



Julal Syed

Taj Tandoori
Cambridge CB1 7AA



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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