



## The Birmingham Business School Annual Advisory Board Guest Lecture

The Birmingham Business School Advisory Board is recognised by the Financial Times for its international reach, gender balance and the outstanding calibre of its membership which rivals even the world's top-ranking Business Schools.

The Annual Advisory Board Guest Lecture is the most prestigious event in the School calendar, with a long line of distinguished speakers listed below. It is attended by our students and business networks and our Advisory Board members themselves.

What makes this talk distinctive is that it is always given in response to a current issue affecting all businesses in the immediate term.

The inaugural lecture took place in 2008, and has taken place in November (on the evening before the main Advisory Board meeting) every year since (barring 2020, the year of the Pandemic). It is traditionally introduced by the Chair of the Advisory Board.

**2021: Billie Major – CEO HMRC Business Unit, Corporate Vice-President, Capgemini**

"Business Transformation in the Pandemic: Large IT Programmes do not have a great reputation for delivering on time or to budget and yet, through the pandemic and unfamiliar home-working environment, a leading global IT Company supported their client in delivering the systems for Furlough and other emergency government measures which provided a financial lifeline for the UK." Billie explained how this was done in the wake of the biggest global business shut-down of our generation, and the lessons learnt that need to inform how all businesses operate in the future.

**2019: Nick Jenkins – Founder of Moonpig.com, and former 'Dragon' on BBC Dragon's Den**

"21st Century Luddites: To what extent do entrepreneurs have a responsibility to think about the impact of their innovations on society?" With both the benefits and disruption of Industry 4.0 ever more in evidence to consumers and employees, Nick asked whether or not entrepreneurs and investors should take into account the impact on society of disruptive technology or whether the state should set the parameters within which we should work.

**2018: Mike Barry – Director of Sustainable Business at M&S**

"A Sustainable Economy: the imperative for change and the opportunities it offers". In the wake of the public up-rise precipitated by the finale of David Attenborough's BBC documentary Blue Planet, which took an unflinching look at the impact of plastic waste on marine life, Mike's talk acknowledged the urgent need for business to help build a sustainable economy, one that works for all – consumer, shareholder, employee, community and planet alike. From climate change to human rights; plastic pollution to diet; deforestation to ethical jobs, he explored why and how business needs to change, and outlined why a sustainable future is not about sacrifice and prohibition but about enjoyment, opportunity, excitement and green growth.

**2017: Jane Cordell Director – Result CIC**

"Positive defiance: a deaf woman's social enterprise journey". In the wake of the widely publicised accusations facing Hollywood and the UK Government, demonstrating alarming flaws in long established organisational cultures that have not done enough to create safe and inclusive work environments, Jane explained how her unexpected life story led her to recognise and help those who continue to be marginalised in society, particularly in times of economic uncertainty, and explored how we develop responsibility in business by working more inclusively and deriving wider societal and economic benefits from doing so.



- 2016: **António Horta-Osório, Chief Executive of Lloyds Banking Group**  
"Helping Britain prosper in uncertain times". In the wake of Brexit, António set out the emerging economic trends following the June referendum result, emphasising the importance of investment in areas such as infrastructure, housing and education to help put the country in the best possible position to emerge stronger from the uncertain times ahead.
- 2015: **Andy Street CBE, Managing Director of John Lewis & Chair, Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership**  
"Regional Renaissance, origins, opportunities and lessons". On the eve of a new devolved combined authority, at this critical phase in Birmingham's economic growth, Andy Street illustrated how Birmingham has become an exemplar for manufacturing, exports and digital business, and outlined the strategy in place to leverage this to achieve sustained economic growth for the region.
- 2014: **Lord Michael Heseltine**  
"Changing the role of Whitehall". Drawing from his work that year on the Greater Birmingham Project, Lord Heseltine discussed his vision for growth in the Greater Birmingham region and how this can to be achieved through devolution.
- 2013: **John Neill CBE, Chairman and CEO, The Unipart Group**  
"The Unipart Story". The story of how one of Britain's largest employee-owned companies became a £1billion turnover manufacturer, logistics and consultancy business, with the majority of shares still held by its 10,000 employees around the world.
- 2012: **Anji Hunter Senior Advisor Edelman, former gatekeeper to Prime Minister Tony Blair. & Adam Boulton (Political Editor of Sky News)**  
"Murdoch Marries Blair: Why Politics, the Media and Business misunderstand each other and what should be done about it". In the wake of the Leveson inquiry into the culture, practices and ethics of the British press, **Anji Hunter gave this talk jointly with her husband Adam Boulton**, with footage of his interviews with world leaders such as Barak Obama, and visual reference to her complex dealings with the media on behalf of world leaders, both in politics and business, to manage their profile.
- 2011: **Jane Lodge, Deloitte Partner of 25 years.**  
"Deloitte – the building of a brand" which described how the firm grew exponentially in critical mass, through mergers and acquisitions to become the largest of the Big Four at the time.
- 2010: **Sir Dominic Cadbury, former Chairman and CEO of Cadbury**  
"The Kraft Takeover of Cadbury", a unique insight told in the wake of the most controversial and hostile take-over ever experienced in the UK.
- 2009: **Lord Karan Bilimoria, Chairman of the Cobra Beer Partnership**  
"Adapt or Die" which took the audience through the trials, tribulations and successes of building the Cobra brand, what led to the new partnership with Coors, and how Karan came close to losing everything in the process during the economic downturn of 2008.
- 2008: **Dr Rebecca Harding, Parliamentary Chief Policy Advisor on Entrepreneurship**  
"Growing Business: Is it still possible?" In the wake of the huge economic downturn that year, Rebecca addressed whether setting up and growing a business was still possible.