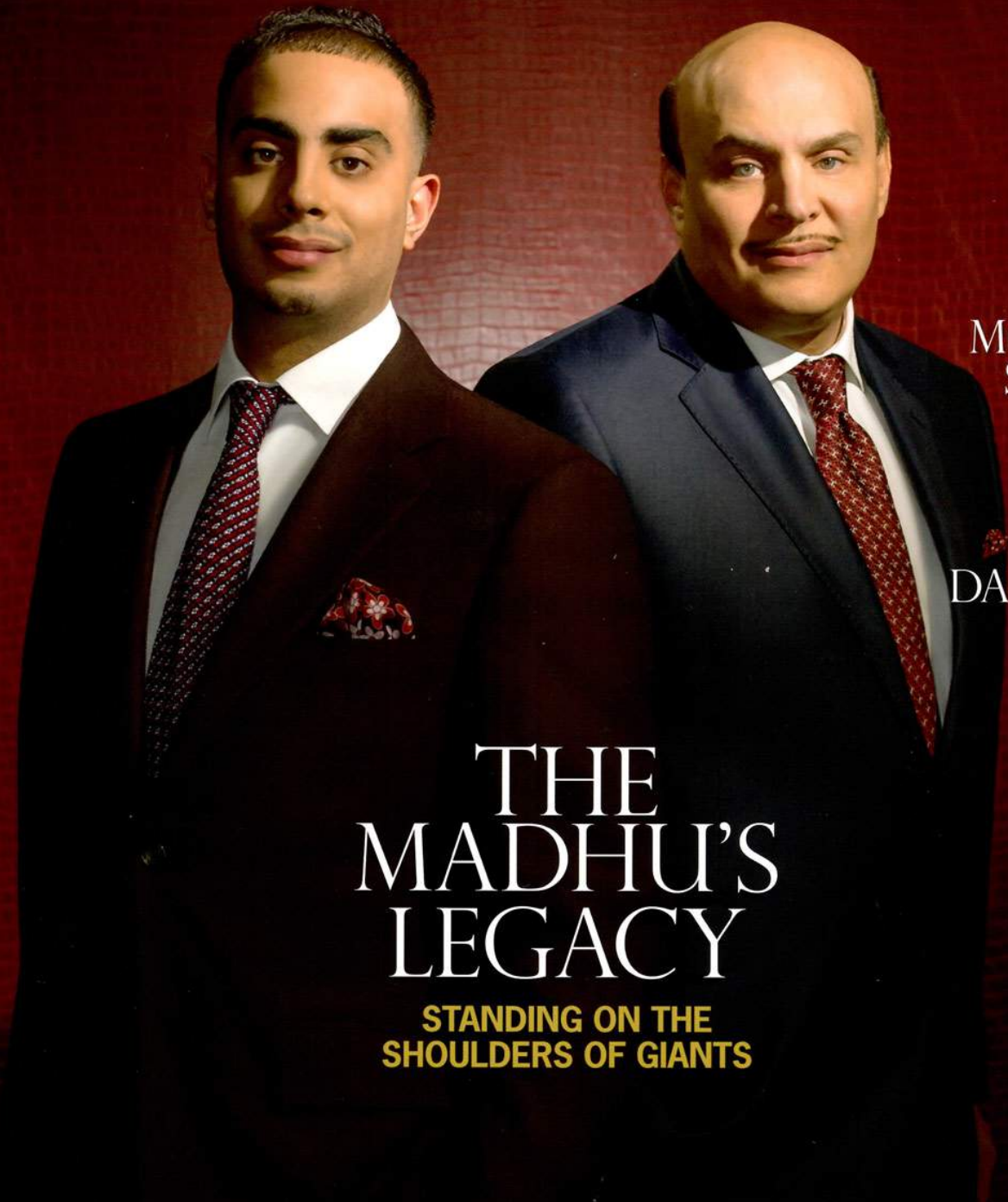


THE LUXURY BUSINESS MAGAZINE FOR ASIAN ENTREPRENEURS

# ASIAN WEALTH

MAGAZINE

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MOVERS & SHAKERS

UK ASIAN WEDDING INDUSTRY

DARSHANA UBL

MAKING A GLOBAL IMPACT

## THE MADHU'S LEGACY

STANDING ON THE SHOULDERS OF GIANTS

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The Chohan brothers

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- The UK glass ceiling

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# A PERFECT PITCH FOR SUCCESS

Darshana Ubl, UK CEO of Entrevu, shares with Nima Suchak her passion to help small businesses and her journey as a young woman in an international arena.

**T**HE SPARKLE OF CHRISTMAS IS A DISTANT MEMORY, and many are in the drudgery of the January slump. But not Darshana Ubl, the London-based businesswoman has just returned from a three-week holiday in South Asia and is raring to go.

And the world is definitely her oyster. Darshana is the CEO of Entrevu in the UK, and has supported businesses and entrepreneurs in various cities around the world. She is currently writing her first book, detailing what she has learned by interacting with entrepreneurs around the world and how to get into the right mindset to become a high achiever.

Born and raised in India, 34-year-old Darshana has relocated 16 times. Her lifestyle has offered plenty of change and opportunity to travel, which she believes has empowered her to adapt swiftly to ever-changing environments.

