

Jeff Dodds – Citation

Following a senior-level career in marketing for the automotive and telecoms sectors, today Jeff Dodds is the Chief Operating Officer at Virgin Media O2.

Last year he was part of the team that completed the record-breaking £32 billion merger between Virgin Media and O2 – a feat led remotely during lockdown, which prompted Jeff to acknowledge that life's biggest challenges often provide the biggest opportunities.

Looking back on his own education, Jeff recalls doing okay at school but getting more enjoyment from playing sport and making friends than from his academic studies. After completing his A-levels, he delayed the decision to go to university in favour of earning money; and secured his first career role for Volvo. It was only after starting work that Jeff's interest in academia grew, as he began to appreciate its practical application. Jeff went on to complete various finance qualifications, achieve a Master's in International Marketing Management and an additional Master's in Business Administration.

After working for Volvo and then Honda, Jeff's first move into telecommunications was to Virgin Media, where he went on to become the Chief Marketing Officer. Having moved to become Chief Executive of a Dutch mobile operator, he returned to Virgin Media in 2019 as their Chief Operating Officer.

Despite numerous high-profile marketing campaigns, including those featuring Richard Branson, Sir Mo Farah and Usain Bolt, and partnerships with England Rugby and Formula One, Jeff's proudest moments are those which have made a positive impact on society. These include, delivering gigabit broadband capability across the Virgin Media network, four years ahead of the government's target; campaigns to tackle digital exclusion, and joining forces with the charity Scope, to address the disability skills gap for more than one million disabled people across the UK.

Jeff's commitment to social inclusion has seen him advise government as a non-executive director and act as a trustee and director for two charities: the Dallaglio Foundation and The Valuable 500.

Jeff's advice to those entering the workplace today is to celebrate educational achievements but not be defined by them. He urges job seekers to demonstrate their curiosity, positivity and boundless enthusiasm and to seek employers who share their personal values.

Pro Chancellor. I have the honour to present Jeff Dodds and I ask you to confer upon him the degree of Doctor of Business Administration, honoris causa.