



STARTING MY OWN COMPANY WHILST DOING A PHD

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INTRODUCTION

- My Career path
- The PhD
- The Company - Aqua Laboratories
- Why and how I started the company
- What changed
- Balancing work, studies and home life
- What I would do differently





1980



1999



2002



2009



1996



2001



2004



2013

2017

THE PhD

- Part time
- Sheffield Hallam University
- EPSRC/Industry funded
- Fertilizer Chemistry/Analytical Chemistry
- Worked with the BBC
- The focus changed



THE COMPANY

- Micro SME
- Manufacturing
- R&D
- Product development
- Liquid fertilizers
- 4 Directors





BRINGING YOUR
INNOVATIONS

INTO THE NEXT GENERATION
OF PLANT NUTRITION



INNOVATION



GOALS



SCIENCE



FLEXIBILITY

WHY?

- Previous employer went into administration
- The opportunity was presented to me
- I like a challenge
- Always dreamed of having my own business
- 10 years' experience in the industry
- Money
- Why Not?



HOW?

- Approached by an investor
- Took 6 months off my PhD
- Redesigned the facilities
- Worked part time
- Hard work
- Planning



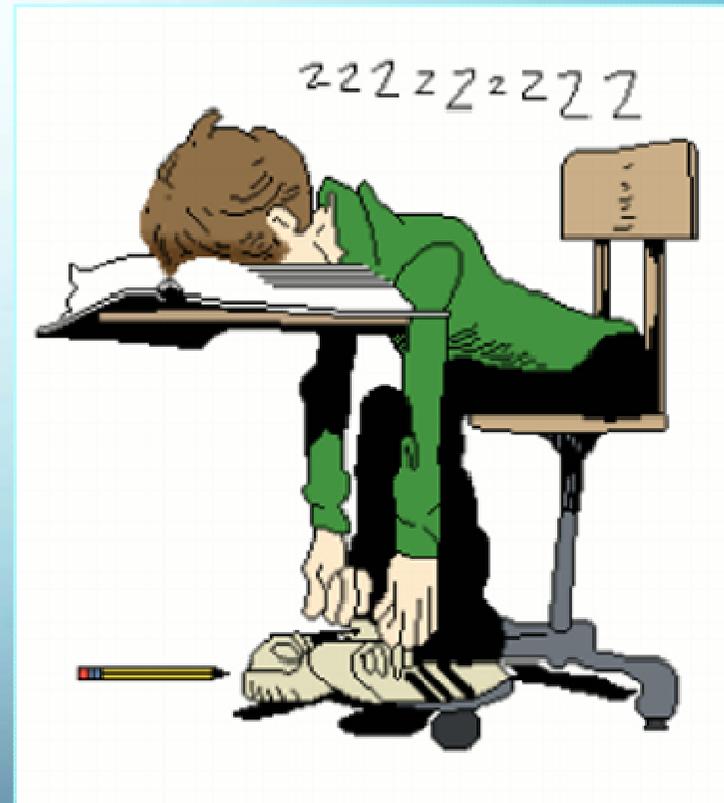
WHAT CHANGED?

- Wages!
- Level of responsibility
- Stress Level
- Number of meetings
- How people treated me
- Thickness of my Skin!



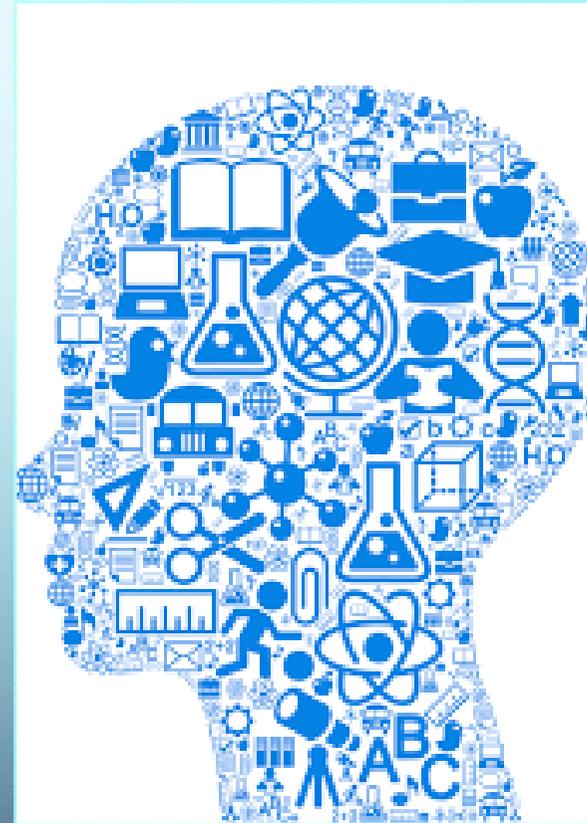
CHALLENGES

- Work/life balance
- Focusing on the task in hand
- Sleeping/relaxing
- Stopping distraction
- Writing up my thesis
- Understanding business



KNOWLEDGE GAINED

- The importance of listening
- Respect is earned
- Always remain professional
- Everyone is a potential customer
- Be flexible
- Be prepared
- Stand up for what you believe
- You need Thick Skin!
- Importance of networking



WHAT I WOULD DO DIFFERENTLY

- Start writing your thesis up NOW!
- Full time PhD
- Increase my foundation in business
- Speak up more
- Challenge other people decision more
- Not allow myself to be bullied in to decisions
- Start on my own



MESSAGE TO TAKE HOME

- Work hard
- Listen
- Learn all skills
- Don't think any job is below you
- Be Flexible
- Don't take too much on
- Plan
- Never give up





**THANK YOU FOR
LISTENING**