



...our
people

Foreword...

Waterstone's people are a group of special individuals held together by some very strong values. Passion for our industry and roles, providing great service to those around us, a strong respect for ourselves and others, and always looking for improvement in the way that we work.

You'll see us demonstrating these values every day all over the country, in our stores, at support centre in Brentford and Solihull, at the Book Hub in Burton, and all points in-between.

Why?

Because we've seen what happens when we live by these values, the personal satisfaction, the goodwill, and of course the successes they drive out.

Passion, service, respect and improvement are powerful words, but words alone are not what make the difference here... it's what we do.

These stories illustrate how Waterstone's people are continually translating these words into action.

Stories of passion...

Waterstone's people are passionate people. Passionate about sharing their experience of books, passionate about doing good work and building a successful organisation, and passionate about creating welcoming and inspiring bookshops.

This is what
passion
looks like at
Waterstone's...



The Tim treatment

Tim's story...

Tim Watson is our divisional manager for the east of England. He believes strongly in helping people to achieve their full potential, and is cited by many as the person who helped them on their way. There are a fair few of these, with Tim having worked at Waterstone's since 1988, joining as a bookseller in the Leicester store.

"I'm passionate about helping people get better at their jobs. For me, it's a case of spotting what they do best and finding ways to help them do it even better. Helping them understand their strengths and to take the most appropriate career path is very rewarding and Waterstone's has a framework which allows me to do this," remarks Tim.

With numerous store managers having served time with Tim, there is no question that he lives this value. What is also interesting is that people who have received the 'Tim treatment' continue to pass it on.

Stephen Allard, the manager of our Ipswich store, is one of them. He describes watching his team as watching "passion in action, everyone focused and energised, striving to do the job and motivated because they want to."

"For me, one of the best feelings about working as a manager is when you see a new bookseller who is passionate about books, yet not yet commercially focused, suddenly 'get it'. By helping them to work through the sections, pick books, write reviews and recommends, and watch the sales sheets as those books fly out of the shop, they see the difference they are making to the business, and the penny drops! I remember Tim Watson teaching me this and the feeling that I got then, and I still enjoy passing this feeling on," concludes Stephen.



Following her passion

Rachel's story...

Rachel Lodge heads up our children's section in our Bedford store. She is passionate about section ownership and proud to work for an organisation that encourages its people to follow their passion.

"I just love running the children's section. You get to speak to people of all ages about their love for children's books. You get to read so many new books – it's the most prolific section in terms of new titles, and once children get the bug they can't wait for the next instalment... and nor can I!" comments Rachel.

"It's different from any other section of the shop. It's full of life. It's fast and furious. You have to accept that just as soon as you've tidied it up it will look like there's been a big accident and that's what's just so perfect about it".

"Imagine a parent coming in with a child – who perhaps doesn't like reading. Imagine asking him what he does like. Football, sport, action-based TV programmes and films might be the response. Then imagine sending him away with a book that has all the things he likes in it and then seeing him return the next week to ask for another".

"When you work in the children's section and you know your product, you don't have to imagine. This type of scenario happens every day. Going home feeling satisfied happens every day too," concludes Rachel.





Inspiring people through books

Jen's Story...

Jen Long, one of our branch managers who has worked at both Boston and Romford exudes passion for what she does from the very first moment you talk to her. About her job, Jen says: "I've got the best job in the world, every day when I come in I'm excited because I'm making my living working with things I love."

Jen's passion for her job is threefold – it's about discovering great books, helping others to discover great books and supporting her team to develop. She says: "Talking about books with my team reignites my passion and gets me excited all over again. I love those moments on the shop floor when I hear a member of the team passing on a recommendation to a customer."

Jen's passion for books is infectious. Thanks to Jen, Dionne Underwood a member of her team discovered a book that she previously wouldn't have considered. Dionne thinks Jen is an inspiration, and says: "Since Jen's started we've talked a lot about books. I was dead against reading Twilight but I read it and loved it. Now I'm reading the next in the series as well. She's so passionate, I thought I had to give it a go. When Jen talks about books her eyes light up, it's really inspiring."

For Jen this describes the perfect moment in bookselling: "For me there's nothing better than convincing someone to read a book they didn't think they'd like and then finding out they love it as well."



