

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?

Fleur Bothwick, OBE - Director of Diversity & Inclusive Leadership, EMEA Ernst & Young LLP

sixth in the series - interviewed on 15 October 2017 by Halina Jaroszewska

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

There are two women in my organisation that I have always found inspiring. They share a couple of the same traits – they invite different perspectives, they really value difference and they facilitate new ideas and innovation. Best of all, their approach is always consistent which inspires my trust and drives real engagement which gives me energy.

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

I started work in very much a command and control environment – you had to know how the hierarchy worked and know where your place was. The cultures that I now enjoy working in still have inspiring leaders, but they listen to everyone, they can show empathy, they encourage vulnerability, they are not driven by status and most of all, they show humility – no one knows everything – we are strongest when we collaborate.

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

There are multiple challenges, depending on your geography. In the UK I would say that as we further embed social mobility, we will depend even more on inclusive leadership and cultural flexibility. People no longer sign up for a job for life. We have to solve for the gig economy, changing demographics and the rise of AI and robotics. This impacts how you describe your EVP, the benefits you offer and the way you attract, retain and engage your people.

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

Genuinely listening to their people – engaging their workforce with a shared vision and making sure that everyone understands the impact that their role has.

What advice would you give to young aspiring leaders?

Don't ever look for one role model – take the best bits from as many leaders as you meet and create your own template. One you have 'observed', start to 'experiment' – it won't always work, but you have to start somewhere and of course, always stay true to yourself.

What question would you like to have been asked?

Would you like a sponsor? And I would have said yes.

Who would you recommend to be interviewed?

UK role model – e.g., Helene Morrissey; someone in my business – e.g., an EY partner based in Bristol

**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.