

W A L P O L E

MY LIFE'S WORK

My Life's Work | Vartkess Knadjian, CEO, Backes & Strauss

In this weekly series, we meet a Walpole member chief executive to discover what makes them tick, how they define success, and what keeps them awake at night. This week Vartkess Knadjian, CEO of the world's oldest diamond company, Backes & Strauss.



Vartkess Knadjian is the Chief Executive Officer of Backes & Strauss, the world's oldest diamond company established in 1789, in London. Under his leadership over the past 30 years, Backes & Strauss has been transformed from a small diamond procurement office into one of the world's finest jewelled timepiece creators, where highest specification diamonds meet with time in its most precise form.

WHAT DOES BRITISH LUXURY MEAN TO YOU?

Refinement.

WHAT'S YOUR VISION (FOR THE COMPANY)?

To be the reference for bespoke high end diamond jewellery timepieces.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER YOUR GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT?

My family.

HOW DO YOU DEFINE SUCCESS?

Passion in your workplace.

WHAT'S YOUR GREATEST EXTRAVAGANCE?

Travelling on holiday with family.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT YOUR JOB?

It is a privilege to work with talented people who make things happen.

LEAST?

My daily caffeine overdose.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST REGRET?

Not competing in the Olympic Games.

WHAT'S THE SMARTEST BUSINESS IDEA YOU HAVE EVER HAD?

Migrating the company from a diamond B to B company to a watch brand.

WHAT WAS YOUR BIG BREAK?

When I got the job at Backes & Strauss in 1976.

WHAT WAS YOUR BIG BREAK?

When I got the job at Backes & Strauss in 1976.

WHAT IS YOUR GUIDING PRINCIPLE?

Integrity and loyalty.

WHICH LIVING PERSON DO YOU MOST ADMIRE?

Her Majesty The Queen.

WHICH WORDS OR PHRASES DO YOU MOST OVERUSE?

"Think outside the box".

WHAT KEEPS YOU AWAKE AT NIGHT?

Craftsmen.

WHAT DO YOU MOST VALUE IN YOUR FRIENDS?

Friendship and loyalty.

IN A PARALLEL LIFE, WHAT WOULD YOU BE DOING? (FANTASY JOB)

I'd be a watchmaker.

WHAT PIECE OF ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE SOMEONE ENTERING THE LUXURY INDUSTRY NOW?

Get digital!

Find out more backesandstrauss.com