

JOANNA CHIN
Co-founder &
chief operating officer
Langland



Team work

As a child, Joanna Chin's ambition was to be a Blue Peter presenter. It wasn't the fame – it was the sky-diving, the mountain climbing and the 'opportunities to make things' that appealed to her. Several decades on, she has set that particular dream aside. Instead, she and her husband Philip run an advertising agency and get to make things that influence the nation.

Their partnership has stood the test of time. For the past two decades the duo have worked together to build Langland, the Windsor-based agency, to lead the field in the healthcare sector. Joanna says that while she and her husband share the same values, their skills are very different.

'Phil is client-facing and gets engrossed in a project; I sweep around everything,' she says. 'Nothing has ever stagnated because I am always looking at new approaches to how we operate.'

Their agency has a knack for creating distinctive campaigns about unglamorous subjects. Last year, it took an incredible 50 prizes at the IPA Best of Health Awards for campaigns that included a cartoon promoting haemophilia awareness. And their 'Get Real' cinema spot for Pfizer, which features a man pulling a dead rat out of his mouth, has become notorious.

Family has always been an important inspiration to Joanna. As the eldest of five children born close together, Joanna was a very bossy child and says 'there was a strong expectation that I had to be the capable one.' Her mother, who had been discouraged from staying on at school by her own parents, went back to college when the five children were at school, later qualifying as a teacher. Now 70, she still works as the head of a children's centre.

That work ethic is one that Joanna has inherited. Within weeks of graduating from Manchester University, she landed a job with one of the largest market research firms. 'I did an ad of myself. In the middle was a picture of me which said: 'Give me a ring. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain.' I put it in the post at 6.30pm and got a phone call at 9.30 the next morning.'

At Langland she is prepared to get stuck into anything – you name it and she has done it, from financial planning and putting in place HR strategy to chairing management meetings. But she knows that it starts and ends with family, and that her time at work has to be balanced with time at home to keep her grounded. When she had twins in the late 1980s, she took three years out, but like her mother returned to work with gusto.

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