

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 coordinating 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?

Heledd Wyn – Director and Head of Private Client & Long Term Care at GL Law

twelfth in the series – interviewed on 25 February 2022 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 been fortunate enough to have some great colleagues who have shown true leadership and have encouraged me to pursue this as a career goal.

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

That there is an increasing shift away from vertical team structures to much flatter structures. This takes into account that everyone is important, but also that everyone has different skills sets and strengths.

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

How to harness the change brought about from the pandemic. The remote working / working from home lifestyle balance is so important to people but also how do we ensure that there is a sense of cohesion within teams.

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

Keeping abreast of technology – it is always changing and there are so many things that can make the day job easier – but not if you don't know about them!

What advice would you give to young aspiring leaders?

Be brave and accept that you will not know all the answers all the time and that opening the discussion to the floor is really important.

Who would you like to have / recommend be interviewed?

Sara-Jane Aris ([LinkedIn - Sara-Jane Aris](#))

/ ...

And these are also interesting questions to consider although not part of the original research:

- 1. Looking into the next decade what do you suspect / predict leadership might look like?**
There has been so much change in the last two years that is a catalyst for further disruption and change – we need to be ready for it!
- 2. When did you first realise that you were actually a leader and how did you spot it?**
When I was increasingly being asked to get involved in projects, unstick difficult problems.
- 3. What makes you curious about leadership?**
Always interested in learning!
- 4. If the myth about women not being able to hack it at the top is ‘fake news’ what would you suggest as a top tip to shatter that myth?**
Anyone can make it to the top, but you need a good support network to do so.
- 5. How do you encourage young/younger women in your team, organisation, community, network, family, friends to plan / prepare for leadership roles?**
By encouraging them to find their voice and solve problems before I do.
- 6. How do you spot an emerging leader?**
Someone who is always sticking their hand up for tasks and keen to learn.
- 7. What do women who want to step into leadership roles need to do and be to take / achieve that step?**
Not worry about coming across as foolish.
- 8. How would you advise aspiring women leaders to deal with stereotyping; discrimination; obvious and hidden glass ceilings / walls?**
You will come across people that are going to make your life difficult. Accept it and work out how you can work around it. There will be a way.

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)
11. Kate Redshaw – Senior Associate, Burges Salmon LLP (09.11.21)

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

**To discuss how Halina Jaroszewska can help
email halina@halinajaroszewska.com**

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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.