



**From advising in international politics to heading a successful PR and communications agency, when did you make the jump and what inspired you to do so?**

I set up Curzon PR in late summer of 2009 after a number of years as the Vice Chairman of Business Relations for the Conservative Party in the UK. My previous role in the Conservative Party involved promoting bilateral trade & FDI and gave me the experience and network to launch Curzon PR. I was inspired to set up my own agency, as I needed the flexibility of running my own business and having control over my ability to effectively balance motherhood with work and life. Coupled with the fact that I've always had an entrepreneurial spirit – both my parents were entrepreneurs so it must be in my blood. The PR industry is continuously evolving and I feel lucky to have found my career path that I am fortunate to work

in. Life is short and shouldn't be wasted working in a job you are not passionate about.

**Are there similarities in your past professional work and what you do now heading a firm of Curzon's size? How does it differ from your previous experience being the boss and building a company from the ground up?**

I set up my first business, which was in finance whilst at university and recently sold it after running it for 16 years, allowing me to focus on Curzon PR. Therefore, I was already familiar with setting up a business and managing it. I have been an entrepreneur for 16 years, managing staff, dealing with clients, working across all functions including finance, IT, HR, Marketing etc. so with the launch of Curzon PR, my learning curve was focused on the PR delivery for our clients. I am used to working on weekends and on holidays. I haven't taken a holiday without working since ►

**PUBLIC RELATIONS  
ENTREPRENEUR**

# **FARZANA BADUEL**

**ON POLITICS, CAREER & HER  
18TH CENTURY ESTATE**

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(Opposite page)  
Summer white,  
Farzana pairs a  
white tea-dress with  
Mary Janes and bold  
baubles; (This page)  
Picturesque doesn't  
cover it! The old  
world charm of  
Farzana's historic  
home



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**'It is important to have visible role models, as they are a source of inspiration, which can ignite the drive and confidence needed to start on the path of success.'**

(Opposite page) Looking Parisian chic in a white A-line dress topped with an eyelet sweater with black trim and silver buttons;  
 (Left) Farzana with her daughter (bringing life to that floral crown!);  
 (Below) The Baduels, Farzana pictured with her husband and daughter

1999 and don't feel sorry for myself, as I love my work and feel no need to escape from it.

My challenge now is to ensure the culture of Curzon PR is firmly established in our new offices in New York, Dubai and soon to be launched Delhi. I never really thought of culture as important until I started opening overseas offices and understood the importance of culture to ensure our customers get the same experience from our London office as they would from our Dubai office. My previous finance business was UK based only and likewise with the Conservative Party, so this is my first time I have been working outside the UK and I find it exciting and a great challenge. Travel is inspiring and working across different cultures is fascinating.

**Being a South Asian woman in a position of power, how important is it for you to be vocal on the international field. In other words do you feel the drive to let other South Asian women (and women in general) know that they can strive for the top?**

I think it is important to have visible role models, as they are a source of inspiration, which can ignite the drive and confidence needed to start on the path of success. I was inspired by women in my family who were leaders in their professions or businesswomen. Likewise, I grew up in Thatcher's Britain with the Queen at the helm of the country and was surrounded by strong women role models both on TV as well as at home.

My greatest supporters have been women and I am indebted to them, as they have helped me build Curzon PR into the agency it is. Women helping other women, is important and as Madeleine

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Albright said: “There is a special place in hell for women who don’t help other women.”

I was delighted to recently win the award for the Asian Women of Achievement Award for the Entrepreneur category. The awards platform was launched in 1999 by Pinky Lilani OBE to provide visibility of Asian women achieving excellence in their respective fields. The awards have inspired me over the years and it serves a critical need to inspire the next generation of leaders to step up.

**You were featured in *Forbes* after winning the award. What were your initial thoughts?**

I was featured in *Forbes* after winning the Asian Women Achievement Award. My initial feeling after winning the award was pure delight, thinking of how happy my daughter would be when her mama brings home an award.

I also did not expect myself to win, as I thought of myself as a PR professional and not an entrepreneur, but it has made me realise that I am an entrepreneur as well as a PR pro. This is the first

award I have won for being an entrepreneur, as previously I have won awards for being a media professional.

