

Did entrepreneurship come naturally to you?

Yes! Entrepreneurship did suddenly stumble upon me, that too after I got married and decided to settle in Bangladesh. I was always on the lookout for doing things that would help me become more independent and self-sufficient. Back then, I was married to my current ex-husband and earned a fixed monthly stipend as allowance. Sometimes, that money just wasn't enough, and I really can't be more thankful for that!

One day, out of the blue, I decided to use the complete amount of my allowance to purchase sushi knives, roller sets, kits, and other kitchen appliances. The funny thing was, I spent the entire allocation for the month and didn't know how to get through the next day. After procuring all the necessary appliances, I patiently made sushis throughout the day, called up a few of my friends, and had it all delivered to their houses. They loved the food so much that they immediately ordered more and news spread like wildfire. And believe it or not — overnight, I had to hire quite a few staff to help me with the catering business, because orders were pouring in like hot cakes!

Have you faced obstacles along the way? How have you managed to overcome them?

Whatever obstacle there was, it was overcome with a strong

belief in my abilities, and with a lot of respect for the people working with me on this initiative. I always prioritise the wellbeing of my employees, and am extremely lucky to have been able to employ really efficient and hardworking people over the years. Third and most important aspect of it all, is that I have always prioritised my clients and their preferences over anything else. As a result, today, the most stringent customers have become the most loyal — with the maximum amount of repeat purchases.

This has definitely not happened over a week or month; this process took years to establish. If ever there was something wrong with the food and there were complaints, we immediately returned the money, and additionally, gave away new and fresh food for free, till the customers

were satisfied. Such dedication has helped me gain their respect over time. Now, many people might argue that giveaways might cause a company to go bankrupt. But if you are smart enough, you'd realise that perpetual loyalty and complimentary word of mouth advertisement more than makes up for the loss, especially in the long run.

What would be a typical day for Menx Mansur the socialite?

It's funny you should call me that! But yes, I do like to socialise and get on my social media platforms more often than most people. But all this networking actually helps my business. I have tried staying away from social media quite a few times, but it has always had a bad effect on the entrepreneurial front. What I believe is that, in today's world of globalisation and incessantly updated technologies, we must stay connected and let the world know about our work. This is simply the new generation business format.

And a typical day for me would be 'very regular', unlike what most people assume.

I get up early for my daughter, and drop her to school. Then, I come back home and get on with some work, which includes visiting the restaurant, some trouble shooting, and by afternoon, Adria would be back. Sometimes, we have lunch together at home or at work. In the evening, we play with the dogs and cats, and maybe watch a movie.

Sometimes, I invite guests over, or just have regular chitchat with the little one, before retiring to bed.

Surprised...?

What is the future for Menx Mansur, as an entrepreneur?

I am grateful to have been granted a keen sense towards all forms of art and culture. Having said that, I'd also like to add that my ventures will definitely not end with the food industry! I have many different projects up my sleeves, and hopefully, you'd all be able to know about it soon.

Any advice for the 'newbies' who want to follow in your footsteps...?

Well, I'd just like to ask them to start small and learn the tricks of the trade first before venturing into anything big.

I started off small myself, with an undersized catering business, and only Tk 50,000 as capital. Since then, I have been vastly able to expand my business, only because I learnt from my mistakes, while my business was still in the offing.

This has definitely helped me avert major mistakes and losses, when it actually mattered.

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