

# BAE HQ, the community for British Asian Entrepreneurs

*As part of our quick founder questions series – or QFQs – we spoke to Amardeep Parmar, cofounder of BAE HQ about making connections, remote working and building a network built on diversity.*

Temps de lecture : minute

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## What was the catalyst for launching The Bae HQ?

Disappointment. Frustration. Rants.

Before Bae HQ, I had built a strong network in the startup ecosystem in the US despite not living there. Yet I had no idea how to get involved here and I found I was struggling to feel like I belonged. It seemed like people here, especially from my background, were less likely to support each other.

I met my cofounder Gurvir Riyat who was at Kindred Capital at the time and we both had the same passion for changing the culture. We thought someone should do something about it then realised, why not us?

Tell us about the business – what it is, what it aims to achieve, who you work with, how you

# reach customers and so on?

Bae HQ is the community for British Asian entrepreneurs, operators and investors in the startup ecosystem. Our mission is to inspire, connect and scale members of the community.

We've got 5 key pillars:

- Media - We've released over 170 podcasts and have written features on British Asian success stories to showcase them as role models. LinkedIn is our primary engagement channel.
- Events - We've had over 1000 attendees at our events and hosted at the likes of Google, AWS and HSBC Innovation. We have a mix of panels, fireside chats, workshops and social events.
- Futures - We run experience and mentorship programs and deliver talks at schools and universities.
- Investment - We help founders with fundraising and will be launching an angel network later this year.
- Support - We offer consulting services and have resources such as our wikipedia and job board.

## How has the business evolved since its launch?

The initial idea for Bae HQ was much simpler. It would just be a side project where we had a podcast, had an occasional event and would educate people on funding.

However we had massive engagement and enthusiasm from the start which led to rapid adjustment in our plans. We ran many experiments as we grew by listening to the community and iterating. Some of the ideas we thought would be huge didn't work out whereas other ideas stuck and the community loved them. We learned where the greatest impact we

could make was and began to prioritise these key areas.

Now we have our much clearer pillar structure and we're much more conscious of whether something fits and we can deliver something exceptional rather than chasing every tangent.

## Tell us about the working culture at The Bae HQ

The organisation is led by myself, Amardeep Parmar, and my cofounder Gurvir Riyat. We work in our private office most days so that we can quickly align on all the chaotic moving parts of the business. We've got our weekly catchups on Monday mornings for focused deeper dives.

Everyone else who works for us is remote and freelance. We use Slack as our primary communication channel and WhatsApp when something is urgent. We use Notion and Loom to share all the SOPs to make sure everyone is set up for success. We have our team meetings each week too which are always fun!

## How are you funded?

Our headline partner for 2024 is HSBC Innovation Banking and they fund a lot of what we do including the podcast, mentorships, events and more. We also have an exclusive legal partner, Joelson, for 2024.

We're growing other sources of revenue at the moment.

## What has been your biggest challenge so far and how have you overcome this?

We've had many challenges and the early one of getting a critical mass of

people to care about what we're doing feels like a lifetime ago.

Now our biggest challenge is focus and prioritisation. We're fortunate to have high engagement and many people who want to get involved in the community. Yet we have limited resources and can't be everything to everyone.

We constantly refine what exactly we do and how all the parts of the jigsaw fit together.

## How does The Bae HQ answer an unmet need?

Diversity in the startup ecosystem had an awkward gap that no one talked about.

There were many organisations for other groups of underrepresented people but nothing for Asians. When you consider ~10% of the UK is Asian heritage and ~20% of London, it's not like this is a small niche.

Many Asians felt they weren't represented at startup events they went to and didn't feel like they belonged.

Many Asians felt they had no role models who looked like them to look up to despite there being incredible founders out there who weren't being covered.

Many Asians felt they didn't have the support of their community for what they were building.

These are some of the unmet needs we're tackling.

# What's in store for the future?

We're less than 2 years into a multi-generational project. We've barely even started.

In the short term, we'll be launching new forms of education for those in the startup space to help narrow the information gap. We'll continue to host packed out events with top players in the ecosystem.

Looking to the medium and long term, the major area we're excited to grow is our Futures arm. As we become more established, we will dramatically increase our work with schools and universities. We want no one from underprivileged areas to lack role models who look like them. As part of this there will be significant growth in the mentorship and insight schemes we offer too.

# What one piece of advice would you give other founders or future founders?

Constantly seek to understand yourself.

I've interviewed 330 founders, investors and high performers now. The most successful can often admit they were initially driven by insecurity or fear and know themselves well enough to see how their relationship with themselves has changed over time.

Spend time reflecting on what's important to you and how well this aligns with what's important for the company. You aren't the company and there can and will be conflicts.

You're not a robot and you're going to have ups and downs and don't deny yourself these. Many founders fall out of love with their businesses and pretending the feeling isn't there won't help. Try to dissect your own

mind to find out what the problems are.

Building a startup is hard and stressful. The only true way to fail is to spend years building something which you end up resenting.

## And finally, a more personal question! What's your daily routine and the rules you're living by at the moment?

The only part of my day where there is some facade of routine is from 6 am to 9 am. The rest has extreme variation because of the number of different hats I wear.

I wake up at 6 am most days and spend about half an hour reflecting and listening to my thoughts. Calling it meditation might be a stretch but it helps my mind warm up for the day. Then I prepare myself for the outside world and make the train at 7 am. On the train, I either read a book or listen to a podcast depending on my mood. Once I get to the office, the time until 9 am is my time before I start responding to anyone and I get my creative juices flowing.

I've become more strict about the time I give to others. I have unlimited demands for my time and there's nothing wrong with someone shooting their shot but I have to look after myself and prioritise effectively. It's now difficult to get a call and coffee with me so I have more time to be proactive with deep work rather than flailing around!

Amardeep Parmar is the cofounder of [BAE HQ](#).



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