

'MY LIFE IN A DAY'

MELANIE WHELAN

The CEO of SoulCycle talks about the excitement of seeing a business flourish



Melanie thrives on always being on the go

I work long hours and travel a lot so, when I'm home, I get up very early to be a part of my two children's morning routine. First off, I check my emails, the news headlines and my schedule for the day, then I'll have a seltzer water with lemon, a cold brew coffee and a banana while breakfasting with the kids. After the school run, I head to one of the 22 studios we have in New York five days a week, not just to train, but also to talk with the teams and riders – I learn so much more spending 30 minutes in a studio lobby than sitting at a desk.

After that, the rest of my day is spent at the office in meetings, covering everything from real estate selection and marketing campaign reviews to retail collection design (we launched our own collection of performance and lifestyle clothing, Soul by SoulCycle, earlier this year). When I started with SoulCycle (soulcycle.com) over seven fun-filled years ago, there were seven studios in New York. Now we have 90-plus in the US and Canada, and a new UK site. It's thrilling to see how much demand there is for what we do!

CLASS ENERGY

'I wasn't the best athlete at school, but I loved playing team sports. I studied engineering at Brown University for two years to become an architect but, after realising that all the labs and science weren't for me, I got my first job with



Sense of community



Inspiring instructors

Starwood Hotels on the corporate development team. It turned out to be a fascinating training ground, which led me to work for Virgin America, before I became vice president of business development for the gym brand, Equinox. I was responsible for developing business extension initiatives, including the 2011 acquisition of SoulCycle. I'd already tried a class; the lobby energy felt amazing and the class was different from any other I'd ever taken.

We scour the globe to recruit the best instructors who treat each class like a live production, with each one having a unique playlist, energy and inspirational message. What this translates into is 60 people having a shared, music-driven, empowering experience in the dark, with candlelight, and no technology around.'

FITNESS FAMILY

'Our riders say they come to us for the workout, but they stay for the connections

– friendships, community and everything that happens in the studio and lobby. Because we're a community business, we're very careful in selecting the communities we enter. We've been studying the UK market for years to make sure we find the best locations to create our experience. We're so excited about our first location in Soho. We don't think there's anything like it in London.

I'm always on the go, and find meals slow me down, so I snack throughout the day on boiled eggs, high-protein energy bars and unsalted roasted almonds. After a hard day's work, I like to end my day by spending some time with my husband, reading a good book and using my jade roller, which I find super relaxing, before heading to bed early.'

MELANIE'S TRAINING TIPS

- 'Think progress, not perfection. Little accomplishments, like another turn on the resistance knob or lifting a heavier weight are better measures of progress than how you look.'
- 'Workouts should benefit you mentally as well as physically. Go inside your head, listen to music or push yourself. Relax. Have fun!'
- 'Choose workouts that enable you connect to community, inspiration and self-development, so you can become a better version of yourself.'