Believing 100% per cent

Annie's story...

Passion for customer service is not limited to our bookshops; it is shared throughout the organisation. Annie Gallimore, our marketing manager based at support centre in Brentford, is known for it. Taking a leading role in the development of our loyalty card scheme, Annie has witnessed what can happen when you harness the passion our people share for our customers.

“To me, passion means believing one hundred percent in what you are doing and getting the most out of it by putting everything you can in. I put everything I could into introducing the Waterstone's Card. The joy of working on this project has been that everyone else at Waterstone's has done so too”.

“The result? We have a sophisticated database allowing us to improve and personalise our service to our customers and our support to publishers and the wider industry; we now have two million cardholders and are still going strong; the card is driving 60 per cent of our online sales and it has changed the way our managers and booksellers think about their core customers,” advises Annie.

“One thing we got absolutely right was to give ownership of this initiative to our booksellers and customers from day one. By involving them from the beginning we have developed a scheme for which there is a true need, and to which everyone feels committed. For example, the idea to reward eco points to customers who don't use carrier bags came from one of our booksellers who is passionate about the environment. This is a value Waterstone's shares and offering an incentive is a very tangible way of showing this and just one example of the type of conversation the card is helping booksellers to start,” concludes Annie.

Putting fire in their bellies

Luke's story...

Luke Taylor is the manager of both our bookshops in Leicester. He is quite rightly proud about the team of booksellers across these two stores and about the performances they have been giving since our internal training programme Get Selling was rolled out in his region.

“Why am I so passionate about Get Selling? Because it encapsulates all our values: passion, service, respect and improvement – and provides a compass for each store to use in its own way.”

“In many ways it’s about going back to basics: putting our customers at the centre of everything we do; treating our booksellers with respect; giving them the tools and support to do what they are passionate about; recommending books to our customers. It’s also about putting measures in place to ensure we continue to get better and better at this,” says Luke.

“The best thing is that the booksellers love it. They’re very excited about how many new ways they can find to recommend books to customers. They’re enjoying the freedom to find these ways and they’re coming to work every morning with a fire in their belly and a smile on their face.”



Stories of service...

Waterstone's people pride themselves on providing great service.

This means always being helpful and ensuring customers have a great experience with us, doing whatever we can to help colleagues to succeed, and working hard to understand our communities, relating to them, and respecting them.

This is what
good
service
looks like at
Waterstone's...





Creating a buzz

Caroline's story...

'Leaving people feeling in some way positive' is something Caroline Dominey assistant manager Newcastle Emerson Chambers' excels at.

"Caroline puts customers first – all of the time. She has an innate ability to spot customers who need help before anyone else does. It's almost as if she has in-built antennae. Not only can she spot customers who need help, she knows how to approach them and help them find what they are looking for. She knows how to make the experience enjoyable," comments Julie Howells, store manager.

"What is it about her? Well, she has a warmth and boundless energy that creates a buzz wherever she is in the shop. It's the kind of buzz that is infectious. Many of our colleagues have picked it up from her.

"That's not the whole story though. Her antennae can tune into colleagues needing help too. She keeps a close eye on the team at all times, providing any necessary feedback and inspiring them to give their best. Whether selling or supporting others, Caroline never falters. She never complains. She puts in all the extra hours and inspires others to follow her lead. Her energy breathes energy into those around her and service levels excel throughout the shop," concludes Julie.

"I just love giving, excellent customer service. It comes down to creating a positive experience from the moment a customer walks into the shop to the moment they leave. We are lucky to have many people in this store who excel at this, so we have set up a buddying system for new recruits, encouraging them to shadow such people for a while. Seeing great service in action is the best way to learn it," says Caroline.

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Beyond the call of duty

John's story...

John Lewis used to work in stores and chose to move to support centre taking with him his great service ethos. He currently works as the Buyer for Business and Computing & Economics. “John is a breath of fresh air. It’s not just what he does. It’s how it does it – the way in which he communicates and behaves – always ‘taking care’. To me that is what good service is about,” explains Scott Coning, buying manager and John’s current line manager.

