve their websites and marketing. 30% of restaurants and takeaways who have apps and increased their orders.

- Train staff and improve their customer service on telephones, computers and social media platforms. Employing well skilled staff and retain staff is the key. There are shortages of staff who work in kitchens, drivers and those who work in front-of-house. For example Indian restaurants are employing more European staff because of the staff shortage.

- Improve their hygiene standards and star rating. Customers check this information, trip advisor and reviews before ordering food. They also check rating with the local council and suppliers such as Just Eat and Hungry Horse.

- Adapt menus, offer a variety of healthier options and have contactless payments systems. Some businesses have closed their restaurants and become takeaways only to reduce expenses and rates.

- Improve delivery times as customers have an appetite for a fast efficient service. Be honest with your customers if there is going to be a delay with the delivery service.

The takeaway sector has a bright future and potential growth in the sector is almost certain whether we leave the EU or not providing important issues are tackled.

**Kulsum Hussin**

*CEO and Director*

*Welcome Skills*



# FOOD ALLERGY



## What are you going to do if a customer in your restaurant or takeaway has a food allergy?

You will be surprised to know that the highest fine for a food allergy offence is £1.5m at a restaurant in Hornchurch where two staff members went to prison. The UK has a high prevalence of allergen conditions with 20% of the population affected by one or more allergenic disorders. 44% of the British adults now suffer from at least one allergy [1]. Between 1992 and 2012 there has been a 615% increase in the rate of hospital admissions for anaphylaxis [2]. The recent Pret A Manger case of the death of Natasha Ednan Laperouse, aged 15, at Heathrow Airport is likely to lead to a change in the law.

Food allergies are increasing becoming a problem for Indian restaurants and takeaways. In the UK all food businesses must tell customers if they use any of the 14 key allergens as ingredients in the food and drink they provide

to their customers under Consumer Regulation No 1189/2011 and its amendments under Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 78/2014.

There are 14 allergens that must be declared in writing on the menu or on the website or chalk board or by written signpost explaining how customers can obtain information. This could include speaking to a member of staff. Customers with allergies can make informed decisions when choosing items from the menu and checking restaurant business policies. Phrases such as “may contain” warn customers that there could be small amounts of an allergen in the food product.

This could happen when an allergen has entered the product accidentally during the production process. It may be best to :



- Make sure your menu offer's clear food allergy information. The information must be clear, visible and legible. For buffets list information for each food item separately rather than for the buffet as a whole

- Your website clearly indicates what the business policy is for food allergies and intolerances. Businesses are not required to offer a customer a different meal to suit the customer's needs

- Make sure the customer is referred to a manager or supervisor on duty

- Make sure staff are trained in how to handle customers who have questions about allergens. Customers may want to know how food is handled and cooked. Make sure a staff member is also trained in first aid

- If there is a chance of cross contamination from cooking equipment or ingredients, staff must be able to advice customers when menu choices are being made. Remind chefs to be more careful about added allergens from glazes, sauces, and cooking oils

- Make enquiries of customers on the phone if you take bookings from customers in the restaurant or if you take orders for takeaways on the phone. With distant selling information must be made available at the point of purchase or delivery. When ordering for several customers in a party make sure the customer with a food allergy has takeaway food which is clearly labeled so that the customer knows which food items are safe. For large parties in restaurants try to take pre-orders and identify guests early with special dietary needs

- Check your allergen information is accurate especially if you introduce a new menu or a new dish or a substitution ingredient

- Be extra careful if the restaurant offers complex dishes. Chefs must plan the cooking and serving process for a customer with an allergy. For example ask the chef to use a different utensils

with a separate chopping board (purple) with a purple knife and temperature probe. Ask the chef to keep the food separate from other foods, double check the ingredients and avoid toppings / decorations which might appear safe

- Some customers are very knowledgeable and there is no harm in speaking to customers

- A small trace of food can cause an allergenic reaction. Clean work surfaces and equipment thoroughly before use to remove any traces of anything you have cooked before to avoid cross contamination

- Check other websites for allergy alerts and information. Local authorities catering bodies and consumer bodies supply useful information. For example check the Food Allergy and Intolerance Research Programme which identifies factors and useful information associated with food allergies.

