



## International Case Study

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# Promoting & Pitching

## Arfah Farooq – Muslamic Makers

Slough, UK & Global

Muslamic Makers is a community of Muslim Changemakers who upskill each other to become pioneers in the world of tech. Through networking, skills and knowledge sharing the community empowers its members to fuel their growth mindsets within a safe space. They work together to facilitate collaboration by connecting changemakers who will go on to drive innovation within the community, and to build opportunities by bridging cross industry expertise.



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Arfah Farooq is a lifelong community builder. From shaping the regeneration of East London post 2012 Olympics to building resilience in young people as a youth trustee for a charity. She accidentally co-founded a start-up called Discoverables after an initial Design Council grant in 2012. This catapulted her into the technology world which led her to co-found MuslmaicMakers a community for Muslims who upskill and pioneer the world of technology in 2016. She is a 2017 fellow of the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust and has been awarded a prestigious fellowship exploring Muslim Women in Technology in USA, UAE and Pakistan where she vlogged her travels and brought back her expertise to help businesses. She has been featured as a trailblazing Muslim Women as part of International Women's Day campaign and has been named as a top 30 London Tech Week Changemaker in 2018. She has a day job and works in Government where she managed an internal community of 1,500+ product and delivery managers across the UK Government and now leads the No.10 Innovation Fellowship Programme. She is also an Angel Investor in start-ups as part of the Ada Ventures Angels programme to invest in under represented talent. Born in the UK, a British Pakistani and Muslim, living and working in Slough, UK.

### **What type of creative entrepreneur are you?**

I would say I am a community led one. I find the word entrepreneur is so often equated to money, my behaviours have been more entrepreneurial, creative, making experiences and communities

### **What stage is your various creative enterprise at right now?**

With MuslamicMakers it is only this year we have registered as a UK Limited company. We have become more commercially savvy and are currently writing up the impact reporting five years into setting up. With me own freelancer work I have been honing in more, built my expertise and am now monetising it through speaking events and conferences, and offering workshops in community building, diversity and inclusion, careers, and branding. I have been expanding my offers, this is early within this year 2021 and getting more, and better paid work; so, it is going well. Through trading and my partnerships this helps me to find you work and I do this for others through a broker model for now.

### **What did it take for you to get here?**

I needed to find the self belief to believe I could do it. I now know I can charge for things both for MuslaimcMakers and my freelancing work. I am so grateful for exposure but that does not do me a favour. I have made the mental shift to know my own value, and this is important. My personal brand has taken time to build, it has been important to carrying on being visible whilst being myself and keeping myself on people's radar. I plug away at and I am doubling down now. I keep in personal touch with people as building relationships so vital. I am committed to being authentic with my faith is front and centre. I use the terminology on both personal and professional platforms, knowing I am the same wherever people find me.

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## **As an investor what are you looking for in a creative business? Creative business pitch??**

- + I am looking for great story. I want to know why the founder is the best person to execute on this idea. I want to know what is their story, why are they are winner? For me it is not just about a gap in the market.
- + In want to know why is it the right time to invest? Why now?
- + The team and who is on your team is vital to show who is backing you, your advisors, your mentors and supporters.
- + I am very aligned to people who are from disadvantaged backgrounds as I want to open doors for them.

## **Becoming investment ready - based on your Spark and Mettle to Discoverables journey?**

This was a ten years ago and we ran all the project on Google Hang outs and then began scaling from there offering soft skills, personal branding, wellbeing, and mindfulness support. We were ahead of the curve and bit early i.e. it was a good project but not the right timing. And we have the investors who sstill invested and actually in hindsight they invested more into me. So this is worth thinking about when pitching and promoting who you are and what you are about.

## **What makes a great pitch?**

A great story and one that goes into the problem, the solution, answers why them and demonstrates there is a market.

## **Mistakes and how to overcome them when pitching (pre/during/after)?**

- + Since being on the Angel side I like getting decks in advance so make sure you send information in advance, and make sure you are concise.
- + Stick to the time you are given to do the pitch as the investors want to talk to you more in the time for questions.
- + Acknowledge any mistakes and make sure you follow up with the specific answers in the agreed timeframe.
- + Own the numbers this is key.
- + Be real and do not blag it if you don't know, be honest.

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## What has been the top advice you have taken to grow your creative enterprise?

- Grow yourself, it is cliché but don't put barriers on yourself.
- I gave a career talk, but I was told not to call myself "extra" i.e., don't downplay yourself, your achievements. When you are growing don't put 'aspiring' before any work you are doing i.e., use the phrase 'I am...' 'own your title.
- ✚ Put systems in place to manage whatever you i.e., my emails key separate, and I categorize ways people can reach me
- ✚ Read books, articles and watch videos.
- ✚ Find the experts you want to be like. Watch, learn and use what you feel aligns to your idea and personality style.

## What is good advice when considering trading between working between countries?

- ✚ I have worked with Pakistan and the tech scene and it was important for me to find the middle ground.
- ✚ Understand what it is you are aiming to deal with. There are great markets to tap into, lots of interesting projects going on so find out who is doing what, how does this align with your values and your projects
  - i.e. Careem is the Uber in the South Asian market, middle east market and for a long time Careem held the market share because of their depth of understanding in their customers, the local and regional needs, customers. However now Uber has bought them out.
- ✚ Align with cultural understanding i.e. your USP is understanding the culture of your region, palace, country

Arfah Farooq's LinkedIn profile [www.linkedin.com/in/arfahfarooq/](http://www.linkedin.com/in/arfahfarooq/)

Company Website [muslimicmakers.com/](http://muslimicmakers.com/)

Company Instagram [@arf\\_22](https://www.instagram.com/arf_22)

Further reading [www.getrevue.co/profile/Arfah](http://www.getrevue.co/profile/Arfah)

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