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SPIRIT OF ENTERPRISE - NOMINEE

Interviewed on : 24-02-2005

Interviewee



Mr Koomaren CHETTY
Le Capitaine Restaurant Ltd
 Caudan Waterfront, Port Louis

Interviewer



Mr Deepak BALGOBIN
University Technology, Mauritius

The Inspirational Beginning

Mr Koomaren Chetty is a very courageous and successful entrepreneur involved in the Food & Beverages and Press & Media. He owns Le Capitaine Restaurant at Grand Baie, Le Capitaine Du Port Restaurant at Caudan Waterfront, Beer and Spice Restaurant at Caudan Waterfront and the Hebdo Newspaper.

Mr Chetty decided to embark in this venture since he was a teenager. In the late 80's, at the age of 19yrs, he lost his father. Being the eldest son in the family, he had the big responsibility to come forward and look after his family - mother, brother and three sisters. He had to stop his studies and leave school to work hard in his father's shop situated at Grand Baie to be able to meet both end of his family. He was renting his father's bungalow but there was no daily revenue as he did not have clients everyday. But every effort was not sufficient as the cost of living was high and there were not enough receipts from his business to be able to cope with daily life.

Mr Chetty took courage and patience and decided to increase his business. In 1990, he opened a small restaurant at Grand Baie - Le Capitaine Restaurant, with the financial help of mother. But here also he had to face many difficulties to obtain necessary help and above all wait for a long time to get the required permit and license. Unfortunately, his restaurant was badly damaged by the Hollanda cyclone some years later in February 1994. Mr Chetty was not discouraged. He took loans from bank to do the necessary repairs of this restaurant.

Le Capitaine Restaurant worked very well and on the 20th December 1998, he changed the concept and presented a new 'Le Capitaine Restaurant' with seafood specialities. Mr Chetty continued to increase his business and he opened this second restaurant Beer and Spice found at Le Caudan Waterfront in Oct 2000. His business continued to be successful and he opened Le Capitaine Du Port Restaurant on 21st June 2001. In the same line, Mr Chetty also involved himself in the press. He started working on this project in August 2000 and opened the Hebdo Newspaper. The first issue appeared on 27 February 2001.

The Catalyst for Change

Mr Koomaren Chetty had a childhood dream to be a computer engineer or a journalist. But circumstances in life were such that he could not attain his childhood dream. Still, he satisfied himself by bringing out a Newspaper, Hebdo. Mr Chetty is opinion that is someone wants to work for himself, there should have dedication, guts and hard work. He himself works 14hrs a day to sustain his business. He says, "life is a never ending spin". Therefore, he is always ready to face challenges and difficulties.

Mr Chetty acknowledges that there are many problems and challenges when starting a business from scratch. For example he says that the time factor in obtaining the permit and license. If someone does not have contacts, the latter's permit may take more time. There is jealousy from people and competitors. Another problem can be the capital rising to start the business.

Mr Koomaren's family and his personnel has always been a motivating factor for him to do better and continue is the same track. Besides, the customer satisfaction also is a motivating factor for him.

Constant Consciousness

When it comes to the first few customers, Mr Chetty said, "90% of my clients are still faithful to Le Capitaine Restaurant". His three years old newspaper has an interesting market share in Mauritius. His customers have always been faithful to his restaurants and his newspapers as quality and proper informations are delivered. As concerns the first few years in business, Mr Koomaren spent those starting years in hard work, dedications and "fire fighting".

As said earlier the re-opening of Le Capitaine Grand Baie on 20th December 1998 was one of his best days in business. That day was also lucky for him as it was on that day he became the President of Mauritius Volleyball Association. On the other hand, the worst day in business was when the cyclone Hollanda hit Mauritius in 94 and damaged his restaurant at Grand Baie, as the latter is located near the shore.

On one's Mettle

To succeed in business, Mr Koomaren states that the entrepreneur should not be greedy. There must be honesty that prevails. He also added, "Honesty is the best policy". He is of opinion that there should be sharing. For example sharing of profits and benefits among personnel, thus you can have dedicated and committed personnel. To succeed in business, Mr Chetty believes that hard work as he himself works 14 hours a day, dedications and commitment and little bit of luck are his secrets in making his business successful.

Here he added a saying, "luck favours only those who work hard". In his success, his mother, his wife and three children, his brother and three sisters, customers have always inspired him to go forward heart and soul. He has also a special thinking for his employees who have always been with him in good and bad times.

Local Business, Global Mindset

Our brilliant entrepreneur has expressed his wish to expand his business. He will open another restaurant, 'Beer and Spice' at Trou aux Biches in a near

future. He wants to make his restaurants have a Brand Name. Mr Koomaren Chetty is working on a project to open a high class gastronomy restaurant in Mauritius in the same level as the Spoon des Iles of One and Only Le Saint Gerant Hotel or even the Blue Penny Café of Belle Mare Plage Hotel. This will give him the opportunity to offer gastronomy cuisine to local people at Mauritian price. In my opinion Mr Chetty is the only entrepreneur in Mauritius who has brought out such an idea for the host community.

Here I would say, " Keep it up Koomaren, you are the best"

The Future of Entrepreneurship

Mr Chetty would define entrepreneurship as someone who works really hard, that wakes up early in the morning to do business. That person must have guts to face challenges. He must have a sense of honesty in action with a big heart. An entrepreneur should keep his customers and staff happy.

Education level is important for proper communication in business. As per the nominee it is the base in business as the entrepreneur has to deal with banks, stakeholders, customers and staffs. Communication is a ladder for success in business. To be able to inspire others, a person himself should be an example in the society and business. He must be honest. Here our nominee added, " In business, we can't cheat people. If you cheat people means you are cheating yourself".

To the younger generation, Mr Koomaren Chetty would like to pass down his hard work, honesty, dedications and guts to face challenges and hardships. He would advise people who wants to start their own business to think well and write everything on paper. He also advises them to be patient and not be in a hurry to make money.

Summary

"To be successful entrepreneur one should work really hard (luck favors only those who work hard) up to 14 hours a day, should be commitment and dedicated in his work, not to be in a hurry to get money, should have patience and have a sense of honesty in action".

