

FRANCESCA LEIGHTON

NACD.DC · MBA · BSC (HONS)

BOARD ADVISOR | STRATEGIC ADVISOR | EXECUTIVE LEADER

Strategy development and commercialisation · Business and team transformation

Francesca Leighton is an internationally recognised commercial executive, strategic advisor and transformational business leader with more than three decades of experience shaping growth, leading change and building high-performing organisations across global consumer and lifestyle businesses.

Throughout her career she has built a reputation for bringing clarity to complexity, identifying opportunity ahead of the market and translating ambitious vision into disciplined commercial execution. Her experience spans global corporations, founder-led businesses and growth-stage companies, giving her a distinctive ability to bridge corporate scale with entrepreneurial agility.

Francesca spent twenty years with Nike, where she held senior commercial leadership roles across Europe, North America, Latin America and Asia Pacific. She ultimately led one of Nike’s largest wholesale businesses, with responsibility for more than US\$3 billion in annual revenue and over US\$5.5 billion in retail sales. Across her career she has led commercial strategy, marketplace transformation, category leadership, omnichannel growth, organisational redesign and international expansion while developing high-performing teams across diverse markets and cultures.

Today, as Chief Commercial Officer of vetsak, she has led the strategic transformation of the international premium furniture and lifestyle brand. Through a comprehensive commercial reset spanning strategy, brand positioning, customer experience, digital commerce, organisational effectiveness and international growth, she has helped restore profitability and position the business for its next phase of sustainable expansion.

Alongside her executive leadership, Francesca serves as a trusted advisor to founders, leadership teams and investors. She is frequently sought out to bring perspective to complex commercial decisions, strengthen strategic direction and accelerate growth. Her work spans executive leadership, commercial strategy, market positioning, go-to-market strategy and execution, organisational design and investor readiness.

Known for combining commercial discipline with genuine curiosity and emotional intelligence, Francesca brings a balanced perspective that enables organisations to make confident decisions while remaining true to purpose. She believes sustainable success is created when strategy, people and culture are aligned behind a shared vision.

EXECUTIVE SNAPSHOT

30+ years international executive leadership

20 years at Nike leading businesses across Europe, North America, Latin America and Asia Pacific

Chief Commercial Officer leading strategic transformation and profitable growth at vetsak

US\$3B+ annual commercial leadership

US\$5.5B+ retail marketplace responsibility

Global expertise across consumer goods, sporting goods, retail, digital commerce and lifestyle brands

Trusted advisor to founders, SMEs and growth-stage businesses

Specialist in commercial transformation, international and omnichannel growth leadership and strategic advisory

BOARD EXPERTISE

Commercial strategy and growth

Business transformation

Consumer and retail

International expansion

Omnichannel and digital commerce

Brand and consumer strategy

Organisation design and effectiveness

Leadership and culture

Founder and CEO advisory

Governance and strategic decision making

BOARD ADVISORY CLIENTS

Walrus Wellness · Litknit · Kinda · HU Space · AdvisoryCloud

BOARD VALUE

Francesca brings the perspective of an executive who has successfully led complex international organisations while remaining closely connected to the realities of entrepreneurial businesses.

She is recognised for asking insightful questions, challenging constructively and helping leadership teams navigate growth, transformation and change with confidence, clarity and purpose. Her diverse real-world experience makes her uniquely positioned for board oversight.

SECTORS

Consumer goods · Sporting goods & fashion · Retail · Lifestyle · Luxury · Furniture & interiors · Wellness · Technology · Hospitality · Founder-led businesses · Scale-ups · International markets · Investor insights

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