

A COFFEE WITH ...

Create a vision – trust others to complete it

Do you have a business motto that guides the way you do business?

I love the paradox of 'plan for spontaneity'; by planning for stuff you can flex at any time.

Which individual has inspired your business life and why?

Gaudi. I love the fact he began the Sagrada Familia (pictured) knowing it

Liz Cross, managing director at The Connectives

couldn't be completed in his life time. What he did though was create a big enough vision, advance it to a stage and then trust that others

after him would contribute and complete it with integrity.

Which is your proudest achievement in business?

There are many, all of which have been done with others, so our visibility is more subtle and the ownership of the success is owned by those who live the dream. A particular pride comes from seeing what we helped create with the young people, staff and trustees at 42nd Street. It started with a coffee and a simple conversation about whether a capital asset, rather than a rent liability, would bring longer term benefits. Together with the charity, we delivered something out of the ordinary; 42nd Street opened its own building in Ancoats, which has won prestigious awards and significantly strengthened the charity's balance sheet.

What item do you always have with you?

My phone so I can connect to anyone, anywhere ... (but also many coloured pens so I can listen hard, think and plan all at the same time!)

How about your online profile? Do you use Twitter or Facebook and if so, why, and with how much success?

I could do better! LinkedIn is one window into what my colleagues and I do. My friends despair when it comes to Twitter and Facebook, but I may be dragged there soon. I value connectivity but want it to be deliberate, attentive and targeted, so I struggle a little with the tell-all world we are in.

What is the most inspirational book you have read?

I receive lots of inspirational words – some from books, many from conversations and not all from obvious or famous people. I think in every conversation there is something you are meant to hear and meant to say. A book that recaptured my attention again recently is *The Starfish And The Spider*, by Ori Brafman. It sums up much of what I believe – embed the why in the DNA and help the organism work in a really responsive and joined up way, like a starfish. Spiders are vulnerable, as the central intelligence is in the head and if the head gets damaged, the limbs can't work.



THE Connectives' expertise helps grow prosperity with sustainable solutions that improve people, profitability and the planet. As a social enterprise, it operates as a business, offering our social and commercial acumen to individuals, communities and organisations that can benefit from the team's experience and insights.

Do you prefer to dress up or dress down for business?

I love black and I love quirky, but am probably dressed the same in most contexts. Dressing down comes less naturally to me so takes more effort.

Give us a tip that is invaluable in life or in business.

Embrace the planned for and the unexpected with equal value; we need logic and intuition to thrive in a complex and interconnected world.

At what time of day are you most creative or inspired?

Any quiet time, so that is typically late evening. However, either end of the day, when the world is asleep, is a good time to work.

What time of day do you take your coffee break?

If it's good coffee, I'm up for it any time of day, but breaks don't usually come hand-in-hand with the drink.

Americano, latte, cappuccino – what's your coffee break favourite?

Americano – Italian roasts and blend.

