

Deanne Chatterton, CEO at Instinctif Partners Africa

 By [Emily Stander](#)

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We spoke to Deanna Chatterton, CEO and managing partner at Instinctif Partners Africa, an international business communications consultancy.



Image supplied: Deanne Chatterton, CEO of Instinctif Partners Africa

With 15 years of experience behind her, Chatterton specialises in restructuring and repositioning businesses to be profitable with the idea of being sustainable and transformative.

Read about her work, life and what the future holds...

■ ***Tell us a bit more about yourself and your work.***

I love to travel and immerse myself in different cultures. I spent eight incredible years in the Far East, living in Hong Kong and working and travelling across the Asia Pacific. I consider myself incredibly fortunate to have had the career and opportunities I have had up until this point.

My work across my career has been varied from human resources in South Africa to banking in the UK and owning my communication and production business in Hong Kong. These experiences helped me land the role I have at Instinctif Partners today.

■ ***What's really behind your mask - literally and figuratively speaking?***

Often pink lipstick, an easy smile and a hello.

Figuratively, I am passionate about collaboration and engagement. While I believe, as a business, that technology-enabled working from home allowed us to survive Covid, I don't think any of us thrived in that environment. It is now about striking the right balance between a more personal level of engagement and flexibility about where and when the teams work, focusing on the quality of outputs.

I have seen our team come together this year as they have been able to find more time to connect in person and celebrate the human interaction with their team members and our clients.

■ ***Growing up, what did you want to be?***

Growing up, I wanted to be a ballet dancer. I love its artistry, the music, the individual expression, and there is also freedom of expression in dancing. Unfortunately, I was not blessed with a dancer's physique.

■ ***How did you end up in the industry?***

There was no deliberate plan; more of an evolution.

I was heavily involved in driving extensive scale communication and engagement programmes at the Royal Bank of Scotland during my time in London. When I decided to leave corporate and try something on my own, I naturally leaned into setting up a communication and event company. Based in London and Hong Kong I helped businesses to navigate the financial crisis and then to rebuild and restore their brands as the world began to show signs of recovery.

■ ***What excites you most about your career?***

I am most excited about the people I have worked with and the clients I have worked for. I have been incredibly privileged to have had the opportunity to work with gifted thinkers who always pushed me to do better, think differently and challenge myself and my self-imposed limitations.

I am aware of how fortunate I am as a female leader to have had a strong, committed and generous mentor at the Royal Bank of Scotland. He encouraged me never to give up but to go after what I believe I can do fearlessly.

■ ***Any advice for anyone entering the industry?***

Be curious and constantly be open to learning new things because the world is changing at such a pace. Just because we have always done it that way doesn't mean it shouldn't evolve.

Don't let mistakes define you but learn from them. Strive to be your best, always with a focus on the quality of execution.

■ ***When you're not busy working, what do you do? How do you socialise these days?***

I used to love entertaining and eating out. But these days I enjoy a quieter life and spend time gardening, running and reading a good book.

■ ■ **What are you watching/reading/listening to at the moment?**

Currently, I am reading Matthew Syed's *Rebel Ideas*.

■ ■ **What's your favourite gif?**

I love any gif featuring animals.



■ ■ **What does 2022 hold for you?**

I hope to do more travel this year, having been grounded for over two years. It will allow me to reconnect with my friends across the globe and my colleagues in London. I have also signed up for my first marathon, so I have some training ahead of me.

ABOUT EMILY STANDER

Freelancer specialising in games and entertainment | My first loves are writing, music and video games

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