

SAHAR HASHEMI OBE



Sahar believes if you're human, you're an entrepreneur.

Described as a “powerful catalyst to drive entrepreneurship within big corporations” Sahar is the founder of two disruptive businesses and has seen up close how the unique spirit that exists in a start up can dramatically transform behaviour and performance. This first-hand experience has led Sahar to develop a simple roadmap for those who want to capture some of this start up energy for themselves or their business, no matter its size. Her work has attracted international attention and made her a bestselling author.

A former lawyer, Sahar started the UK's first chain of coffee bars with her brother Bobby, building *Coffee Republic* to 110 stores and a £50 million market cap in five years. Later she founded market segment-defining sugar-free sweets brand *Skinny Candy*, selling it to confectionery conglomerate Glisten PLC in 2007.

Along the way she learned entrepreneurs aren't born, they're made. Entrepreneurship isn't an innate personality trait but a step-by-step process anyone can follow. Which is why she called her book *Anyone Can Do It*. If someone, like her, who had never shown a shred of leadership or creative potential could do it, then truly anyone can. The book has been translated into six languages and is the second-highest selling book on entrepreneurship in the UK.

Since moving on from her businesses, Sahar has worked to bring start up mindset to big companies facing relentless change and in need of more agility and innovation. Her most recent book *Start Up Forever* is the culmination of her work speaking to 400 organisations about the actionable, practical steps that can bring out anyone's inner entrepreneur. It was named *The Financial Times* Best Business Book of the Month in March 2019.

Sahar knows what blocks entrepreneurial behaviour in large organizations, and what it takes to unleash it. She offers practical, day-to-day advice, not vague theory. And by drawing on her deeply personal story, she connects with audiences through the heart, not just the head, to bring about real, long-lasting change.

She has been repeatedly recognised for her work. In 2011 she was nominated by *Director* magazine as one of its Top 10 Original Thinkers, alongside Sir Tim Berners-Lee and Sir Jonathan Ive. In June 2012 she was awarded an OBE for services to the UK economy and to charity. She has been named “Pioneer to the life of the Nation” by Her Majesty The Queen and Young Global leader by the *World Economic Forum*.

She recently co-chaired the UK government Scale Up Taskforce shaping government policy towards growing SMEs. She currently sits on the board of the *Scale Up Institute*. She is patron of Child Bereavement Charity UK and on the advisory board of the *ECB HUNDRED* Cricket Competition, *BFC Fashion Trust* and *Change Please Coffee*, a social enterprise that trains and hires homeless people to run coffee bars.