

Leading By Example

An Interview with Nick Candy



Nick Candy

EDITORS' NOTE Nick Candy is a British entrepreneur best known for his background in luxury real estate and for co-founding world-leading interior design firm Candy & Candy. The company's most high-profile project was the globally celebrated One Hyde Park residential development in London, which revolutionized the property market worldwide and set unparalleled new standards in luxury design and living. In 2015, Candy diversified his interests outside of real estate and established Candy Capital, a family office based in London to manage his personal business interests and companies.

Did you always know that you had an entrepreneurial spirit and desire to build your own company?

I don't think you are born with an entrepreneurial spirit, but rather you inherit it from the people around you. I watched my grandmother who came from Cyprus to London and was a waitress in Wembley Stadium. She got up every day and worked hard to try to provide for

herself, and when my father could not pay for some of my school fees since he was in advertising and his business went up and down, my grandmother would step in to help out.

In 1995, my brother and I decided we wanted to buy our first flat in London, and these were the days when you could get a 95 percent mortgage. We asked our grandmother for the deposit, and we fixed up the flat ourselves. Someone came along about a year and a half later and wanted to buy it, and we made a good profit. We then bought other flats and sold them for a profit, and that is where the entrepreneurial spirit really started.

I am someone who likes to do things that others do not think can be done. As much as this can be seen as entrepreneurial, I see it as more of a mentality.

What was your vision for creating Wild Idol, and how do you define its mission?

The new generation does not drink as much alcohol as past generations, which is why there is a huge surplus of wine in the world and wine prices are going down. There is a focus on health and wellness, and we saw an opportunity

to create a zero alcohol product that would be the best of the best – the Dom Perignon of zero alcohol wine. This applies to the bottle, the cork and, above all, the quality and consistency of the product. The key was then to get into the best restaurants, hotels and establishments in the world, and we have done that without spending lots of money on marketing. If we do a blind tasting with our competitors, we will win with sommeliers every time. The product speaks for itself.

We have proven ourselves in the United Kingdom and the Middle East, and we are now focused on the U.S. market which provides a massive opportunity. This is the next step on the Wild Idol journey and Wild Idol is now available in the U.S. (us.wildidol.com).

What led to your interest and involvement in politics?

I guess, like most people, you have a journey in life to politics, and my journey started with Tony Blair. I think Tony is one of the most gifted politicians in a generation. I watched Tony very closely, and I admired how he led

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with empathy and felt the heartbeat of the nation better than any other Prime Minister over the past decade. I was also involved with David Cameron and Boris Johnson. Boris is a dear friend; he never got the opportunity to execute on his vision because of the pandemic.

Now, there is Nigel Farage who is someone who genuinely cares about the country. He is not focused on the title; he is focused on having the ability to get the job done, and he will have the ability to make critical decisions for the country when he becomes Prime Minister.

You recently sold your home, which was the most expensive sale of a home in London. Will you discuss this transaction?

The project took me a long time, just shy of five years, to do. It is definitely one of the best houses in London, as it is very rare to get two acres inside of Central London. I am passionate about design, and was deeply involved in every aspect of the project. I had been approached over the years by a number of people interested in buying it, but I felt this time it was the right timing with the right buyer. We had numerous interested parties and we closed on the transaction in six hours.

How do you describe your leadership style?

I am very demanding, and I lead by example. I work seven days a week and am usually

the last one to leave the office. I love what I do, and for me work is my passion.

What has made philanthropic work so important to you?

I have been fortunate in life and have always believed in giving others opportunities where I can. A fellow philanthropist once told me that giving would bring me more satisfaction than any business deal ever could – and over the years I've realized he was absolutely right.

Are you able to enjoy the journey?

I would like to enjoy the journey more, but when you have lots going on between business, politics, family, philanthropy – it is hard to find the time. ●

