

Stuart Rose

Former Chairman and Chief Executive of Marks & Spencer

Lord Rose is an iconic British businessman, having spent his career in retail, originally joining Marks & Spencer plc, an international retailer, in 1971 as a management trainee. He left to join the Burton Group in 1989, becoming a director in 1993. Following the Group's demerger in 1997, he became Chief Executive of Argos plc, a British catalogue retailer with over 730 stores, and was widely praised for his leadership during the bid by GUS.

Stuart, one of the preeminent executives in retail and one of the best-known British business leaders, is credited with giving Marks & Spencer renewed energy and cachet among younger, more fashion-savvy customers. He also managed to restore full-year profits at M&S back to the level of £1bn – something not seen since 1997. During his time, he successfully defended the company from several takeover attempts, helped to rejuvenate the brand and was named the 2006 Business Leader of the Year by the World Leadership Forum. In 2008 he was knighted for services to the retail industry and appointed Chairman of Business in the Community.

In presentations, he addresses leadership, business strategy, retail, and customer service, outlining the trends facing businesses and the fundamental shifts in the economy and social fabric worldwide. He explains why businesses are increasingly looked to by society to address issues larger than themselves and have the ability to do well while doing good.

In 1998, he became Chief Executive of Booker plc, which was merged with the Iceland supermarket company, in 2000, forming Big Food Group. He then became Chief Executive of Arcadia Group plc in November 2000 and left in December 2002, following its sale to Sir Philip Green. He was named Chief Executive of Marks & Spencer in May 2004 and became Chairman in 2008, standing down in January 2011.

Since leaving M&S in 2011, Stuart has served as a non-executive director of Woolworths Holdings Ltd (2011), non-executive Chairman of Dressipi.com (2012), an independent non-executive director and chairman Designate of Ocado (2013), and an advisor to the UK government. Additionally, he was Chairman of The British Fashion Council from 2004 – 2008, Chairman of Business in the Community from 2008 – 2010 and a Non-Executive Director of Land Securities from 2003-2013. He is also Chairman of The Healing Foundation, a medical charity, and was made a life peer in September 2014. He also mentors young entrepreneurs.

During his illustrious career in business, Stuart was often committed to promoting “green” issues, notably while at M&S, where he instituted the recycling of plastic bottles and pledged to reduce non-glass waste by 25 percent and plastic bags by 33 percent.