

STRATEGIC LEADERS

INSIGHTS

FOR SUCCESS

Featuring

BARONESS LUCIANA BERGER • DAVID DEIN
SIR LLOYD DORFMAN CVO CBE • PAUL FINEMAN
LORD RICHARD HARRINGTON • CHRIS HUGHTON
CLAUDE LITNER • IAN MARCUS OBE • JULIAN METCALFE
DEMI PENDAKIS • RICHARD SEGAL

Presented by

BKL

JEWISH CARE

CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Baroness Luciana Berger	4
David Dein	6
Sir Lloyd Dorfman CVO CBE	8
Paul Fineman	10
Lord Richard Harrington	12
Chris Hughton	14
Claude Littner	16
Ian Marcus OBE	18
Julian Metcalfe	20
Demi Pendakis	22
Richard Segal	24

INTRODUCTION

Every week, Jewish Care makes a difference to thousands of lives. Many of us have seen this for ourselves through our older loved ones. It's a reminder that life happens in chapters. We can't always foresee when a new chapter will start, or the events that change the course of a life and how we'll respond to those events.



At BKL, my colleagues and I have the privilege of being part of our clients' stories. We're trusted advisers supporting all kinds of businesses, individuals and families through their challenges and opportunities.

Helping them achieve their ambitions isn't just about applying specialist accounting and tax knowledge or experience of their industry. It's about getting to know them and their ambitions, earning their loyalty, being with them for all the moments that matter. From fintech startups and expanding property businesses to growing charities and multigenerational families, our clients' journeys are opportunities for us to learn.

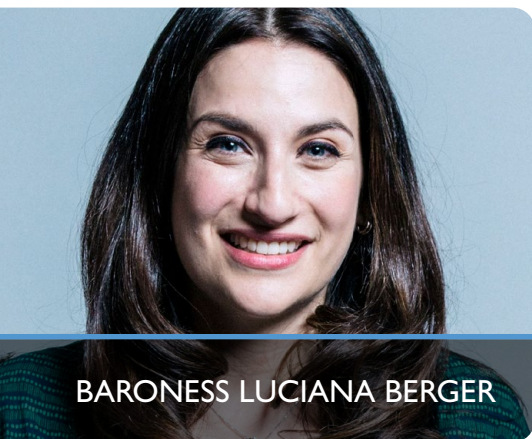
That's why I'm honoured to be introducing this booklet, bringing together so many fascinating stories from inspiring people. Some you'll know already; some will be new to you. Thank you to all the interviewees who gave their time and shared insights into their personal and professional lives.

BKL are proud to be among the sponsors of this year's Jewish Care Topland Group Business Lunch. Here's to a wonderful get-together for a very special charity.

Jake Lew
Partner, BKL



Baroness Luciana Berger’s remarkable journey from corporate consultant to political leader has been defined by a commitment to making a meaningful difference. Throughout her career, she has embodied leadership that blends resilience, compassion and a drive to make a positive impact on society.



BARONESS LUCIANA BERGER

From a young age, Luciana engaged in a variety of work environments, working several years at the Disney Store. She also volunteered at the learning disability charity Norwood. She then spent her gap year with Accenture, laying the foundations for her leadership approach.

Luciana reflects on how these experiences taught her to relate to people from all walks of life. Volunteering, she believes, offers a unique insight into the human experience, something that is just as relevant in leadership as in day-

to-day business operations. “It’s crucial to be open to learning from diverse environments,” she says. “The humility and perspective that come from volunteering are invaluable for anyone in a leadership role.”

Her work in politics began at the University of Birmingham, where she became involved in student politics. She went on to do a master’s degree in political science and policy, which eventually led her to a prominent frontbench role.

Luciana credits much of her political involvement to the values instilled in her during her Jewish upbringing, particularly the concept of tikkun olam: repairing the world. This motivation to make a difference and contribute to the public good has motivated Luciana throughout her career.

Luciana’s leadership is rooted in effecting positive change – from her early days in student politics to her current advisory positions—which led to her receiving a life peerage from His Majesty The King in 2024. Her journey has been marked by accolades and recognition, including

a Jo Cox Memorial Award for Bravery & Heroism, a Jewish Care Women of Distinction Award, and being featured in the *Vogue* 25 line-up of ‘high-powered and visionary women whose work is shaping Britain’s future’.