“When you ask John to do something he engages completely. Not only does he deliver what it is that you asked him for, he always finds some way to add value or to do it in a better, more efficient or more customer friendly way. He somehow adds a touch of humanity to whatever he does.

“Last October, for example, when we were organising our Christmas sales conference we had the idea to mock up a shop in the hotel, showing all the recommended books and how they could be presented front of store. Initially, I gave John the task of ordering the books from the publishers. He did this, but with his trademark enthusiasm he also took responsibility to get all the books to the venue and to ensure the mock shop was set up according to a planogram – something he designed for managers to take away with them.

“He had already gone beyond the call of duty but found a way to add still more value. Upon breaking down the stand and wondering what to do with it, John suggested setting it up at support centre in an empty room and selling the books to colleagues and donating the money made to our chosen charity. He had shown great service to the business, his colleagues and the wider community, all in one go!” concludes Scott.

“Making the job as easy and as pleasurable as possible for colleagues, helping them to succeed, that’s what good service is about. Having spent over five years on the shop floor I know what it’s like out there. “It would be very easy to get into a protective bubble where you forget to think about how realistic it might be for the booksellers to implement new initiatives during a busy period. So I try not to, and I try to always think of ways to make their lives easier,” he adds, in a typically modest manner.

Power in the community

Philip's story...

In a small market town in Suffolk, a team of teachers, parents and pupils, former and current, came together one Saturday morning to replace the pond lining in the school's environment corner. Conversation flowed during the course of the morning, turning at one point to 'best book read this year.'

"Without a doubt *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* – if you can count a graphic novel as reading," enthused the deputy head. "Ah, I read that in an hour. I couldn't put it down," added Jake, a 17-year-old former pupil whose mum teaches at the school and had also enjoyed the book.

"Yes, it was that guy in Waterstone's who put me onto it. What's he called? Anyway, we've known him for years. Jake has grown up with him. We'd go in and he'd show Jake yet another book he'd enjoy, and sure enough he did. When I was in there before Christmas, he had a stack of books by the till and seemed to be hand-picking people he thought would enjoy it to recommend it to. When he saw me, he simply handed me one and said, "Here's another one for Jake".

"Is that the same guy who arranged for Nick Sharratt to come here?" asked the head teacher. There was a chorus of yesses, for everyone knew who she meant and had seen him at the Nick Sharratt event. "He's phenomenal. I've never witnessed such an event so well organised in my 30 years of teaching. I hardly had to do anything – he had it sewn up from beginning to end. The children loved it!

"Yes, a special thing for my children to have; books signed by a well known author to treasure and to show their children and grandchildren. They'll remember the day they met Nick Sharratt forever – and it was at this school. Do you know what, you created a happy memory for them all that day? You ought to do things like that more often," piped up a parent.

"What is that guy's name anyway?" concluded the head teacher.

His name is Philip Daws. He is the children's bookseller at our Bury St Edmunds store.



Stories of respect...

Respect is something we take seriously at Waterstone's. We realise the importance of listening to the views of colleagues, whatever their roles or place of work, listening to and seeking the views of our customers, and identifying and responding to trends across the industries in which we are involved. The way we work shows that we respect Waterstone's wider mission and goals.

This is what
respect
looks like at
Waterstone's...





Balancing different needs

Adam's story...

For Adam Janes, respect is all about being aware of the workload in stores and managing the flow of communication to reflect that. In his role as store communications advisor, Adam juggles the needs of support centre teams to communicate with stores with the volume of work that stores have to do.

The promotional planning pack, which details upcoming promotions, is a good example of this, he says: "There are so many different people involved in the promotional planning pack that signing it off and getting it right first time can be difficult. It's about balancing and respecting the needs of all the people involved."

Respect has another important meaning for Adam and that is in the work we do to reduce our impact on the environment. As a member of the Corporate Social Responsibility committee (responsible for our environmental policy and the work we do to support charities and local communities) respecting the environment is really important to Adam. Reducing our impact on the environment can also have the added bonus of reducing work in the business, he says: "As well as being about saving the planet, CSR can free up the time and energy of people in the business to focus on our key priorities. By switching off reports, we're not only saving paper, but reducing work as well."

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Doing something quite extraordinary

Elyse's story...

“Respect means acting with integrity, always being honest, always being fair,” believes Tim Watson, divisional manager of the eastern region.

