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7-8 JUNE

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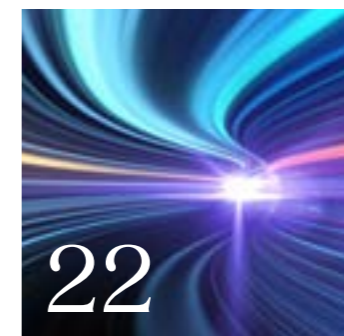
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EDITOR'S LETTER



"A groundswell of support to improve equity for women and celebrate the importance of international experience."

Exciting times as the UK sees the early, green shoots of business confidence increasing and news the UK is to become the first European nation to join the Pacific Rim free trade organisation, the CPTPP. The UK joins the association alongside Australia, Brunei, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, Vietnam and Canada.

International Women's Day and our live 'Inspiring Global Women for Growth' event held on the 10 March was also pivotal as we consolidated a groundswell of support to improve equity for women and celebrate the importance of international experience. Read more in this issue and in our special supplement celebrating our 40 Outstanding Global Women.

Our keynote speaker, Dr Anino Emuwa, illuminated the importance of sponsorship and visibility on the global stage. We are delighted also to share Dr Emuwa's reflections on the challenges and opportunities for entrepreneurs and start-ups globally as our Hot Topic.

Innovation is high on the agenda as we approach our annual Awards and Festival. We are thrilled to announce that Astronaut, Tony Antonelli will join us on 7 June to share his journey from Earth to Space in an exclusive leadership programme. Whether you're a space enthusiast or simply interested in leadership and innovation, the day will be a source of inspiration for anyone looking to motivate an international team and achieve greatness in their industry sector or field.

On 8 June, 'The Innovation Festival for Global Working' is the place to be to join the best thinkers in leadership, global mobility, HR and education. You will connect with leading international experts in a glorious countryside setting, share knowledge and collaborate with peers and visionary leaders across diverse industry sectors. Join in the Hub conversations and celebrate success at our Awards Ceremony, to be held at the end of a stimulating day.

Enjoy this vibrant issue and we look forward to welcoming many of you in person on 7 and 8 June. With our new **Think Global People membership community**, and its new website at thinkglobalpeople.com, we'll be able to share even more exciting content, activities and events with you, our global audience.

Fiona Murchie
Founder and Managing Editor
Relocate Global & Think Global People

Summer 2023 - next issue

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INNOVATION FESTIVAL FOR GLOBAL WORKING: 7-8 JUNE

Challenges & opportunities for entrepreneurs expanding globally

There are huge opportunities for entrepreneurs and start-ups who are now able to access a global market for their products and services. There are also cultural, financial, legal and staffing challenges which need to be taken into consideration when expanding overseas, says **Dr Anino Emuwa**, Managing Director of Avandis Consulting and founder of 100 Women @Davos.

The global economy and the power of the internet means that start-ups can sell to global customers from their first day of trading, should they wish to do so. This opens up opportunities for founders who want to bring their products and services to an international audience. As a company expands, however, there are some key considerations to bear in mind to ensure the success of your entity.

1. ENSURE YOU HAVE STRONG GOVERNANCE

If you are a smaller business or a start-up, the focus is on the product, selling it and expanding. When you then start growing, governance becomes a key issue. You need to build in a board, put the right structures in place and draw up robust policies. We often find with entrepreneurs that they are so busy developing, testing and marketing their product that they forgot about this aspect of running a company.

2. BRING IN FINANCIAL EXPERTISE

Founders may have business flair and acumen, but not all of the clients we work with enjoy the minutiae of keeping books and managing the accounts. As you expand, it may be necessary to appoint external auditors and to file annual reports.

3. CHANGE YOUR LEADERSHIP MINDSET

Moving from a start-up to a rapidly expanding company requires a different kind of leadership. You are running a larger organisation and it needs to be well-structured in terms of organisation and leadership.

You may have a fast-growing team which you need to motivate and manage. A key skill founders need to develop is delegation. Delegating doesn't just mean people the power to do things, it also means you know, you can't really be in the midst of every single thing. You have to rely on a team and hire the best people.

4. LOOK AT THE WIDER CONSIDERATIONS

Once you start to grow, it is not just about you and your initial idea. You may need legal advice, you need to learn how to deal with stakeholder management. It's much more than just yourself and the product and your customers. Depending on your location or industry, there may be regulatory considerations. You will need to get the marketing right and have a strategy in place for growth and expansion.

5. BUILD A GLOBAL TEAM

As you expand, you may come across challenges in terms of staffing and finding talent. In tech and tech-related industries in particular, the talent and expertise is global. This brings with it issues around tax, immigration and employment laws, depending on whether you need your employees to be working at a physical office in a specified jurisdiction, or whether they are employed remotely from their own country and are working from home.

Dr Anino Emuwa,
Keynote Speaker at our
Think Women event
'Inspiring Global Women
for Growth', at IoD,
London

HOW TO EXPAND OVERSEAS – FUNDING, STAFFING AND LEADERSHIP CONSIDERATIONS

If you are scaling up and your business requires a physical presence, then you will need to get local advice. You will need to understand how to set up an entity in your chosen country, and consider tax issues, laws, regulatory policies and other external factors. When you're looking at expansion, entrepreneurs often are looking at the market and neglect to research the practicalities around their chosen jurisdiction. That is why it is important to engage specialists who can guide you through the process. If you are employing people directly in your organisation, then it becomes essential to understand how the law works and to make sure employment contracts are set up properly.

Think carefully about the security of your capital. Entrepreneurs who were establishing ventures in emerging markets, from India to Brazil, Africa and Nigeria, had raised funds from the US venture capitalists, and the funds were housed in SVB. Investors in emerging markets had felt that it was safer to house in the US. They set up Delaware companies to become the holding companies. These entrepreneurs and owners are based in emerging markets, they're not American citizens and do not have the social security numbers required to set up a US bank account. SVB was one of the very few banks that was encouraged business from these ventures. They were in the US because it was supposed to be safer.

Finding and keeping your talent can also be a challenge and you need to think globally, especially if you are a tech or tech-enabled company. Tech talent can be found



in Africa, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Turkey and you need to know how to onboard employees from these countries legally and compliantly.

As a founder, you may also find yourself moving between countries, especially if you are expanding into a new market and want to be on the ground in that jurisdiction. If this is the case, you need to think about how you put together a team in the new location. You may need to build a workforce and manage them and this requires a new set of skills and a deep cultural

awareness of the country in which you are operating. There are often major differences between the way business is done in different cities, as well as different countries.

For this reason, it is really important to use consultants and advisors who can guide you. You need to be culturally attuned, be receptive to the people around you, ask questions and don't make too many assumptions. If something doesn't seem right, ask questions rather than jumping to conclusions. It may be something cultural or business-related that you were not aware of.

Entrepreneurial businesses don't necessarily have the capital immediately available, and if they are planning an expansion they will need to become involved in fundraising. This can be problematic for founders who are inexperienced or unsure where to turn.

It's important to be clear when raising capital that you communicate to your investors

what you need the money for, and if it is for expansion, that you explain the funding will be used for international projects. I remember that we looked at a set of financials for a business client and they had a huge fund earmarked for expansion over the next year, which they had not articulated. It is important not to spring these sorts of surprises on the venture capitalists with whom you are negotiating. You have to be clear that this is for expansion and be open with your investors.

The debacle around Silicon Valley's SVB bank will continue to have ramifications across the whole of the funding and venture capital market. We will not see the full effect until we have figures at the end of April 2023, but there is likely to be a drop in funding.

A phrase much used is the VC Winter, created by a combination of the end of the decade long bull market in equities in 2022, rising inflation and interest rates around the globe, and a gloomy outlook

for companies amid fears of a recession. This has led to a fall in valuations for start-ups and VC-funded ventures, and according to Kroll, valuations of private startups fell by 56% between 4Q 2021 and 4Q 2022. Its research found the tech-heavy NASDAQ index fell by a third in 2022, making it one of the worst years on record and drawing comparisons with the dotcom bust of 2000-01.

The run of SVB, fuelled by social media speculation and fear, is a reflection of systemic problem, which is why financiers and investors are concerned about the risk of contagion to other banks around the world, and ultimately, the entire banking system. No one wants a repeat of the global financial crisis of 2008, which is why investors are twitchy.

SVB had their capital tied up in long US government bonds right, and the prices dropped as interest rates rose. In Europe, the European Central Bank has just increased

IT'S IMPORTANT TO BE CLEAR WHEN RAISING CAPITAL THAT YOU COMMUNICATE TO YOUR INVESTORS WHAT YOU NEED THE MONEY FOR, AND IF IT IS FOR EXPANSION, THAT YOU EXPLAIN THE FUNDING WILL BE USED FOR INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS.

interest rates, which will further drive down the value of existing bonds in the market.

