

20 questions

Name: Stephen Puri

- Job title: Co Founder and Managing/Chief Executive Member
- Company: Aston Bond
- Lives: In Bray, Maidenhead, Berkshire

Q What car are you driving at the moment?

A Aston Martin DB9.

Q How long does your journey to work take?

A Between 15 and 30 minutes depending whether I am working in Slough or Reading.

Q If you won the lottery would you retire?

A I cannot imagine not working in one form or another.

Q What do you always carry with you to work?

A My laptop.

Q What was your first job and the amount in your first pay packet?

A I was paid £1.96 an hour as a barman at 18 (plus tips of course).

Q Would you say you live to work or work to live?

A I have to say that if I am true to myself (and my family) I live to work. I thrive on what I do and value the relationships that I have built up in recent years.

Q What can you see from your office window?

A The cosmopolitan High Street of Slough (if I am in Slough that day) and its sheer business vibrancy which unfortunately others seem to miss.

Q Do you make time for lunch every day?

A Never. In fact I steer well away from it unless a meeting dictates otherwise. I would much rather visit the gym.

Q As a business person, describe your three main qualities?

A A passion for what I do together with a sheer determination to succeed and never taking no for an answer.

Q And your worst quality?

A Impatience.

Q What irritates you most about running your business?

A As crazy as it may sound but being undervalued and appreciated by some of the others in the business (at least that is what I feel). The legal profession is still very backward and peers assume that unless you are at your desk you are not working! I actually feel I achieve the least if I am at my desk. I would much rather be out meeting people.

Q What has been your most satisfying moment in business?

A The first is being recognised as a business from my name tag at business events and secondly seeing our company name on a huge board live on ITV 1 before tens of millions of people at a football champions league match on television.

Q What is the most important thing you look for in new recruits?

A This depends on the vacancy. Apart from being presentable and obviously being competent to do the job, the single most important thing for me is that "fire in the belly" hunger and sheer determination to succeed and take the business to the next level.

Q If you could work in a completely different field, what would it be?

A I wanted to be a fighter pilot in the RAF. I was extremely disappointed to learn at the age of 16 that my eyesight was too weak.

Q How important do you think a university education is to success in business?

A A university education in itself is not at all necessary to succeed in business. However it is far better to have this education than not to have it.

Q What was your biggest mistake in business?

A There are two. Not following my instincts sooner and listening to others. In my view business is not all about facts and figures but more about believing in your own vision and where you want to be.



Q If you could employ anybody from the world of business who would it be and why?

A Someone with lots of energy and ideas, as daring as they may be. Someone like James Murray Wells, the 21 year old who founded Glasses Direct. He has totally revolutionised the way people think about buying glasses.

Q What advice would give to an aspiring entrepreneur?

A To have total and utter passion for your idea or business, be prepared to make sacrifices and never take no for an answer. You will need nerves of steel.

Q If you could choose to work for any company in the world which would it be and why?

A To give something back to a charity that have been one of my clients from the early days who have supported me and our business to this very day.

Q If you could turn the clock back, what would you have changed about your business career?

A I would have followed my instincts much earlier rather than take advice from others or thought what they thought and also have had the confidence to take those chances. That being said, I think confidence comes with experience and some success. **BV**