Her approach to leadership remains unchanged despite evolving roles and increasing responsibility.

“We’ve got two ears and one mouth,” she asserts. “We should listen twice as much as we speak.” This advice speaks to the heart of her leadership style: emphasising the importance of listening, empathy and kindness.

Luciana’s advocacy for mental health is a reflection of these values. She has long been a champion of mental health awareness, serving as the first-ever Shadow Cabinet Minister for Mental Health in the House of Commons. Her dedication to this cause has spanned two decades, fuelled by her desire to help others and reduce stigma.

She also acts as a mentor, offering guidance to the next generation of leaders. As the chair of a mental health charity, she brings her commercial and political experience to bear in the nonprofit sector.

“Whether you’re coming from a commercial background or another field, it’s about applying your skills to benefit organisations that may not be motivated by profit but are driven by a desire to make a difference,” she explains.

Balancing her demanding career with family life presents a constant challenge for Luciana, who is a mother of two young children. “It’s not easy,” she admits. “But we do our best.”

With responsibilities ranging from a number of voluntary organisations to juggling the expectations of her political and advisory roles, Luciana exemplifies the complexities of modern leadership, finding great fulfilment in her ability to make a positive impact, both professionally and personally.

“WE’VE GOT TWO EARS AND ONE MOUTH,” SHE ASSERTS. “WE SHOULD LISTEN TWICE AS MUCH AS WE SPEAK.”

David Dein's name is synonymous with strategic leadership, especially in the world of football. Known for his transformative role at Arsenal, where he was vice-chairman, his impact on both the club and the industry is profound. He continues to inspire many through his philanthropy, charitable work and non-executive advisory roles.



Reflecting on his career, David stresses the importance of thoroughly knowing your industry. For him, leadership is built on understanding your area and, just as importantly, the people you work with.

"You've got to be collegiate," he says, emphasising the need to respect and listen to others' opinions, even when they differ from your own. He is also an advocate for taking risks, a sentiment captured by his personal motto: "You

don't get anywhere unless you stick your neck out, just like a turtle."

Reflecting on the transition from executive to non-executive roles, David observes that a different approach is needed. "In an executive role, you're working full-time and the decisions are immediate. The high-paced nature of executive work requires quick thinking and the ability to respond to challenges in real time. Whether it's managing day-to-day operations or reacting to the next phone call, executives must stay agile," says David.

"However, when moving to a non-executive role, things change. In advisory roles, you have more time to think things through. It's not the same level of immediate responsibility."

He adds, "For someone making the transition into a non-executive or charitable role, it offers a chance to still contribute but with a different kind of influence. Whatever you do, fall in love with it. You've got to enjoy the

work; it should be a passion, not just for financial reasons."

This mindset reflects his own approach to his post-Arsenal work, which focuses on creating a meaningful impact.

Striving for progress drives David's professional and personal ventures, including his work with Speakers for Schools, where he delivers motivational talks to young people. "For me, every action I take is about moving forward in a positive direction and adding another brick in the wall."

His commitment to contributing to society led to his creation of The Twinning Project, an initiative that uses football as a tool for rehabilitation in prisons. The project aims to reduce reoffending by connecting football clubs with local prisons, providing coaching and support to inmates.

"Football resonates with people from all walks of life," David says, highlighting the success of the project. "The results speak for themselves: better behaviour among prisoners and improved employment prospects for those released."

However, despite the success, David points out the persistent challenge of funding such initiatives, underscoring the constant struggle for financial support, especially in the charity sector.

David's journey is a masterclass in leadership, adaptability, and the importance of passion. Whether in a fast-paced executive role or a reflective advisory position, his ability to maintain focus on progress and contributing to society remains constant.

The key takeaway from his experiences is simple but powerful: find something you love and commit to it wholeheartedly. Whether it's sports, business, or charity, true leadership comes from a genuine desire to make a difference.

For those considering a shift into non-executive roles or charity work, David's advice is clear: "Make sure it's something you enjoy, and you can contribute to. It's not just about the job; it's about the satisfaction you get from it."

And for him, that satisfaction comes from supporting others and continuing to make a lasting impact.

