



BoardBuilders



BIG ALLIANCE

CASE STUDY:

Trustee Chris Watson

Partner at CMS and Chair of
the Board of Trustees at ELBA



In 2010 Chris Watson of CMS joined ELBA as a Trustee and, in 2015, he became Chair of our Board of Trustees. We caught up with Chris to find out about his experience of being a trustee and what he has gained from his time with ELBA.

WHAT ORIGINALLY MOTIVATED YOU TO WANT TO BE A TRUSTEE?

I had been working with ELBA at a previous law firm over a long period of time and became very enthusiastic about the work it does and the role it fulfils.

HOW DID THE OPPORTUNITY COME ABOUT?

I was approached by CMS's account manager at ELBA, who I think had noticed my enthusiasm and commitment. They asked if I would like to take this further than simply representing my firm as one of the users of the charity services.

WHAT HAS YOUR EXPERIENCE BEEN LIKE SO FAR? WHAT HAVE YOU ACHIEVED?

It has been very positive. The experience has been both to show me insights into parts of London which I had not previously encountered and also to give me some experience of operating at Board level and working in conjunction with others of completely different backgrounds to deliver a common goal. There is a very different dynamic in relation to a Trusteeship and it has been a privilege to work with such highly qualified and senior people, each of whom brings a different range of skills and insights.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNT ABOUT THE ORGANISATION AND THE ISSUES THEY ARE FACING?

The biggest challenge for organisations of this kind is resilience. We need to ensure that we are constantly looking at where change is coming from and where it is heading. All third sector organisations face this challenge and it is an illusion that they only apply to the private/commercial sector.

WHAT IMPACT IS THE ROLE HAVING ON YOU AND YOUR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT?

It has given me greater insight and compassion and at the same time a greater degree of realism about what is achievable and how it can be achieved.

WHY SHOULD STAFF IN CORPORATE COMPANIES VOLUNTEER? WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

It is important to move out of the bubble and to see a wider perspective of the world and the people in it. Opportunities to do this are quite few and to have the chance to do so with a group of highly motivated people achieving good things means that all of the outcomes are positive.



ELBA places 100 trustees per year at east London based community organisations through our series of BoardMatch events

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