In the delicate ecosystem of world banking, this has made investors nervous. Banks and investment funds face a dilemma, however, because they need to put their capital to work, and deciphering where is a safe haven has become increasingly challenging, hence the renewed interest in commodities such as gold.

I feel that the VC Winter is likely to continue, as Venture Capitalist make the decision to watch and wait, to see how this all plays out. But there are still plenty of opportunities for start-ups and entrepreneurs who have ambition to see their products and services sold worldwide. What is needed in this uncertain economic situation is good advice, sound planning, and a team of quality talent who can help plan and anticipate to take advantages of opportunities when they arise, wherever that may be globally. ◉

YOU MAY NEED TO BUILD A WORKFORCE AND MANAGE THEM AND THIS REQUIRES A NEW SET OF SKILLS AND A DEEP CULTURAL AWARENESS OF THE COUNTRY IN WHICH YOU ARE OPERATING.



CHANGING THE DIAL ON WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

Inspiring Global Women for Growth was the theme for a day of inspiration, networking and discovery to celebrate International Women's Day at the Institute of Directors in London. **Marianne Curphey** reports.

It was a unique opportunity for women and men to come together in support of global women and use their expertise for positive good. Fiona Murchie, founder & Managing Editor of Relocate Global, the magazine, digital, multimedia and events company for Global Business, HR, Global Mobility Managers & Relocation Professionals, began the day by telling her own story of how, as a young woman, she started her career providing insights and information to the oil and gas industry in Scotland.

Dr Susan Doering, author of 'Smart career moves for Smart Women', called on women to support each other and appreciate that they had many options throughout their career. Ellen Shustik head of programmes and external relations at the Inner Wings foundation spoke movingly of the many schoolchildren that the charity had helped to find their inner confidence.

A lively workshop followed in which delegates discussed their career defining moments and the biggest surprise or the lessons they learned as an international woman in the workplace.

Summarising the discussion on her table, Dr Sue Shortland, Professor Emerita at Guildhall Business & Law at London Metropolitan University and a Senior Lecturer in HRM at the University of Westminster, described how many women had found that taking a risk and moving out of their comfort zone had helped to further their career. Other groups emphasised the importance of networking and support, how women were naturally good at making connections and

creating communities, and how having more women in senior leadership roles helped to change the nature of an organisation and enable both men and women to consider working more flexibly and being more authentic at work.

DE&I OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES

Journalist Marianne Curphey then interviewed Julia Palmer, COO Relocation and CHRO at Santa Fe Relocation. Julia is one of Relocate's 40 Global Outstanding Women who are being profiled throughout 2023.

Julia spoke about her early childhood and how her formative years moving around the globe gave her resilience and ambition to work in global teams. She discussed how the nature of work and the requirements of assignees were changing and how women could be more supported in international roles.

Marianne then introduced three panel guests: Caroline Thorley-Farrer, group Mobility director at Worley, Jenny Hinde, executive director at the Clear Company and Salma Shah, founder of Mastering your Power and a coach and author. All three panellists are profiled in our 40 Global Outstanding Women, and the discussion focussed on how diversity and inclusion presented great opportunities for organisations, and how to overcome challenges and difficulties.

Caroline Thorley-Farrer spoke about how international assignments might be made shorter in order to appeal to more potential candidates, especially



Above: Panellists Jenny Hinde, Salma Shah and Caroline Thornley-Farrer.
Below: Panelist Julia Palmer.



in cases where assignees were sent to hardship locations like Mongolia, where it was difficult for families and partners to follow. Jenny Hinde described how many organisations were keen to incorporate DE&I into their policies, but many were at a loss at where to start. Salma Shah said that women's advancement needed to be looked at through an intersectional lens, because women were not a single homogenous group but were from many different cultures, backgrounds and experiences.

There was then a lively discussion around the tables on how to move the dial for women working in international careers. Delegates exchanged insights and experiences on how to support women and help them flourish in the fast changing global workplace. Many spoke of the importance of support and mentoring, the need to help younger women develop confidence and to speak up and find their voice. There was also a consensus that having the opportunity to take an international assignment early in a woman's career gave them a huge career advantage and a lot of experience in terms of understanding different cultures and ways of working.

SPONSORSHIP & VISIBILITY

After a delicious lunch, keynote speaker Dr Anino Emuwa was introduced by Fiona Murchie. Anino has over 25 years' experience in banking, international management consulting and research. A former corporate banker with Citibank, she is Nigerian born, British educated and a French resident, and runs international agency Avandis Consulting. She opened her speech by quoting Carla Harris, Senior Client Advisor at Morgan Stanley and a former Vice Chairman of Wealth Management at the firm.

She said: "Hard work does not complete your success

equation", and she explained that there is more to managing a career than hard work, because you also need sponsorship, and you need visibility.

"That is, having the attention of people who are making the influential decisions," she said.

In order to fast track and improve your agency she described how women need to be "TMA or top of mind awareness".

Women who articulate their value and describe why they are perfect for a role, are the ones who will succeed, she said.

"It's being clear about your values. You are, we are all unique and you have to be clear about what you do. You have to have career goals for the next 12 to 18 months and look to how you can leverage the next step with your unique value proposition," she explained.

This could include creating content, blogs and thought leader articles, ensuring your LinkedIn profile is up to date, and using social media to communicate where you are going in your career, and not where you actually are now.

"In thought leadership, you can share your deep experience and your unique perspective," she said. "How do you influence people's thoughts? It's about giving, and coming from a place of knowledge and giving in order to inspire and influence."

Speaking engagements can start locally with schools' associations and local clubs. Even for those who are natural introverts, public speaking need not be daunting.

"It's a skill that you require, and it's important to remember when public speaking that people are not there to judge you. They're there to get from you. And that enables you to have less focus on yourself."

She also recommended networking, which can give you support and opportunities through word of mouth. Online networking and conferences can also enable you to interact with a global audience.

Dr Emuwa also spoke about 100 Women @Davos, which is a community about leadership which aims to help bring change.

Men should be part of the discussion around using the talent of women, and she suggested that given the huge talent shortage in technology, women could step forward to fill the talent gap, move the discussion forward and be part of the future of success. •

Watch the video highlights at thinkglobalpeople.com/events/think-women-inspiring-global-women-for-growth/



Take five practical steps: international experience counts for women

Organisations often embrace diversity and inclusion but struggle turning policy into action. The delegates at our Inspiring Woman for Global Growth event used their collective expertise to come up with some ideas. **Sue Shortland** reports on their top five suggestions.

Although the discussion focused on how diversity and inclusion presented great opportunities for businesses and the women employed by them, the point was made that many organisations were at a loss as to where to start in turning their diversity policies into action. The ideas raised by the participants were wide-ranging and helpful. Reviewing them here, Dr Sue Shortland suggests how they can be turned into organisational action.

1. THE VALUE OF INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

From the organisational perspective, it is well known that international experience forms the bedrock for forging a senior leadership career. And it was notable that the senior women attending this event all had international experience in some form or another – primarily from working abroad at some point during their career and/or being a “third culture kid”, that is being the child of an international assignee and having experience of living, being educated, and growing up in various countries. The discussion also focused on why international mobility was important for women. From their own perspectives, participants noted that it provided the opportunity for professional and personal growth as well as cultural understanding.

Organisations frequently lament the lack of senior women in the C-suite. But for women to reach the most senior positions, action must be taken while they are in the earlier stages of their careers to support them to gain the necessary international exposure and experiences that organisations require of their senior leadership. It is no good sitting back and not providing support for junior women only to then complain later on that there is an insufficient pool of suitably qualified female talent upon which to draw for board level positions. Action has to be taken in a practical manner to turn DE&I policies into practical support.

2. ROLE MODELS, SPONSORS, MENTORS AND NETWORKS

In discussing the ideas on how to support women to be more confident, resilient and gain more exposure in the global marketplace, delegates spoke of the importance of role models and allies in leadership positions as well as mentors and support networks.

Employers can take action here by providing the space, time and resources to support women in senior positions to act as role models and mentors to others. It is often the case that organisations regard senior women expatriates as role models but women themselves often do not see themselves as fulfilling this



role. Research shows that they are concerned about doing a good job, proving themselves, and focusing on their own career advancement. If senior women are to support more junior female employees, they need to be recognised for the role that they play as a role model and for this to be made part of their responsibilities in terms of sponsoring those working their way up through the corporate ranks.

