

SIMON LINARES

Major Career Roles

Chair, Dreams Come True Charity
Group HR Director, Direct Line Group
Group Human Resources Director, Telefónica Digital

Other Career Highlights

Director, Diageo

Simon Linares has extensive international experience in senior executive and non-executive roles across consumer goods, telecommunications, financial services and digital businesses. Over a career spanning commercial and HR leadership, he has led people, culture and communication agendas for complex, multi-geography organisations while serving as a trusted partner to CEOs and boards.

Most recently, Simon was Group HR Director at Direct Line Group, a FTSE 100 company, where he led HR, Communications, Public Affairs and CSR strategies for almost six years until 2020. In the 20 years prior to Direct Line, he headed Human Resources for O2 across Europe and for Telefónica's global digital businesses, and held a series of commercial and HR roles at Diageo, working across multiple geographies and cultures.

He was also on the board of The Nottingham Building Society from 2019 to 2025 as a Non-Executive Director and is a member of the Risk and Chair of Remuneration Committees, bringing a people and culture lens to board discussions on strategy, risk and performance. Simon is also Chair of the Dreams Come True charity, which helps life-limited or seriously disabled children and their families create positive memories, deepening his perspective on purpose, empathy and impact beyond the corporate sphere.

Throughout his professional career, Simon has been interested in what enables people to perform at their best while remaining personally and professionally fulfilled. He believes each person is unique and capable of becoming a "bigger and better" version of themselves, and he draws on his extensive experience working with senior leaders to help clients think through their situation and options, building practical strategies to achieve their goals. His style is grounded, thoughtful and challenging in equal measure, focused on increasing self-awareness, sharpening decision-making and aligning personal values with organisational demands.

Simon brings deep cross-sector expertise in:

• Leadership development & personal fulfilment – helping senior leaders clarify their goals, expand their impact and build careers that balance high performance with meaning and wellbeing.
• People, culture & organisation – leading HR, communications and CSR strategies across FTSE 100 and global businesses, aligning culture with strategy and performance.
• Major business and cultural change – driving transformation at both strategic and executional levels to ensure meaningful, lasting organisational impact.
• Board governance, risk & remuneration – contributing to risk and remuneration committees with a strong focus on leadership, succession, reward and culture.

He is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and has been ranked among the top five most influential HR practitioners in the UK, reflecting his reputation as a leader who connects people, performance and strategy.