



HAKIM
GROUP



Biography

Imran Hakim

From an early age, Imran knew he wanted to run his own business. He started his first business, aged 15 with a £2000 loan from his father. Within days, he was trading in computer equipment, selling to college teachers and the local community. As he neared the end of his college education, he faced a tough decision, whether to grow the business or study to become an Optometrist at University. Unable to choose, he decided to do both. As well as studying, he continued to build his business, almost being expelled from his course for failing to attend lectures – his passion clearly lay in business!

Having successfully completed his degree and professional exams, Imran opened his first optical practice in his local community of Bolton, recruiting a University colleague as his first employee. He decided to set up a locum recruitment company employing the services of most of the students he had met at University. Imran went on to build a portfolio of businesses within the optical sector including a chain of optical retail practices, lens laboratory, spectacle frame distribution, interior optical shopfittings and recruitment.

Imran came into the media eye in 2007 when he appeared on BBC2's Dragons Den to pitch his innovative iTeddy product concept. Having successfully secured investment, Imran joined forces with Peter Jones and Theo Paphitis to create one of the biggest successes the den has seen to date with the multi award winning iTeddy and iTeddy.com. Less than a year after the original idea came to light, Imran signed a worldwide distribution deal seeing the business reach the shores of 45 counties around the world.

He has won countless business awards over the years in recognition of his numerous endeavors including NorthWest Young Entrepreneur of the Year 2006, Fusion Entrepreneur of the Year 2007 and most recently a Mosaic Award for Science and Technology from HRH Prince of Wales. His work on the iTeddy brand has earned him awards such as Toy Inventor of the Year 2007, World Toy Innovation 2008, Start-up Business of the Year 2008 and IOD's NorthWest Young Director of the Year 2007. Most recently, In 2009, Imran received an Honorary Doctorate in Enterprise and Innovation from the University of Bolton as well as making Growing Business's list of top 40 entrepreneurs in the country under the age of 35. He is also the youngest entrant into the NorthWest Power 100 list for 2009.

Imran's interests include expanding his business portfolio by incubating and investing in other companies. A key focus of his is to encourage entrepreneurship especially in the NorthWest, through mentoring and various ambassadorial roles. Current positions of responsibility include Non-Exec for Business Link NorthWest, NorthWest Ambassador for UKIBC and board member of TIE entrepreneurs. As Director of Entrepreneurship for UMIP, Imran works closely with the universities in order to commercialise new intellectual property. He is also active on the speaking circuit.

**For further information, Imran on [07973 623 022](tel:07973623022),
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