“FOOTBALL RESONATES WITH PEOPLE FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE”

Sir Lloyd Dorfman CBE CVO, renowned British entrepreneur, philanthropist, and business leader, relishes his wide-ranging interests that fuel his passion and enthusiasm for business and charitable endeavours. Sir Lloyd has been a long-time dedicated supporter of Jewish Care. Anita Dorfman House care home at the Sandringham campus was very generously dedicated by the Dorfman family in honour of Sir Lloyd's mother. He is also Chair of the Royal Opera House, Vice-President of King's Trust International and Deputy Chair of Community Security Trust.



SIR LLOYD DORFMAN CVO CBE

His story is one of persistence, learning from setbacks, and adapting to the evolving business landscape. "I built Travelex brick by brick and stumble by stumble," he explains.

His business acumen and management expertise, honed through years of overseeing Travelex's global expansion, equip Sir Lloyd to deal with the challenges faced by organisations, whether in business or charity. Sir Lloyd emphasises the value of learning and adapting, acknowledging that, over time, growth and experience provide the ability to handle recurring challenges more effectively.

"In any organisation, whether commercial or charitable, income must exceed expenditure. People sometimes forget that costs in charities are just as real as those in businesses," he reflects.

"While many of the issues are familiar, the longer one stays in business, the better equipped one becomes to find solutions. You see the same basic problems in different guises."

When approaching exit strategies and selling businesses, Sir Lloyd stresses the importance of recognising when it's time to move on.

"I've always believed you shouldn't fall in love with your business," he states. "If you're a founder, it's crucial to know when the right time to sell is. You need to be comfortable with the price, even if it's not the ultimate figure you had in mind."

He also highlights the importance of being comfortable with the dynamics of selling, particularly the shift in control, advising prospective sellers to ensure that they understand the exit strategy and the direction the business will take after the sale.

"If you're staying with the business after the sale, you need to be sure you know

what the future holds, especially the role of those taking control," he explains. "For a founder, stepping away completely after selling can often be the best route."

Sir Lloyd's passion for philanthropy shapes his perspective on leadership. He explains, "It's about harnessing the people you work with, supporting them, and being innovative. These elements are essential, whether you're running a business or a charity."

For Sir Lloyd, success in business and life comes from continually learning and having the discipline to see things through, no matter the challenges.

His advice: "Be ready to learn and know when it's time to hand over the reins for the next chapter."

Sir Lloyd Dorfman continues to inspire and lead by example, demonstrating that true success is found in the constant pursuit of growth and the ability to help others rise.

“**I’VE ALWAYS BELIEVED YOU SHOULDN’T FALL IN LOVE WITH YOUR BUSINESS**”

“Business has always been very personal to me. I never considered the demands of running a business as ‘work’. Maybe that’s one of the privileges of loving what you do and of being part of a business with a family and team culture and mindset.



PAUL FINEMAN

“**M**uch of the success in my career to date has been about surrounding myself with talented experts and being aligned with like-minded people, albeit those who will challenge and help deliver great decisions and results. That drive and shared passion is more important than anything,” says Paul, who grew his small but successful family business, Anker International, into a medium-sized one, and later sold it to International Greetings – a public-quoted company he subsequently led and transformed into an award-winning, billion-dollar business.

At 19, Paul joined the family business, Anker, after deciding law school wasn't for him. It evolved into a consistently growing and profitable consumer products designer, importer and distributor. Paul's early career spanned all aspects of the business – commercial, operational and financial. “It was a fabulous grounding and the foundation for everything over the next 40+ years,” he says. “We managed to maintain a sense of family and community throughout that time and yet the business grew enormously and was slick, professional, forward-thinking, innovative and fast-paced. I always felt I worked with my dad, not for him. He wasn't a micromanager and allowed me to make mistakes and learn from them. He was extraordinarily generous in how he empowered me, but I knew he had my back. This enabled me to focus on growth, investment and innovation.”

Recalling the time the finance director brought the monthly accounts to him and his dad, Paul says, “Our offices were joined by a very small corridor, but if we both leaned forward in our chairs, we could see each other. That day, we'd reached a very significant milestone. My dad wasn't someone to celebrate financial success,

but this was a spectacular month. We both leaned forward and my dad gave me the thumbs up. We didn't need to say anything. It was just a beautiful moment of bonding and shared achievement. It remains the most treasured business success celebration I'll ever have.”

Although Paul felt torn selling the business in 2005, he knew it was the right decision. He remained CEO of Anker and was given a seat on the board of International Greetings. Three years later, he was asked to become the CEO of the whole organisation. Paul says, “The Chairman and board felt I had the experience and leadership skills needed to galvanise the Group, get it through a challenging time, restructure, reinvent and grow the business.”

