

ONES TO WATCH

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Martin Symington

Wanted.Coffee, a brand which is pioneering micro-lot coffee in the UK and Ireland, introduces consumers to the world's finest coffee beans to be enjoyed in the comfort of their own homes and savoured outside the home. The Wanted.Coffee Proposition is simple: in a world overflowing with average, the most unusual, the most unique, the best is always the most wanted. The combination of good coffee, delivered as whole bean or in ground format and personalised customer service deliver moments of pure indulgence. Headquartered in Lisburn, Northern Ireland with more than 10 employees, Wanted.Coffee sells products directly to its customers and has ambitious plans to move to a global platform within two years.

In one sentence, what do you do?
Create exceptional, unique coffees.

Why is there a need for what you do and who are your customers?

The coffee market is evolving and demand for outstanding coffee continues to increase. Our

Martin Symington Master Roaster at Wanted.Coffee

customers are coffee lovers from around the world.

What makes you better than what's already out there?

We are passionate and believe in sustainability and to use the old adage; retail is detail.

What excites you most about what you do?

Developing an idea and working with the team to create an exceptional brand.

What are the biggest challenges you've come up against so far?

We have invested a lot of time in sourcing and cupping coffees from around the world

to deliver what we believe to be exceptional coffees.

What would help you kick on to the next level?

Exposure to much larger markets, for example, UK and Europe.

What do you ultimately want to achieve?

To allow as many people as possible to enjoy the pleasure that coffee brings.

Who inspires you in business?

Sir Anthony Joseph Francis "Tony" O'Reilly (born 7 May 1936, Dublin, Ireland). Tony is a former Irish businessman and international rugby union player. ■

Ritu Bhatt iEngageIT

By Amy Leonard

When Ritu first arrived in Belfast with her family, she intended to stay six months. Fast forward nearly 10 years and not only is she still here but she has set up and is running her own immediately successful business.

So how did plans change so drastically? How did she find herself in Northern Ireland, and such success with it?

Ritu, 38, is originally from Mumbai, where she grew up and was schooled. She went to Savitribai Phule Pune University, formerly the University of Pune, to study a Bachelor of Engineering, Electronics. In the final year of her studies, the students were sent to complete a professional project in tech work places. Ritu was placed at Siemens, one of the leading corporations in the electronics field. It was here that she says her career began.

"I helped to develop a 16 channel output relay module. A micro controller for Siemens was where I learnt Step Five, I think that's what they called it. It was so long ago and seems even longer since someone asked me!"

For those that don't speak tech, Step Five is a coding language and the 16 channel output relay module is a micro processor, apparently.

The family moved to Belfast in 2007 for the sole reason that Ritu's husband Manish, who worked for BT in India, was transferred here.

"At the time we had a small daughter; it was only meant to be for six months, but look at us now, still here!" says Ritu, explaining that they fell for Belfast.

"We loved it here. The people were straight away welcoming and helpful. Our daughter got very well settled in school and we never thought of going back."

That small daughter, Aditi, is now 12 and they also have a son Jay who is five.



Ritu Bhatt

Ritu herself began to work as a consultant programmer. She held a number of senior posts in IT before deciding to build her own business, and iEngageIT was born.

This leap was taken not just so she could be her own boss, have her name on the door, or anything else so self-serving.

"I have had a long career as a tech team member" says Ritu, "from junior coder right through to technical leader. What always stood out to me was the lack of females in the tech teams."

She noticed a pattern that yes there may be some women in HR or other departments, but time and time again she joined a male-only team.

"I asked myself why? Was it a local problem? But unfortunately not, it is a worldwide issue."

And so the idea for having her own business stemmed from a desire to encourage more gender equality in the profession.

"I started this business on my own, from scratch, to inspire young girls in schools and colleges. It gives me the flexibility to go into these places of education and talk about tech, and hopefully, slowly, each step at a time we'll make changes."

Her daughter Aditi and friends are already showing great interest, something which means a great deal to Ritu.

"There have been so many instances of great feedback from the talks. I even personally keep in touch with the girls and have them into the business as interns. It's why I started iEngageIT."

Only founded in 2016, the first year of trading has gone extremely well. Ritu was a finalist for two awards at Women in Business NI Awards 2016, "Best New Start Up" and "Excellence in IT", competing against other well established companies.

"It's been nothing short of a dream start for us", says Ritu. It seems it was a stroke of fate that brought her to Northern Ireland. ■