

## Raam Thakrar

### 2.1, BSocSci International Studies with Politics (1998)



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#### Who are you currently working for and what is your job title?

Co-Founder, Touchnote

#### How has your career developed since graduating from the University of Birmingham?

A lot. I've been a teacher, worked at the UN / World Bank / EU. I've worked in strategy consulting, for people like Procter & Gamble. I did a Masters at LSE in Development Studies. I've worked in development consulting (for USAID). I've worked in small business finance (EBRD). And now I've been an entrepreneur for 5 years.

#### What is the best thing about what you are doing now?

The diversity of the role – I do many different things on a daily basis, and almost all of them stretch me hugely. And the fact that I'm making it up as I go along. And in tech, that's really normal.

#### Why did you originally apply to Birmingham?

It's a well recognised university, not too far from home. In all honesty, I probably didn't do enough research into the university, given how important the choice was.

#### What are your fondest memories of the University?

I made some very good friends. And it was unquestionably the most interesting academic time of my life – more so than my masters.

#### How did you grow as a person by coming to University?

Hugely. It undoubtedly helped me form career ideas. And helped me develop my intellectual passions in ways that even today make me smile.

#### What did you think of the learning experience within the University?

Almost all of it. My South African studies and Politics of Islam are still courses I reference in conversations today. The various IR (international relations) and IPE (international political economy) classes have helped formed my view of the world.

#### Did you find the degree programme at Birmingham challenging or easy?

It was very challenging. But it wasn't difficult. That was the fun of working on stuff that I found hugely interesting.

#### Did you find the University or your degree helpful to you in getting your first job?

The careers centre didn't help much, but given that I was off to do a few placements and masters, I wasn't really expecting much. My POLSIS tutors has helped over the years – and that's been invaluable.

#### What advice would you give to current students studying on your degree programme?

Really think through what you want to do – and where career choice overlaps with intellectual interest and skills. And importantly the amount of money you want to earn. I don't really remember if someone tried to teach me this @ Birmingham – but it's taken me many years to realise this.