



Launch of The Entrepreneurial Way

Yoganathan Ratheesan, Chairman and co-founder of Lebara Group officially launched The Entrepreneurial Way at Cass Business School, London last week in the presence of many of London's Tamil student community. During the course of the evening the audience also heard inspirational speeches from Surinder Arora, Owner of the Arora chain of hotels including the flagship Sofitel at Heathrow Terminal 5, and Emeline Wraith from online start-up company Remote Goat; the first recipient of an entrepreneurial investment fund from Ratheesan.

Ratheesan began by introducing the concept of The Entrepreneurial Way (TEW), committing to invest a seed fund of £5 million between now and 2020. He highlighted that he is keen to inspire future generations of young Tamil people, both students and recent graduates, by giving them the opportunity to find out more about business and the rich experience that a career in business can provide. Ratheesan set out ambitious targets for the programme, namely that it's his hope that the £5 million, through its various projects, will generate revenue of £100 million by 2020. In addition, he laid down a challenge that in the next 25 years, he'd like to see the Sri Lankan Tamil community contributing 1% to the UK's GDP.

Ratheesan went on to talk about his own personal experience of setting up Lebara eleven years ago, aged 25. "At Lebara, we believe in dreams more than anything else. Lebara started out as a dream shared by three friends. We didn't know what we were getting into; we didn't know how far it would take us. But here I am, a proof that extraordinary things can happen to ordinary people if only they dare to dream. That's why we believe in extending our support and encouragement to young dreamers in this room. Because it all starts with a dream!"

After a motivating speech, Ratheesan introduced Surinder Arora, a man he greatly admires for his ethics and approach to business. Surinder gave a very insightful and entertaining account of his entrepreneurial journey, starting from when he first came to the UK as an 11 year-old boy. He demonstrated his sheer determination and ambition to grow his portfolio from a single bed and breakfast on the A4 by Heathrow, to one of the fastest growing independent hotel companies in the UK and now the largest hotel company at Heathrow and Gatwick airports.

Next to the stage was Emeline Wraith, Founder of Remote Goat, a new online business and social framework which provides a networking service to match graphic designers to prospective clients, enabling them to form virtual working relationships. Emeline, a Lebara employee, gained investment through an internal 'Dragons' Den-style' initiative aimed at encouraging budding entrepreneurs within the company. She gave a first-hand account of the kind of support successful TEW applicants can expect; from general mentoring, to practical budget planning and forecasting.

Members from the UK Tamil Students Union (UKTSU) closed by thanking everyone for attending and explaining how the UKTSU is helping Ratheesan organise and deliver TEW; spreading the word and encouraging as many young people to take part as possible.

For those interested in applying for The Entrepreneurial Way investment, they first need to check they are eligible to enter, by looking at the [FAQs section on the website](#).

The key dates for the TEW 2012/2013 application process are:

- Short proposal deadline - 11.59pm on Wednesday 12th December 2012
- Workshop – Wednesday 30th January 2013
- Business proposal deadline – 11.59pm on Friday 1st March 2013
- Presentations and Interviews – 11th – 15th March 2013

The workshop on Wednesday 30th January 2013 will be an interactive session where interested applicants will be given some practical advice on how to write a business plan, and will learn about what makes a successful company from sales and marketing to finance, legal and HR. After this session, TEW applicants should have all the know-how to complete their TEW business proposal. In order to attend the workshop, applicants will need to submit their short proposal by midnight on Wednesday 12th December 2012. [The proposal should be submitted online](#). The final business proposal will need to be submitted by Friday 1st March 2013. Presentations and interviews for those shortlisted will then take place with a panel of judges, including Yoganathan Ratheesan, during the week of the 11th March 2013.

TEW applicants who have any questions, should email: dreams@dreamitachieveit.co.uk.

Notes to Editor:

About the Entrepreneurial Way

The Entrepreneurial Way is a new initiative launching in the 2012/2013 academic year, offering students and recent graduates since 2005, the opportunity to pitch their business ideas to a panel of judges, including Yoganathan Ratheesan; for investment, funding and additional support, such as mentoring. The scheme will offer potential entrepreneurs practical advice on how to develop their business ideas and make it work in the real world.

About Lebara

Lebara is one of Europe's leading mobile telecoms operators, enhancing the lives of ethnic and migrant communities by providing high quality and low cost international mobile products and services. Lebara provides Pay As You Go mobile SIM cards and related products and services customised to serve the international communities in seven European countries as well as Australia. In March 2011, Lebara expanded its services by launching Lebara Money in the UK, a simple and secure MasterCard® prepaid card, offering highly competitive exchange rates and no transfer fees for customers wishing to send money abroad.

Lebara has achieved rapid growth since it was founded in 2001 and the company employs over 1,000 people around the world. The London call centre hub serves all of its European operations, with staff fluent in 27 languages. Lebara invests heavily in recruiting top talent to meet all its customer needs; only 1 in 50 even make it through the recruitment process. Lebara's commitment to customer service and talent development has been recognised in 2012 through eight awards. Most recently they were awarded 'Best Large Contact Centre' at the European Call Centre and Customer Service Awards and the company won in three categories at the UK Customer Experience Awards 2012 including Best UK Customer Experience in the IT & Telecoms sector as well as the overall Large Centre across all industries.

Lebara's Chairman and co-founder Yoganathan Ratheesan was recently awarded an Honorary Doctor of Letters (Hon D Litt) from Kingston University in recognition of his outstanding contribution to business and entrepreneurship. In June, he was also named Ernst & Young 'London & South' Entrepreneur of the Year 2012.

Lebara is committed to giving back to the communities it serves through its Foundation which was established in 2008. At the 10th anniversary in 2011, the founders committed €10 million to develop a new village and school, near Chennai in South India. The company has also invested in projects in 10 other countries where Lebara customers have family and friends.

More information can be found here: www.lebarafoundation.org/ and www.lebara.com/.