If you have a customer with a medical issue you should not move the customer. Call 999 and ask for an ambulance. Ask the customer if he or she carries an adrenaline pen or takes any medication. Help the customer retrieve the adrenaline pen. If the customer cannot administer the EPI adrenaline pen get a first aider to do this. Send a member of staff outside to flag down the ambulance. Ask any customers in your establishment if they are medically qualified to help.

Customers with food allergies receive two types of medication to relieve their symptoms namely (1) Antihistamines are available without prescription to treat moderate reactions and (2) Adrenalines which narrow blood vessels to treat severe allergic reactions (such as anaphylaxis) to open airways to ease breathing difficulties.

**Waseem Sherwani**  
Director, Welcome Skills



[1] Mintel 2010, [2] Turner, Paul J , et al 2015



# HEALTHY FOOD OPTIONS AND ADOPTING NEW CONCEPTS

“ People are now more conscious about their health in today's society and are interested to know the nutritional aspects of the meal they're ordering. ”

A few years ago, it was very difficult to find a restaurant that had the knowledge, the expertise, or even the capacity to cater for a variety of different dietary needs. Today, there is much more awareness and understanding about having food readily available for those who are vegetarian, vegan, dairy free, gluten free etc, that it's almost become the norm - which is great. What's more, people are now more conscious about their health in today's society and are interested to know the nutritional aspects of the meal they're ordering, so it's important to keep this in mind when adding and adjusting dishes on your menu.



# THERE SHOULD BE **WEEKLY AND MONTHLY AUDITS** TO KEEP A TAB ON DUE DILIGENCE



For restaurants, one way to ensure guests are getting what they want, is to stick to cooking techniques that are health friendly, rather than those that are quick and easy to do in the kitchen. Steaming, baking, roasting and shallow frying are just a few examples that chefs can adopt to maintain nutrition in the dishes, which will ultimately keep customers happy and away from greasy, full of fat dishes.

I also think that there has been a great increase in the number of restaurants using local suppliers and ordering local and sustainable produce, which is another thing I'm a strong advocate for. I myself, like to use local produce, for a number of reasons – for freshness, better flavour and I'm supporting my local economy, so I believe this is another new concept chefs can easily adhere to in their workforce.

