

Nidhi Banthia Mehta, Founder, Bollybeatz

We all dance to the beat of different drummers; Nidhi Mehta however dances to the beat and rhythms of a very quirky indigenous drummer.

Our Young Indian Entrepreneur in question is the founder of Bollybeatz, the dance sensation gone global. No prizes for guessing what they do but Nidhi says it best- “BollyBeatz as the name suggests is a bollywood dance company. We run regular dance fitness classes in Singapore, USA and regular workshops in countries like Paris. Our trademark is our BollyArobix and Power Bhangra routines. They are power packed; all bollywood and can make you lose about 500 calories per class. BollyBeatz helps normal people like you and me learn how to dance, to gain more confidence in their skill sets and to lose weight while having fun dancing!”

Dance lovers and bollywood lovers across the world are flocking to their centers to learn the moves and steps that dominate the Indian box office. Nidhi says “We have centers in Texas, Singapore, Silicon Valley and shortly starting in New Delhi and Paris. Our main goal is to give an opportunity to anyone who loves to dance to come to our class and explore the bollywood style of dance. We have people from all ethnicities. For e.g in our classes in Singapore 30% of the students are non-Indians comprising of Americans, British, Chinese, Malays, Japanese, French and Australians. It’s a very diverse group of students – men and women included. In all our centers combined we have about 800 registered students.”

Bollywood has inspired countless men and women to pursue dreams unheard of and unthought-of. Nidhi too is one such dreamer whose fantasy has been made tangible by her entrepreneurial acumen. She states “Our business model works on a very simple module – give people good music, good choreography and a great workout and they will keep coming back. And that’s what happens. Every 10 weeks we have a fresh set of music, steps, dance style that’s introduced in all classes – so there is always something new to look forward to and learn for all students so they stick to the class and don’t look elsewhere for newness factor. We provide that to them!”

“ Our biggest asset is the choreography style which all my students love and also the strength is the group of instructors who are very passionate about bollywood dancing and work very closely to provide a high quality standard and personal attention to all students. We focus a lot on the high impact dance element to make people sweat. If they lose calories they are happy and that makes us happy! I have people coming to me and telling me that every time they enter a party someone or the other compliments them about having lost weight or looking very toned ... and they credit it all to our classes. Our classes are also successful coz we are very sensitive towards our clients needs and we are

constantly training to provide better choreos and different innovative styles to our students.”

The next time you spy bollywood moves in an American disco we know who to credit. Their reach and popularity are also slated to increase, Nidhi reveals their chosen mode of growth saying “Through partnership-franchising. We already have a very successful partnership franchise set up in Texas. We are working on the same for California, New Delhi and Paris and are constantly looking for existing instructors or good dancers in different countries who’d like to take up our franchise!”

Her destiny crept up on her in unexpected ways; entrepreneurship and dance was the last thing on her mind. “Honestly, I did not plan it! I think some things are destined and opportunities come your way and something in your mind makes you grab it! That’s what happened with me. I left my Job with McKinsey & Co. in 2001 and moved to the US after my marriage. I planned to go back to McK in USA but decided to take a break for 6 months and enjoy life! But I was so bored out of my mind and that I had to do something... I was spotted at a party dancing... they asked me to choreograph a dance and teach some kids for a competition which I gladly did and enjoyed it very much. Next we know that they won the competition and the moms want them to continue taking lessons from me. That time it struck me that I could actually make this into a professional work style. I registered a company, rented out a studio. Got my first set of students for a kid’s class and an adult’s class... rest is history. In 2005 my first company Step Dance Inc had grown 200% in 3 yrs time.”

Despite her dreams coming to life with such great results the challenges it has brought are also constant. She talks about them and her better half who tempers her enthusiasm saying “It’s been balancing time between work and personal life, creating limits and boundaries for work. You can really go crazy when it’s your own business – you want to work 24X7 but that can burn you out quickly too. Luckily for me, my husband Alop has been a very strong factor in helping me know when I am going overboard, making me go thru a reality check when its needed and constantly supporting me in all my ideas and ventures.”

She regrets one thing only and she says it is -“selling my first company. I should never have! But it’s done with – I made good money out of it! But BollyBeatz will always stay with me!”

The operating style of Bollybeatz is simple yet perfect in its simplicity. Nidhi explains how that came to be and says “I started with USD250 for my studio rent which of course my husband provided for. My business is not capital intensive – so that helps. We can wind up in a months time with zero liabilities –that’s the way I have structured it and I try to empower women like me – who are good dancers, have that skill set which I can spot on to join me and take it on for themselves and make money out of it – why not! If they do well I do well!”

Bollybeatz has certainly done well. They have grown 100% each year, worked with several corporates for team building workshops and conducted regular classes for their employees. So of the companies that can dance it Bollybeatz style are P&G, Standard chartered, Cisco, Yahoo!, JCDecaux, Bunge agro foods ltd, Vopak Asia Pte ltd, INSEAD business school and more.

Nidhi adds “We work with the government on cultural exchange projects and with schools... so far we have branches in Singapore, Chennai, Texas and we plan to start in New Delhi, Silicon Valley and Paris shortly.”

Nidhi has pride in her achievements and the extent to which her idea has grown. She was especially heartened -“To see it establish in so many countries, having people constantly enquire about our franchise and being featured in all the big publications!”

From India Today, Femina, Time Out, to Simply Hers, Bollybeatz has found recognition and publicity in all their pages. “We have performed at Stanford Business school, At the Miss India America Pageant... conducted workshops in Paris...”

Nidhi describes entrepreneurship according to her experiences saying “It’s a high! It feels great to create something of your own – I am constantly thinking of new ways to expand – now we have moved into hosting events. I am also working on a a new venture of creating a complete Indian classifieds magazine in Singapore. Like my husband says, I wake up with a new business idea everyday – I am convinced that it will work and do great – I just wish I had more time in my life to materialize all of them!”

Her dream and vision for the coming year is “To open more franchises, start more classes, create new concepts – for eg we are starting a new concept of dance as a part of our existing dance fitness module called BellyBeatz! Its bellydance fused into bollywood!”

From Captain of her school’s Basketball team to corporate soldier to Successful entrepreneur Nidhi has seen many changes in her career. Nidhi takes a page out of her experiences and says “Always think in terms of cost-benefit ratio for your business plan. The faster you can break even, the faster you can grow and do well. Always be cost conscious and save.... And put a part of your savings back into the business and a part of it in other growth ventures....”

Nidhi Banthia Mehta is an Indian Entrepreneur to watch out for, even if it is just to watch her dance all the way to the bank. Yourstory wishes her and Bollybeatz greater success with each groove they perfect.