



## With love for creativity and business

WORDS: ELIN HELLSTRÖM AND FREDRIK HAGENIUS

**Alex Haddon is an expatriate Swede, an entrepreneur, a mother of two, three if you count her company IC Design, and the creator of the Swedish Chamber's brand identity.**

Twelve years ago, and only two years after graduating with a design degree, Alex did what her gut told her to do; just like her father and grandfather, she started her own company, the branding consultancy IC Design. Passionate about design, she wanted to take on the challenge of establishing her own business in one of the most creative cities in the world. When you meet Alex and listen to her talking about her business, animated and excited, you can tell it was the right decision.

"It is impossible to be creative if you do not have fun. To do something well you have to really enjoy it," Alex says. IC Design helps companies to establish, build and communicate brands with a keen focus on business and premium consumer brands.

**ENGLISH BRANDS** such as Fortnum & Mason and Sanderson, and professional services companies from Sweden like Poolia UK are among their customers. One of Alex's visions is to attract more companies with a Swedish heritage who want to strengthen their brands in

the UK. "The UK market is very different from the Swedish, we want to help them adapt and find their place."

Alex stresses that she is first and foremost a designer, and being the Managing Director does not stop her from overseeing the design projects. "I also try to have as much face to face contact

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with our clients as possible, to sit down and talk to them on a regular basis. It is very important to spend time to listen to what your clients are saying, to take on board as much feedback as possible, if you want to build strong relationships. So that we can also understand what the biggest communication challenges are."

**ESTABLISHING LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS** with clients is a key strategy. Fortnum & Mason, for example, has been a loyal client since the start, twelve years ago. "We do not have a large turnover of clients; we pick up three or four new clients per year." Alex allows things to take time,

building up confidence with potential clients and getting to know them well – what she calls 'Slow Marketing'. "This is a 'people buy people' industry."

Alex is also adamant that IC Design needs to be an ideas company, not just a design company. "We work with graphIC Design, but we look upon it as total brand communication. So that we can deliver value and return on investment, otherwise it is just pretty pictures."

**TODAY FIVE PEOPLE** work at IC Design. Alex explains that in her view, up to ten people is ideal for a creative consultancy. She wants to keep the company small and to concentrate on quality. If it grows too big it would become more about managing and take her further away from the actual projects. IC Design has been created to be her dream job, where she can be involved and creative.

She says that starting up her own business was a very natural thing to do. As an entrepreneur she enjoys the freedom to make her own decisions and the potential to try working in new and exciting ways.

 [WWW.ICDESIGN.CO.UK](http://WWW.ICDESIGN.CO.UK)