

ReadMe: Chris Hulatt

My role involves introducing Octopus to the world

I spend most of my time focusing on two key areas: develop deeper and broader Octopus relationships with institutional investors around the world, and maintaining strong relationships with the UK government and MPs (meeting with MPs and government ministers, attending the Conservative and Labour party conferences, speaking at think tank events, etc). I also make time to support key business initiatives, such as opening the Octopus Australia office, which is a great opportunity for us to establish a significant presence in that country.

I am really enjoying my work with institutional investors, and I aim to spend around 35-50% of my time on the road meeting investors around the world. It is incredibly exciting to see the way our investment capabilities are being recognised by institutional investors. Plus, it's particularly gratifying that our culture as an organisation is considered such an important part of our success.

I enjoy working with people who are driven and motivated

I like to work with people who are upbeat, able to get things done, who work to a high standard, and who are excited by the opportunities that Octopus has ahead of it. People who are always looking for ways to keep developing what we do, and who spot adjacent areas where we could be successful.

The best ideas can come from anywhere and anyone

Many of the best things we've done as a company have come about because people had ideas that they raised with me or Simon. One thing is absolutely clear – the Executive Committee members do not have some sort of monopoly on having good ideas. I want everyone in Octopus to feel empowered to suggest things, to share their thoughts, and to feel that they can make a difference. As we grow, we need to really make sure we maintain this part of our culture.

I really value having discussions with people

Whether it is a 30-second chat by my desk, or an hour thrashing through an issue in more detail, I always try to be approachable. I recognise that as I am away quite a lot of the time, we need to have a dialogue over email rather than in person, but I am always delighted to chat about ideas or suggestions you have.

The best meetings are those with structure and purpose

I like people to turn up to meetings with a clear idea of what they want to talk about, what they want my input on and what topics they want to cover, along with what their thoughts and suggestions are. I'll also bring along thoughts and ideas. There's no need for meetings to last longer than necessary – if we only need 15 minutes, great. It doesn't help either of us if the meeting is stretched out unnecessarily.

I tend to hold meetings in internal rooms – I don't tend to go out for a coffee or sit in the breakout spaces. But if you need my thoughts on something, it's usually far better to just

come and find me at my desk, or to swap emails if I'm away from the office on a trip. No need to feel you have to wait for the next diarised 121 to raise something with me – it is usually far better to get it on the table straight away.

We should always be willing to challenge ourselves

Feedback is really important, especially when we are doing new things, such as launching products into countries where we don't have much of a presence yet. We need to challenge ourselves to be as good as we possibly can be, all the time. That means we should be willing to critique how we have done in every meeting. So, if you think I was 'off my game' in a meeting, tell me afterwards. If you have suggestions for how we could explain things more clearly, or be better at handling external relationships, let me know. I really value ideas and suggestions.

I start work early and I leave quite late

I get into the office at 6:45am and I usually leave at 7pm. I find the first hour or two of each day to be the most productive, as I feel fresh and full of energy. I like to get home in time to see the kids before they go to bed, and I usually catch up on emails after dinner.

I find Saturday morning and Sunday evening are times when I get plenty of work done. The best way to get hold of me is to send an email. I don't tend to check messages on my phone very often.

You owe it to yourself to find the right work/life balance

I expect people to work hard, but I also strongly believe that you can have both a career at Octopus and a fulfilling and rewarding life outside Octopus. The two aren't mutually exclusive. I don't want people at Octopus to work 20-hour days for a few years and then leave because they have 'over-cooked it'. That doesn't help anyone!

I think it is critical that everyone finds their own style of working that works best for them. Octopus is not a sprint – we are all on a long journey – so it is important that we make sure we don't burn out. I have found a pace and way of working that I think I can sustain indefinitely, and I think it is key that everyone figures out their own work/life balance that they feel is sustainable.