



catherine
SPROULE

INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,
THE RESPONSIBLE JEWELLERY COUNCIL

Learn, master, mentor. Three simple rules that guide Catherine Sproule's approach to work. "I believe it is vital to learn how each level of an organisation works by actually doing the job," she says. "I believe it is vital to master the tasks at each one of those levels and vital to then mentor those coming forward to show them how it's done."

These three steps have helped to shape Catherine's own career in retail and communications. And they've worked. This past year she has held the role of interim chief executive officer of the Responsible Jewellery Council, helping to advise, mentor and inspire the jewellery industry's approach to CSR practices from mine to retail. "I greatly valued the opportunity to be the RJC's Interim CEO from October 2013 to September 2014," she states. "Having been RJC's chief operating officer since 2006, it was a unique chance to work on a different level with the RJC board leading into the next phase of the RJC's development."

We capture Catherine during a pit stop in London, where the RJC is headquartered. She selects RJC member Beaverbrooks as the location for her Hot 100 photograph — a business that has been a great supporter of the Council.

So what does she think her peers make of her? "I think they would say that I am a firm believer in letting ideas flow forward through discussion about day-to-day experiences. This industry requires a lot of listening and consensus."

On the subject of listening, Catherine animatedly recalls one of her more interesting encounters of 2014. "On a flight to JCK Las Vegas my seatmate admired my jewellery and I admired his. When he asked me if I would like to see his diamond collection, I was amazed at the wide assortment of unique, beautifully-crafted diamond pieces he was carrying. I asked him where he was exhibiting and he gave me confused look. He said he was a rapper, performing that night in Las Vegas. The rest of the trip, we looked at photos of him with all the guests at Kanye West and Kim Kardashian's wedding. Lesson learned here — don't assume everyone with lovely jewellery, heading to Las Vegas in June, is a jeweller."

Back on terra firma, Catherine's working life is full of learning curves, and she is happy to impart a slice of advice to those considering a role in jewellery: "They must recognise that it is unique and operates like no other industry." She pauses, before adding: "Oh, and the jewellery industry needs more women, not just in the commercial side." Spoken like a woman in the know.

