

2024 THE YEAR OF HOPE AND OPTIMISM?

For me, leadership is about taking organisations to places they would otherwise not have gone.

Five years after we opened our doors, our clients at Starfish continue to share one thing in common: their unshakeable commitment to positive social change and to the value of social purpose. Whatever influences threaten progress, at home or globally, organisations determined to deliver their mission have had every opportunity to demonstrate their resilience. After three years of hard graft to re-form, repair and set strategies and organisations back on track, 2024 stands to be a year of fresh hope and optimism if we choose that: a year in which talents are acknowledged; in which pioneers and trailblazers have a platform to shine; a year in which individuals feel that, whatever their background, personal ambitions can be fulfilled.

The years up until now have been characterised by change and disruption on almost every axis. Whether we'll see any decrease in that disruption is anyone's guess; yet in 2024, we've adapted and learned to live with uncertainty on a grand scale. And with so much flux comes opportunity, with major cultural shifts in old rules and codes, and whole systems and institutions being opened up to unprecedented scrutiny. Perhaps 2024 will be an opportunity to put lessons learned into action; to end what doesn't work and to redesign organisations and systems for a more equitable society. Time will tell.

Starfish Search. Integrity. Dedication. Social Focus. Questioning. We opened our doors five years ago. We're now responsible for placing 696 people in the jobs they really wanted and have been commissioned to fill 977 interim and permanent appointments to date. Nearly 30% of people we place are from diverse backgrounds and we're working hard to improve this all the time. Our appointments are offered equally to men and women. We've just achieved our target of placing 50 first time NEDs. Here's what people say about us: "I have enjoyed every aspect of working with Starfish. I have never felt as supported with other organisations as I have with Starfish. I have enjoyed the process to the point that I wished I was applying for a role within Starfish." Watch this space.

For our CEO community, we begin 2024 with a conversation about changing personal experiences as leaders. Over 100 people told us that their time running organisations is increasingly focused on: learning; considering relationships and dynamics in flatter organisations, and needing to be available to think and act fast in a changing and sometimes uncompromising world. Our Board community recognises the heightened level of exposure for Chairs and Board Members in an era of easy public, political and media challenge. Yet more and more people are choosing social purpose organisations as a route to personal fulfilment. The talent pool is richer in depth and range, and becoming more diverse all the time.

We said that 2023 was the year to recognise, celebrate and listen to leaders everywhere. We'd like to make 2024 the year of hope and optimism and in doing so wish all our clients, candidates and friends a happy and successful new year.