Sponsoring can provide a formalised and accountable method through which the sponsor holds responsibility the career progress of the woman who is under their charge. To bring this into effect, organisations need to consider formalised sponsoring arrangements whereby

senior female sponsors are held accountable and appraised on their role in career support for more junior females.

Mentoring works best when the mentor and mentee self-select through shared interests and goals. It is important to remember that not everybody wants to be a mentor and, in general, allocated pairings of mentors and mentees may not work effectively if the partners in this relationship do not find mutual interest and support.

Research has shown that networks are particularly important to women and minorities, such as the LGBT community, especially in the arena of international assignments. Minorities and others including senior women and females wishing to gain senior positions tend to have fewer network contacts and support mechanisms than the male majority. Organisations can assist here by setting up networking groups for minorities and facilitate these through space, time and resources for groups to meet, be that in person or virtually. Care must be taken though that groups that are specifically set up to support minorities do not act as a disincentive for male networks to exclude women. An inclusive approach to networking that includes allies as well as the women and other minorities wishing to forge their careers is needed.

MINORITIES AND OTHERS INCLUDING SENIOR WOMEN AND FEMALES WISHING TO GAIN SENIOR POSITIONS TEND TO HAVE FEWER NETWORK CONTACTS AND SUPPORT MECHANISMS THAN THE MALE MAJORITY.

3. BUDDY GROUPS

A further area of support that women find particularly valuable concerns the opportunity to speak to others in similar situations to themselves who have already experienced an international assignment. Buddy groups – whether these are set up in pairs or wider circles – are of particular value if they enable women to discuss with others how particular problems can be solved. For example, this might include finding schooling for special needs children, managing dual careers, and how to balance work with home life where international assignments can result in considerable spill-over between the two.

Once again organisations can help with this by facilitating links between assignees and their spouses/partners who have already undertaken assignments and are either still on assignment or have repatriated, putting them in touch with those considering going abroad or about to set out on their international journey.

4. DIVERSITY, EQUALITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

There is much discussion about diversity, equality, equity, and inclusion and it is worth considering what these terms mean. Diversity concerns celebrating difference and capitalising from the differences

that people can bring into the workplace. However, organisations can have impressive diversity statistics but without true inclusion, i.e. individuals being listened to and their views acted upon, diversity remains a set of statistics on paper and the true benefits of a diverse workforce are not recognised.

Equality is underpinned by legislation – in the UK, we have the Equality Act 2010 which lists protected characteristics and sets out the framework for equal opportunities at work. This should provide an equal chance for individuals of any minority group to compete on an equal footing in the workplace.

However, it has to be recognised that this does not necessarily result in equal access to, for example, international assignments. Equity concerns perceived fairness and thus for all minorities to be able to compete on a more equal footing, inclusive processes/additional support might be required otherwise the espoused bedrock of equal chance does not translate into equal access. For example, open and transparent approaches to selection have been shown to provide greater opportunities for women to be offered international roles than closed and opaque approaches whereby people are simply asked to go on, or recommended for, an assignment. The latter favours the status quo, reflecting the white, male majority expatriate population.

A further point that employers need to consider is that of equal share. Even if minorities have an equal chance and equal access of accessing an international position, do they have the opportunity for an equal share of the roles that are best placed to provide career advancement or the most senior positions?

To achieve equal share, organisations might need to consider taking positive action in order to ensure that minorities are given the opportunity to compete for these senior positions. It is important to be clear that this does not mean positive discrimination; positive action concerns, for example, inviting individuals who otherwise might not have thought to apply to do so such that they have the opportunity to enter the selection process on the same terms as those who would consider themselves suitable and

put themselves forward for the position. To assist in identifying individuals, organisations might wish to maintain a database where individuals can register their interest for international assignments. Potential for international mobility might form part of regular performance discussions.

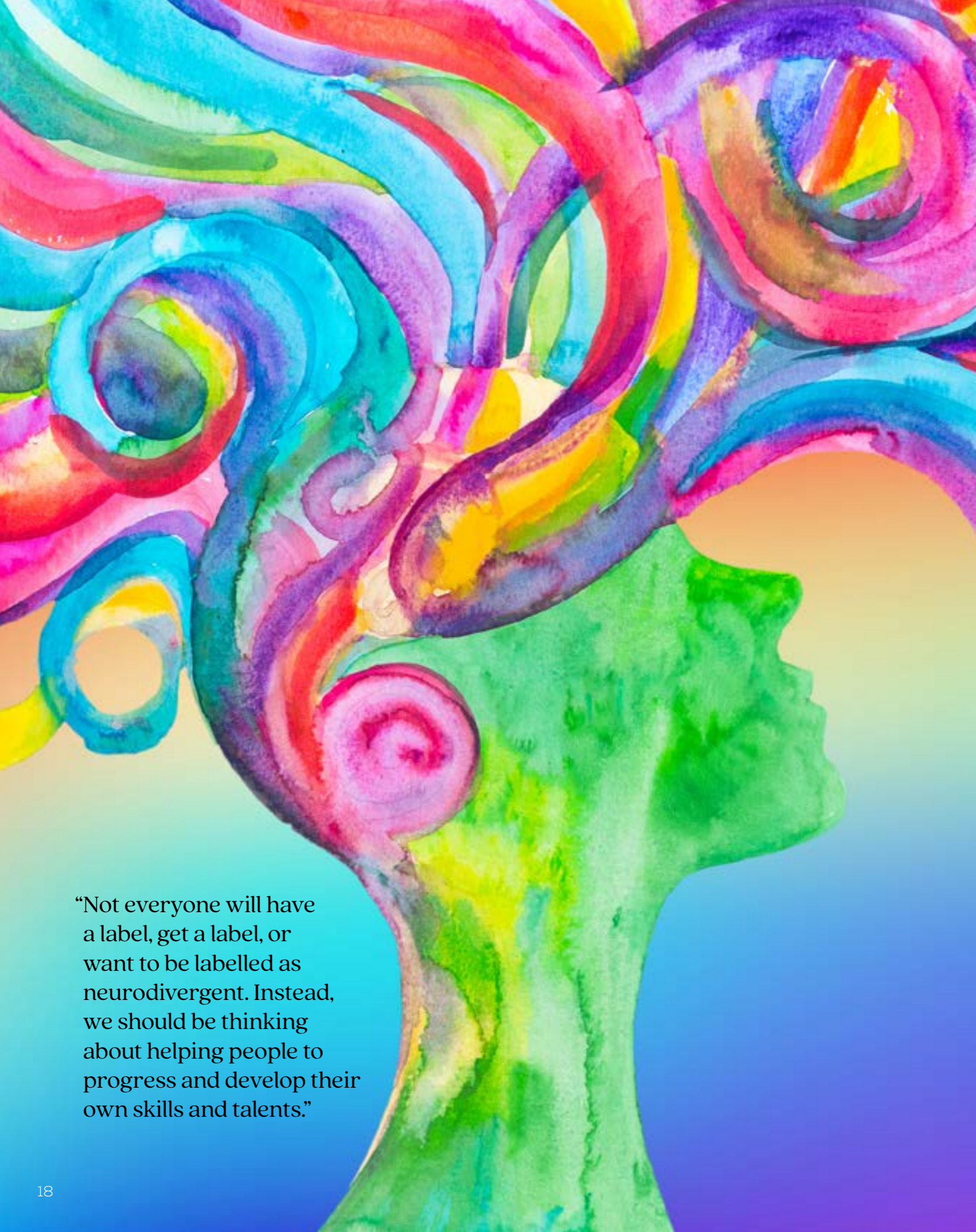
5. INTERSECTIONALITY

A final issue for employers to consider is their international assignee profile through the lens of intersectionality. As discussed at the event, women are not a single homogenous group but come from many different cultures, backgrounds and experiences. Organisations need to look beyond gender to consider other aspects of potential disadvantage and consider how these might combine to make women’s international career progress difficult.

This means considering people

as individuals with a combination of characteristics that might act together to create a recipe for exclusion based around the “whole being more than the sum of the parts”. Research, for example, has shown that women of colour have different and less positive experiences than white women on assignment; LGBT women also experience international assignments differently than heterosexual women. To assist in this regard, employers need to consider how they manage their subsidiary HR operations such that the local culture becomes more welcoming, inclusive and accepting of intersectionality. •

Join the Think Global People membership community and take DEEGI to the next level.



“Not everyone will have a label, get a label, or want to be labelled as neurodivergent. Instead, we should be thinking about helping people to progress and develop their own skills and talents.”

NEURODIVERSITY AT WORK: PROFESSOR AMANDA KIRBY



In a globally competitive market where there is a shortage of talent and an exodus of staff from the office, how can organisations attract and retain a diverse range of employees?