In 2011, International Greetings won HSBC's Turnaround Company of the Year. Six years later, Paul won Chief Executive of the Year on the Alternative Investment Market, having grown IG Design Group into the biggest consumer gift-packaging business in the world.

And, after 13 years as Group CEO, Paul stepped down in early 2022 and is now giving strategic advice and mentoring to businesses and boards, as well as investing across a portfolio of opportunities.

Once when interviewed and asked if there was one strategy he attributed to his success, something that his dad once said came to mind. “Buy at one, sell at two. Take care of your team and everything else will fall into place.” Paul says, “The interviewer looked a little perplexed, but I suggested he gave it some thought and then smiled. I loved how at that moment my dad's words were as relevant as when I first heard them.”

Paul concludes, “You don't have to go to Harvard Business School or be in the corporate world to understand how to run a business. My family's business was the epicentre of my knowledge. My story is not simply a business story. It's one about the joy, privilege and triumph of teamwork.”

“**YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO TO HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL (...) TO UNDERSTAND HOW TO RUN A BUSINESS**”

Lord Richard Harrington, Baron Harrington of Watford, has worn many hats throughout his career: businessman, politician, charity leader, advisor. His journey from successful real estate entrepreneur to influential politician and trusted advisor offers valuable lessons for business leaders considering life after retirement, or a change in focus.



LORD RICHARD HARRINGTON

Born in Leeds, Lord Harrington's career began in the world of business. He co-founded Harvington Properties in 1983, followed by leadership roles in property development companies like LSI Leisure Syndicates International. His business expertise led to senior advisory roles with firms such as APCO UK and Canaccord Genuity, laying the foundation for his later advisory work. Today, he serves as a senior advisor at Stephenson Harwood LLP, Chairman at Regal, Director at Cluster Partners Ltd and advisor to a range of organisations.

However, Lord Harrington's professional evolution took a pivotal turn when he entered politics in 2010, which his children playfully describe as his "gap year". He served as Conservative MP for Watford until he retired in 2019. His political career included a number of ministerial positions, including Minister for Business and Industry. He was later appointed to the House of Lords to become Minister of State for Refugees, leading the UK's response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis in 2022. This marked a significant shift from the corporate boardroom to the public sector.

Moving from business to government required him to reframe his approach to leadership. In business, at the helm, he made decisions with direct responsibility for outcomes. In politics, he quickly learned that his influence lay in convening decision-makers.

Chairs and advisors, Lord Harrington explains, are "there to advise management, based on years of experience. The responsibility to guide others remains, but without the authority to enforce decisions. For business leaders

who retire or sell their companies, this shift requires a different mindset. Moving into non-executive roles can feel like an exercise in patience and humility, where offering counsel and strategic input takes precedence over direct control."

Charitable work has also been significant for Lord Harrington. He has served as trustee for several prominent charities, including the Variety Club Children's Society, NESTA and currently the Royal Albert Hall. His experience here demonstrates the value of strong governance and management in the charity sector.

For those moving from business to charity, Lord Harrington suggests that "roles in larger nonprofit organisations can feel very similar to corporate governance, with an emphasis on financial oversight and strategic direction. On the other hand, smaller charities can resemble startup businesses, requiring more hands-on involvement. This distinction is critical for leaders deciding how much time and energy they want to dedicate

to charitable causes after stepping back from the business world."

Lord Harrington reflects on key moments when he sold businesses. "It has to be a long-term strategy to build up a business for sale," he shares. "Even in smaller businesses, it's vital to maintain robust financial systems, monthly management accounts, and compliance procedures to maximise value when the time comes to sell."

Lord Harrington's path has also shown the importance of finding a new purpose after retirement or exiting a business. "My first cause in life was to try and make some money, but I needed another cause," he reflects. For those approaching retirement or contemplating a shift, his experiences provide valuable lessons: adaptability, purpose, and the importance of leadership in any setting. Lord Harrington offers a final piece of advice: "Even if you want a break, think of the second half of your career as an opportunity to make a difference."

