
CLAIRE BENSON



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Personal Profile: Experienced & Innovative Strategy Director

For the past 12 years I have successfully run my own business as a strategic consultant and leader to a variety of businesses, government departments/NGOs, charities and communication agencies. I have 30+ years experience in business and communications strategy, marketing and media. I am currently considering both permanent and freelance opportunities.

I bring ...

Vision – I inspire organisations and teams to plan for the future with imagination and wisdom. I'm a clear thinker, able to assimilate lots of data to find insights; I recognise good ideas

Enthusiasm – I am an authentic leader who brings energy and passion to every project, motivating and empowering staff and stakeholders to embrace and deliver the strategic vision. I'm an excellent communicator. As a strategist I get under the skin of the target audience and then champion them, passionately

Collaboration – I believe a culture of collaboration brings powerful and positive benefits. By working together, listening and allowing each individual to explore and expand their competencies, I lead teams that are engaged and highly effective.

Innovation – I employ fresh thinking and new approaches to old problems.

Commercial thinking – I have strong business acumen and understand the realities of financial stability and returns. I identify opportunities to drive growth and revenue.

Recent Projects

Consultant Strategist, 3HO – June-September 2022

Working collaboratively with the CEO, marketing director and 3HO board I developed a strategy for monetised content. The strategy was insight-driven, fully costed and included a framework for delivery so that it could be easily implemented by the small marketing team.

With a focus on diversity and inclusion, the strategy will deliver 3HO's mission by keeping Kundalini Yoga classes free for everyone, everywhere, while allowing customers to go deeper into the practice with paid content courses, programmes and digital downloads. It supports

teachers and teachers-in-training with a recommendation for more collaborative working with sister organisation IKYTA.

Strategy Lead (content) COP26 – 2021

COP is the leading global conference on climate change, run by the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change); each year it's hosted by a different country. COP26 was the UK's turn. It's a huge global event with 25,000 people and negotiation delegations from 96 countries in attendance. COP 26 was a hybrid event with parties invited to attend online and in person.

My role was to develop the content strategy and then recruit, train and lead the digital content team as we created content to support and promote the event. The project was complex technically, deadlines were extremely tight and Covid-19 meant that rules for travel and participation were constantly changing.

I worked to unite (extremely busy) stakeholders across the world – in the UK Government cabinet office, the UNFCCC, the digital tech team, advertisers and exhibitors – to deliver our strategy. My team were highly motivated, passionate and determined to deliver our vision for content. I am intensely proud of the work we did.

Strategy Director (content), Boots Health & Beauty – Covid-19 Response: March - July 2020

Boots is one of the UK's leading retail pharmacies. During 2020 when the pandemic hit I worked with Boots Health & Beauty content team (at WPP) as strategy director to ensure that all print and digital content answered questions, was responsive to the public's fears and challenges and yet continued to drive online sales of health & beauty products during lockdown.

Other recent roles include:

Consultant Strategy Director at Communicator London (2021), winning business for Lavazza, Carte Noire, PepsiCo among others

Consultant Strategy Lead (content) at Accenture Digital (2019), advising the NHS (National Health Service) on digital content

Consultant Strategy Lead for Four Engage, various projects from 2014-2021 working on global clients such as Nivea and Merck Life Sciences.

Consultant Senior Content Strategist, various projects from 2014-2020, working on brands such as Travelers Insurance, Schroders, RBS

Yoga Teacher: since 2016 I have taught regular Vinyasa flow and Hatha yoga classes and since 2019 Kundalini Yoga. During the pandemic I

taught daily online classes to help my yoga students maintain a sense of community and cope with the challenges of lockdowns.

Volunteer/Charity work includes: business strategy and rebrand for Play Professionals (from Kids City), social strategy for Brixton Fencing Club and Afewee Boxing. I also served on the board of governors at the local Primary School for four years with a specific interest in 'awe & wonder'.

Before setting up my own consultancy I worked at Saatchi & Saatchi, BBH, John Brown Publishing, WPP (Forward).

Education

Vinyasa Flow Yoga teacher 200hr YTT (2016) and Kundalini Yoga Teacher 300hr YTT (2019)

Diploma in Clinical Hypnotherapy 2011

NLP practitioner & NLP hypnotist 2010

MRS Advanced Certificate in Market & Social Research - 2009

2 years of BA at Curtin University, Western Australia, left to go travelling, fell in love, never returned!

TEE – A-level equivalent at Canning College, Perth, Western Australia.

English Literature, English Language, Maths, Physics, Chemistry, History

What my colleagues say

"I've had the pleasure of working with Claire on multiple projects since 2014. Claire brings a level of expertise and experience to the strategy/planning role that I've seen in few other people. She is reliable, inspirational, and gets things done in a way that creates a high level of energy and enthusiasm on any team."

Claire listens to her clients, understand their needs, and always provides timely and insightful recommendations. She is particularly skilled at market research to support creating strong audience targeting strategies, nurturing stakeholders to gain alignment and buy-in, and articulating complex ideas simply and effectively. She is equally comfortable working with large enterprise clients and smaller organisations.

As a strategist and all-around amazing person, Claire gets my highest recommendation. I always enjoy having Claire on my team and would hire her again in an instant."

Julie Christie, Content Director, Publicis Sapient

"I've worked with Claire for over 12 years on a huge range of projects from complex global b2b strategies to a launch strategy for a new skincare innovation. She blends insights, strategy and creativity perfectly to develop genuinely effective, on brand, game-changing solutions. Whether she's running client workshops, delivering insights audits,

creating innovative campaign territories or training and mentoring teams, her energy, experience and leadership are second to none."

Kath Ludlow, former Managing Director, Four Engage

"Claire is a brilliant catalyst. She brings vision and vigour to every project, from concept to delivery. Her capacity to understand and connect with people and audiences across the spectrum is unique. She inspires creative thinking and generates practical solutions that deliver results."

Louise Perry, former Group Account Director, Forward Worldwide

Claire possesses a rare blend of business acumen and creative sense, and as a result is able to deliver brilliant insights that generate excellent results for businesses of any size or type. Of all the strategists I've worked with, she's without question the best at inspiring ideas and getting the creative juices flowing. Claire is broad-minded and her curiosity is relentless. She's always on the lookout for new and interesting ways to approach problems. Claire's also incredibly hard working and focused; I envied her ability to deliver so much good work so quickly and calmly."

Jo Harding, former Planning Director, Forward Worldwide

"Claire is quite literally an inspiration. She has that all-too-rare quality of being able to enthuse and kick-start teams into creative action, often with amazing results. She's a pleasure to work with because she helps everyone work better and have a lot of fun in the process."

Rachel Shattock, former Editorial Director, John Brown Media
