



Allan's biography

Allan Leighton

Highly successful businessman, down-to-earth [leadership](#) style, CEO of Asda and Royal Mail

Climbing through the ranks came easily to the would-be footballer who found his feet in business.

Allan Leighton's Background

- Went from a cashier to a successful millionaire businessman
- Turned around the prospects of a struggling Asda
- His book, On [leadership](#): Practical Wisdom from the People Who Know was the UK's bestselling business book when it was first published
- As someone who has extensive experience of Leadership and public speaking, Allan Leighton is well placed to deliver talks at a wide range of occasions.
- Most known for his work with Asda and Royal Mail, Allan Leighton is a highly successful businessman with a down-to-Earth leadership style.

Allan Leighton was born in Hereford, England on 12 April 1953. Whilst he grew up in Oxford, his father was the manager of a Co-op store, but the young Allan did not see himself taking on this kind of role he wanted to become a professional footballer. Unfortunately, when he was fifteen a bad leg fracture put an end to his sporting dreams and when he had finished his [education](#) at Magdalen College School in Brackley, he progressed on to a course in Business Studies at North Oxford Polytechnic (now Oxford Brookes University).

In 1972, he became a cashier at Lloyds Bank. He spent two years in this position before moving to Slough in order to join the [Sales](#) team at Mars UK. In 1987 he became the General sales Manager (of Mars UK Grocery Division). He was the youngest director in the whole of the global company. He later became the managing director of Mars in Ireland and Portugal. It was at Mars that he learned about business and [management](#), acquiring knowledge and skills which he transferred to his later roles.

Allan left Mars in 1992 and became [Marketing](#) Director at Asda. The company were aware of his vast experience in management and chose to equip him even further for the role by sending him on an Advanced Management course at the prestigious Harvard University. Asda had been struggling against supermarket rivals, but under the care of Allan and Archie Norman, its fortunes were reversed utilising the methodology employed by Wal-Mart in the USA. In 1996, Allan became chief executive of Asda and after about three years, sold the company to Wal-Mart.

Since selling Asda, Allans career has been varied. He has worked as a Non-executive Chairman for

Royal Mail and Lastminute.com and as an advisor to BHS, Dyson, and Guy Hands (who went on to purchase EMI). He was also President of Loblaw Companies (a Canadian food retail chain). Currently he is the Chairman of Pace, one of the UK's best technology companies and chairman of Danish jewellery company Pandora and fashion chain Peacocks, the deputy chairman of Selfridges, and a non-executive director of British Sky Broadcasting.).

Fond of sports, Allan has run the London marathon in aid of Breast Cancer Care, a charity to which he also sends the proceeds of his television, book (the acclaimed best-seller titled *On Leadership: Practical Wisdom from the People Who Know*) and speeches. He is the Chairman of Business in the Community, a charity which supports responsible business practices, [equality](#) in the workplace and the idea that businesses should have a positive impact on their surrounding community.

Allan has three children with his ex-wife Anne and now divides his time between living in Stanmore and living in Toronto, Canada. He supports several sporting teams, from Northamptonshire County Cricket Club to the Toronto Maple Leaves ice hockey team.

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