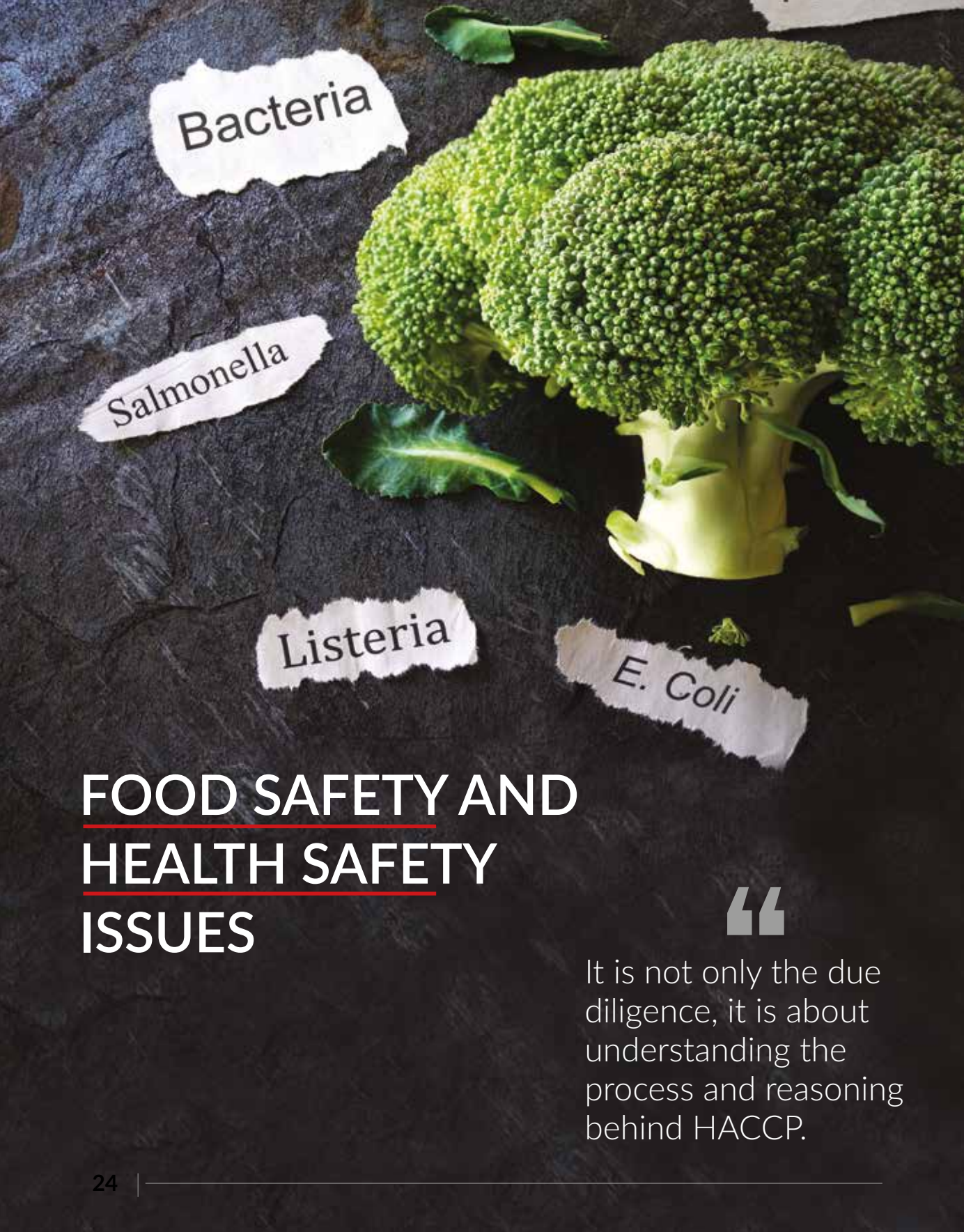
A final thing to remember is that vegetarian, vegan, gluten free dishes aren't just for those who have that specific dietary requirement, these dishes are on the menu for everyone! I

think there are some misconceptions towards dishes that are labelled with these dietaries, but it's important to realise that these are just as nutritional as meat, gluten or dairy dishes. I've noticed that diners today are willing to try something outside of their comfort zone. Now that there is more clarity on what the dishes include (including allergens), and how nutritional they are, it's great to see that people are giving different dishes a go – there is now the freedom to opt for healthy/non-healthy choices, which is what all restaurants should, and need to offer.

Sudha Saha

Consultant Chef





Bacteria

Salmonella

Listeria

E. Coli

# FOOD SAFETY AND HEALTH SAFETY ISSUES

“

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



# THE ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IS FOOD SAFETY AND HEALTH AND SAFETY ARE AS IMPORTANT AS **DRIVING REVENUE**

Food  
Poisoning

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





# WHY TOTAL QUALITY IS A MUST IN A CATERING BUSINESS

Here's the way we define it at restaurant business. Improving quality, involves all our activities: Foods and services, Customer relationship and Management style.

Quality is nothing but continued attention. Continued attention to everything. Service floor to kitchen floor. Every product packaging. Every process and policy.

## **Attention to detail**

Those details are in your hands. As someone has said, "Every job is a self-portrait of the person who did it. Autograph your work with excellence." You are your quality controller. Individually and collectively.

