

FINANCIAL ARCHITECT

Anand has built a lucrative advising career with the concept and principles of architecture as his guide

by Elaine Bonello, ACII, APFS

Bhupinder S. Anand, ACII, DipPFS, a 12-year MDRT member from London, England, has a unique answer to the question, “So what do you do for a living?” He describes himself as a financial architect and, as such, his role is to help clients design and create a financial home to secure them in their future.

The home represents a client’s dreams and aspirations, and Anand’s job is to design the size and style of this home. As with all good architects, a great deal of training and planning — along with a talent for working with people — went into the successful practice he has built.

The early stages

Like many in this profession, Anand did not intend to be a financial advisor. He graduated with a bachelor’s degree in engineering, but after a year as treasurer at his university’s students union, he got a job as a trainee bank manager. Within three months, he was promoted to assis-

tant branch manager, and a year later offered his own branch.

The importance Anand placed on planning ahead and pursuing professional qualifications helped him advance quickly even early in his career. “If you’re aiming to be the best, then a prerequisite is being more than adequately qualified,” he explained. Anand’s banking career showed promise, but he had a major problem: “I hated it,” he said. “The job squashed initiative, which I found frustrating.”

Anand’s dissatisfaction with banking led him to seek a new challenge at Scottish Equitable Life, where he worked as a broker and discovered his passion for sales. He became a top-three consultant within the first year by promoting his company’s products to Independent Financial Advisers (IFAs). Anand established an excellent rapport with the IFAs on his panel and learned valuable lessons from them, including the value and techniques of niche marketing. In accor-

Anand and his team on a recent trip to Barcelona, Spain.



dance with his belief in earning professional qualifications, he earned an associate of the Chartered Insurance Institute designation in 1991.

An important step

With several years of experience under his belt and a determination to challenge himself further, he decided to switch roles; rather than promoting products to IFAs, he began to advise clients as an IFA. Focusing on clients' needs and aiming to add value to their circumstances led Anand to design his own client report tool. This brought industry accolades when he won the 1995 Planned Savings IFA of the Year award after just 14 months as an IFA.

During these years he also identified his niche market. Anand, whose parents immigrated to the United Kingdom from India when he was 10 months old, identified with the increasingly affluent British Indian community as a perfect prospecting base. He set a five-year goal to be recognized as the leading financial advisor to the British Indian community.

With this objective in mind, Anand began writing of a financial column in a leading newspaper in the sector, profiling successful Indians to motivate others. He eventually became the newspaper's finance editor. With the recognition this created, alongside his IFA award, Anand had achieved his five-year goal in a matter of months.

Business thrived as interviewees became clients while his growing reputation brought him invitations to join committees for charities, associations and national government task forces.

In 2007, the NRI Institute of India — which recognizes non-resident Indians for achievements in their chosen fields — awarded him the Gold Pride of India award in recognition of his career and voluntary services. In addition, Anand has achieved four Court of the Table and seven Top of the Table qualifications.

Anand Associates

In 1997, Anand established his own practice, Anand Associates. The practice, which currently includes four other advisors and five support staff, offers holistic financial planning.

Anand has made clear that his primary role is to advise clients — the only job in any financial services practice that generates revenue — while



Anand is father of Anishka, 13, and Savraj, 10. His wife, Daisy, helps him strike a balance between work and play. The family are frequent fliers because Anand finds traveling the best way to relax.

being supported by an excellent team. He never calls the first appointment “free” but “at my expense,” which places a perception of value on the meeting. An advisory fee is charged for producing a report, with implementation fees usually offset by commission earnings. Clients pay fees for the advice they receive on the basis that advice should be remunerated regardless of whether the client buys a product.

Providing an alternative to the product-focused approach, Anand and Associates uses architectural language to describe the financial planning process. For example, the first meeting is referred to as the Planning Dialogue, the fact-find is called Your Priorities Survey and the implementation stage is described as the Construction Process.

MDRT and public speaking

Besides developing his practice, Anand has been an active MDRT volunteer for the past several years. **Caroline A. Banks, APFS**, a 19-year MDRT member from London, England, introduced Anand to the magic of the Round Table in 1996 and, since then, he has become a passionate advocate of the association.

In addition to his volunteer work on committees, he credits MDRT with helping to hone his public speaking skills. He has spoken at five MDRT meetings.

Other speaking engagements have included numerous high-profile events in the United Kingdom: In 1998, Anand shared a platform with Prime Minister Tony Blair at a project he sponsored, *Britain's Richest 200 Indians* magazine, a supplement to the *Eastern Eye* newspaper. Anand also recently launched a training program, Advisormasterclass.com. **TBJ**



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