

## Turning a passion into a full time job#

### **The idea**

After a year living in New York with Mountbatten, working for McGraw-Hill Companies in the communications department, I started getting more into digital communications and blogging, trying to make the most of the city by writing about eating out , drinking a bit too much and dating (a very New York preoccupation). One of my blogs, Nylonbites, was a look at where to go in the city for nights out. The other, I LoveYour Accent, was a blog devoted to setting up Americans with English expats.#

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Neither really took off but kept me amused. However, when I returned to London# I stumbled across an article about a new dating site called I Love Your Accent# that had taken off in the states. I looked on in horror at a site that was more# sugar daddy focused than anything else, but, outraged that someone else had# done the same thing, decided to formalize the next idea I had. My over amorous# nature and the New York dating scene had taught how to date frequently and# very well, and I wanted to bring this open-minded and fun approach to young# professional dating to London.#

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### **From Blog to Business**

[Social Concierge](#) started off as a blog, telling readers where to date in# London and how to play the game. It was about opening people up to a form# of 'experiential' dating - not just about who you date, but where- putting the joy# back into dating in a city where there's so much going on.#

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Soon readers and friends started suggesting I matchmake people and put on# events. A couple of months later I registered Social Concierge as a limited# company and threw a party in a bar for single friends, 60 of us; it was a great# night. I charged for tickets and made some cash from it, plus spotted a couple of# kisses, so considered it a success.#

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From that point onwards I started throwing the odd party or dinner and setting# up friends with friend of friends. I'd go out to parties and 'scout' anyone single# who I thought was similar to my friends - ambitious, passionate, sociable; and force them to join the club. After about a year, more people were requesting# blind dates and parties, and I was balancing a full time job in publishing with# the blog. The money already made went towards turning the blog into a website# with member applications - everyone has to be vetted - and pushing the dating club to the forefront. I also spent money on facebook ads which drove new member interest.#

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Finally, two years after I first registered the company, I was sick of my day# job and had the savings (and loan) to give [Social Concierge](#) a shot full time.# With more time, more drive and way more pressure to succeed, I have already# managed to book more events and meet more new members in the past few# weeks than I did in months.#

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### **Early Days as an Entrepreneur**

I can already see the flux of being an entrepreneur, veering between inflated# confidence one second and blind panic the next, but it's suited to my mercurial#

character and I couldn't have cut it in a less creative environment. #  
I think you need to try and be as fearless as possible and narrow your focus. A lot of  
entrepreneurs I've met have few ties - no kids, no #  
partners- and I think that makes it easier. I'm not lost to the ironies of a single #  
matchmaker! #

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## **Looking Forward**

The reception to [Social Concierge](#) has been excellent and the plan is to grow it to #  
an all encompassing dating lifestyle brand to services members with great dates, #  
whether singles, couples, gay or straight. #

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After pleas from friends I am launching the SC Couples arm this year, to create #  
personalised date night itineraries for couples. I'm also piloting some gay events, #  
launching the lesbian arm end of SC, Social Concierge Hera, in Jan in partnership #  
with dating app Dattch. I like to keep an eye on what is going on with the online #  
dating world and don't write off adding some online aspects to the service. With #  
the growth of Grouper and Smeeters, our original SC Crew Dates will continue to #  
offer 3 a side dating but may borrow some online tips for efficiencies sake. #

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The best lesson I've learnt so far is pilot everything and see if it works, before I #  
commit. I've dated ferociously and tried it all, so if it's good fun, my clients will #  
hear about it. #

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Watch this space. #

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