

ORFELINEWS

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Current entrepreneurial role: Innovator, Creator of Brands with Purpose and Positive Change Maker @ Sara Vaughan Consulting

Where has life taken you since you left Oriel?

On leaving Oriel, I took a relatively traditional route becoming a strategy consultant and working for the likes of Bain and Marakon. I then went into communications, working at Brunswick and what is now, Edelman. My passion and purpose came together when I went in-house at De Beers to create and launch Forevermark – their global ethical diamond brand. I then went to L’Oreal Group - The Body Shop, where I was responsible for developing and driving The Body Shop’s global brand repositioning – Beauty with Heart and The Stop Sex Trafficking of Children and Young People Campaign. Latterly, I was a Vice-President at Unilever, where I looked after sustainable business and communications for all the categories and brands and sat on the Global Personal Care Leadership Team. I created and rolled out the People Are Beautiful brand for Unilever Personal Care – a €21 billion company and also worked on the brand purpose for the 16 €1 billion+ brands.

Today, I have my own consultancy working with global companies such as Unilever and Reckitt Benckiser to innovate, create and develop purpose for their brands.

I believe, a truly sustainable brand, whether a consumer brand or a corporate brand is one that not only understands its purpose and acts on it, but is also one that inherently ties it to its commercial success. It is a profitable brand that grows. In this fast changing VUCA world of ours, it is only purpose-led companies and brands that will survive.

What do most enjoy about being an entrepreneur?

The ability and freedom to work with different types of companies and brands.

I recently co-hosted a Conscious Business Leadership workshop with Giles Hutchins, Chair at The FutureFit Leadership Academy, author and speaker. It was truly inspiring to see senior leaders from companies as diverse as Google, HSBC, Freshfields, The Crown Estate, Scott Bader, Weleda, Pukka and Grant Thornton learning, sharing and discussing how to be a conscious leader and how to create conscious organisations.

What motivates you?

Creating powerful brands and movements for positive change.

What was one of the greatest challenges in your job?

My greatest challenge has actually never been the job. It’s actually been Me. Whilst outwardly I have always appeared confident, for many years, most of my life in fact, I struggled with low self-esteem, self-limiting beliefs, doubts and fears about myself and my abilities. Working on and delivering The Dove Self-Esteem Project, whilst at Unilever, helped me as much as it’s helped the 20 million young people across 138 countries it’s reached to date. Doing the Avatar Course last year, finally put the fears and doubts to rest and gave me the confidence and courage to set up on my own.

Who or what inspired you during your time at Oriel?

I am eternally grateful to Dr Beddard and Dr Catto for their wonderful teaching. Thank you!

What has been your greatest personal/professional triumph?

Undoubtedly, I am most proud of The Body Shop's The Stop Sex Trafficking of Children and Young People Campaign. It is still the largest corporate-led petition ever presented to the United Nations – more than 7 million signatures and effected real change in trafficking legislation in over 20 countries. It was a truly incredible experience to see so many people – all over the globe - our store staff, our customers, the NGO's we worked with such as ECPAT International and our media partner CNN, working together to put a stop to what is the world's third largest criminal industry.

A close second is the current A Plastic Planet Campaign for #aplasticfreeaisle in supermarkets. Some 12 months after launching – we have unveiled the world's first plastic free aisle with Ekoplaza, capturing worldwide consumer and media attention, are working with Iceland, Waitrose and other international retailers on their plastic free ambitions, partnering with Sky and the Volvo Ocean Race and APP co-founder Sian Sutherland will be addressing the UN next month.

Do you have any unusual hobbies?

I like to challenge myself to learn and grow. Last weekend I went canvassing for the first time with a friend of mine who is standing as the Women's Equality Party candidate for Tower Hamlets. It was a truly humbling, yet inspiring experience to meet so many people and to hear them voice their concerns about and potential solutions for, the issues facing their borough; gangland crime, the lack of childcare and support for working mums, the fact that Tower Hamlets has the worst child poverty record in the whole country.

Do you do any voluntary work or work in the community?

I am part of the circle along with Lord Stone of Blackheath, Dr Jude Currivan and Dr Alan Watkins who are hosting and organising The Unity Conference in November at Westminster Abbey and the House of Lords – a one day convergence of 200 organisation leaders, inter-faith representatives, artists, scientists, technologists, change-makers and social activists to affirm our common humanity and together define and commit to solutions for our divided world.

I am also a longstanding volunteer for Glassdoor, the West London Homeless Charity for which we are working with Facebook and Universal to create a series of video portraits demystifying the homeless and homelessness.

What is the one piece of 'life' advice you would give to a current student?

To find your life purpose – whatever that may be. Each one of us is unique. Honour it and live by it.

What advice would you give for a student wishing to join your industry?

Get yourself some great work experience and some great mentors. Be brave – and shoot for the stars. Reach out on LinkedIn, Twitter...whatever they're most prevalent on. I promise you, even if they say no, they'll be flattered to be asked. So, go for it!

What advice would you give to students aspiring to set-up and run their own businesses?

From the outset, create and build a business with a purpose. Act on it and tie it to your commercial success.