

## People in business



AWARD WINNER: Ray Singh is proud of what he has achieved.

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# Restaurant owner is star performer

This week, we talk to community-minded Ray Singh, owner/director of Indian Star restaurant which earlier this year was named Rotorua's best restaurant.

**Briefly outline your current position/s and career to date.**

After graduating in hospitality, I started as a restaurant manager in India in 1987, came to New Zealand in 1997 and worked for few different hospitality businesses in Auckland. I bought Indian Star Rotorua in July 2001, working as managing director to date.

**What was your first job and what did you learn from it?**

My first employment was as a restaurant manager. I learnt how to deal with people, develop healthy relationships with them and keep a positive attitude.

**What do you see as the greatest opportunity and greatest challenge in the restaurant industry in the year ahead?**

Greatest challenge is to ready your staff and yourself for more competition, to organise special training programmes for your team so you can provide more professional service and high quality products. Another challenge will be more competition and finding good staff.

**What three skills or qualities are essential in your role?**

Management skill to hire the right

**“Most people here don't know that I love stage acting”**

people, professionalism to train the staff according to business culture and tradition. Leadership with a passion and friendliness.

**How do you maintain a healthy work/life balance?**

Socialise with friends, watch movies, spend some time with family and gardening.

**If you could do any other job for a day, what would it be and why?**

I would spend that day helping the community which provides me a lot of satisfaction and peace of mind.

**What is one thing most people don't know about you?**

Most people here don't know that I love stage acting, in India it was my hobby.

**What achievement to date are you most proud of and why?**

I became an entrepreneur in 2001 and

started with four people including myself, now we have 26 people working in four different branches including a branch in Hamilton. Within the last eleven years, we have won major awards including Business of the Year Hospitality and Attractions 2007 and Outstanding Restaurant at this year's Rotorua Hospitality Awards. My company is involved with community events and sponsorship through association with the Cancer Society and a special need children's Christmas party.

The fact I run a respectable and successful business gives me the most pride and encouragement.

**What one piece of advice do you wish somebody had given you when you were starting out?**

Not to be so friendly with staff members — sometimes they may lose respect for you as a boss and become too comfortable, which may result in them not fulfilling their duties properly.

**If you could choose anybody to be your business mentor, who would it be and why?**

I would choose my ex-boss Prithipal Singh because of his success due to his hard work and work ethic.