Attention to detail will produce profit or put out of trade.

So let's define it specifically and broadly:

With internal policies, quality means: Are our employees happy with their work environment? How many time they have to talk to when they need to get a problem straightened out? Can they come to work in a pleasant, comfortable environment? Do we make it easy for them to handle their family responsibilities as well as their job responsibilities?

With regard to management style, quality means: Does your manager tell you what the restaurant's goals are? Does he or she give you feedback about how you're contributing to those goals? Does your manager provide you with the necessary training to do your job? Does the manager follow through on promises?





Every job is a self-portrait of the person who did it. Autograph your work with excellence.

Training procedure improve reputation of business & teamwork ability to provide “service”. “The manner in which the customer is treated.”

If you think we are in the restaurant business, you are wrong! We are in the business of retail sales. We manufacture a variety of products and merchandise in our menu. Then, we offer it for sale to customers in a display service area known as counter tops, tables, and dining rooms. Unlike most retail operations, such as department stores, our product has a limited shelf life, due to potential spoilage.

There is a greater sense of urgency for selling, moving and serving our products. Our restaurant is not merely a place to eat or drink, but rather a building designed to accommodate, facilitate and promote the retail sales of food and beverage to customers through service. We provide service as a way of making sales to our guests.

Good team work can help to understand  
To Serve Is To Sell – as for example -

- We don't buy gas; we buy heat
- We don't buy circus tickets; we buy thrills
- We don't buy the paper; we buy the news
- We don't buy glasses; we buy vision
- We don't buy dinner; we buy sales and service

## SERVICE

THE MANNER IN WHICH  
THE CUSTOMER IS TREATED

The difference between a restaurant and other retail sales organisations:

### In a restaurant

We manufacture and sell our foods under the same roof. We know our guests are here to buy, not browse (no one comes in to try on chicken Tikka Masala). Our guests may return as many as three times a day (lunch, happy hour, and dinner). Although this is unlikely, some guests may be regulars, day after day.

### In department stores

No one buys the same shoes, pants, or socks three days in a row. Department stores provide service. Restaurants provide hospitality: a warm feeling from feeding both the body and the soul.

More entertainers open restaurants and bars than department stores. Why? Because this is showbiz! Our function as a restaurant is to acquire and maintain business, to turn casual customers into loyal, repeat guests.

Altaf Hussain  
Executive Member  
Catering Circle





# HOW DO WE OVERCOME THE CRISIS!

In every sense, curry is a hot topic. Our forefathers came to the UK for a better quality of life. Through their hard work and passion, pioneered the curry industry and influenced curry to be part of British heritage. With this curry connection, we have successful representation in the business world, host of TV celebrities, media and sporting arena icons and MPs, all with British Bangladeshi identify. All these milestones and achievements has made this curry industry, a proud moment.

However, you will know by listening to the media and from personal experience that the curry industry is dying a slow death with more than 2 businesses closing every week. Clearly we all live in a world of uncertainty and insecurity. At a stage of desperation, we don't know where to start or what direction to go in. Everyone is feeling the pinch and left with two

options, either we give up, close our shutters or we plan for survival and growth. Its about making a choice and as a business owner, our mind-set should be to

**“Work Smarter, Rather Than Harder!”**

Here are few tips and suggestions:

## **KNOW your Business**

- Business needs have evolved along with customer expectations. Visit trade fairs and exhibitions, find out what new opportunities and equipment is available that can reduce labour costs and increase revenue.

- Find out current industry trends? Street food concept, casual dining, healthy food options, vegan menu, food on the go and open plan kitchen.



# BUSINESS NEEDS HAVE EVOLVED ALONG WITH CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

- Experience being the customer! When was the last time you were a paying customer? Take your team out for a meal and enjoy the dining experience through observation.

- Staff are our greatest asset and we need to invest effort in training to improve performance and retention. Build good relationships through engagement at team meetings to increase morale and confidence.