Professor Amanda Kirby, Author of *Neurodiversity at Work: Drive Innovation, Performance and Productivity with a Neurodiverse Workforce*, founder and CEO of Do-IT Solutions and a qualified GP, argues that using the talents of neurodivergent employees could provide some of the answers to the talent gap. She says that if we are to use the best skills of a diverse workforce, then it needs to be more than a token gesture if it is to succeed. Currently, the workplace and the recruitment process are designed for neurotypical employees.

WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT TO ATTRACT, RECRUIT AND ENGAGE NEURODIVERSE TALENT?

“We construct our workplace for neurotypical people,” Professor Kirby explains. “We’ve always had neurodivergent talent, and we have always had neurodivergent people in society. This pool of talent has got certain strengths and challenges. They don’t always get into work, and they don’t always stay in work.”

“We need to be thinking that neurodiversity isn’t a thing that we’re just interested in now. Instead, it should be about reducing the inequity in society.”

Having quotas of people with different diagnoses is also not the way forward, she says.

“Not everyone will have a label, get a label, or want to be labelled as neurodivergent. Instead, we should be thinking about helping people to progress and develop

their own skills and talents. Putting the right measures in place around recruitment, retention and communication will help everybody, build a more cohesive workplace, and improve cooperation and communication in teams.”

Professor Kirby is author of *Neurodiversity at Work*, a book which explains neurodiversity and how to attract, recruit and engage neurodiverse talent. The book also provides guidance on how to adapt HR policies, processes and workplaces to ensure that all employees, including the 20% of employees in the UK who are neurodiverse, can reach their full potential.

She is founder and CEO of Do-IT Solutions and worked in adult psychiatry and stress management early in her career. When her second child was diagnosed with Dyspraxia at age three, she changed focus and became an expert on neurodiversity. She set up an interdisciplinary specialist centre for parents, and works to improve awareness around neurodiversity and to help spread advice about best practice in education and employment.

She is an emeritus professor at the University of South Wales and has delivered consultancy, tools, and training to UK and international organisations including South Wales Police, JISC, Post Office, Admiral, JP Morgan, the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) and the Ministry of Justice (MOJ).

WHAT CHANGES DO MANAGERS AND HR DEPARTMENTS NEED TO MAKE IN ORDER TO ACCOMMODATE THIS?

Many people are excluded from the workplace, despite them having talent, because the workplace has been constructed in a way that is difficult for them to navigate.

“Not only are the systems difficult for neurodivergent people to navigate, they also make it hard for parents with neurodivergent children to stay in the workforce, given the extra demands and pressures that they face in parenting,” she says.

For people who do things differently and think differently, the current workplace environment is about

“IT IS ABOUT THINKING HOW NEURODIVERSITY AS A CONCEPT CAN TRAVERSE DIFFERENT CULTURES, DIFFERENT COUNTRIES, AND WHAT IS MEANS IN DIFFERENT PLACES.”



trying to fit in, rather than allowing people to play to their strengths and manage their challenges.

“Our work systems are not flexible enough to include everybody – the workplace in most organisations currently works only for people who fit a certain mould,” she says. She cites the example of a female CEO whom she knows needs to be able to stop work at 3.30pm in order to care for a neurodivergent child, but who would be happy to start working again in the evening if her workplace allowed that flexibility.

“An organisation needs to look at its staff and see whether it is losing people or parents along the way. If it is, it needs to question why that is and what practices are contributing to the exodus,” Professor Kirby says.

“Think about the environment of your workplace and ask yourself: are we overly rigid in the way we operate and does that exclude some people? Should we allow term-time working and be more flexible for parents who need to cover school holidays? Could our staff go home and pick up children from school and then work in the evenings when they are in bed? Lots of people are quite happy to do that but their work doesn’t offer that flexibility.”

She says this flexibility would be particularly attractive to people in the “sandwich generation” who have the dual caring responsibilities of children and older parents. Many of them end up leaving the workforce, working part time, or struggling with stress and burnout because they cannot balance all the different demands of work and life.

HOW CAN THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS BE FAIRER AND MORE EQUITABLE?

Professor Kirby suggests that for many organisations, diversity falls at the first hurdle of the recruitment process. Generally, job ads and the interview process are not designed to be fully inclusive.

“Even before the interview stage, you need to make sure the application process is inclusive,” she says. “You need to ensure that the words you use, the readability that you’re offering, is clear and explains the whole process. People can’t ask for support if they don’t know what’s

going to happen in the process.”

Options might be to interview over Teams or Zoom in order to fit in with a person’s commitments and to help them feel relaxed with the process. It would mean neurodivergent people might not have to have the stress of travel and would understand what the process involved from start to finish. By providing lots of information about the process, it will feel inclusive to everyone who is thinking about applying. The interview process also needs rethinking in order to accommodate the differing needs and responses of neurodivergent people.

“In the formal job interview, we favour people who can answer questions quickly. Yet what we might really want is people who can reflect and think carefully about a question,” she says. “Organisations need to check the biases and understand who they could be losing by trying to have a cultural fit rather than a cultural mix,” she says.

How might managers see the world from the point of view of neurodivergent staff and how can they integrate their skills into the workplace?

By ensuring that teams and managers are communicating clearly, there are benefits to be gained across all staff members, she says. “There are challenges if you don’t communicate effectively with your team. Everyone has different communication preferences and styles.”

Professor Kirby runs e-learning programmes for embracing neurodiversity and having better conversations at work.

“We have an advanced practitioner course, which is online, in bite sized pieces that you can access over a period of time,” she says. “It is about upskilling people and thinking about how we provide support across the whole organisation because not everyone or everything has a label, and not everyone gets a diagnosis. Instead, it is about providing practical strategies.”

She believes there is a danger that organisations will be tempted to revert back to type and end up with rules about which days staff need to be back in the office, which defeats some of the purpose of hybrid working.

“Companies are starting to try to define hybrid working – for example, hybrid means everyone’s got to be in the office on a Monday or Friday or two days a week,” she says. “When we try to define it, it stops working for everybody. So again, we’re trying to move people into a set workplace shape, dictating that this is the formula and this is the way we work.”

Rather than listening to a parent who is saying: I’ve got a young child and I need to continue working, I can work four days a week, but I need to be at home at 3.30pm to pick my children up, organisations try to define what working hours mean. But this can be counterproductive, she says.

“If you are flexible and understanding, that valued member of staff could continue working for you for the next ten years. If you are overly rigid, you will end up losing talent. People have messy lives. That means they’re coping with a wide range of challenges outside work, from moving house to death, divorce, marriage and all sorts of other things going on in their lives. In order to keep people we need to recognise that variability and harness it.”

WHAT ABOUT STEREOTYPES?

Professor Kirby warns that when thinking about attracting and retaining a neurodiverse workforce, it is important not to stereotype people. It is wrong, for example, to think that everyone with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) will be interested in computing and have an analytical approach.

“We’ve got to be careful about stereotypes,” she says. “When we’re attracting talent, some people will have very good analytical skills and they may be on the autism spectrum. Some won’t and it shouldn’t be a case of hiring for talent by label. This is about mental well-being across the whole organisation. Look at retention, attraction and progression figures. It’s not about quotas, because if you are looking for labels then you are already have a social bias because you’re recruiting white middle class men who can get a diagnosis.

“Also, we shouldn’t be thinking about presenteeism as a measure of productivity or absenteeism as not being

interested. Instead, think about how are we productive? If staff are working from home and are highly effective, then why do you want to make them come in? Productivity is the best measure. Why make people, especially neurodivergent people, attend a physical meeting which involves two hours of travel time, when you could meet online instead? If you’re micromanaging, often you’re constraining people rather than encouraging people.”

HOW TO START THE NEURODIVERSITY CONVERSATION

Professor Kirby says that to start raising awareness across the workforce, managers and colleagues can invite “respectful and curious conversations” to start happening. If team members improve their communications skills, then everyone will work better together.

“If you are respectful and curious, you will find out what people’s experiences are. You will get feedback around what’s working, and what is not working, because every organisation is different in terms of its staff and how it’s run.”

“That means having those conversations, expressing communication preferences. Perhaps some people would prefer email communication, or bullet points rather than long paragraphs.”