“During the launch of the last Harry Potter book, Elyse Goldsworthy, who managed our Bluewater store at the time, did something quite extraordinary. Late on the Saturday night, after two full days and nights touring the region transferring stock from one shop to another, I had a conversation with her. I mentioned that our Cambridge shop was running low on stock and that in the very competitive environment of that city, this was not good.

“On Sunday morning, I received a call from our Cambridge store: ‘Hi, Tim, thought you should know Elyse has just left. She drove here very early this morning with a boot full of books from her shop, and is now on her way back to open up.’ Incredible,” remembers Tim.

Elyse went to the trouble to take her own stock, risking losing out on sales herself, because she saw the bigger picture. Although she could have kept (and probably sold) the stock, she felt the fair thing was to give it to Cambridge. Driven by respect for her colleagues, for Waterstone's as a whole and for our customers, Elyse went out of her way to do the right thing.

“Elyse has a lot of integrity and was motivated out of respect. She earned a lot of respect and trust that day, but it was not a one-off. Respect is her way,” concludes Tim.

Pulling off great feats

Claire's story...

Already credited with successfully merging our two Cheltenham stores in August 2007 and organising and running the bookselling part of Europe's largest literature festival – the Cheltenham Literature festival, in 2008, manager Claire Minnet was asked to join the Waterstone's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) taskforce. Ghlas Ferguson, Claire's regional manager at the time said: "She is a real asset to this group," remarking that: "Claire works in such a way as to command an enormous amount of respect from others. Everything she does is planned and organised with hallmark efficiency, she involves herself fully in every challenge, and she has a way of galvanising others into action on the things she is passionate about."

And of course, the CSR taskforce will give Claire a lot of things to be passionate about.

"I am proud to work for an organisation which genuinely respects the impact it makes on the planet and within the communities it serves and which encourages its colleagues to take responsibility. I am really looking forward to playing my part in the CSR taskforce" concludes Claire, who has just completed a degree in environmental science whilst working full-time.

"As knowledgeable as she is passionate about the environment, Claire is the perfect person to inspire others to take action," agrees Gerry Johnson, managing director of Waterstone's, who heads up the taskforce.

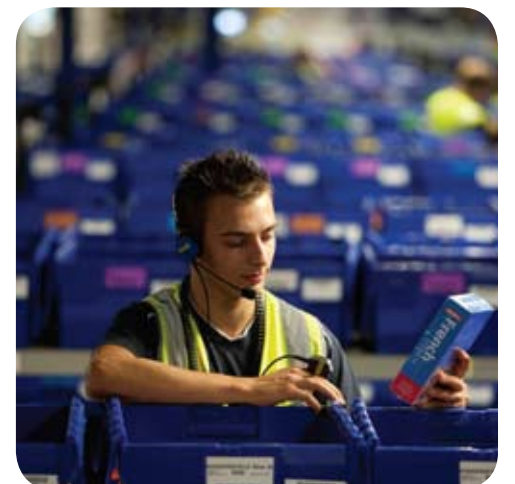


Stories of improvement...

Waterstone's people continuously improve the way we work as individuals, in teams and as part of the wider business, always innovating to meet future challenges, thinking beyond "I can do that" and breaking boundaries.



This is what
improvement
looks like at
Waterstone's...





Setting new standards

Liz's story...

From Bristol to Bath, run-down shops to top performing shops and anywhere in between, Liz Stanley has a habit of improving our bookshops. What's her secret? According to her manager, Chris Townsend: "It's just her way, her way with people, her commercial nous and her passion for progress."

"Liz can walk into any shop and immediately see how to improve it. In Bristol Galleries, she inherited some big challenges. The stock was wrong. Her colleagues were demotivated and the whole place just needed a good dusting. She dusted it," comments Chris.

"When she took over Bath, it was already a jewel in our crown, yet still she added value, setting new standards, empowering the team to take ownership and fostering pride."

"She's delivered so consistently we just let her get on with it now. She did scare me last Christmas though. When I walked into her shop I could not see the spinner we traditionally have by our doors selling all non-book related products. Instead there was the local book section. She had moved the spinner to the children's area. 'What have you done?' I asked. 'Liz simply presented me with the sales figures. In moving the spinner she has single-handedly generated several thousand pounds worth of additional revenue. That's what improvement looks like," concludes Chris.

