

Sir Richard Branson

Sir Richard Branson is Founder of the Virgin Group. Virgin is one of the world's most irresistible brands and has expanded into many diverse sectors from travel to telecommunications, health to banking and music to leisure. Having started Virgin as a mail order record retailer in 1970, Richard founded Virgin Records. After the first Virgin artist, Mike Oldfield, released 'Tubular Bells', Virgin Records went on to sign household names from the Sex Pistols to The Rolling Stones. There are now more than 40 Virgin companies worldwide in over 35 countries.

Richard has challenged himself with many record-breaking adventures, including the fastest ever Atlantic Ocean crossing, a series of oceanic balloon journeys and kitesurfing across the Channel. He has described Virgin Galactic, the world's first commercial space line, as being "the greatest adventure of all". He is also a record breaker online, voted the UK's number one Twitter user, the world's most social CEO and the world's most followed person on LinkedIn. He maintains a daily blog on virgin.com with more than 40 million followers across five social networks.

Since starting youth culture magazine as a student aged 16, Richard has found entrepreneurial ways to provoke positive change in the world. In 2004 he established non-profit foundation Virgin Unite to tackle tough social and environmental problems and strives to make business a force for good. Most of his time is now spent working with Virgin Unite and organisations it has incubated, such as The Elders, The Carbon War Room (now merged with RMI), The B Team, Ocean Unite and the Branson Centre of Entrepreneurship. Richard was awarded a knighthood for services to entrepreneurship. He lives on Necker Island with his wife Joan, and has two children, Holly and Sam, and five grandchildren.