

# THE DIARY OF AN ENTREPRENEUR

*Imran Hakim*

**POSITION:** MANAGING DIRECTOR / FOUNDER

**COMPANY:** ITEDDY.CO.UK LTD

**BASED:** BOLTON

**AGE:** 29

In this Diary of an Entrepreneur, we take a peep into the thrilling and hectic life of young entrepreneur, Imran Hakim, as he juggles television documentaries and appearances with the exciting launch of his innovative product iTeddy which is set to be a global success, flying across the world to promote his new product. Since winning over the infamous Dragons, Peter Jones and Theo Paphitis on Dragon's Den, securing an investment of £140,000 for his invention, he has transformed the traditional teddy bear into a 21<sup>st</sup> century technological creation. As we follow his footsteps, Imran reveals why he has given up on sleep since meeting the Dragons, and how much it means to him to enjoy the journey rather than just the destination...

As far back as I can remember, I have always had a passion for business. At 15 I was already buying and selling computers to my school and college teachers, and learnt about some of the pitfalls in business through experience rather than through a textbook. For me, the challenge is what it is all about and I constantly set myself challenges.

My biggest challenge at the moment is the launch of iTeddy at London Zoo in Regent's Park. While I arrive in Manchester from China, having made last minute amendments and been in negotiations regarding the final details of the deal, the team back in Bolton get all the pieces ready for the launch.

During my trip to China, I picked up two life-sized teddy bears for the launch. These toys are monstrous and weigh a ton – about 40 kilos each, which I dragged with me back to Manchester. You can imagine my astonishment when I landed in Manchester and discovered that the life-sized teddy bears had managed to free themselves from their cardboard packaging and were going round the conveyor belt with everybody's luggage. The lady who was hired to carry them back to Bolton was not impressed as

she asked me sternly "are you responsible for these?"

I have been back and forth to China about ten to twelve times in the last three months, fourteen hours each way. Most of the time the journey lasts longer than the duration of the trip. I usually stay there between eight and twelve hours and then it's back on the plane to Manchester. Things have been pretty intense lately. It's crazy, it can be very exhausting. I've literally run out of pages in my passport!

I wake up at six in the morning, having just had three hours sleep. We didn't arrive in London till 2am. Nine of us squeezed into the back of a big white van, filled with props and the life-sized teddies and bombed it down the motorway at full speed.

We drove straight to the Hotel near Excel, had a quick briefing, making sure that everybody knew their roles and that all the last minute details were in order, and we planned to meet for breakfast in the lobby at 6am.

I wake up in the morning to find a hundred emails on my blackberry. God knows how people used to do business before the



internet – my blackberry and laptop go everywhere with me. I grab a *pain au chocolat* and a coffee. A coffee with a shot of hot chocolate is all I need to get me going; the coffee keeps me awake and the chocolate gives me the energy boost I need. I don't need a lot of food in the mornings as I find that it tires you out and slows you down in events. I also don't have an appetite – maybe it's the nerves that it might, God forbid, go horribly wrong.

I'm a bit of a control freak and I go over everything ten times making sure everybody knows their role for the day. The plan is to meet at London Zoo at 9am so I jump in my chauffeur driven Ferrari (hoping to make a grand entrance) and zoom off. But despite all the planning, I find myself stuck in traffic and running late to my own launch!

