

MARTHA LANE FOX

LONDON
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- Non-Executive Director of Marks & Spencer
- Co-founder of lastminute.com



Topics

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Baroness Lane-Fox co-founded Lastminute.com, where she and her business partner, Brent Hoberman, came to epitomise the new breed of internet entrepreneurs in London. In November 2003 Martha stood down as Managing Director of Lastminute.com, remaining a non-executive director of the company.

She is currently a non-executive director at Marks & Spencer, MyDeco.com and the Women's Prize for Fiction. She co-founded and chairs Lucky Voice, a private karaoke bar group, revolutionising the karaoke industry. In December 2003, it was revealed by The Sunday Telegraph that Lane Fox would join Galen Weston, owner of Selfridges, and take over the day-to-day running of the business.

On 16 June 2009, she was appointed the UK Government's Digital Inclusion Champion to head a two year campaign to make the British public more computer literate. She has argued that "I don't think you can be a proper citizen of our society in the future if you are not engaged online."

On 22 March 2010 her government role was expanded when it was announced that she would set up a new Digital Public Services Unit within the Cabinet Office. And in June 2010, the new Government asked Lane Fox to expand her role as UK Digital Champion advising how online public services delivery can help to provide better, and more efficient services as well as getting more people online. She was invited to sit on Cabinet Office's Efficiency and Reform Board. In July 2010 David Cameron hosted an event at 10 Downing Street to celebrate her Manifesto for a Networked Nation – a challenge for people and organisations in every sector and every corner of the country to work together to inspire, encourage and support as many new people as possible to get online by the end of the Olympic year. By the beginning of 2011 the Race Online 2012 campaign had over 1000 partners pledging to reach almost 2 million adults.

Many of the lessons learned whilst building Lastminute have been applied to her latest venture, in particular the blending of online and offline to create a business of substance. Lastminute has just opened a standalone store in Manchester with other openings planned. She points out the company employed a similar strategy several years ago, and says: "no one can afford to ignore online and see how it is translated off line."

Martha remains a role model for entrepreneurs – not just in business, but also in her dealings in wider society. She is a trustee for Reprieve, a prison reform charity, patron of education pressure group CAMFED, and has set up her own charity, Antigone, a grant-making trust.

Martha was made a CBE in the New Year Honours List 2013. In March 2013, she was appointed a crossbench peer in the House of Lords, becoming the youngest female member, taking the title Baroness Lane-Fox of Soho.

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