- Create your own brand. Have a logo, colour scheme that flows throughout the business.

- What is your brand identity? Create and expose your brand. Sell benefits and not features. Let the customer embrace an emotional benefit.

- Understand how legislation and regulations have impact on operations. Stay up-to-date and comply.

- Employ during peak and off peak times. Encourages the next generation to be involved in the industry and offer better remuneration package

## KNOW Your Customer

- Important to understand expectation. Having online presence through social media to communicate with customers. This creates visual impact and loyalty through social media networking.



Every job is a self-portrait of the person who did it. Autograph your work with excellence.

- Invest in an EPOS system, that helps reduces labour, helps increase revenue through customer data capture and identify buying behaviour.

- Online reviews are vital communication tool. Explores your business performance from customer's feedback.

- Menu management connects all stakeholders. Take your time to devise unique dishes that attracts customers.

- Less is more so keep it short and simple. Rather than a large list of similar items, have fewer, reduces wastage and increase revenue.

- Have signature dishes that make you stand out from the crowd.

- Introduce seasonal menus and specials, gives opportunity for menu innovation.

Business needs have evolved along with customer expectations. We are resilient entrepreneurs, got to face the challenges. We need to implement a new work ethos and improve our business model through CHANGE. This starts with YOU, the business owner that will encourage growth and delivers results. It will take time and effort and I urge you all to be proactive and take a positive step! We can all make small changes and reap the rewards.

Helal Malik  
Executive Member  
Catering Circle





# WHY ONLINE REVIEWS ARE IMPORTANT FOR EVERY RESTAURANT ?

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Many times online review pages grow into active 'virtual' social communities in themselves where customers leave reviews with others joining in the discussion to agree or disagree.

## 1. Crucial to the restaurant

Online reviews are crucial to any restaurant that wants to keep control of its online reputation. After all our 'virtual' shop window is now online. Reviews are extremely powerful and widely read. Customer perceptions are built upon reading online reviews.

## 2. Are you doing a good job?

A customer review allows you to understand if you are doing a good job and then allows you to rectify any issues identified. This knowledge allows you to better serve your customers and gives you a good measure of where you stand with your customer base.



# ONLINE REVIEWS CAN PROMOTE AN EVERLASTING **POSITIVE IMAGE** TO POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS

## 3. Improve your online rankings

Online activity works towards improving your websites ranking on search engines like Google, Yahoo and many more. The more that is written about your business online, the more important a search engine considers you to be! By maintaining a steady influx of SEO keywords this helps your restaurant secure a more prominent online presence. Keywords help bring up your website in search results and therefore increase search optimisation.

## 4. Allow customers to have a voice

Customers like to have their voice heard and this allows them to leave their view points in a transparent and meaningful way. Those who take the time to leave a positive online review for a restaurant are far more likely to feel a certain loyalty to your restaurant and keep coming back year after year.

## 5. Reviews breed more reviews

When a restaurant, product or service has already received reviews online, it seems to encourage other visitors to leave their own feedback. Just the appearance of a number of reviews appears to be enough to give new

visitors the confidence to add their own views on that particular product or service. Many times online review pages grow into active 'virtual' social communities in themselves where customers leave reviews with others joining in the discussion to agree or disagree. This creates social engagement around the discussion of your restaurant allowing you an insight into the virtual community of your customer base.

## 6. Let customers do the talking!

A handful of positive online restaurant reviews are worth a great deal and can offer your restaurant benefits that a simple marketing campaign cannot. Similar to micro marketing campaigns that keep working long after the online review has been posted, online reviews can promote an everlasting positive image to potential customers. This creates a continual brand awareness that benefits the business for the short and in the long term.

Forhad Hussain Tipu

Executive Member

Catering Circle





# BUYING OR SELLING A BUSINESS. WHAT DO YOU LOOK FOR?

We've all heard that business mantra: Location, location, location. You've probably heard that phrase often, the number one rule in business whilst also most overlooked. You can buy the right business in the wrong location or vice versa. You can change the structure, remodel it or alter the layout but, typically, you cannot move it, as it's attached to the land.