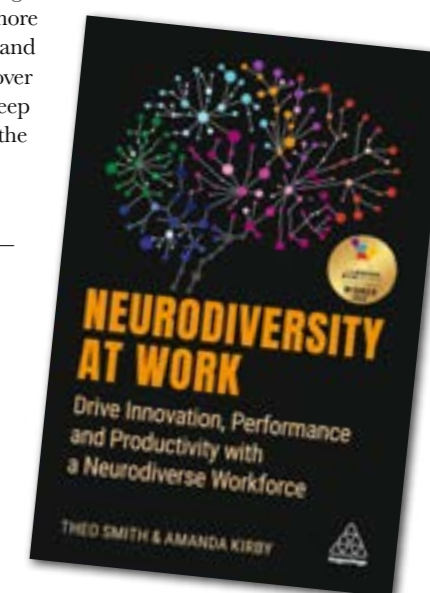
Professor Kirby works in Australia, New Zealand, India, America and Europe, and says while in North America there has been a lot of focus on autism, there is a lack of understanding around other neurodivergent traits. The good news is that in some global companies these open conversations are starting to happen, and organisations are thinking about how they use language and communication.

“It is about thinking how neurodiversity as a concept can traverse different cultures, different countries, and what it means in different places,” she says. “How does that transpose in other countries and cultures, and what effect does different healthcare systems have on access to diagnosis and understanding? These are all helpful starting points.”

Managers can start to ask questions such as: What is inclusive? What are our communication challenges? What are we misunderstanding? Looking to the future, she says neurodiversity should be “hard baked into an organisation” rather than used as a token gesture.

“Otherwise, it feels like just another gesture, and that can cause resentment,” she says. “All of us have got messy lives and face different challenges throughout our lives. Let’s have a more flexible approach to the workplace and enable people to adapt and evolve over time.” That way, we harness and keep the best talent, and give people the opportunity to develop and grow. ◉

Join the Think Global People membership community to hear Professor Amanda Kirby as one of our Book Club speakers.



THE FLEX FACTOR

Global mobility professionals have a lot to contend with – economic and political volatility, environmental concerns, and societal changes. Together, these are driving change within global mobility policy, says **Dr Sue Shortland**

Global mobility policy design is going through a period of rapid change and organisations need a dynamic and flexible approach to reflect the new post-Covid environment.

The industry has a range of options to design appropriate policies to ensure talent is moved efficiently and cost effectively. This can require a radical redesign of global mobility policy or alternatively, a more flexible approach to existing policy content. In addition, the use of guidelines rather than a prescriptive policy presents another option. An increased desire to promote diversity in international assignees is also driving policy change.

WHY FLEX IS BEST

One of the key factors global mobility professionals need to consider is the delivery of benefits to assignees and their families. International assignment policies have seen reviews that make a wider range of options available. For example, policies now often go beyond the traditional long-term and short-term options to encompass other approaches such as one-way moves, non-local national hires, graduate development, and various flexpatriate arrangements

including commuter and remote work.

In the past, international mobility policies designed to reflect assignment lengths and types tended to provide a stated package with associated exception management. Today, there tends to be a more flexible approach which might include tiered policy provision reflecting assignee seniority or assignment purpose and core-flex, cafeteria and lump sum arrangements.

Core-flex (a core relocation benefit plus a flexible selection of optional benefits) provides options that help businesses in their delivery of appropriate benefits while cafeteria and lump sum approaches ensure a positive employee experience. However, these approaches may not provide the most inclusive method of delivering benefits to a diverse population. A more flexible approach is the use of policy guidelines which can be structured so individual and personalised packages can be offered to provide tailored support for every employee and their dependants. The use of policy guidelines can provide a similar range of support for each employee, with tailoring to their specific needs which delivers inclusivity within the guidelines.

THE IMPORTANCE OF INCLUSIVITY

Inclusive language is now standard practice in policy design and support is provided for a wider range of dependants. This ensures partners and other family members (rather than just spouses and children) can be supported during international moves.

Policy design needs to support opportunities for all talent. To ensure this happens effectively, global mobility, diversity and inclusion, and talent resource professionals need to work together to identify candidates and ensure support is made available to everyone.

Organisations also need to take a proactive approach to monitoring and evaluation to ensure benefits are assessed for their success. By doing this, policy content can be revised to ensure the best outcomes.

MAKING IT SUSTAINABLE

Another trend is the redesign of global mobility policies to reflect and promote sustainability objectives. Higher carbon intensive activities such as the provision of flights to employees and their family members, shipping of goods around the world and the provision of local transport are under increased scrutiny.

“A more flexible methodology concerns the use of policy guidelines which can be structured in such a way that individual and personalised packages can be offered so as to provide tailored support for each and every employee on the move (and their accompanying dependants).”



This might mean reducing the use of first or business class flights, pre-assignment trips, home leave trips, and shipping of household goods to reduce an organisation’s carbon footprint. Instead, providing furnished accommodation, revising utility payments, and support to use local public transport or electric cars are initiatives attracting attention.

Employers may move towards providing benefits that encourage sustainability, for example credits that employees can spend if they participate in more sustainable options.

MANAGING POLITICAL VOLATILITY

Political volatility impacts on the practices of global mobility professionals. Instead of deploying talent to volatile areas, one option is to relocate staff to nearby locations where they can operate safely and still meet company objectives.

It is important that employees can be moved quickly and safely in times of political instability and to do this global mobility professionals need to be on top of immigration options. This involves working with talent management, legal professionals and others in the human resources function to ensure everyone is aware of political situations and the immigration options available should individuals need to be moved.

THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY

A good understanding of technological solutions to support decision-making is increasingly important in the industry. Technology can help with the personalisation of mobility policies to support diversity and inclusion. It can also be used for assessments to determine whether remote working in a third country is financially feasible.

WHAT’S NEXT?

In the future flexibility will be crucial. Global mobility professionals will need to work with a wider range of human resource professionals in addition to more diverse employees.

The global mobility function will also need to be on top of sustainable options and practices. Sustainability in policy design will need to extend beyond environmental and green objectives to encompass a wider range of corporate social responsibility actions. Talented

employees can choose where they work and organisations that adopt an inclusive, flexible and corporately responsible approach will attract the best staff.

It is also likely that new and existing employees will increasingly request opportunities for remote working and virtual mobility; this could be in their home countries or other locations. This will expand the role of global mobility professionals into devising a wider range policies and guidelines to support the business.

Opportunities that can flow from international working (whether the individual is working remotely or is physically present) will provide an incentive for talent recruitment and retention. Global mobility employees will need to liaise with a wider range of business and human resource professionals within their organisations. This will help the sector to promote its seat at the table in recognition of its unique contribution to inclusive talent acquisition and retention. •

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Green shoots:

Business confidence is on the increase in 2023

Rising business investment and a budget designed for growth show signs the UK economy is bouncing back, says **David Sapsted**.



As 2022 drew to a close the UK economy was looking grim: rising inflation, forecasts that the nation was on the brink of recession, and economists' predictions of minimal growth, all combined to paint the gloomiest of pictures.

But now the bleakness of winter has yielded to the green shoots of spring, bringing with it signs of revitalised economic growth.

In March, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) revealed that, at the start of the year, GDP growth had exceeded expectations and had risen by 0.3 per cent.

The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) subsequently retracted its forecast (made in November) that the UK would enter recession this year and predicted that inflation would be below three per cent by the end of 2023.

In fact, ONS data showed that UK business investment had risen by 4.8 per cent in the fourth quarter of last year, more than 13 per cent higher than the corresponding period in 2021 and unparalleled since the last quarter of 2019, just before the pandemic struck.

Meanwhile, data firm S&P Global reported the UK private sector had returned to growth in February, indicating that the chances of a near-term recession "have fallen considerably".

Additionally, March's purchasing managers' index (PMI) for the services sector – the dominant force in the UK economy, accounting for more than three-quarters of GDP – showed it had grown at its fastest pace in eight months in February, boosted by stronger business confidence and an improved economic outlook.

"UK service providers moved back into expansion mode in February as fading recession fears and improving business confidence resulted in the strongest rise in new orders since May 2022," said Tim Moore, economics director at S&P Global Market Intelligence.

In fact, further data released by the ONS showed that UK services exports had reached a record high of £397 billion last year, prompting business and trade secretary Kemi Badenoch to comment: "This cements the UK's position as a global services superpower.

"To see trade reaching these heights is a firm reminder of the resilience of our strong services economy and shows significant progress in our race to export over a trillion pounds of British goods and services a year by 2030."

A BUDGET FOR GROWTH

Growth has become the watchword for government and industry alike. The Spring Budget was unveiled on March 15 by chancellor Jeremy Hunt, who labelled it a charter for "long-term, sustainable, healthy growth".

Among the measures aimed at achieving this were tax breaks for companies investing in new technology, plant and technology; and the creation of 12 new investment zones across the UK, which would benefit from financial incentives and be funded by £80 million each over the next five years.

Hunt also announced a reduction in red tape for international traders; a £20 billion investment over next two decades in low-carbon energy projects; increased public funding for nuclear energy projects, which will henceforth be classed as environmentally sustainable for investment purposes; streamlined approvals for new medical products and a £900 million investment in a new supercomputer facility.