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Allowing extraordinary things to happen

Caroline' story...

Caroline Morris knows how to innovate. She writes a regular newsletter called 'Criminal Intent' for the crime readers in our Cheltenham store. The newsletter has become legendary amongst these readers, who are growing in numbers as each edition is published.

The newsletter is not born just from the desire to improve and innovate though. It is a by-product of the Cheltenham store embodying Waterstone's values of passion, service and respect too.

"Our manager is extremely service-focused. She runs an efficient shop that sets extraordinary standards. This gives us the space and encouragement to innovate. She respects us and our knowledge of and passion for our specialist areas. Working in such an environment allows me, for example, to write my newsletter for crime readers. Freeing up time for someone who knows the specialist titles and the audience, giving them a little space to tend to them with love and attention, allows extraordinary things to happen," comments Caroline.

Adding value, making a difference

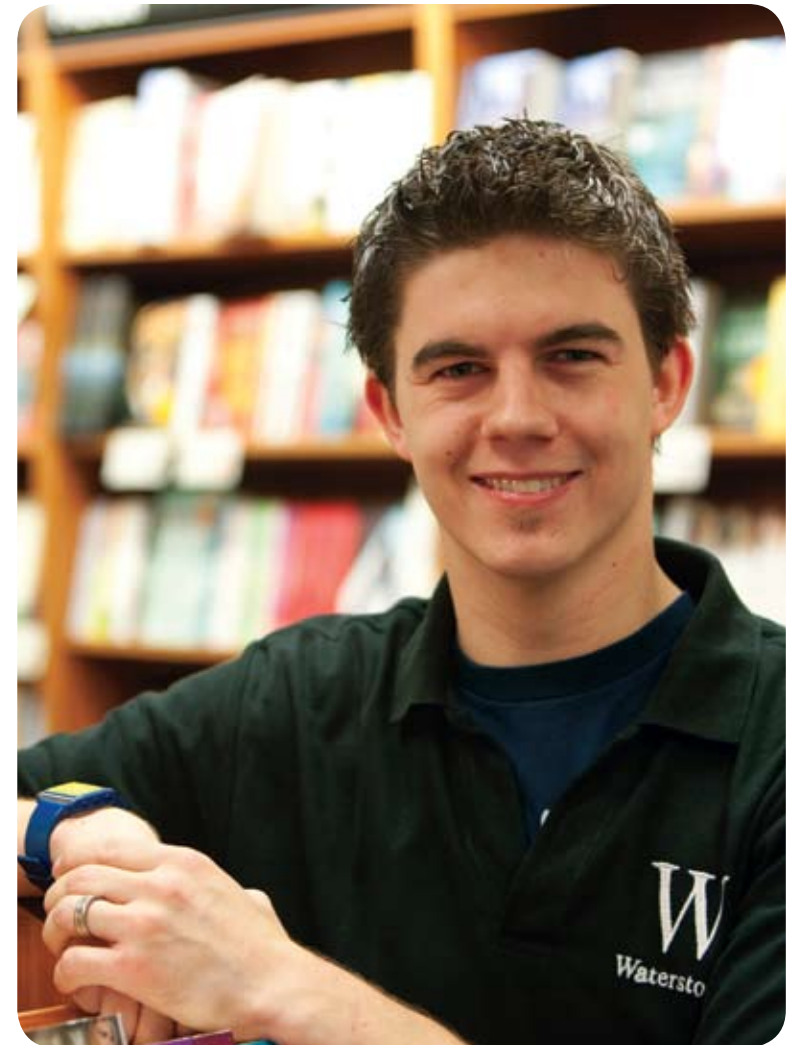
Karl's story...

Karl Rushton, our lead bookseller in Coventry, is passionate about providing better things for the community he works in, and believes that the freedom Waterstone's gives him to develop local marketing initiatives allows him to do just that.

“Organisations that act responsibly towards the communities they serve add value in ways their competitors just can't. This is why I am always looking for new opportunities,” he explains.

