

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?

Kate Redshaw – Senior Associate, Burges Salmon LLP

eleventh in the series – interviewed on 9 November 2021 by Halina Jaroszewska

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

As a child growing up in the 70s I was unusual as I had a mother who worked full-time. I think she was probably my first inspirational leader even if I didn't necessarily appreciate it at the time choosing instead to wonder why she wasn't at home like the other mums! Determination, work ethic and a desire to deliver to the highest possible standards whilst at the same time being mindful of how you treat those you work with were at her core.

Since then, I have looked to others, both male and female, for inspiration. My first proper boss was a wonderful inspiration – kind, patient, fair and excellent at his job – I owe much to him in terms of how I conduct myself at work and deliver the end product.

I have school and university friends and friends from my days as a trainee solicitor who have gone on to achieve great things – they were never the ones who bragged or showed off – they have just quietly got on with doing what they do very well were rewarded and recognised accordingly.

And being inspired is an ongoing process – I regularly meet people who inspire and impress me – lucky me!

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

I think people – thank goodness – are better at appreciating that good leaders don't all look and sound the same. Different life experiences offer different perspectives and that can only be a good thing.

Leaders now are more prepared to get down in the trenches with their team – the sense that we are all in it together working towards the same goal is much more prevalent. Today's leaders are also more willing to accept that they haven't always got everything right and that they don't always know best. A good leader is someone who is prepared to listen to and reflect on what others have to say before deciding on a course of action.

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

There are a lot of 'modern day' issues to grapple with outside of BAU. Cancel culture, green-washing, virtue-signalling and so on – all hot potatoes where it is easy to make the wrong call – and in the unforgiving whirl of social media the fall-out can be catastrophic.

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

Keep modern. Understand what's going on – how is tech being used, what about AI, how do people want to work post pandemic – it's easy to get left behind or to judge based on your own perceptions and views – which you might just find are outdated. Is it you who is out of step and not others?

What advice would you give to young aspiring leaders?

Look around you – if you like working with someone, take the time to identify what it is you think they do well and look to build that into your ways of working. When seeking out role models, don't be disheartened if you don't see someone exactly like you – adopt the qualities you admire in a range of people and build your own role model!

What question would you like to have been asked?

How have you changed as your career has progressed?

Who would you like to have / recommend be interviewed?

Sarah Embleton, mediator and workplace investigations expert, Resolution at Work

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, EMEIA 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)
10. Patricia Patilla Sanchez – Technical Service Representative, Rolls Royce plc (23.09.21)

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.