Additionally, there will be schemes to encourage more over-50s to return to the post-pandemic workplace, and additional grants for childcare to enable more mothers to find work at a time when the number of job vacancies stands at a near-record figure 1.12 million.

"Our plan is working – inflation falling, debt down and a growing economy," said Hunt. "Britain is on a lasting path to growth with a revolution in childcare support, the biggest ever employment package and the best investment incentives in Europe."

The one disappointment for business leaders was that – apart from relaxations for certain construction workers, such as bricklayers and carpenters – there were no additions to the shortage occupation list to make it easier for companies to obtain visas for the overseas talent many so badly need.

But, as Miles Celic, CEO of the financial services trade body TheCityUK says: "The Chancellor's focus on embracing innovation, boosting business investment, and driving growth across the UK, is promising.

"For the UK to realise its growth ambitions, remain a powerhouse for talent, innovation and investment, and to reaffirm its reputation as a world-leading international financial centre, there must be continued focus on ensuring economic stability and resilience."

BOOSTING TRADE AND INNOVATION

Even before the Budget, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak had put economic growth at the top of his political agenda by creating four new government departments in January, aimed at boosting growth through trade and innovation.

He announced the creation of a dedicated Department for Science, Innovation and Technology to “help make sure the UK is the most innovative economy in the world”; a combined Department for Business and Trade to promote investment and free trade; a Department for Energy Security and Net Zero tasked with securing long-term energy supply; and a “re-focused” Department for Culture, Media and Sport to “build on the UK’s position as a global leader in the creative arts”.

Sunak said at the time: “This week we drove serious change from the heart of government by creating four new departments. This was done to deliver on the promises and priorities of the British people, and to go further and faster on our ambition to drive jobs and growth in every



“Innovation and technology are our future. They hold the keys to everything from raising productivity and wages, to transforming healthcare, reducing energy prices and ultimately creating jobs and economic growth in the UK, providing the financial firepower allowing us to spend more on public services.”

MICHELLE DONELAND, SECRETARY FOR SCIENCE, INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY

part of the UK and ensure we are at the cutting edge of technology and innovation.”

The first major initiative from the new Department for Science, Innovation and Technology came in March when it launched a ten-point plan, backed by more than £370 million in funding, aimed at making the UK a tech ‘super-power’ by 2030.

“Innovation and technology are our future,” said the Secretary for Science, Innovation and Technology Michelle Doneland. “They hold the keys to everything from raising productivity and wages, to transforming healthcare, reducing energy prices and ultimately creating jobs and economic growth in the UK, providing the financial firepower allowing us to spend more on public services.”

AUTUMN INVESTMENT SUMMIT

Sunak has also announced that the UK’s second Global Investment Summit will take place in October, bringing together more than 200 CEOs of multinational companies and investment corporations to “showcase the UK as a world-leading investment destination”.

The first summit held in October 2021 secured £9.7 billion of new foreign investment in one day, according to Downing Street, creating more than 30,000 new jobs and supporting growth in vital sectors such as wind and hydrogen energy, sustainable homes, and carbon capture and storage.

This year’s summit is intended to showcase emerging UK success stories in life sciences, deep tech, nuclear fusion and small modular reactors (SMRs), and manufacturing.

“The next Global Investment Summit is an opportunity to demonstrate what we can do as a nation, delivering on our ambition to be a world-leading destination for international finance and investment,” said the Prime Minister.

Even the Bank of England has been sounding more upbeat about the economy. As recently as February, the bank was predicting a shallow recession lasting a year or more, mainly because of rising energy prices. But then along came the unexpected PMI data in March showing the economy had returned to growth.

Huw Pill, chief economist at the BoE, told a meeting of the Institute of Directors: “Survey indicators, that have become available since the publication of the (February) forecast, have surprised to the upside, suggesting that the current momentum in economic activity may be slightly stronger than anticipated.”

NEW LEVELS OF OPTIMISM

Confidence among business leaders has also been on the increase, according to the latest survey by the Institute of Directors. “Business sentiment is improving from its historic lows, driven primarily by a growing sense that prospects for inflation are improving and the economy is proving more resilient than previously feared,” said Kitty Ussher, the institute’s chief economist.

This was supported by the latest ‘UK Business Outlook’, published by Accenture and S&P Global on the eve of the Budget, which showed confidence had rebounded to its highest level in 12 months. With a net balance of 43 per cent among manufacturing and service sector firms expecting activity to increase over the coming year, the confidence level among UK firms was almost double that of the 23 per cent optimism level recorded among EU businesses.

In all, those gloomy winter days really do seem to have become a thing of the past. ●

BUSINESS, SCIENCE LEADERS WELCOME ‘GROWTH’ BUDGET

Business and science groups in the UK have broadly welcomed the spring Budget launched on Wednesday by Chancellor of the Exchequer Jeremy Hunt, who said he wanted to create “the most pro-business, pro-enterprise, tax regime anywhere”. By **David Sapsted**.

Proposals to boost economic growth were unveiled in the House of Commons as the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) predicted that, contrary to its own forecast last autumn and those of global financial bodies, the UK would not enter recession this year.

The inflation battered economy is now forecast to shrink by just 0.2 per cent this year before growing by 1.8 per cent in 2023. Inflation itself is expected to be below three per cent by year’s end.

Although Mr Hunt confirmed the planned increase in corporation tax – from 19 to 25 per cent – would go ahead in April, he said Britain would still have “the lowest headline rate in the G7”.

The ‘super deduction’ scheme, which allows companies to offset investment against tax on profits, will be scrapped but, in its stead, the government is to adopt a new policy of “full capital expensing”, initially worth £27 billion over the next three years, which will allow firms to write off all investments in IT, plant and machinery against their tax bills.

INVESTMENT ZONES

There will also be an “enhanced credit” scheme for research-intensive businesses, worth a £27 tax cut for every £100 they invest.

As part of the government’s ‘levelling up’ agenda, Mr Hunt announced the creation of a dozen new investment zones across English regions outside London and the SE, with one each also in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

To qualify for £80 million in government funding and the ability to retain local business rate income, areas will need to develop proposals centred around universities or research institutes.

At a time when there are still more than 1.1 million job vacancies throughout the nation, Mr Hunt also announced schemes to encourage more economically inactive over-50s back to work, and enhanced childcare allowances to enable more women to join, or return to, the workforce.

Matthew Fell, interim director-general of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), welcomed Mr Hunt’s “plan for stability and growth”. He said the organisation had been calling for action on people and productivity, and felt the government had delivered

support for both.

“Full capital expensing will keep the UK at the top table for attracting investment and puts us on an essential path to a more productive economy,” he said.

“Boosting childcare provision is a big win for businesses struggling to recruit and retain, and parents balancing care and career needs.

“Alongside support for occupational health to help people stay in work, it shows the chancellor is listening to business on reducing economic inactivity and easing a tight labour market.

“New investment zones focused on economic clusters will drive growth across the country and increased support for quantum is a further step towards making the UK the science and technology superpower it aspires to be.

“Giving the go-ahead to carbon capture and nuclear are important steps that will keep the UK’s green growth story on track. With our closest rivals raising their game on green growth, moving further and faster in the months ahead is key.” ●

Read the full article with **Business Response** and the **Engineering & Science Perspective** online at www.relocatemagazine.com/enterprise-business-science-leaders-welcome-growth-budget-dsapsted-0323





Online school King's InterHigh launches Southeast Asia timetable for international students

Students across the Asia Pacific region can now get a world class British education fully online, in a time zone more suited to them, with King's InterHigh's new Southeast Asia timetable – enrolling now for September 2023.

Founded in 2005, King's InterHigh is the UK's leading online school. Open to families anywhere in the world, King's InterHigh provides a high-quality, flexible, and personalised British and international education entirely online. Students can already choose from two other timetable options (UK and Middle East), with the Southeast Asia timetable launching this new academic year.

Taught on the GMT+7 time zone, King's InterHigh's new timetable opens the field for students across Asia, Australia, and beyond to access top British schooling on a time zone that works better for them.

MEETING AN INTERNATIONAL NEED

King's InterHigh is proud to be home to an online school community spanning over 4,500 students worldwide, including numerous learners in countries such as Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia, and Singapore.

Demand for high-quality British education is high across the whole Asia Pacific region among local and expat families alike. However, parents often find that international schooling options are limited – from long waiting lists to difficulty finding a school that meets their child's lifestyle or learning needs.

That's why King's InterHigh is excited to launch this new timetable. With live, online classes from UK-qualified teachers (all delivered on the GMT+7 time zone), learners can now prepare for bright futures with a British education on a schedule that suits them.



