

Mahima Mehra, Founder of “Haathi Chaap”

Written by Administrator

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Mahima Mehra, a psychology graduate student from Lady Sriram College, Delhi, specializes in making organic stationery products “out of elephant poop”, under the brand name ‘Haathi Chaap’. This brand has been making waves in international markets with Germany being her largest buyer. Mahima, the entrepreneur who saw an opportunity in an elephant’s bad digestive system, talks exclusively in an interview to the Newmedia:

- ***What are the range of product and services which your company offers?***

Organic food packaging, stationery items made from cotton handmade paper and paper made from elephant and camel dung.

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- ***How & when did you start on your entrepreneurial journey? Please elaborate on your journey so far.***

Being a native of Jaipur, I was exposed to the craft of handmade paper making at a young age. Recycling of anything and everything had been a childhood passion. So, it seemed like the best thing to follow when I decided to start my own enterprise.

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- ***How did you finance your business?***

At the initial stage, with a loan of Rs. 15,000 from a friend.

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· ***Being an entrepreneur, what are the challenges you faced and how have you succeeded in overcoming them?***

Well, the most important challenge was to be able to work in the area of manufacturing, which is primarily male dominated. However, over a period of time, it has just become naturally easier.

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· ***Would you like to highlight people who have inspired you in your business?***

My inspiration was pretty much all the ‘garbage’ around me, never really a person.

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· ***What are your future plans?***

To be able to make paper as organic as possible.

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- ***What is your methodology of recruiting people and what are some of the key qualities that you look for?***

No methodology as such... but one of the key qualities we look for is being able to think ‘out of the box’, to be open to experimentation and creativity.

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- ***According to you what makes a “Successful Entrepreneur”?***

Hard work, willingness to experiment and an eye for details.

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- ***What is your outlook on the present economic condition? Has it affected your business? If yes, how?***

Not really. Since our local business is increasing, we haven’t felt the pinch... yet.

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- ***The Government of India claims to have taken several initiatives to promote SMEs. What are your expectations?***

N. A.

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- ***Please share the lessons learnt from your business for the benefit of our new entrepreneurs.***

Starting a new venture is only as terrifying as you make it out to be. Putting one's ideas to it, working hard and never be afraid to try something new.