

Tell me about your current role.

I work within the education and skills sector globally; currently I work as Group Project Director for Pathway Group – a national workforce development solutions company. In this capacity, I manage several projects and most notably The Asian Apprenticeship Awards which attracted an audience of 460 people to celebrate the talent of the underserved British Asian apprentices, their employers and learning providers. The evening itself went very well but more importantly, it had significant impact on organisational perspectives of diversity within their own workforce.

I am also the Executive Director for the BAME Apprenticeship Alliance (BAMEAA), the BAMEAA is a not for profit membership body that lobbies organisations on their apprenticeship diversity. The core areas of the BAMEAA are:

- Policy - working with our members to develop policies for organisations, which they can apply to increase their apprenticeship diversity.
- Advocacy - advocating and lobbying organisations on their apprenticeship diversity.
- Conversation - providing a platform to generate conversation for organisations around apprenticeship diversity.

What inspired you to pursue this area of work?

I studied Biomedical Science at De Montfort University, but didn't want to pursue a career in science. I began to explore other options, and had a passion for business and education. I was working in teaching and educational development, and set up a company called CorpTools, which was an award winning international education company on a mission to develop young people differently. The business itself didn't continue in the end, and in the final 6 months, it eventually merged into the work of the Pathway Group.

What challenges did you face in your career and how did you overcome them?

The biggest challenge I faced was leaving university with a degree in a field I had lost passion for. The entrepreneurial gene in me wanted to take the risk and go for a career path change against the traditional science routes found within many Asian families. In the end, I did take the risk but it came with a packed box of challenges of its own. There was an element of self-discovery, which was a hard step but I now feel comfortable with who I am and what I have achieved since. Being a small fish in a big ocean means every challenge will be magnified but overcoming struggles such as finding a job built me up to be a much stronger person and the person who I am today.

What are the 3 most important things you've learnt throughout your career?

- Grab every opportunity that comes your way.
- Develop yourself and constantly learn.
- Always network and take the opportunity to meet new people.

Who has been your biggest inspiration/role model?

My current boss, Safaraz Ali, Managing Director of Pathway Group, has been a real inspiration and role model for me. Through his career journey and business experience, I've gained many insights into what it takes to succeed. It's always great to have that mentoring figure next to me to guide and challenge me along the way.

What advice would you give to anyone wanting to be an entrepreneur?

My advice to anyone wanting to pursue an entrepreneurial career is you will experience setbacks and failure along the way. But don't lose hope, and learn from the experience.