His team has not been short on ideas or delivery. Writing to local schools to find out the recommended text books and drawing attention to them on the shop's shelves with shelf talkers; setting up a cult fiction section; setting up a multicultural reading section – all initiatives started at Karl's shop that are to be rolled out nationally and that contributed to his team winning the Waterstone's Local Marketing Award for 2007–2008.

“There is no other high street chain where you can make such a difference. It's very exciting coming to work every morning, knowing that you can do something new if you want to. Seeing the impact of what you do, be it in the sales from the dump-bin of recommends you put together the week before, or the sales from the local authors section you organised the signing for last month, it all makes you feel immensely satisfied and proud. It keeps the passion alive,” concludes Karl.

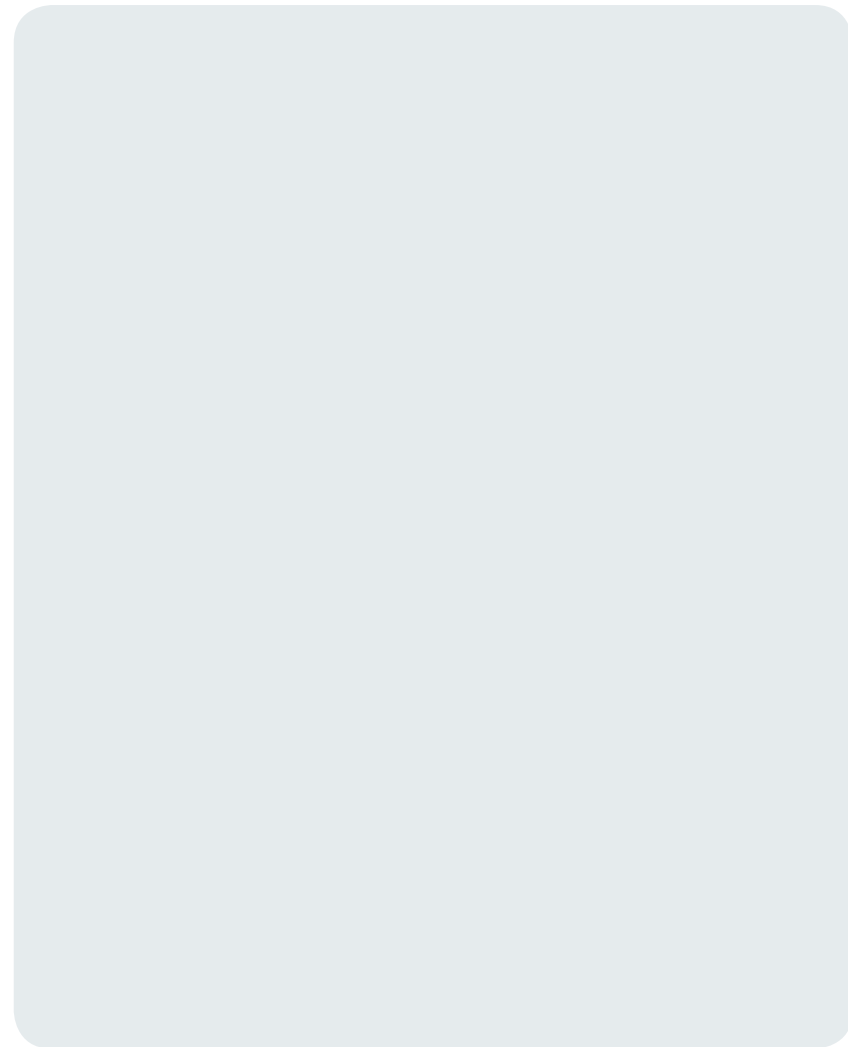


In summary...

You now have a taste of what it is like to work at Waterstone's.

The values we describe in this booklet serve as a compass. Everybody here, from the board down, uses them to guide the decisions they make and the way they behave.

These values will inform your journey throughout our organisation. In the practical sense from induction, to learning and developing in your current role, perhaps to taking on responsibilities of a new one. Also, in the personal sense, as you discover more about yourself and your special talents.



Stories of improvement...

Waterstone's people continuously improve the way we work as individuals, in teams and as part of the wider business, always innovating to meet future challenges, thinking beyond "I can do that" and breaking boundaries.

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