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“MY FIRST CAUSE IN LIFE WAS TO TRY AND MAKE SOME MONEY, BUT I NEEDED ANOTHER CAUSE”

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Chris Hughton's career in football hasn't followed a traditional path. He joined Tottenham Hotspur FC at 13 and began playing in the youth team at 16. Chris took up a four-year lift engineer apprenticeship when he was offered a full-time contract at Spurs. He made a choice to finish his apprenticeship and two years later, he signed a full-time contract and was playing in the senior team.



CHRIS HUGHTON

Later on, as his playing career began to wind down, Chris wanted to remain involved in football. Thanks to the support of Ossie Ardiles, then manager at Spurs, he broke into management: a transition that, he admits, wouldn't be as straightforward today. After spells at West Ham and Brentford, Chris was appointed as a reserve team coach at Spurs.

"It was like being thrown into the deep end," he says. The transition from player to coach was a steep learning curve and

it wasn't until he began working as a coach that he truly began to understand the nuances of leading others.

Chris believes that leadership is about far more than just tactical knowledge, and that key traits of a good manager include humility, hard work, and being a good listener. For Chris, this is central to being an effective leader.

"Being a manager isn't about being above the team. Players need to see someone they can relate to, someone who doesn't place themselves on a pedestal.

"You need to be someone players can trust, even when what they hear may not be what they want to hear. A manager's honesty is critical, especially when difficult conversations are necessary."

Balancing the needs of players, owners, and fans while ensuring success on the pitch is no easy feat. In recent years, he believes the role of the manager has also become more challenging due to the constant changes in the sport and the growing influence of digital and social

media. This brings increasing complexities to the role, creating a constant narrative around team performance. In the past, managers would mainly communicate with club owners or chairmen. Today, they navigate multiple layers of management and public scrutiny through the media.

"You have to have broad shoulders," Chris remarks. "It's about more than just dealing with wins and losses. It's about handling the emotional highs and lows and finding the strength to move on after every setback, from a heavy defeat to a difficult media cycle."

For young managers, Chris encourages them to seek guidance from those they trust, but also to assert their independence in decision-making.

"You are your own person," he stresses, advising new coaches to focus on continuous learning. The game is

constantly evolving, and keeping up with these changes is vital. Chris believes that a thirst for knowledge, combined with a strong work ethic, is key to a successful managerial career.

Upbeat and open to new challenges, Chris remains deeply motivated by his work. His greatest satisfaction, which drives him more than any trophies or accolades, comes from helping players improve and watching them succeed. He recalls his pride when Pascal Gross, a player he brought to Brighton, earned his first cap for Germany at 32 years old.

"I still have a lot of energy," Chris says. He is confident that his passion for the game, his work ethic and his desire to make a difference to others, will continue to fuel his journey in football for years to come.

"IT'S ABOUT HANDLING THE EMOTIONAL HIGHS AND LOWS AND FINDING THE STRENGTH TO MOVE ON AFTER EVERY SETBACK"

There aren't many people who have a business school named in their honour, but Claude Littner is one of them. The Claude Littner Business School at the University of West London is where Claude gained his degree and MBA many years earlier and where, as a result of his long-standing relationship with this educational institution, he was asked to help redevelop it. He says, "I am now a visiting professor at the university, and I've got a business school that bears my name, so I am incredibly proud about that."



in South Kensington, Claude says, "I am bilingual in French and English and, over my career, that has stood me in good stead, although at the time I didn't realise how important it would be." Looking back, he believes it was his ability to speak fluent French that got him the job as Chief Executive of Amstrad International, based in Paris, with Alan Sugar: "I told him all the things that were wrong with the company and he said, 'Just fix it.'"

Claude did what he was asked and a delighted Alan then sent him to Spain to do exactly the same thing there, followed by Denmark, where he was tasked with using his expertise to set up a mobile phone business.

When Alan offered Claude the role of Chief Executive of Tottenham Hotspur, Claude admits he didn't really want it but took it anyway. He says, "It was a fantastic time in my life as I met the royal family, as well as legendary footballers.

However, there is much that Claude can feel proud about when you consider a career that has taken him from a management accountant at Unilever to Chief Executive of Tottenham Hotspur plc, with many significant roles in between.

Having been educated at the Lycée Français Charles de Gaulle de Londres

It was a wonderful opportunity for me to make contacts and have an incredible experience."

