

WHAT MAKES A BUSINESS AN AWARD-WINNING BUSINESS?

Gemma Treby interviews **DR INDY SINGH**, owner of Cathedral Dental, a multi-award-winning dental practice.



Cathedral Dental is a dental practice based in Bury St Edmunds. Launched in 2008, it offers a whole range of general dental treatments. In addition, it provides more specialist treatments including cosmetic dentistry, teeth whitening, implant dentistry, teeth straightening, Botox and many other treatments. In 6 years, Indy has increased the profitability of his business by 40%, as well as winning a multitude of national and local business awards ... making him the one to watch!



WHEN YOU LAUNCHED YOUR BUSINESS, DID YOU HAVE A CLEAR BUSINESS PLAN WITH GOALS AND OBJECTIVES?

When I bought the practice in 2008 I was very naïve, and if I am honest, I didn't really know what I was doing. I read a few books about running a business and thought to myself that it seemed pretty easy, so I bought a dental practice and gave it a go. Once it was open, I realised how difficult running a business actually is, and it took me at least three years to find my feet.

Once I got to grips with things, I realised how important it is to have goals. If you don't know where you're going, how are you going to get there?! I worked with a business coach to set my goals, and once I'd done that, the business really took off.

I have some ultimate goals which I'm aiming for, and working backwards from that, I have set 5 year goals, yearly goals, 90 day goals and also daily goals.

I believe that when you set your goals, you have to set them big. One of my ultimate goals is to create the most successful dental brand and group of practices in the world.

ARE YOU ON TRACK TO ACHIEVE YOUR ULTIMATE GOAL?

I am about 6 years into my 30 year plan, and I think I'm more or less on track. All businesses have their ups and downs which can throw you off track, such as staff leaving, competitors opening and so on. When this happens I just deal with it and change plans accordingly.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE HARDEST THING ABOUT RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS?

Running a business is really hard. I could write a whole book in answer to this question, but I'll keep it short. One of the hardest things is the amount of time you have to put in - late nights, early mornings,

weekends... Getting the work/life balance correct is tough.

IF YOU COULD TURN BACK THE CLOCK TO THE BEGINNING, WOULD YOU CHANGE ANYTHING?

No, I wouldn't change anything. It's been a great journey so far and even though I've made loads of business mistakes along the way I have considered them to be learning experiences.

The three lessons I've learnt are, first of all, if you want to be successful you've got to love what you do. If you don't have passion for your industry or your business, then it just won't work. Why do something every day that makes you miserable? If you're not having fun, then what's the point? Also, you've got to be prepared to graft. You have got to put in the hours.

Finally, self-belief is so incredibly important, because if you don't believe you can achieve a vision or a goal, then you won't even start to do the work needed to achieve that vision or that goal.

WHICH AWARD HAS BEEN THE MOST PRESTIGIOUS AND IMPORTANT ONE TO YOU?

Winning the 2013 Best UK Marketing Strategy at the Dentistry Awards was huge - a bit like the Oscars for Dentistry. There are over 10,000 dental practices in the UK, so to beat everyone else was some achievement. In that year we also won Best Team in the East of England. We also won the Velvet Awards for Healthcare in 2012 and 2014. The Velvet awards are the ones that I am most proud of as it was voted for by our patients and customers. At the end of the day the most important thing is what your customers think of you so for them to take the time out to vote for us meant a lot to me.