



DIARY OF AN ENTREPRENEUR

DIARY OF AN ENTREPRENEUR JEFF MICHON

**FOUNDED: MICHON CREATIVE
BASED: NOTTINGHAM**

AT THE AGE OF 24, JEFF MICHON DECIDED IT WAS TIME TO GO IT ALONE. HE'D ENJOYED WORKING FOR OTHER AGENCIES BUT THOUGHT HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO DO BETTER. TURNS OUT HE WAS RIGHT. HE WANTED TO BE IN CONTROL OF HIS OWN LIFE, RESPONSIBLE FOR THE STABILITY OF HIS CAREER AND FOR FINDING HIS OWN OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH.



Michon began in 1982 with just Jeff. Five years later, his brother Tony joined the business and later became Creative Director taking on responsibility for overseeing creative aspects of the company, while Jeff gave more focus to management and growth of the business. Now, a leading design agency with 25 employees and counting several household names as clients, Michon is a highly respected innovator.

The last few months have been fairly hectic, as we have just moved offices. I'm a great believer in good staff morale and creating a happy work environment, so I wanted my team to be in surroundings that help them think creatively and give them a greater sense of well-being. We bought a 4,500 square foot 19th Century building that is full of history. It used to be a school, then a cinema and played an important part in the community for many years as the church hall. We've kept many of the original features, but have spent recent months restoring and converting it into contemporary offices.



We're now settled in the new building and all our hard work has really paid off. My role in the agency is split between Managing Director, overseeing everything in the business and acting as the Account Director for

Ronseal who I've been working with for over 14 years now. As one of our biggest clients, I spend much of my time liaising with Ronseal, designing packaging for various product ranges, creating new concepts for promotions and acting as brand guardian on everything we do. For me, there is no typical day. I can be working on a project for Ronseal, such as retail POS concepts or the packaging for a new product launch, or I can be involved in other areas of the business making sure that everything is running smoothly and doing my bit on the tea rounds too!

When the company was smaller, I knew about every project that we had going on but as the company has grown, I couldn't possibly do that so I have a team that I can trust to get on with the job to the standard our customers expect and deserve. As a company we're also working with clients including E.ON, Hanson and BT. I rarely get involved in other accounts unless someone needs me as a sounding board for new ideas or commercial advice. This gives me the time to get on with running the business and continue to manage the Ronseal relationship. It also gives my employees a sense of ownership. I am extremely proud of the people I have here and I want to give them the responsibility of making their own decisions.

It's thanks to our excellent team that the business has been able to achieve steady and consistent growth. Recruitment is crucial for us as it's so important to find the right people for the job who fit in with everyone. Thanks to our people, we have been able to



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achieve a high level of customer loyalty through our passion for design, doing a job well and keeping our clients happy.

Everyday I like to find the time for my staff and make sure that I speak to everyone on a regular basis, no matter how busy we are. My door is always open and I always have time to chat if someone needs me. The office is a fun environment to work in and there is always plenty of banter going on, which is what I love about the place. At the same time, we keep a professional approach to our work and support each other. I like my team to feel like they work with me, not for me, and I think this is the reason we have such a strong, supportive group of people.

Whether I'm at work or at home, I like to be on the go. People always say that I can't sit still and it's true! It keeps me fit though, and means I can eat what I want. I love food and wine. Luckily my wife's an excellent cook but we both love eating out so we always keep our ears to the ground for good restaurants. When I get home after a long day at work, I like to relax by getting out into the garden – weather permitting.

Later today I will design and landscape my garden from scratch, it's also a good time to think of where the business is going. I like nothing more than being outside and getting on with whatever needs doing. We have a place in Norfolk and I love to go over there with the whole family whenever

we can, including weekends. Walking and the occasional fly-fishing for the elusive salmon are some of my favourite activities. Being outdoors really helps me to relax and unwind after a busy week at work. I never get bored. There's always something to keep me busy or something new that I want to experience.

As for the future of Michon, my goal is to continue growing the agency at a steady rate. I don't want to grow rapidly in a short space of time, as I believe we'd lose our culture, team spirit and focus. We get most of our new business through referrals and we tend to keep clients for a long time too which is testament to our abilities and I want to keep it that way.

Obviously our work has to deliver commercial success, which goes without saying, but I believe if clients and staff are both kept happy and you're providing what they want, your business will be successful.