The following years, however, were very tough. After being diagnosed with cancer, Claude was given six months to live. Nevertheless, he went on to make a full recovery after finding an excellent stem-cell match in his sister. He also went on to become a troubleshooter at a company called 3i, where he was asked to make good some bad investments. One of the companies that was losing money was Powerleague, but Claude saw potential in it. He bought it and after appointing a chief executive, together they turned the company around and floated it on the stock market. "It was a complete windfall," says Claude.

But nothing could prepare Claude for the success of the sale of ASCO, an oil

services company based in Aberdeen, Norway and across the United States, which he was asked to take over by the Bank of Scotland and Royal Bank of Scotland. The Aberdeen branch sold for £120 million alone, giving Claude and his partner a 20 per cent share of the sale. "We did very well from a company that was in dire straits," he says.

Now towards the end of his career, Claude is using his skills and experience as a trustee to benefit both WIZO and Blood Cancer UK. Speaking about the latter, he says, "The management team are unbelievable in terms of their commitment and professionalism. It's an absolute joy for me to be part of a team that is working so well and will hopefully, over time, be able to cure blood cancers. They say they are honoured to have me, but I am honoured to be part of them."

"I TOLD HIM ALL THE THINGS THAT WERE WRONG WITH THE COMPANY AND HE SAID, 'JUST FIX IT.'"

Ian Marcus's career blends the worlds of banking, real estate, and visionary leadership. He has worked with Bank of America, UBS and NatWest, and played a key role in founding Credit Suisse First Boston's European Real Estate Investment Banking group.



IAN MARCUS OBE

Recognised with an OBE in 2020 for his economic contributions, he has also chaired The Prince's Regeneration Trust, served as a Trustee of The King's Foundation, and engaged with the British Property Federation and Bank of England's Commercial Property Forum. Today, Ian advises top firms and holds key industry roles, including trustee of the Saracens Multi-Academy Trust.

He believes his career in real estate has been shaped by luck, rather than grand design. In the early 1980s, whilst Ian was studying land economy at the

University of Cambridge, he applied to ten banks in America, hoping for a chance to work overseas. He accepted a job offer from Bank of America – but instead of California, Ian was offered a position in Birmingham.

"It was a great opportunity for exposure to different markets," reflects Ian, "and it was also beneficial for my love of rugby."

Ian quickly learned a key lesson: in real estate, despite the popular mantra of 'location, location, location,' the most important factor is the people you work with.

"If you get the people decisions right, you'll navigate the market's cyclical nature better. Strong relationships provide a solid foundation."

Expanding his horizons at Credit Suisse, he ran the European business for 13 years. In 2012, his focus shifted to advisory roles, both corporate and charitable, with his appointment to the board of the Crown Estate. Today, Ian holds a range of positions across both public and private sectors, from multi-academy trusts to educational charities.

"As a non-executive or adviser, you're there to support the team, ask the right questions, and offer guidance – not to run the business. What I enjoy most is working with people I trust, making decisions, and advising companies at the highest level.

"I give 100 per cent of my time and attention, whether it's a major corporation or a small charity. I evaluate every role based on three principles: Is it intellectually stimulating? Do I know, like, and trust the people? And, importantly, am I enjoying it?"

Ian recommends gaining experience in smaller advisory roles, such as becoming a school governor or joining a charity board, to help those considering the move to understand the dynamics of non-executive life before making the leap.

Looking back on the real estate industry, Ian identifies three major changes. First, the sector has become truly global. "When I started, the market was mostly domestic. Today, capital is international:

half of London's property is owned by foreign investors."

Second, "When I began, real estate was limited to office, retail, and industrial properties. Today, it spans everything from data centres and self-storage to later-living developments and cell towers. The lines between asset classes are now blurred."

Finally, Ian highlights the impact of technology. "When I started, we did everything manually: calculators, typewriters. Today, technology streamlines analysis, but brings challenges where people hesitate to make decisions. Real estate, like any industry, is about taking calculated risks."

Whether in banking, real estate, or philanthropy, Ian's career has always been about people and enjoying the journey. "Understanding risk and making decisions with confidence is key. And if you're enjoying the people you work with, you're always in the right place."

“IF IT'S NOT FUN, THEN WHY DO IT?”

Julian Metcalfe, co-founder of Pret A Manger and founder of itsu, is renowned for his strategic leadership and dedication to detail and people. Over his 35-year career, he has built businesses from the ground up, learning valuable lessons along the way. From the initial concept of Pret A Manger to navigating the complexities of selling a business, Julian has developed a leadership philosophy rooted in adaptability, determination and the importance of people.



