

# MARY PORTAS

LONDON  
SPEAKER  
BUREAU

## ▪ Branding and Retail Expert



## Topics

- Branding
- Innovation
- Innovators
- Marketing

Retail expert Mary Portas is probably the UK's foremost authority on retail and brand communication. As founder of one of London's most respected retail & brand communication agencies, Yellowdoor, Mary is recognised throughout the trade as the Queen of Shops.

After beginning her retail career as a Saturday girl in John Lewis, Mary later became responsible for windows and display at Harrods and then Topshop. Mary went on to join Harvey Nichols in 1989 and is credited with transforming the brand into the world-renowned store and restaurant group it is today. After leading the transformation Mary left Harvey Nichols as Creative Director in 1997.

Her foresight and unique knowledge of brands, retail trends and consumer insights prompted her to launch Yellowdoor when she saw a need for integrated and creative brand communication in the retail, fashion, luxury and beauty sectors. Under Mary's guidance, Yellowdoor has created category-challenging campaigns for a wide range of brands on the high street including Clarks, Louis Vuitton, Oasis, Swarovski, Dunhill, Boden, Thomas Pink, Westfield London, and Patek Philippe.

Mary's first book *Windows: The Art of Retail Display*, published by Thames and Hudson in five languages, quickly became the worldwide authority on window display. In April 07, Mary's second book *How to Shop*, was published through BBC books offering the ultimate 21st Century guide to retail therapy.

In 2005 Mary was commissioned to write a weekly feature in the Saturday Telegraph Magazine – *Shop!* – Reviewing the state of the nation's shops. Mary now leads the panel judging the annual Telegraph Best Shops in Britain Awards, and her column has become one of the retail industry's (and disgruntled shopper's) definitive reads.

May 2007 saw the beginning of Mary's television career with the launch of the BBC2 series *Mary Queen of Shops*, produced by Optomen Television. The show took Mary behind the scenes of the fashion retail world, challenging her to rescue a series of failing independent boutiques. A second series aired in Summer 2008 and, following their success, Mary was nominated for two Royal Television Society Awards.

In Spring 2009, Mary responded to the two critical crises facing our world – the financial and the environmental – in her own unique way, with the series *Mary Queen of Charity Shops*. Mary donned a Save the Children tabbard, taking the charity's worst performing store – Orpington – and transforming it into its best. Mary has since become the Global Retail Ambassador for Save the Children and has pioneered a new type of charity shopping with her 'Living & Giving' concept – recently opening her third permanent Living & Giving Shop in London's Primrose Hill.

On 19 June 2009, in a ceremony at Galashiels, Herriot-Watt University awarded

Portas a Doctorate of Letters in recognition of her career and her contribution to the advancement of marketing and brand communication within the retail sector.

For her third and final BBC series of Mary Queen of Shops, Mary took on the supermarkets by rescuing six British shopkeepers and showcasing their struggle to stay in business in June 2010.

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