

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?

With BWB – Bristol Women in Business now in its 4th successful year connecting women both from corporates and large businesses in the city 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?

Isla Baliszewska, UK Director Smart Coaching Training Ltd

fifth in the series - interviewed on 26 June 2017 by Halina Jaroszewska

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

I read books and stories, ones about mind set, achievement, neuroscience and business. Those written by business leaders like Michael Dell who tell their stories of success and failure are riveting. It is the leaders who talk in depth about their failures that are inspirational, exploring how they used those failures as lessons going forward. A lifelong interest in how people's minds work is at the bottom of my interest in the minds of leaders.

In terms of WHO inspires me, it has been friends who have created something great out of adversity, through leading themselves and being aware of their impact on others and what needs to be done to get what they want. And the young business owners I have worked with as they show me a thing or two about disruptive ways to lead well.

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

A collaborative ethos becoming more the norm rather than a closed door policy. A focus on equality and diversity and building a trust between leaders and followers. Among the younger generation of leaders an ambition to try out new ways of leading which is less about hierarchy and more about shared purpose and communicating what success looks like and means to everyone in the organisation.

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

For starters, the pace of technological innovation. Whether you are leading a micro business or a major corporate, new technology is changing and progressing at an accelerating speed. Business owners and leaders have to acquire a mass of knowledge quickly and be able to analyse what is best for them in their organisation and implement at speed.

Secondly the change in the way we work and the expectations of our people. The future workplace is one of fluidity and flexibility and managing output in that kind of environment needs deftness and skill. Employees want to be part of a business now, to feel involved and valued and elemental in that business's future, it is no longer just a 'job'. Engaging and motivating staff, keeping staff, having happy staff is an ongoing challenge; leaders need to adapt be transparent, create a shared purpose for their staff.

Finally the pace of change and the shifting sands of the current business marketplace globally and how that affects their businesses and their decision making.

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

Having a coach. Someone to check in with, review where you are with your strategic objectives, be a nudge.

Stretching self – always looking to see if there is something a little outside your personal leadership comfort zone and way-of-doing.

Listening – being truly aware of what is out there to motivate, inspire, develop.

What advice would you give to young aspiring leaders?

Don't think you can do it all yourself. Be prepared to share. Be prepared to ask. Be prepared to take risks. Think big, take small steps and be prepared to flex.

What question would you like to have been asked? - Were you always clear about what you wanted to do?

A question about did I know what my own leadership strengths were? That would have put me on the spot. And my answers would be ...

1. Knowing my limitations and knowing not to let them limit me when leading my business.
2. Knowing when to ask someone else to help.
3. Knowing that risk is elemental and so commitment is essential.

Who would you like to have / recommend to be interviewed?

Deborah Potts – Head of Marketing & Communications, Elman Wall Audit Tax Advisory also Director of Summit Advisory – because I have known her for 40 years since we were the first intake of women at Trinity Hall, Cambridge.

**To discuss how Halina Jaroszewska can help
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Outstanding Executive Coach | Chosen By High Potential Leaders, Key Teams |
To Deliver Remarkable Results | Inspires Change

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.