So having the right person at the right time to take the worries and inconvenience away, doing all the due diligence and ensuring a smooth completion makes viable business sense. Whether your buying or selling its one of the largest financial transactions in our lives. The sale price is a fantastic indicator of 'success'. You want to get the best possible

price for your business and that's down to good marketing of your goodwill, setting a fair asking price and being open, honest and transparent throughout. Whether you are buying, selling or renting in the residential or commercial market the client wants professional hassle-free hands on approach to get the best experience, each step of the way that's suits the client.

Selling your business via gumtree or social media attracts the wrong type of tenants or buyers. It can seem good at the time but does end in tears and financial liability – so be careful and select the right agent, reputable in the industry with good conversion rate and success record.



## ENSURING A SMOOTH COMPLETION **MAKES VIABLE** BUSINESS SENSE

Remember: Agents work for you.

When you sell a property, it's vital that you find the best estate agent for you. It's wise to keep in mind that estate agents work for commission, which means that you're in a strong position – if they don't sell your property, they don't get paid. You may feel pressure from them to accept an offer, but it's important to remember that the decision to accept is yours alone.

If you have ever sold a home or business you

“So many options are available at a reach but getting expert advice on each step of the way is necessary to avoid stumbling blocks and maximise financial gains.”

may have found you have had to handle parts of the process yourself and still pay high fees and commission. The ethos now is to allow each customer to benefit from reduced fees without reducing the quality of service. This is possible if you shop around for an agent that understands your needs and gets the best deal for you.

If you are considering selling a business or home then now is the right time! Allow yourself to break free and release some equity. Invest smartly or maybe choose to be debt free. So many options are available at a reach but getting expert advice on each step of the way is necessary to avoid stumbling blocks and maximise financial gains.

The real estate world has dramatically changed with hybrid estate agency at the forefront allowing you to have all the benefits of an online estate agent coupled with a hands on traditional service.

Having the knowledge and experience from an agent gives the client an informed choice to decide as well as attract the right buyer.

Ruhul Shamsuddin  
Executive Member  
Catering Circle







A low-angle photograph of a wooden staircase leading up to a stone wall. The staircase is made of dark wood and is positioned on the left side of the frame. The stone wall is made of large, light-colored blocks and is positioned on the right side of the frame. A bright light source is visible at the top left corner, creating a strong glow and casting long shadows. The overall composition suggests a path leading up to a goal or achievement.

# Success Stories



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 management 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

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 (Community Against Poverty – 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 Al Hajj MD Aziz Miah. His work within the community involves monthly immigration surgery attendance along with other BHC embassy staff.



Tofozzul Miah



**Bayleaf**  
London N20 9HH



Installing EPOS System enables Tofozzul's Bayleaf to boost sales and cut labour cost during peak business times. He is a firm believer of IT and Bayleaf has used advanced EPOS systems since 2001, where they have collected over 12,000 pieces of data from their customers to date. They use this database to remarket via three streams: SMS, Email and Direct Post. By implementing this strategy, they do not leak profits, especially with the current breathtaking fees being charged by third party online companies. "Also this has made us much more efficient when we are packed, and given our waiters the opportunity to take more tables," Tofozzul explains. They also have their own website, app and online ordering system, with each of them improving efficiency for both customers and themselves.

Tofozzul is an innovative and forward-thinking entrepreneur. He is the founder of the award-winning Bayleaf brand and Hiltop Motors Ltd, located in North London. From a very young age, he always wanted to be in control of his destiny and realised that the self-employment route will allow that. He did various labour-intensive jobs as a young man straight after school and on the weekends, which included working in the rug trade and on the Sunday markets. By the time he was a young adolescent he had enough capital to open up his own Indian Restaurant. He took this leap in South East London at the age of 17 and unfortunately the venture wasn't too successful. However, he did not give up. The principal lessons he took from this was that one really needs to entirely understand all work streams of a business when it is a micro size enterprise and in the case of a restaurant he needed to understand the roles of managements as well as front house and kitchen.

