



JOHN ATHWAL



“for his entrepreneurial brilliance and benevolence that reinforces the potential of an equal opportunity society; for believing and encouraging many in giving back to the society, himself taking pro-active participatory roles in various socially relevant charities and development work; for giving selflessly, of his wealth and his self, for those without a home, or at times even hope.”

## A SELF-MADE, SELFLESS ENTREPRENEUR EXTRAORDINAIRE



John Athwal is one of the top business tycoons in the UK, who have singlehandedly build the rock solid foundation of his business empire. John's entrepreneurial skills unearthed at college at just 17 years old, where much against his parents' wishes, he formed a business with a friend as a music promoter hiring bands for the local town hall and student's union. His parent's disapproval of this venture, which involved late nights and selling alcoholic beverages going completely against his Asian culture, led John to run away from home – a decision that he now regrets but this very decision altered the course of his life.

As a self-confessed workaholic, John landed a job as a trainee manager in a filling station and in those days when filling stations generally sold only fuel, he recognized the potential to stock add-on merchandise such as jackets, briefcases, garden accessories, bread, milk – in fact anything that caught the customer's eye. At the age of 29, John was appointed to the Board of Directors and almost singlehandedly he established an importing arm for the company. A couple of years later, a friend approached John with an order to supply Christmas decorations to Asda – as his friend did not have the funds to fulfill the order himself. Travelling to factories in Taiwan and discovering the considerable excitement involved in this type of product, John decided that this was where his future lay. He formed Premier Decorations Ltd – the UK's first Christmas brand and one, which remains a market leader for this type of product today and the rest... as they say, is history!

Premier Decorations Ltd. - established almost 30 years back - now provides employment in the UK for 84 permanent staff rising to 250 during the delivery season.

Premier Decorations has twice appeared in the Sunday Times Profit track for the fastest growing profitable companies, and once in the International track 200 for the fastest growing exporters.

He has been honored as Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in the Queen's 2018 News Year's Honors list for his services to business and charity. Having already been announced as Asian of the Year in 2010, John has been recognized for his outstanding contribution to the British economy for his thriving business.

John Athwal is also renowned for his philanthropic nature, being involved with and donating generously to charities including The Fence Club, where he was Chairman and Treasurer, which raise funds for providing donated toys to needy homes and institutions for children in the UK. In 2014 John Athwal took part in the CEO Sleepout to raise awareness and money for Action for Children – a 150 years old British charity that is concerned with the 100,000 or so children who sleep rough in the UK every year. John is also proactively involved with the Make a Wish Foundation, which grants wishes to children and young people with life-threatening conditions, where he spent 14 years on the fundraising committee.

He is self-motivated for all the charity and benevolence for which he has extended his money and personal support throughout this incredible journey of his growth. To quote him - "Life has not always been as easy as it is today; having arrived at the age of eight in the UK in 1961 with my parents from very humble beginnings in Punjab, I have embraced the opportunities this country has offered me, and it only feels right to give a little something back to society."