He credits his relentless determination and passion for his product as the key driving force of its success. “The vision behind Pret was simple. How do we create incredible food at a price everyone can afford, in an environment where people are proud of what they do?”

This focus on detail, according to Julian, is what differentiates successful businesses from those that falter. “Most people think running a big business is all about big character and big plans, but it’s actually about the detail.”

In Julian’s experience, the team behind a business is just as important as the business itself. The cornerstone for success is “trust, pride, care and growth. You can’t build a business on your own,” he says, highlighting the role that strong relationships play in a company’s success. He identifies those four key qualities in those around him: “I build trust. I take pride. I care and I want to grow.”

For Julian, starting Pret A Manger was not a straightforward path. Reflecting on his career, he emphasised the importance of staying open-minded and adaptable in business. “Not one single day goes by where you know exactly what’s going to happen,” he says. “Entrepreneurs must be ready to change plans and adjust to the unexpected.”

For Julian, trust is fundamental – and the importance of pride and care in one’s work, both for colleagues and customers, cannot be overstated. “Pride is so important,” he adds.

For those looking to build their own business, his advice is clear: “Be ready to learn, be adaptable, and prioritise the details. Leaders who are open to new ideas and perspectives, and who embrace learning from others, tend to be more successful in navigating challenges and growing their businesses.”

Julian also emphasises how crucial it is for new entrepreneurs to understand the importance of decision-making. “The only job we have is to make

decisions,” he says. “Human beings are not naturally good at making decisions, but entrepreneurs are the ones who are willing to make them.

“I thrive on watching people exceed their own expectations. Watching young people rise up and astound themselves is what gives them strength in life,” he reflects.

Julian’s leadership philosophy is rooted in empowering others, whether through mentorship, trust, or creating an environment where people can thrive.

For those aspiring to follow in his footsteps, his advice is simple yet powerful: “Be relentless, stay curious, and never stop learning.”

“THE ONLY JOB WE HAVE IS TO MAKE DECISIONS”

Demi Pendakis' journey is one of transformation, passion and the pursuit of authentic success. From thriving in the high-pressure world of fashion production to launching a sustainable luxury fragrance brand, his story is one of reinvention and reflection.



DEMI PENDAKIS

For 22 years, he thrived in the fashion industry. Growing up, Demi's father had a factory and Demi was surrounded by textiles and design. By 2002 he had joined corporate fashion, rising from sales executive to VP at Li & Fung, overseeing a £50million operation with 100 employees. Working with major UK retailers like Primark and Topshop, he achieved financial security and recognition.

However, this took a personal toll. Long hours, constant travel, and the intense demands of the industry meant that Demi saw his family only 10 days a

month, leaving him emotionally drained and physically unwell.

A near-death experience in early 2020 changed everything. Contracting Covid-19 early in the pandemic, Demi battled severe illness in hospital. Clarity struck: his high-stress lifestyle was unsustainable. He made the bold decision to leave the corporate world and pursue a life more closely aligned with his values and wellbeing.

The transition was daunting. Unsure of his next step, he wondered if his skills were transferable. But an unexpected moment sparked inspiration. The fragrance of a bowl of figs brought to him in the hospital transported him back to his grandmother's garden in Greece, evoking memories of childhood. That sensory experience reminded him of the importance of nostalgia, wellbeing and the power of fragrance to elevate one's mood and environment, igniting a new passion: home fragrances.

Demi launched F.Y.G. (Find Your Glow), a sustainable luxury home fragrance brand rooted in the comfort of nostalgia. "I was inspired by my grandmother's garden

and wanted to craft products that not only evoke memories but also promote wellbeing and sustainability. They had to be sourced and produced in the UK with eco-friendly materials, building a brand that resonates with consumers."

F.Y.G. quickly gained traction. Within four years it had become a recognised name, securing retail partnerships with Anthropologie and Sequoia Spa. International expansion followed, with stockists across the EU and the Lifestyle Store Group supporting distribution in Dubai, Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. A major milestone was supplying fragrance to the iconic Savoy Theatre, including creating a bespoke hamper for Sarah Jessica Parker during her Plaza Suite performance.

As the business expanded, so has its reach into commercial ventures, offering fragrance solutions for hotels, gyms and office spaces.