**The career advice you most treasure or look back on often?**

‘Follow your enthusiasm’ is advice that I have treasured over the years. A hedge funder friend of mine told me this and I agree with him. I observe people by their actions and I have found that successful people often share similar traits – they work hard, have vision and are good with people, but most importantly they are passionate about their work. I also think that the harder you work, the luckier you become. Opportunities find their way to your life when you have consistently been working hard in an area you are passionate about.

**Moving from work to home, tell us a bit about your home, what drew you to it?**

Sawmill House is in West Wycombe Park, around an hour’s drive from London. It is a beautiful 18th century park and is a perfectly preserved rococo landscape garden,

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**(Opposite page)** A nude chiffon and knit dress paired with a gold statement necklace  
**(This page)** Farzana Baduel sits lake-side on her property in a red, orange & pink printed off-shoulder summer dress and nude sandals

complete with statues and temples inspired by Classical Architecture from both Greece and Italy. My mother-in-law Marcella, Lady Dashwood and my husband previously lived in the main Palladian house and after our marriage we moved to Sawmill House. The estate is often used in shoots including the television series, *Downton Abbey*.

The lake on the estate is entirely man made, created from the nearby River Wye in the form of a Swan. The lake is host to an enormously diverse range of wildlife including all manner of invertebrate and insects through to coots, swans and many ducks, which my daughter loves! The lake and the approachable parts of the river are well stocked with both brown and rainbow trout.

The park still contains many follies and temples; the Temple of Music is on the island of the lake and was inspired by the Temple of Vesta in Rome. Amongst the many other temples is the Temple of Apollo, Temple of the Winds and my favourite the Temple of Venus.

**What was the thought process behind the design and interiors?**



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The design and interiors were created to be wholly sympathetic to the 18th century estate and its surroundings, so the furniture is 18th century and walls are covered with frescos loyal to the 18th century aesthetic that prevailed in that time period. As Sawmill House is a listed building, there were limitations to any structural changes, so the design had to be within the acceptable parameters of the heritage bodies that govern listed buildings.

**Your favourite room in the home and why?**

The family room where my daughter plays, so I can be close to her and watch her grow and develop using her imagination. The wallpaper is by De Gournay who produces the most beautiful hand painted wallpaper along with Biedermeier furniture.

**What is an average day from home to work with you?**

I stay in London during the week and weekends I am at West Wycombe Park so it's the perfect balance between town and country. I wake up around 7am and always ensure I have loud happy 80's music to wake up to start my day with a smile. I get my daughter ready; give her breakfast whilst I plunder my wardrobe for the outfit of my day.

I drop my daughter to school and then head to my office. If I have time, I walk through Hyde Park to head to my office in Mayfair. My day is full of meetings usually around Mayfair with clients, journalists and my team. I am a natural people's person so I am in my element working with people and meeting new people.

I usually pop into an art viewing when I finish my day before I head home to spend time with my daughter and hear about her day at school before she heads to bed. When she is tucked in, I look forward to dinner with my husband, who is the greatest cook in the world! I love his food, and I regularly become homesick for his food when I travel away for work. Before I go to bed, I often read a few pages from a gardening book, typically by renowned gardener Vita Sackville West. Her books are a perfect way to end the day.

**To any individual looking to embark on their own entrepreneurial journey, what would you tell them?**

Follow your enthusiasm; your passion will drive you to greater heights. One saying I coin is 'don't do analysis paralysis, just do it!' I believe this is such a great philosophy to live by.

From an entrepreneurial angle, I would advise to not be afraid of failure, we all make mistakes and it is often the best way to learn and develop. To help, set clearly defined goals, timelines, deliverables and key performance indicators so you know exactly where you are going. Believe in yourself and don't be swayed by others, It's your journey in life, not theirs. And lastly, be prepared to work hard and take risks.



INTERVIEW: SABAH BANO MALIK  
PHOTOS: SANA E RASUL

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Lady in red!  
Farzana pairs her  
pleated red dress  
with black patent  
pointed pumps