Anna Hursey, online student, table tennis player and Commonwealth Games medallist

As the UK's leading online school, King's InterHigh is known for a high standard of education, and the new Southeast Asia timetable promises to be no exception.

ABOUT KING'S INTERHIGH

Part of Inspired, the world's leading global schools group, King's InterHigh brings together 17 years of online education experience with over 50 years of academic excellence from King's College schools.

At King's InterHigh, learning revolves around you. Students can study from anywhere in the world with small, live, interactive classes, all recorded for flexibility. In each lesson, expert teachers bring learning to life with proven online teaching methods and innovative technologies. Outside the classroom, students can participate in extra-curricular activities, socialise with their classmates online, and join in-person events and programmes at over 80 Inspired schools worldwide.

Since 2005, more than 10,000 successful alumni have graduated

from King's InterHigh, and the school maintains a strong track record of success. Every year, numerous students earn top grades and places at esteemed UK universities such as Cambridge and Oxford as well as top universities around the world.

WORLD-RESPECTED QUALIFICATIONS

Offering IGCSEs and A Levels online, King's InterHigh's new Southeast Asia timetable brings the world-respected British curriculum to students aged 14 to 19.

From age 14 to 16, students typically study eight or more International GCSEs (including mathematics, English, and science). IGCSEs teach important knowledge on a broad range of subjects, while A Levels are more specialised and in-depth. From age 16, students spend a further two years studying three or

more A Levels in the subjects they're most passionate about, preparing them for degree studies.

Both IGCSEs and A Levels are internationally recognised and highly regarded across the globe, providing a strong route to the world's best universities and future careers.

Online schooling is a game-changer for students seeking to follow this route in a more flexible, personalised way without compromising on education quality. King's InterHigh offers a range of 10 IGCSE subjects and 11 A Level subjects to choose from, giving learners the freedom to follow their unique passions with the best possible teaching.

INNOVATIVE, EXPERT UK TEACHING

As the UK's leading online school, King's InterHigh is known for a high standard of education, and the new Southeast Asia timetable promises to be no exception. Each class is taught by expert teachers, and every teacher is highly qualified in the UK — an advantage over many traditional international schools.

Combining their subject expertise, British curriculum experience, and training in online learning, King's InterHigh's teachers are uniquely able to guide students to achieve their best.

This guidance also goes beyond academics. The school's staff are dedicated to creating a warm, welcoming environment with support every step of the way, from wellbeing sessions to exam stress workshops — plus assistance with UK and international university applications.

In addition, learning online brings students a much-needed edge in today's traditional age. At King's InterHigh, students learn, interact, and collaborate in state-of-the-art virtual classrooms, using cutting-edge learning technologies like simulations and extended reality. For students across Asia and Oceania looking towards global futures, this innovation is invaluable.

FLEXIBILITY FOR ALL STUDENTS

As many parents know, a traditional environment isn't always the best fit for every child. With King's InterHigh's new timetable, more families around the world have an option for quality British learning that revolves around their needs

and lifestyle.

While the school's online classes are taught live for the best learning experience, students also have 24/7 access to video recordings of every lesson. This offers unprecedented flexibility, empowering learners to study at their own pace or fit education around their passions. King's InterHigh student Anna Hursey, for example, is balancing her A Levels with table tennis training and competitions around the world. House of the Dragon actress Maddie Evans, meanwhile, can follow her film and television dreams without compromising on her learning.

Anna and Maddie are just two of many King's InterHigh students who blend online learning with careers in sports, acting, arts, entrepreneurship. Others use their flexibility to spend more time on hobbies or keep up with education in spite of health issues.

With online learning on an additional time zone, new and current King's InterHigh students alike can strike that healthy balance between life and learning.

JOINING KING'S INTERHIGH

For Japan-based student Anna Takano, King's InterHigh offers an opportunity to "apply to more universities around the world with the qualifications I earn, as the UK curriculum is a global curriculum." For others, like parent Juli based in Singapore, online learning is about striking a balance between life and learning. "When we're travelling,"

says Juli, "we don't have to worry about activities outside of school clashing with our son's timetable."

With a GMT+7 timetable and a commitment to educational excellence at every step, King's InterHigh aims to bring more families around the world a high-quality education that fits them. •

King's InterHigh's Southeast Asia timetable is now enrolling for a September 2023 start. Visit the website to **learn more**, **join an open event**, or **book a discovery call**.

At King's InterHigh, students learn, interact, and collaborate in state-of-the-art virtual classrooms, using cutting-edge learning technologies like simulations and extended reality. For students across Asia and Oceania looking towards global futures, this innovation is invaluable.





Tackling the challenges of megatrends in society from a boarding school perspective.

Dr Stephanie Nau, Head of Admissions at Salem International Boarding School, explores the shifts and how schools like Salem International Boarding School are leading the response.

Above & right: students at Salem International Boarding School

Photography credit: Ilja Mess

Only a couple of years ago, the prime minister of the federal state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern in Germany sent her child to a private school close to their home. The German public heavily criticised her for this decision. They considered it proof of the decay of the public educational sector in Germany.

Three years later, the pandemic blatantly revealed the many issues German public schools stand for. Along with the lack of teaching staff go overcrowded classes. More than 30 children in one class group do not form a teaching and learning atmosphere anyone would wish to experience. What comes on top is a list of challenges like the ongoing immigration of refugee families as well as inclusion debates, just to name

a few. When it comes to digitisation, the German government does provide the means and gadgets. While in some schools, there was simply no staff well prepared enough to actually include the new technology in their lessons, some other schools did not come as far as to implement the corresponding software due to infrastructure problems. Consequently, home schooling in Covid-19 times very often turned out to be a “mission impossible”.

UPSWING OF PRIVATE BOARDING SCHOOL EDUCATION IN GERMANY

For decades, Germany used to be at the bottom of the European table regarding private and boarding school education. While the UK and many other countries follow a boarding school tradition,

considering this way the number one educational career for children, boarding schools in Germany would rather suffer from a negative connotation. Sending a child away from home used to draw level with “failing” as a family, as parents, maybe revealing problems at school or similar trouble. Not so since the pandemic uncovered the many benefits private boarding schools hold for their pupils: determined daily structure, everyday life with same-age pupils, a broad list of activities to pursue on campus, small group sizes in lessons and tutoring, and the chance of growing one’s personality through the boarding school experience. In fact, private boarding school education seems to have become more socially acceptable after the crisis, with pupil numbers rising ever since.

MEGA TRENDS OF OUR TIMES AFFECTING EDUCATION

However, there is more to it than “just” the pandemic when it comes to turmoil in the German educational sector. The German Zukunftsinstitut (Institute of the Future) in Frankfurt am Main scientifically analyzes 12 megatrends affecting society in different dimensions. Megatrends stand for long lasting, irreversible change processes to which we must adapt, whether we like it or not. Breaking things down to education, there are six irrevocable megatrends deserving a closer look, while being intertwined:

Of course, (1) Globalisation rings a bell and is nothing new. However, it goes along with (2) Connectivity at a progressive rate, with (3) New Work and the establishment of a (4) Knowledge Society. There are increasing debates on (5) Health, and we can see a (6) Gender Shift happening in every aspect of our lives. How could we possibly follow these trends without including them in our teaching, our education and pedagogy? Again, the public school sector seems to miss the train that is already leaving the station, while private education in Germany is far better prepared to tackle the challenge. In what way can boarding school life contribute to readying young people for this ever-changing world?

SALEM’S ANSWER TO THE MEGATRENDS OF OUR TIMES

As a boarding school, Salem certainly stands out for the international approach in its education. There are 45 different nations represented on campus, making up 40 per cent of our pupils and covering the whole globe. This makes globalisation very visible and directly palpable. Anyone starting in Salem as a pupil will encounter “strangers” and their backgrounds, their traditions, their attitudes, their ways of thinking in lessons and in our dorm communities. Aspects of diversity clearly matter every single day, challenging one’s own point of view continuously. However, as strangers become friends, they will stay connected during holiday periods and beyond graduation, forming global networks of friends and professionals. While the so-called Generation Z stands for

growing up in globalised and digitalised contexts, the Salem pupil community builds global citizens on our very own campus, preparing them for their future lives wherever this may take place.

On the other hand, the Salem community also mirrors what is happening in the world. Besides broadening horizons, you need to cope with these aspects every day of your Salem life. This includes supporting our student body in current geopolitical situations, for example between Russia and Ukraine. These experiences build your personality and character for life. Our Alumni networks reach around the globe, offering opportunities and open doors to any member of the Salem community in need. Global awareness is not only a phrase for Salem. Our pupils do engage at an early age, be it in Salem services to our community, be it in action brigades, or in networks following the idea of improving life for everyone, organising global conferences on the social, environmental and political issues of our times.