Demi's vision extended beyond home fragrance. Tapping into an overlooked market sector, he explains, "I knew that if I wanted to succeed, I had to focus on a niche that wasn't fully explored:

commercial fragrance solutions for businesses or large-scale applications. The brand's sustainability commitment – planting a tree for every candle sold – led to over 100,000 trees planted in just four years."

Beyond business success, Demi's transformation was personal. He prioritised his health, losing 15kg; and he restored balance in his life, nurturing relationships and cherishing time with his wife and three daughters. His journey underlines the importance of aligning career choices with personal values and wellbeing.

For those considering a career shift, Demi advises, "Do your research, understand the market and ensure your brand has a compelling story. If you're truly passionate, the journey will be worth it.

"It's this combination of authenticity, vision, and scalability that's crucial when starting a business. You need to understand where you are today, where you can grow and, most importantly, how to visualise your success on a much larger scale. Without that clarity, entering any industry would just be a shot in the dark."

**“IF YOU’RE TRULY PASSIONATE,
THE JOURNEY WILL BE WORTH IT.”**

Summing up his career, Richard Segal uses the cliché “from bricks to clicks” because his career moved from bricks and mortar, in multi-site leisure companies, to online consumer businesses. Yet, despite a successful career, which has taken him from an accountant at Arthur Andersen, to leading a management buyout of Odeon Cinemas, to leading a FTSE 100 listed business, and on to chairing multiple private equity-owned companies, Richard says he is most proud of his wife, Josephine, and their two grown-up children.



RICHARD SEGAL

Richard is currently Chair of HotelMap.com, a hotel booking platform for large events, exhibitions and conferences; Virgin Experience Days, a leading provider of inspiring gift ideas; and Peach, which automates and optimises the workflow of advertising content between brands, production companies, agencies and media owners. It’s a far cry from the accountancy path where his career

commenced but, as Richard says, “The future is uncertain and full of possibilities.”

Having decided accountancy wasn’t for him, Richard joined Rank Group, a large leisure conglomerate in film and TV, holidays, hotels, leisure and gaming. While there, he led a management buyout of Odeon Cinemas, which became the first cinema chain in the world to sell online tickets and use speech recognition technology in its call centres, and the first in Europe to use digital technology for presenting film and non-film content.

After the successful sale of Odeon Cinemas, Richard became Chief Executive of PartyGaming, a global online gaming company. He says, “At the time of my appointment, I had limited digital experience but, in the early 2000s, very few individuals did. I got the role because Odeon had been a pioneer with technology and I had gaming and regulatory credentials. Having got the

role, to stay ahead in an ever-evolving world, I had to adapt, learn new skills and embrace technology and innovation.”

Talking about technology, Richard says, “Over the last 50 years, globalisation, technological advancements and automation have created a more interconnected and interdependent world, where adaptability and innovation have been crucial for success. Those companies who haven’t adapted have died. The pace of change has been rapid but, over the next 50 years, fuelled by AI, it will accelerate at a considerably faster rate. Those starting their careers today must not only embrace change but also thrive in it. In a world that will be constantly evolving, adaptability won’t just be an advantage, it will be a necessity.”

A year after PartyGaming floated on the London Stock Exchange, Richard left to become a founder partner of a private equity fund set up by 3i; Chair of Esporta Health and Fitness; and chair of a number of digital consumer companies, including On the Beach, HostelWorld, Direct Ferries, Encore Tickets, and Racing Post.

Today, in addition to his chairing roles, Richard is a trustee of Chai Cancer Care and Spread a Smile, which entertains sick children in hospital for prolonged periods, and was co-founded by his wife, Josephine, and Vanessa Crocker. He says, “Josephine makes a real difference to many people’s lives and, along with Vanessa, received an MBE for her services to seriously and terminally ill children and their families in the New Year Honours list 2024.”

Clearly, they are a couple making a meaningful impact. Richard attributes business success to several factors. “At the heart of every organisation is its team. Recruiting and nurturing talent is essential,” he says. “I’m fortunate to have had several mentors guide my career, but seizing opportunities is up to you. I’m task-focused, results-driven, and believe fast execution delivers the best results.” He concludes, “In my experience, successful organisations typically display strong and decisive leadership, a customer-centric mindset, financial discipline, innovation and the ability to stay agile and resilient in the face of challenges.”

“**AT THE HEART OF EVERY ORGANISATION IS ITS TEAM**”

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