

Jon Hague

Vice President Unilever R&D Operations/Open Innovation



Jon is Vice President, Operations and Open Innovation, in Unilever's Global R&D organization. Jon is responsible for strategy, innovation excellence, data excellence, organizational efficiency and partnership capability across the whole of Unilever's € 900 Million R&D effort, spanning major sites in Europe, North America, China and India, and employing 6,000 R&D professionals. In this capacity Jon is a member of Unilever's global R&D leadership team, which oversees the delivery of innovation and new product and process technology for all of Unilever's € 53 Bn of turnover.

Prior to this position, Jon was Unilever's first Vice President Open Innovation, between November 2008 and April 2016, and successfully embedding a number of unique models for partnership in the company, which today generate several hundred million Euros of impact each year. Jon was instrumental in driving the creation of the Materials Innovation Factory (MIF), which opened in April 2016. The MIF is a flagship investment by the University of Liverpool, HEFCE and Unilever in a unique facility to accelerate materials discovery and for Unilever, integration of new technology into better FMCG products. The centre is at the leading edge of using automation and computation in Research and Development, and operates the unique "Liverpool Model" for industry academic partnership.

Jon is a member of the Hartree Centre Advisory Board and is the Unilever leader for the Partnership Steering Board between Unilever and the Hartree Centre.

Before becoming Vice President Open Innovation, Jon had a long, varied and international career in Unilever. His career started in 1990 in Port Sunlight, after a degree and PhD in Materials Science from the University of Sheffield. After seven years working as a scientist in Hair R&D, Jon was posted to Jakarta, Indonesia in 1997 to build a Regional Innovation Centre for Skin Cleansing and Care. This coincided with the fall of the Soeharto Regime, and so to some unique business and personal challenges. Jon moved on from Jakarta in 2001, then working for five years in Rolling Meadows, near Chicago, Illinois, leading a Global Innovation for Deodorants and landing the innovations that led to market leadership for Unilever in the North American business.

Jon is Chair of the Innovation Board for the Liverpool City Region, and a member of the Liverpool City Region LEP Board. These are positions that extend his experience and abilities to guiding the Innovation plan and priorities for the Liverpool City Region, striving to link the world class science capabilities of the city region to direct economic impact.

Jon is married with two sons, aged 25 and 30, and is a regular early morning dog walker, clocking up around 2,000 miles over the course of a year. Winter sees him on the terraces at Bramall Lane, following Sheffield United, and in summer playing as an opening batsman for Sefton Park Cricket Club in Liverpool.