

# My Journey as an Entrepreneur



Afrah

Owner

Coffee Lab Roasters

# COFFEE FACT!

## COFFEE DRINKERS TEND TO LIVE LONGER

- Moderate consumption (3 - 4 cups per day)
- Longer life span,
- Reduced risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and Parkinson's
- About 1-2 calories per black coffee

Harvard Research



# My Journey



# Previous work

- After O' levels and few odd jobs, joined Police Service
- CSI and Forensic Image and Video Analysis



# Typical day at Digital Evidence Lab



- Always dreamt of doing something bigger
- Create something my own
- Passion for coffee
- Home brewing
- In 2013, Met someone who was as enthusiastic as I am about coffee
- Introduction to Specialty Coffee



# Change of routine

- Drawn to Specialty Coffee because of its values, passion, people oriented...



# What is Specialty Coffee

- Top 10% of the world's coffee production
- Coffee graded above 80 cupping points
- Transparency
- Fresh roast
- Craft of brewing to the highest standard
- Focus on PEOPLE, skill development, Job creation







Hand-picking



Processing



Roasting



Cupping / evaluating



Brewing



Quality

# Change of routine, cont....

- Generally all Maldivians drink coffee.
- Not seasonal
- Research (Internet, books, videos etc)
- Bought some equipment, started hands on learning
- Brought in Specialty Grade Coffee and started experimenting, Learning, tasting, inviting people to tasting sessions.



# Tasting session



# Tasting session



# Coffee Gathering



# Tasting session



# Time to start business

- Looked for investment options from government
- Impossible to acquire sufficient funds;
  - No mortgage option,
  - Salary not high enough,
  - Not a wealthy Family,
  - No connections....
- Foreign Investor came to rescue through mutual friends



- Spent half of 2014 learning and researching
- Registered Coffee Lab Roasters
- Began Business
- Mid 2014, decision time. Forensics OR Coffee
- Risk and fear – Worst case scenario?
- Made a decision as a Family to quit Police and started giving 100% to Coffee





- Change the game – offer something unique
- Place to showcase the experience
- Opened Family Room
- People + products + environment = experience
- Tight budget = No one to delegate work
- Working wife – Stay-home dad



# First 1 year of Family Room



- First 10 months of Family Room – Donation Basis
- Sat will people talked about greens, roasting, brewing etc
- After started billing, Still challenging to sustain on coffee alone
- Adjust strategy
- Distribution
- New focus on Skill development



- Travel abroad for trainings and certifications
- Became a Licensed Q Grader
- Became an Authorized SCA Trainer
- Launched Maldives Coffee Academy
- Worldwide recognized Barista Courses
- Developing Baristas through internship at Coffee Lab Roasters
- Teach coffee modules at FHTS courses
- Coffee competitions
- More professionals = industry growth



# Interns at Family Room



# Coffee Session at FHTS



# As it stands



- Coffee Roaster
- Distributor  
*Coffee beans and equipment*
- Maldives Coffee Academy  
*Skill development*



# Result!



- 2 Bronze medals.
- International competition.
- 805 entries from USA, Australia, Singapore, China, Greece, Hong Kong, Malaysia and more.



# Persisting challenges

- Access to reinvestment funds
- Retaining local employees
- Lack of Opportunity for local businesses



# Future Goals

- Expand Distribution
- More but quality controlled partner outlets
- Develop more local coffee professionals



# COFFEE FACT!

In 16th century Constantinople, not providing your wife with enough coffee was grounds for divorce





**Thank you**