

London Business Matters

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TWO MINUTE INTERVIEW

Lisette Mermod, Commercial Director, Risk Reward Ltd



Which one business achievement over the last 12 months are you most proud of, and why?

We recently signed a deal with Saudi company which allows us to develop and deliver financial services training for women in Riyadh. The results of our work will have an impact on business and individual lives far beyond our current expectations.

“If there is one thing I hate about my job it’s...”

...sounds hokey, but I have a great job and there is nothing I hate about it!”

If you were advising a young entrepreneur which business person would you suggest as a model?

Melinda Gates – although she would not describe herself as a business person, she is the business heart and soul of a formidable empire fuelled by a formidable business. And as Warren Buffet said, he would not be giving all his millions to the Gates Foundation without her by Bill’s side.



Image: Kjetil Reie

How do you think the transport system in London can be improved?

Have you ever tried to board a bus in the rain to be told you have to buy a ticket from a machine (which may not be working, or the print is so small it’s impossible to read the user instructions in the dark)?



Bring back money transactions on the buses please and bus conductors to give directions, help older persons, women with baby carriages, business people from out of town, etc.

Which piece of red tape causes most problems for your company and why?

Top of the list? UK Border Entry for non-EU passport holder changes and the Employment changes which just followed. As an SME we wrote to the then Shadow Government and were invited to Whitehall to state our case; at present we are ‘in the queue’ to speak to Boris Johnson about this issue. As an international business based in London we need to have employees with an international perspective, highly educated and with multi-language abilities and a strong work ethic.

Moreover, it is now practically impossible to attract non-EU delegates into the UK to attend our City of London training events which is having an impact not only on our business but on all the related service providers, mainly SMEs, such as print houses, caterers, audio/visual supply, never mind the hotels and training venues who are losing business as a result.

What do the 2012 Olympics mean to you and your business?

On a macro level we are huge supporters of the Olympics as a truly global and inspirational event. Many of our team are marathon runners, kayakers, mountain climbers and judo experts, and the games are a great networking opportunity for all of us not-so-athletic types too. On a micro basis, as we have seen with the World Cup in South



Africa, the disruption of international travel will probably mean we will have to reduce our own business travel. Also, as hotel rooms may be scarce or only available at inflated prices, we may need to relocate some activities overseas to keep our business on track.

If you were Mayor of London for the day which one thing would you change?

Since the Roman era London has been most notable as a centre for international trade and that is still its *raison d’être* today. From this grew wealth and economic

development for a wider society. I would ensure that any barrier to international trade was lifted and unnecessary or illogical banking regulation reversed. Then I’d leave the rest to the markets, as they know how to do it best.



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