

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?

Tracy Burleigh – MPWR Business Club Founder & CEO

thirteenth in the series – interviewed on 4 March 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 draw my inspiration from all the amazing businesswomen around me. Family, friends, and members of our business community. Self-employed business owners, out there fighting the good fight and following their passions, day in day out. Yes, I have followed, read books on and watched documentaries about 'famous' leaders in business, Michelle Obama and Mary Portas being the most recent and they do inspire me, but it is definitely those close to me that are my biggest inspiration - and my 'why' in all that I do.

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

That the leaders out there aren't necessarily a man in a suit, or a woman in a suit come to think of it, and that leaders come in all shapes, sizes, ages and from very different backgrounds. Leaders are now also more 'hands on', being a part of the process rather than sitting above it, evolving, and growing with everyone else too. Technology, especially in the last couple of years has become such a valuable tool meaning we can support and lead others 24/7 in any country. Lastly community! This is a huge one for me as I believe communities are stronger and more powerful than ever - and a necessity in my eyes. Leadership is one thing but having a community around that, is huge!

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

Looking at this in the world of self-employment leadership, I would say that trends and change are the biggest challenges faced by leaders today. Both things mean a business must adapt, re-educate, make cutbacks, expand etc. It's a constant battle to simply 'keep up' these days and constant learning, education, rethinking and often reinvention is necessary to stay in business let alone excel in business. I do have to add though that a challenge can be the best thing that can happen to an individual or business, as it can bring out the most amazing outcomes. As leaders we need to keep one step ahead of all of that and be there and able to support, educate, guide, and assist in those challenging times.

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

Today's leaders need to accept the above as an ongoing truth. We should be encouraging anyone and everyone to follow their passions and keep re-educating and learning ourselves. Being open to change, accepting challenges with open arms, and doing all they can to help where needed - whatever that help may be, is key.

What advice would you give to young aspiring leaders?

Go for it! Learn as you go and don't put off starting, then keep learning. Be passionate. Be open to change. Love what you do. Don't be afraid to take risks. Don't ever be afraid to ask others for advice. There is no such thing as failure! Failure is just a blip - something to learn from before getting up and trying again in a different way till you get it right. Lastly but most importantly - build a network of people that will support you. A network of people that you can aspire to be, that lift you up, that you can learn from, that you can grow with.

What question would you like to have been asked?

If you could go back 20 years, what would you do differently? My answer would have been ... Do it! Do it now and don't wait.

Who would you like to have / recommend be interviewed?

Mary Portas

Anne Boden - Starling Bank

Susie Ma - Tropic Skincare

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)

Details of previous interviews in Series Three

12. Heledd Wyn – Director and Head of Private Client & Long Term Care at GL Law (25.02.22)

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.