



Q&A

Where business people discuss their motivation, ambition, experience - and themselves. In the spotlight this month is **Rachel Collar**, founder of HR consultancy Haus of HR and a newly appointed non-executive director of Milton Keynes and Northamptonshire Chambers of Commerce.

which one to eventually call home.

What has been the best moment of your life?

Without doubt it has to be getting married, which was in February 2020 just before the pandemic started. Of course our honeymoon was cancelled, and it has not yet been rebooked.

...and the worst?

My husband having a heart attack the day before our first wedding anniversary. It was such a scary and worrying time, especially because I was not able to visit him in the hospital.

How do you relax?

I enjoy going for long hikes deep into the countryside to find geocaches. It is an outdoor activity which uses GPS technology to find hidden containers - geocaches.

For some proper downtime I like to do pilates and tai chi.

What's your guilty pleasure?

Watching reality TV. I am an absolute addict but it is pure escapism from the world of work and I do not need a brain to watch it.

What's your worst fault?

When I am passionate about something, I do not always know when to shut up.

What's your most treasured possession?

Apart from my husband, it has to be my rescue cat Buddy who also is the 'Chief Happiness Officer' at Haus of HR.

What are you afraid of?

Spiders - of all sizes!

Tell us something you regret.

Not keeping up with my language skills. I have an A-level in German so I wish I could speak a second language fluently.

Tell us a secret about yourself.

I have a grade 8 in keyboarding which I got while I studied at the Yamaha Music School - which used to be based in Bletchley - and I got to perform a solo piece at The Stables in Wavendon.

Which historical figure would you most like to talk to and why?

I used to volunteer at Bletchley Park so it would have to be Alan Turing, who contributed to the Allied victory by helping to decipher the German Enigma code. I would love to know his views now on artificial intelligence.

What are the first three things on your bucket list?

- To attend the Air Guitar World Championships.
- Ride Route 66 in a pink Cadillac.
- To walk the Inca trail in Peru.

What music/song would you like played at your funeral?

Ave Maria sung by Aaron Neville.

What was your first job?

Working as a retail assistant in a bookshop - the ideal place for a bookworm.

Why did you choose your particular career?

I studied business studies at A Level and went on to study it at university. In my final two years I had to specialise in either finance, marketing or HR. I chose HR, because, having worked since I was 15, I found it easier to relate to HR and work psychology.

I was lucky to jump straight onto an HR graduate development programme with Accenture HR Services and the rest is history.

What's the best job you've had and why?

Hands down it has to be running my own business. By far it has been the most rewarding and it has tested my resilience to the max but I have developed so much more as a person and a business professional in the last 18 months since launching Haus of HR.

...and the worst and why?

Working in a call centre processing unsecured loans. It was an evening job while I was studying for my degree.

At times it would be soul destroying, especially if there were no calls coming through because that was before it became the norm to have an email account and internet access so I just had to clockwatch the evening away.

What's the best advice you've received in business?

To keep learning, because the business world is constantly evolving and it is important to stay up to date on industry trends, new technologies, and best practices.

Continuously learning and expanding my knowledge helps me stay competitive and able to make informed decisions.

What has been the highlight of your career so far?

Starting my own business. I never thought it would have been possible so to experience so much success in the 18 months since launching the Haus of HR has to be my proudest moment.

...and the low point?

I can't think of a particular low point, because I always try to stay positive. Maintaining a positive attitude can be challenging during a low point in your career but it is important to stay optimistic and believe in yourself.

I always think of setbacks as temporary and with hard work and perseverance, you can overcome them.

From solo at The Stables to my Greek island dream

Who in business do you respect the most?

I'm a big Dragons Den fan so it has to be Deborah Meaden. I admire her entrepreneurial spirit having run several successful businesses throughout her career and her willingness to take risks.

As a philanthropist myself, I admire her involvement with charities and her passion for animal welfare, and supporting animal rights. She has overcome obstacles and setbacks throughout her career but uses her experiences to inspire others to pursue their dreams.

I was lucky to meet her briefly when I completed the London Marathon which her husband was also running in. She kindly donated lots of food and drinks for the runners of the charity I was supporting.

What annoys you the most in business?

Poor communication: when there is a lack of clear communication or miscommunication between team members, it often leads to frustration and errors that could have easily been prevented. Being in HR, I have seen a lot of issues escalate quickly and often unnecessarily due to poor communication.

... and in life?

People who are rude, inconsiderate, or selfish, who are set on making life difficult and stressful for everyone else.

What's the best thing about where you work?

The best thing is I can play the music I want and I have created a working environment around me that is relaxing - which is so unlike the corporate world I used to work in.

...and the worst?

The worst thing is having direct access to the biscuit tin all day...

What's your career ambition?

For Haus of HR to go from strength to strength and be recognised as a leading provider of HR and people solutions to businesses in Northamptonshire and Milton Keynes.

Alongside that, the growth of Haus of Coaching, providing executive, leadership and career coaching to both businesses and individuals, enabling them to unlock their true potential.

...and your life ambition?

To retire to a Greek island. I am still exploring them all before making the final decision on

MY FAVOURITE...

FOOD Indian, especially Chilli Paneer

MUSIC/SONG Grunge, so anything by Pearl Jam

BOOK *Man's Search For Meaning* by Viktor E Frankl

FILM *Stand by Me* with River Phoenix

TV PROGRAMME *The Real Housewives of New Jersey*

RESTAURANT The Ivy

DESTINATION The Greek Islands