

Women at the Top Leadership Research

It is always interesting to be curious about the ripple effect of role models, inspiring teachers, trail blazers bravery. How are those doors opened, glass ceilings dissolved, seemingly insurmountable cliffs scaled, limitations challenged, assumptions overturned? Is it simply one courageous or foolhardy person or a combination of many making those ripples spread way beyond what might be thought possible?

Whilst co-ordinating BWB – Bristol Women in Business from corporates and large businesses when meeting in person was possible the opportunity to input another dimension became clear. Inspirational women at the top by sharing their story have influenced, intrigued and encouraged the realisation that we are all role models, inspiring teachers, brave trailblazers.

As a result, my inspiration has been to invite women at the top to share their thoughts regarding leadership and create this series of interviews. I began with five questions and as the first interview was coming to a close two more questions were determined to be asked – What question would you like to have been asked? And then to ask the interviewee to answer it which was fun. And the other question was ... who would you like to be interviewed or suggest that I interview?

Patricia Patilla Sanchez – Technical Service Representative, Rolls-Royce plc

tenth in the series – interviewed on 23 September 2021 by Halina Jaroszewska

You have no doubt inspired a lot of aspiring leaders – from where (or from whom) do you draw your inspiration?

I've always been interested in what makes people different and I have aimed to understand the path that has led them to their current role. I am so grateful to the inspiring mentors I've had wherever I've worked; these people have been key when I've needed to overcome challenges by approaching them with a different mindset. Lately I draw my inspiration from several podcasts such as "How to Fail by Elisabeth Day" and "Feel More Live Better" by Dr Rangan Chatterjee. In these interviews I value the importance given to the human aspect of achievements and the lessons you learn from when things haven't gone as you initially planned.

What would you say have been the biggest developments in leadership that you have witnessed in your years as a leader?

I've witnessed leadership shifts from mainly results driven to being more people oriented. I've also seen the huge advantage of diverse leadership styles that leverage the strengths of team members and focus on their development beyond their current role.

What do you think are the most significant trends and challenges faced by leadership today?

In my opinion, the first challenge for our leaders is to find the right way to ensure employees are motivated. Have the right level of challenging work to help them grow and develop as well as ensuring they feel passionate about being part of your organisation. Nowadays most companies are facing employee retention challenges. Nevertheless, with the expected demands of continued availability and the expectations that we must act on every demand immediately, leaders also should consider the mental aspect of their workforce to protect their mental health and prevent burnout. Finally, today's leaders need to be flexible to continuously adapt as to how the workplace is evolving, an example of this is the shift we've witnessed over the past 18 months where most of the teams have changed from an office environment to working remotely.

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What do you think today's leaders should be doing to keep moving leadership to a new level?

Considering the trends and challenges I have mentioned earlier, I believe that leaders need to be highly adaptable, extremely resilient and have a great dose of empathy.

What advice would you give to young aspiring leaders?

I would advise young aspiring leaders to dare to go for leadership roles and not to be afraid of failure. We're always learning even when the plan does not evolve as you initially envisaged. I would encourage them to keep an eye for role models and inspiration everywhere, recognising which traits of personality or aspects of their leadership style you value. Finally, I would urge everyone to be champions of the change they want to find not only in business but also in the community.

What question would you like to have been asked?

What advice would you give to your 18 year old self?

Who would you like to have / recommend be interviewed?

Ewelina Gregolinska - Engagement Manager at McKinsey

Jacqueline Sutton - Former Chief Customer Officer at Rolls-Royce plc

Elizabeth Day - Writer and host of podcast "How to Fail with Elizabeth Day"

Details of previous interviews in Series One

1. Fiona Jordan - Associate Dean [External Engagement], Faculty of Business and Law UWE (03.02.17)
2. Michele Crossman – Senior Leader in Defence (24.03.17)
3. Katharine Finn – Regional Leader, PwC West and Wales; Assurance Partner (15.03.17)
4. Laura Stambouleh – Partner, Public Sector Advisory – UK Consulting, Cushman & Wakefield (09.05.17)
5. Isla Baliszewska – UK Director Smart Coaching Training Ltd (26.06.17)
6. Fleur Bothwick, OBE – Director of Diversity & Inclusive Leadership, EMEA Ernst & Young LLP (15.10.17)
7. Donna Whitehead – Pro Vice Chancellor and Executive Dean, Faculty of Business and Law UWE (15.10.17)
8. Sarah Pullen – Commercial Director - Regionals, Reach plc (30.06.17)

Details of previous interviews in Series Two

9. Vicky Gardner – Director, ZiaBia Events Consultancy (01.09.21)

Check them all out at [Women at the Top - Halina Jaroszewska](#)

**To discuss how Halina Jaroszewska can help
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Halina helps fast track and aspiring leaders, also key teams, to turn uncertainty into a powerful tool for exponential growth. Her aim is to enable clients to switch surviving into thriving, take business and personal performance to the next level and maximise their potential during challenging times.