Growing up, her mother taught her that beauty lives for a short time, but capabilities and intelligence last a lifetime. Taking these words to heart, Darshana went to Pune to study Economics and enjoyed a spot of modelling while she studied. While she studied for her Masters in Economics she worked nights in a call centre, working 8-10 hours, five nights a week, getting paid a mere £100 a month.

"When I look back, I feel I was able to come a long way through that. I worked nights alongside my Masters for nine months until my body couldn't take it anymore," says Darshana. "Life can be tough if you don't have a game plan. You need to work towards it and plan what you're going to do. Think of your life backwards and design it forward," she adds.

Armed with a Masters in Economics and a Post Grad Diploma in Advertising and PR, Darshana began her career in media as a radio presenter, hosting three shows a day. Her producer noticed her talent and told her that she was capable of much more. "I loved what I did there, but I was interested in the business side of things, which I felt was very exciting."

Darshana's dreams stretched beyond the country she was born in and so she ventured overseas. "I was up for a challenge, I had a lot more to see and wanted to explore living and working in a different culture."

Her life changed when she joined MediaCorp TV in Singapore as an account manager responsible for bringing in new television advertisers. The first few months were absolutely brutal, but she was ready for it. "You could be out of the job within two months if you didn't achieve the monthly sales revenue target, but it was an exciting time," she said. Within six months, Darshana clinched one of the biggest six figure deals for her company, getting SingTel to invest in a children's channel. "In MediaCorp TV, I was at the top of my game, but long hours and increased responsibility was making me Singapore-bound, so I knew I had to make a switch and learn something new."

At 27, she took a job at XL, a company that worked with entrepreneurs, where Darshana could have a bigger impact. It proved to be a good move when she was promoted to become the general manager, looking after the XL events business. "I grew the licensing business from Singapore to Japan, Australia, Indonesia, New Zealand, USA and the UK. The experience of learning how business is conducted in different parts of the world proved to be invaluable."





“Think of your life backwards and  
*design it forward*”



In 2010, Darshana relocated to England for personal reasons and it proved to be the ideal opportunity and location to start her own business. “The move to London was daunting, but I knew I wanted to start a business. I analysed an opportunity in the fast-growth “group-buying” business model.” With the emergence of digital media and the new group-buying model adapted by companies such as Groupon and Living Social, Darshana saw an avenue to service small businesses and give them a new and effective marketing channel that charged on results. She went on to set up her first sole venture, Lyncmeup.com, a daily deals site that helped entrepreneurs promote their products without an upfront fee. The essence of the business was to link small businesses to the end consumer through the emerging power of the internet.

“The first year was challenging to say the least and the costs in London were high,” says Darshana. “With so many people joining across 42 cities in the UK and with more than 900 promotional partners, I very quickly got to know a lot of people.”

By the second year, Lyncmeup.com was a powerful player, and was eventually sold in 2013 to a competitor. After having exited her first business, Darshana was ready for a new challenge in the UK and joined Entrevo UK, a fastgrowing company that organises training for entrepreneurs and business leaders in the UK, US, Singapore and Australia.

**a**t the core of Entrevo is the Key Person of Influence Growth Accelerator (KPI) which trains small, established businesses to become more valued and respected in their field.

“We’ve intensely trained over 500 businesses in the UK alone, with more than 6,000 business owners attending one of our Brand Accelerator Events in London.”

Participants come with the aim to not only learn, but more importantly, implement. “Increasingly in business, we have an overload of information, but not enough implementation. This stifles growth. The KPI Programme creates deliberate and focused action around five core areas. It’s all about focused implementation.” she says.



### DARSHANA'S TOP TIPS FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL SUCCESS

**1 SPEND TIME DEVELOPING YOUR PERFECT PITCH** Clear communication is essential. If you don't have an amazing pitch, regardless of how great your product or service is, you will be overlooked by potential customers or partners.

**2 PUBLISH YOUR IDEAS** Publishing attracts fresh opportunity. Publish your ideas. Write blogs. The pen is mightier than the sword and there is a lot of gravitas when your work is published.

**3 CREATE A PRODUCT ECOSYSTEM** One of the fastest ways to create a breakthrough in your business is to move beyond thinking about individual products and services and begin to develop a product ecosystem.

**4 BE BOLD** You need to raise your profile. What do you want to be known for? Have a game plan and become known for what you're doing.

**5 THINK OF LONG-TERM ASSETS** Diversify your investments. Do your research and look for opportunities in emerging areas.

Darshana is inspired by women in business that balance their personal and work lives. She is well aware of the double standards women sometimes have to face to succeed. “The world has moved on to become quite equal, yet women have to break through the glass ceiling to earn their stripes. Women have to go the extra mile to be taken seriously. I’ve always had to take small steps forward. Support replenishes and nourishes me and challenge makes me stronger,” she says.

She believes that being in business is not only about making money; it’s about solving a problem. Business is about bringing something of value to your customers, having a good team, and creating opportunity not just for yourself but also for others. A good business gives people a sense of enthusiasm, purpose and fulfilment.

Darshana refers to the entrepreneurial ‘sweet spot’ when people work in an optimal way by doing what they love, are good at it, and can get handsomely rewarded for it. “If you have these things along with health, love and a community in your life, you’re in your sweet spot,” she says. “When you operate from that space, you will create wealth and prosperity for yourself and others around you.”

Referring to herself as a ‘Karma believer’ she believes that what goes around comes around. She goes out of her way to help someone once a week. “It’s easy to lose sight of how lucky you are and so it’s a good reminder to share or do something selflessly for others.”

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