He worked in a Punjabi owned restaurant for the next 3 years, where he gained invaluable knowledge and experience. He learnt many tricks of the trade and saved some money too for future investments. An opportunity soon arose

to become the partner of a Restaurant in North London. He took it, with some reservations as he was buying into this partnership knowing that the restaurant was not doing too well at the time. However, he managed to change things and after several months, this business was considerably profitable. This made him even hungrier to go and open his own establishment. He quickly realised that food delivery was an emerging market (in the 1990s), and with not many Indian takeaway/restaurant establishments doing deliveries, he took a bold but exciting decision of venturing into it. This is when he opened Bayleaf Takeaway on the Whetstone High Road. The business won many awards and accolades within the first few years alone and he has not looked back since.

5 years ago, he found a gap in the market for a fine dining Indian restaurant and opened up Bayleaf Restaurant in 2013, and it has been hugely successful since. By having a separate establishment that solely focuses on dining, they are able to direct their focus on not only the quality of food, but the presentation, too, and provide the best experience for their customers through impeccable service.

Amidst his journey in the catering industry, he began a hobby of buying and selling cars from home in 2006. Immediately he saw impressive returns, which led him to expand by purchasing a forecourt which held up to 20 vehicles. Upon continued success, he expanded even further by purchasing a car showroom in 2009. This is when he established Hiltop Motors, a quality German car dealership stocking up to 80 cars. It has been very successful since, with a current turnover of nearly £4m a year. He also likes to engage in local charity as well as voluntary work and he is a founder-trustee of Bangladeshi Welfare Society of Barnet, currently holding the President position. He also carries out voluntary work as the current Chief Treasurer of British Bangladeshi Caterers Association.





**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 Eye 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 job, 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 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.



Mohammed Abul Lais

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■  
**Eurasia Food Service**  
Tadley Tandoori  
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 Sunamgonj, Bangladesh. His father late Alhaj 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 Tadley, 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 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, two-and-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 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.

Jamal Uddin's next move will be growing the Cash & Carry further to be able to serve more clients. He also intends to start some new different types of cuisines. He has already done business with Italian as well as Thai food in the past. Now he is looking to do modern European.



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.



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 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 5<sup>th</sup> 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 Juboraj 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 Juboraj 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 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**

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■  
**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 Jatyto Sangshad, (Bangladesh Parliament), former UK Prime Minister Harold Wilson and former President of Chile, Her Excellency Michelle Bachelet, whose achievements are recognised by academics.

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 Balagonj Sixth Form College and the Osmani Nagar Girls College, co-founder, trustee, secretary of the Haji Soyed Ali Memorial Trust, co-ponor 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 family-owned 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.

As this is the 21<sup>st</sup> 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

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■  
**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 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

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■  
**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 ways.

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 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 5. 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 CHOUDHREY

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**Montaz**  
Newmarket CB8 8DN



Ziaur Choudhrey, who is one of the co-founders 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 restaurateurs, Ziaur 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!

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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

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Raj Garden  
Watford WD23 2DQ



Mohammed Siddiquir 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.

Siddiquir 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

Siddiquir'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 Siddiquir 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.

Siddiquir Rahman was born in 1971 in Luton, Bedfordshire. He completed his GCSEs' in Denbigh High School in 1987. At the age of 16, Siddiquir 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 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**

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**Sopna Indian Restaurant**  
Caernarfon LL55 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. Shajanur 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 atmosphere 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 family-owned 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 Salamatila, 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 Pwelli 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 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

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**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 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



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-eye 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 all the restaurants in London.

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!

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.

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.



# HELPFUL







**TOP TIPS** from  
The *Catering Circle* Show



## Keith Best

Panel Judge,  
The Restaurant Talent Show Awards 2017

- 🍴 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.



