



John
Steel

I am a business leader and social entrepreneur with a passion for making business a force for good. Over the last 12 years I have energetically led Cafedirect, a Fairtrade leader and ethical pioneer. Under my leadership Cafedirect has grown exponentially, whilst maintaining its unique business model, putting smallholder farmers at the heart of the organisation, and challenging the status quo.

During my tenure at Cafedirect I have acted relentlessly in the best interests of Cafedirect's stakeholders, committing to Fairtrade whilst challenging it too. I have driven change internally and externally. I have engaged personally with Fairtrade, social enterprise, B Corp, universities, government and other businesses and movements.

In my career I have worked in various business, large and small and with differing values and cultures. In all cases, I have worked with the total commitment and dedication of an entrepreneur, in complete service of the organisation and with a genuine desire to do the right thing.

I have worked at many different levels in business including senior leadership roles and operating at board level for over 25 years including both Executive and Non-Executive roles.

My focus is always on people and purpose, which is why the Co-op so interests, excites, and energises me.

I believe that the Co-op is uniquely positioned to grow; financially, socially, and environmentally.

This business is truly remarkable because of its values, its ownership, and its members. In 2024 many businesses are talking about social and environmental change, but without the ownership structure to really drive change. The Co-op is making a difference, standing out as totally authentic, driving the agenda and setting an outstanding example for us all.

Putting membership at the heart of the Co-op is fundamental. Growing membership, engaging, listening and acting on the thoughts and desires of members is hugely exciting and energising. The membership of the organisation is what makes this business distinctive, differentiated and game changing.

I want to use all my skills, experience, and character to deliver for the membership and the business. I want to work tirelessly with the membership and work at board level to deliver on behalf of the membership.

I also want to grow membership and increase membership engagement. It is the membership that gives Co-op its power to succeed as a business, delivering thriving communities and the type of change we all need.

Through the membership I want everyone to see and feel how different, relevant, and meaningful the Co-op is.

Living and breathing Co-op values and delivering for the membership of the Co-op makes for better business, better lives and a better planet.

The Co-op is unique and leads the way as an ethical and successful business. My board level experience puts me in a great position to contribute to the leadership of the organisation and my values and beliefs are totally in line with the Co-op. I am totally motivated, driven and excited to listen, engage and work on the behalf of Co-op members and to represent members at board level.
