

LORRAINE COPE

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR AND FOUNDER AND CEO OF BE INCLUSIVE HOSPITALITY, LORRAINE COPE, TELLS US THE STORY OF HER CAREER IN THE INDUSTRY, REVEALING MORE ABOUT THE BIRTH OF BE INCLUSIVE HOSPITALITY AND THE REVOLUTIONARY WORK THEY'RE DOING TO ENSURE A FAIRER INDUSTRY FOR ALL.

LORRAINE, PLEASE TELL US WHERE YOUR CAREER IN THE INDUSTRY BEGAN, DETAILING MORE ABOUT YOUR JOURNEY IN HOSPITALITY AND WHERE YOU FIND YOURSELF NOW.

I have worked within the hospitality industry for the past two decades as a Procurement Executive Director for brands such as Gordon Ramsay Restaurants, The Wolseley Hospitality Group and Shake Shack.

I have worked across fine dining, casual dining, hotels, pubs and contract catering within a procurement capacity, and so have many years of insight and experience across the sector in the UK, and globally. Having spent over 20 years solely within procurement and supply chain, I am now an entrepreneur, writer, life coach and board director.

I founded Be Inclusive Hospitality in 2020, as, throughout my career, there has never been anyone who looked like me in any decision-making rooms, events, conferences, or the supply chain – other than those waiting tables. I felt compelled to address this very noticeable problem within the sector.

WHAT INSPIRED THE BIRTH OF BE INCLUSIVE HOSPITALITY; WHY WAS IT SO IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO BRING THIS CONCEPT TO THE INDUSTRY?

My lived experience inspired the birth of Be Inclusive Hospitality. We take a multi-pronged approach to advance race equity in hospitality. We produce research, delivering professional development programmes to support ethnically diverse employees and founders, and we provide Equity, Diversity and Inclusion consultancy services for regional and national operators in the UK – this includes workshops, training and consultancy.

I founded Be Inclusive Hospitality because of the lack of ethnically diverse people in positions of influence in the supply chain across the hospitality industry.

Despite hospitality technically being extremely diverse, our own research, produced in 2020 in partnership with The Resolution Foundation, found that 17.83% of the sector is represented by ethnic minorities. This is symptomatic of a problem I was keen to raise awareness of and address.

Our aim is to ensure that the future of hospitality has more ethnically diverse senior leaders and founders visible, succeeding



and celebrated. Ultimately, we are advocates of a fair and inclusive hospitality industry for all.

WHAT ARE BE INCLUSIVE'S SHORT AND LONG-TERM GOALS; HOW IS BE INCLUSIVE SUPPORTING THE SECTOR, AND HOW IS IT EXPECTED TO CONTINUE SUPPORTING THE INDUSTRY AND THE INDIVIDUALS WITHIN IT LOOKING TO THE FUTURE?

Our short and long-term goals remain the same, which is to build a fair and inclusive hospitality industry for all.

In support of this, to-date, we have produced four industry reports, in partnership with think tanks and universities, collecting over 4,000 views and experiences. We have supported over 2,000 ethnically diverse employees and founders to achieve career and business goals, investing more than £350,000 in

mentorship, qualifications, grant funding, recognition programmes and work experience.

Lastly, we collaborate with many global and national operators and brands, including Uber Eats, Mars Foods, Dorchester Collection, Caravan Restaurants, The Alchemist Bars & Restaurants, IHG Hotels & Resorts, and many more.

We provide consultancy and workshops, and to date have worked with over 1,500 hospitality leaders to upskill them on all things Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

Our goal is to no longer need to exist as the hospitality industry becomes fair and inclusive for all. In the meantime, we have the goal to support 10,000 employees and 2,000 founders towards progress within their respective businesses or careers by 2026.

We are naturally keen to work with the biggest and the best employers within the hospitality industry, to support their journey towards a truly inclusive workplace culture.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY?

Number one is the people, and this is closely followed by my love for food, drink and hospitality!

WHAT HAS BEEN AN IMPORTANT LESSON YOU HAVE LEARNT WITHIN YOUR CAREER?

I have had far too many to mention!

I think my number one is – your network is your net worth. So many people and businesses who I worked with 10+ years ago

have been the biggest advocates and supporters of the work we do. We are still a relatively small company, but have been able to create notable impact because of our community.

In joint number one lesson is the power of purpose, and how aligning your personal values to the work you do can really have a transformative impact on your life. I genuinely can turn up as myself and do the work I love, and it is because I have aligned my personal values with an industry I love.

WHAT WORDS OF ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR FELLOW HOSPITALITY PROFESSIONALS; WHY WOULD YOU ENCOURAGE THESE INDIVIDUALS TO INVOLVE THEMSELVES IN ALL THAT BE INCLUSIVE HAS TO OFFER?

The first thing to remember about Equity, Diversity and Inclusion is that it is about company culture. Progress in this area will benefit your business from both a recruitment and retention perspective.

Creating a diverse and inclusive hospitality industry requires concerted effort from us all. If you are a passive bystander, you are part of the problem.

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BE INCLUSIVE HOSPITALITY

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