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5 MINUTES WITH ALLYSON STEWART-ALLEN

We interview official Learnfest speaker Allyson Stewart-Allen – global marketer, author and woman to watch. More about Allyson’s work with International Marketing Partners [here](http://www.intermarketingonline.com/)

Tell us more about your organisation and the work that you do?

So I set up my company in 1991 in order to have more freedom over the marketing consulting work and the clients I could work for, especially focusing on those looking to internationalise. Having worked in 3 large, global consulting businesses, they were not the types of cultures that let me perform at my best. I feel incredibly lucky to have had the experience and exposure to so many industries since mastering my own destiny, at least professionally.

What attracted you to Impact’s Festival for HR Learnfest? Can you tell us more about what the participants can expect to learn from you?

I’m attracted to the concept, which is really innovative and a wonderful way to position learning rather than as some dry, classroom-based, linear approach to engaging people or digesting information. My hope is that those that come to my session will leave with many more ideas on how to work more globally and check assumptions about what works at HQ versus what works in regional markets.

You’re an award-winning businesswoman; what advice can you give to women who still face gender inequality in the workplace?

We’ll be seeing record numbers of women leaving corporate life because the corporation is not serving their needs, letting them be at their best, allowing for more collaborative, conversational, fluid ways of working. My advice would be to try to make it work and if it makes you unhappy, go somewhere else where the culture is a better fit, or start your own business. Life is indeed very short, so wasting valuable time trying to get an organisation to fit to your preferences is a pointless pursuit.

You’ve co-authored a best-selling book! Any future plans for writing more?

Yes, I’d like to. I’ve got at least 2 ideas, one of which is in the hands of publishers now looking at the values of women in the workplace which transcend national cultures. A fascinating premise which I hope me and my 3 other co-authors get the green light to write. The other is about brand localisation and how to go about adapting your products/services for different parts of the world.

What does a day in the life of Allyson Stewart-Allen look like?

Up early (ever earlier as I seem to need less sleep as I get older), a chat with my husband over a coffee, a few emails, head to the office, which like for many reading this, is mostly emails, calls, meetings. Then out to business events 2-3 nights each week. The variety however is what keeps me learning as my clients are in a wide range of industries so the best part is seeing what works in one place and thinking about how those practices/ideas might work in another.

What are some of the most memorable/challenging/inspiring brands you’ve worked with? Can you tell us more about some of your best work?

So I’ve just spent 2 years creating and running a leadership programme for SAB Miller which has been fantastic. Not only has the team of people I’ve been working with on their side been great, open, excited and energised, but we had a huge impact on their leaders around the world by creating something engaging and experimental. I’ve also been advising a large asset management business which is keen to improve how they build better relationships with their clients and that I’ve been finding a great reminder of the difference marketing and brand experience can make for the staff and the clients. Yet another has been advising a growing, designer youth hostel chain in the UK and how it



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internationalises its business.

How would you describe your leadership style?

Energetic, enthusiastic, encouraging, inclusive, impatient.

How do you stay up to date with what's going on in the world? Can you also share with our readers your go-to apps and productivity tools?

I use the BBC News website, I read the FT every weekday and The Wall Street Journal twice a week to ensure I get the EU and US perspectives. I read what's trending on Twitter and LinkedIn daily. But the best "app" is human interaction, networking with as many people as I can who aren't in my business because they have the freshest perspectives. It's a bit like the comedy technique of "forced analogies" where you have to find what two very unlike things have in common, which is a great source of business ideas if only I had the time to action them all!

What's been the best thing about your 28 years working in the UK?

The unexpected openness of people to new ideas who in fact do say "yes" quite a lot despite the myth that they're not that interested in new ways of doing things. The level of innovation and creativity in Britain, in my opinion, is just amazing.

Posted by [Guest Author \(/think-tank/author/18\)](#) on 24.05.16

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