



Photo credit: Rowan Hunn

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The great...

With a 'hunger to work' and no real plan, Ian Green left Manchester at 16 to try his luck further south. Here, he talks to Natasha Higgins about creating one of North London's most successful estate agencies and how it all boils down to survival.

Ian Green likes to be in bed before midnight. "If I get less than six and a half hours sleep I'm tired the next day," he states matter-of-factly.

This morning, Ian certainly appears to have had his quota. As he sits opposite me in a navy sweater, white shirt and grey trousers, he looks both relaxed and refreshed. Living in Hertfordshire obviously suits him.

Today, as is the case every day, he left his ivy-clad cottage in Radlett just before 7am, drove his youngest son to the bus-stop, completed a 45 minute work-out and arrived to work at 8.30am. "It's a 15 minute drive into London from Radlett," he says, "it's a great area and you get to see another aspect of life. All my working life has been in London so it's nice to detach myself."

Ian's working life started in London at the tender age of 16 when he arrived from Manchester with no real plan other than 'a hunger to work'. This 'hunger' manifested itself when at 13, he and his family moved to New York for three years for his dad's job in the games industry: "In New York I worked in bars and restaurants after school and when I came back to Manchester, I was ready for something more."

It was a friend of Ian's that suggested he try getting a job with an estate agency. "I didn't want a mundane job sitting behind a desk all day," he says, "so I followed my friend's advice". His first job was in West Hampstead as a junior negotiator working for a local agent. He quickly developed an interest in the aesthetics of property, enjoyed looking around people's homes and after a year, decided he wanted to work

closer to central London.

Following a 14 year career with one of London's most prominent estate agencies, Ian set up his own firm Ian Green Residential in 2004. About the risk he took in doing so, he says the following: "Sometimes in life you have to take a risk in order to achieve your goals. It's a massive decision to take but when you get it right, it's worth it."

Ian certainly got it right. The risk proved a huge success and the business has gone from strength to strength. Ian has had the chance to deal with some of the most prolific properties in St John's Wood, Little Venice and Regent's Park and although he'd rather remain 'discreet' about who his clients are, he says they are some of the most famous people in the corporate world and creative industries.

One of the reasons Ian believes his business model is so successful is that huge attention to detail is placed on every aspect of the business from keeping clients happy to brand image and a flawless website. "We are also not clock watchers," he states in his cool, calm manner.

Similarly, Ian is also not someone who needs to 'switch off'. "I like my phone ringing on holiday, I worry if it doesn't," he says. Always being on call is something Ian's clients value and word of mouth travels fast: "Many of our clients come to us through recommendation. They feel they can trust us and we often gain repeat business."

When commenting on the London property market, Ian says its beauty lies in its robust nature compared to property markets outside of London: "It's a very

transient area and people are constantly looking to buy, sell and move on". The properties he specialises in, all valued at £1.5m and above, means he operates in a safe haven.

Asked where he sees his business ten years from now, Ian shrewdly replies that he would like to see it as strong as it is now, if not stronger, and still offering the same service. Would he want to have ten agencies dotted around London? Probably not, although he would like to carry on selling properties at the forefront of the market. Most poignantly, perhaps, did he ever expect Ian Green Residential to take off in the way it has? No. "I never expected to sell 15 to 20 homes per year, I pinch myself every day."

Success, however, is not something Ian takes for granted. He understands the ethic of hard work and what it takes to have a nice life and keep it. "While I'm able to offer my two sons a lifestyle I never had growing up, I'm careful to teach them the importance of working hard. My philosophy has always been: to survive".

Providing for his family comes foremost and while Ian manages his business, he happily admits that Mrs Green makes all the decisions at home: "I just have to bring in the money," he says with a smile.

Despite not needing control at home, Ian likes knowing every little detail about what's happening at work. He is also methodical, needs everything in its place and always has a tidy desk: "I like everything to be a process," he states. Similarly, before bed, his clothes are always laid out and his gym bag packed. The time is hopefully just before midnight.

*SOLD: 33 Blomfield Road, Little Venice.
 Asking Price £8,650,000; Selling Price £8,700,000*



*SOLD: 60 Marlborough Place.
 Selling Price £8,100,000*



*FOR SALE: 15 Norfolk Road, Asking Price £9,450,000
 A stunning newly-refurbished house located on the east side of
 St John's Wood.*



*FOR SALE: 1 Prince Albert Road, Asking Price £8,350,000
 A detached house overlooking Regent's Park.*

