

evolve enterprise

Business by design ●●●

Nik Mann & Anish Mistry, Fuelled Media

Graphic Design graduates Nik Mann (2003) and Anish Mistry (2002) set up Fuelled Media – a design agency based in Leicester – immediately after graduation

"We didn't know each other before studying at Coventry but Anish was on the same course as me and we were both from Leicester. He was in the year above me, so when he finished, and was freelancing, he got the idea for the agency off the ground. I was handing my dissertation in one week and by the next week I had started my own business.

We started off working out of each other's bedrooms but it wasn't very professional. Then we managed to get some office space from a contact I met when I did my work placement while at Coventry. We were there for just under a year while our new offices were being built in Leicester's city centre.

The proudest moment was seeing our new offices – it felt like we were about to take off. We also won a Young Entrepreneurs of the Year award for coming up with a good idea to keep our business afloat. In the first three months, we didn't have much money coming in and the bills were mounting. We bought a little fridge

for ourselves and came up with an enterprising idea to make some money. We bought a bulk load of the fridges at a good price and sold them on e-bay. It helped pay off the bills and kept our heads above water.

We have secured clients through hard work and persistence, with no track record or contacts in the industry we networked and gained a lot of work. The contacts we made at the beginning have enabled us to keep growing and meet even larger clients.

We started off with no business loans, no support, no clients or credibility to our names – oh and student debt – we have come a long way. We now offer marketing, advertising and PR as well as design services.

I have remained in touch with my tutor Donald Fitzpatrick and we have been back to the Uni to talk to students.

It's also a good opportunity to make contact with some young designers so we can call on them if we need them.

We are still working long hours and even after the phone stops ringing and everyone has gone home, we continue designing.

Last Christmas was actually the first holiday we had taken in about four years. I got married last year and my wife has been very supportive as her father was self-employed.

My advice for graduates wanting to start their own business would be to go for it. You do get a lot of knock backs on the way, but you have to take it with a pinch of salt and move on."

To find out more about Fuelled Media go to www.fuelledmedia.com

Nik and Anish's top five tips:

1. Have a five-year plan and then make a six-month to one-year plan, this will make achieving your goals more realistic.
2. Be persistent but friendly, you will leave a lasting impression.
3. Use every obstacle you come across as a learning curve, that way you can prevent making the same mistakes again.
4. Be prepared to work hard and work long hours.
5. Use every situation as a networking opportunity; you just never know when you will have to sell yourself or your company.



Design for life: (l-r) Anish Mistry and Nik Mann

Want to be your own boss?

Take advantage of the support available to graduates from Coventry University's Technocentre. You can get six months free advice and support on starting up in business, there are opportunities for renting office space if you're business is already off the ground and a number of networking events to attend through the Business Enterprise Works scheme. Contact the alumni office for more information:

alumni@coventry.ac.uk or call
+44 (0) 24 7688 8589.

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