## Pasha Khandaker MBE

Panel Judge, The Restaurant Talent Show Awards 2017

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



## Shahagir Bakth Faruk

Panel Judge, The Restaurant Talent Show Awards 2017

- 🍴 Identify and control hazards in order to make safe foods
- 🍴 Be proactive and take preventative steps
- 🍴 Get used to a management system HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point)





## Dr Wali Tasar Uddin MBE

Panel Judge, The Restaurant Talent Show Awards 2017

- 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



## Dr Zaki Rezwana Anwar

Special Judge, The Restaurant Talent Show Awards 2017

- 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 Khan

Special Judge, The Restaurant Talent Show Awards 2017

- 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



## Mujib Islam




Special Judge, The Restaurant Talent Show Awards 2017

- 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 2017

-  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



## Helal Malik




Special Judge, The Restaurant Talent Show Awards 2017

-  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



## Altaf Hussain




Special Judge, The Restaurant Talent Show Awards 2017

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



## Forhad Hussain Tipu

Special Judge, The Restaurant Talent Show Awards 2017

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





## Ruhul Shamsuddin

Special Judge, The Restaurant Talent Show Awards 2017

- 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



## Atikur Rahman

Special Judge, The Restaurant Talent Show Awards 2017

- 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



## Ana Miah

Special Judge, The Restaurant Talent Show Awards 2017

- Train staff on regular intervals
- Reduce menu content and upgrade regularly
- Embrace social media and make it part of your marketing strategy



## Farhan Masud Khan

Head of Programmes, Channel 5

- 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



## Mohammed Jubair

Chief Reporter, Channel 5

- 🍴 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 Kashim

Winner, 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



## 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



## 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 Islam

Winner, 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



## Tofozzul Miah

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



## Ash Miah

Winner, The Restaurant Talent Show  
Awards 2017

- 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



## Safwaan Choudhury

Winner, The Restaurant Talent Show  
Awards 2017

- 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



## 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
- Turn to healthier versions of Asian food. 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



## Rehan Uddin

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



## 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



## Ziaur Choudhrey

Winner, The Restaurant Talent Show Awards 2017

- 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





## 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



## 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



## Samiya Akthar

Finalist, The Restaurant Talent Show Awards 2017

- Effective marketing reaches consumers where they already are
- Amend training process and staff management systems when necessary
- Have solid foundation of trust and integrity



## Monsur Ahmed




Finalist, The Restaurant Talent Show Awards 2017

- Limited menu items, concentration on quality over quantity to maximise high standard production
- Emphasis on hygiene and working practices to ensure healthy and safe food, to prevent cross contamination
- Continuous training and safe cooking method to ensure high allergy awareness



## Tania Rahman




Finalist, 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



## Foyso Choudhury MBE




Host, Catering Circle, Edinburgh

-  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



## 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



## 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



## 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



## Eafor Ali

Ex-President of BBCA

- 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
- Address our problem and other issues with one voice. Although we may have many organisation our goal should be one



## Rez Kabir

Mentor, Actor and Story-teller

- 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



## Zakaria Chowdhury

Finalist, The Restaurant Talent Show  
Awards 2017

- 🍴 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'



## Abul Hyat Nurujjaman

Director, Taj Accountants

- 🍴 Take business and accounting courses so you can set up an effective business plan and budget. Successful restaurant ownership is not just good food alone
- 🍴 Ensure social media presence. Do whatever it takes to create a loyal online community
- 🍴 Create Motive for Free Press



## Abdul Halim

Director, 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 5

- 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



## 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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



## Suhana Ahad

Director, 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 your brand alive on social media. It is a must and the best way to attract new customers and retain them through online promotions



## 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



[www.catering.com](http://www.catering.com)



[www.cateringcircle.co.uk](http://www.cateringcircle.co.uk)



[www.caterin.com](http://www.caterin.com)



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