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
THE PhD

- Part time
- Sheffield Hallam University
- EPNSC/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
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's decision more
- Not allow myself to be bullied into 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