JUST A FEW EXAMPLES

Salem’s pedagogical staff enhances our academic education by providing several essential add-ons to school lessons. There is the Salem Health & Wellness Curriculum shaping and supporting healthy lifestyles and behaviors for lifelong learning. The special issues and needs of every age group (ranging between 10 and 19 at Salem International Boarding School) see themselves addressed and covered. The older pupils get, the better prepared they are for a demanding life after school.

Always intertwined, there is the Media Education Curriculum providing sophisticated and up-to-date material for Salem’s lessons. The critical use of the internet is just one aspect, while data protection, data security, and questions on an ethical use of internet contents are further examples. We consider the emergence of AI-based software and ChatGPT in education a huge opportunity for the continuous development of our education. These selected examples demonstrate that pupils in Salem are slowly brought in to contact with irrevocable change processes in modern society, while as children they deserve to live in a safe space as long as they can.

SO WHY WOULD ANYONE JOIN SALEM?

Salem International Boarding School offers the supportive environment for tackling ever-changing contexts in our work and our society, stemming from awareness and challenging pupils in everyday boarding school life. We help to build personalities, turning pupils into active global citizens led by the values of our founding fathers. It is the managers and engineers with emotional intelligence that we raise, not the egotistical high-performer. It is the team player, not the lonesome superior. We offer support and trust in our pupils’ ability to cope with any situation. We foster their resilience and we believe that there is more in them than they would know, until they try and find out. •

To find out more, visit schule-schloss-salem.de

“While the so-called Generation Z stands for growing up in globalised and digitalised contexts, the Salem pupil community builds global citizens on our very own campus, preparing them for their future lives wherever this may take place.”





EPSOM
COLLEGE
IN MALAYSIA

RAISING FUTURE-READY YOUNG ADULTS

In an increasingly interconnected world, dominated by technological disruption, we see a profound shift in the skills required by employers, especially as information is readily available at the touch of a button. Given the unprecedented rate of change, we must ensure that the education we offer meets the needs of the next generation.



As teachers we are role models to our students; an excellent teacher can be a decisive element in a young person's life, shaping their character, and enabling their success. At Epsom, three core principles are at the heart of our provision: to Nurture, Educate and Inspire. As a boarding school, our learning community is close-knit – Our academic and pastoral staff reside on-site and interact with students daily, sharing meals, playing sport, forging strong relationships, mutual trust and respect. Happy children who feel safe and secure learn best and in 2022, 1 in 2 of our IGCSE students received 7 or more A* or A grades and 63% of A-Level students received A* or A grades, alongside entry to top universities such as Cambridge, Imperial, LSE, and Stanford.

We recognise and celebrate all our learners as individuals, each with their own interests, talents and challenges to overcome. In this way we nurture our students, building their self-esteem and self-confidence.

The education we provide is holistic, enabling academic achievement while developing scholarship - we seek to inspire our students to find their passion and take their learning further, as well as with their interpersonal skills. We aspire for the learners in our care to grow to be moral, principled and reflective global citizens who leave us ready to take up their place in the world and make a change for good. We are developing literate, numerate young people with a broad knowledge of the world around them but we remain ever mindful that we are preparing our students for more than just examinations, we are preparing them for life.

GLOBAL OUTLOOK & LOCAL RELEVANCE

Today's global landscape is increasingly competitive thus we seek to prepare our students for the global job market via internship experiences at some of Malaysia's biggest corporations.

We promote equal proficiency in

English and Mandarin, the global languages spoken by more than a third of the world's population, through an English Mandarin Immersion Programme (EMIP) for prep school students. Our bespoke EMIP curriculum is supplemented by contextually relevant teaching such as the Singapore Maths learning strategy which instils a deep understanding of the subject through concepts like the CPA (Concrete, Pictorial, Abstract) progression, number bonds, bar modelling, and mental maths. As students progress through the school, they achieve conversational Mandarin fluency and have the opportunity to take the HSK test, an international standardised test of Chinese language proficiency.

INSTILLING VALUES AND BUILDING CONFIDENCE

Our classes are pupil-centred and interactive. We promote active discussion, debate and reflection, developing students' independence of thought and ability to think critically, able to apply prior learning to new contexts.

LIFE LESSONS THROUGH SPORT

We recognise the importance of sports as a powerful tool that instils values such as the merit of hard work, teamwork, risk-taking, sportsmanship and leadership. Our pupils are spoilt for choice when it comes to sporting endeavours on our 50-acre campus with state-of-the-art facilities. With university applications becoming increasingly competitive, an athletic ability can be a differentiating factor in a pupil's profile against a broad pool of applicants – Epsom provides a truly holistic education that will help set applicants apart.

Our partnerships with some of the most prestigious names in sport – from Patrick Mouratoglou for tennis to La Liga for football – have enabled our students to experience a truly holistic education that blends a world-class British education and high-performance sport. Epsom students in Years 6 and 7 will participate in these sport programmes from September 2023, at no additional cost.

NURTURE, EDUCATE, INSPIRE

Epsom seeks to give students a voice and offers a wealth of opportunities for students to lead and innovate. This is evident in the vast array of Academic Societies on offer where students engage with their areas of interest beyond the classroom. These include the Humanities Society, the Maths Society and the Business and Economics Society. Epsom Comfort Society has become an excellent forum for international students to come together and share their experiences of living far from home, whilst practising compassion and mindfulness towards one another. Most recently, Epsom's Senior String Ensemble performed with FIVERA – an award-winning international pop-opera group – in front of a 200-person public audience. These enrichment activities offer opportunities to develop skills that cannot be taught – time management, leadership, resilience, negotiation and delegation as well as the importance of compassion, empathy and compromise.

Although we may not know what the world of work will look like in the future, we do know that our students leave Epsom with the capability, character and confidence to pursue their passions and fulfil their purpose. •

Left & below: Students from Epsom College in Malaysia

▶ WATCH WEBINAR REPLAY

Watch the Future Ready Education for Future Success webinar replay at www.relocatemagazine.com/relocate-global-international-schools-fair-new-release-webinars





EASY DOES IT

To combat climate change organisations need to make sustainable choices accessible and convenient for everybody, writes **Jeff Dewing**.

As the rate of climate change accelerates it is increasingly important for organisations to take charge and deliver positive climate action.

The 2023 Edelman Trust Barometer (an annual gauge of trust in business organisations, government, and the media) recently found business is increasingly trusted over government.

This gives organisations a

key role to play in promoting environmentally conscious behaviour. To make a real difference, everyday consumers also need to adopt climate friendly practices and businesses need to make it easy for them to do so.

Studies have shown that the relationship between consumer behaviour and climate change is complex, but the biggest focus should be on making climate friendly behaviour easy and

convenient. Business leaders need to both improve the carbon footprint of their organisations, but also support the general population to make better choices. Organisations can help by making it easy for consumers to access information and resources, providing clear instructions on how to reduce their impact on climate change, and offering tools and technologies to automate sustainable practices.

CONSUMERS WANT CONVENIENCE

Consumer behaviour is often driven by convenience, especially in relation to environmentally sustainable practices. Most of us want to make choices that help to reduce carbon emissions from our cars, houses, and lifestyles, but when it comes to the crunch, we are more likely to take the easy option, even if that is worse for the environment. A recent Ipsos poll showed that 84% of Britons are 'concerned' about climate change, with 52% 'very concerned'. Despite this, there is still a disconnect: a 2021 study by global data agency Kantar Public found few consumers were willing to make significant lifestyle changes to mitigate climate change. While consumers alone shouldn't bear the burden of climate change, their collective impact is crucial.

THE ATTITUDE-BEHAVIOUR GAP

Greater engagement is the key to getting more of us to take responsibility for our actions. According to the United Nation's 2022 Emissions Gap report, we are not meeting the Paris Agreement goals and do not have a viable plan to limit global warming to 1.5°C. Despite constant exposure to news about climate change, efforts by the media to encourage change are not enough. Often, people do not consider climate change as a personal issue, while others feel overwhelmed with information and don't know where to start. To close this attitude-behaviour gap we need to move beyond one-way communication and promote interactive conversations that encourage individuals to take responsibility. This could be as simple as asking: "Do you care about climate change? If so, what are you doing about it?"

Convenience is also a powerful tool for driving change and companies can help to make climate-friendly actions easier to adopt. This might include providing easily accessible recycling bins in public spaces or offering incentives for the use public transport.

Nudge theory, where the physical environment is changed to promote positive changes in behaviour, can also help. This might be placing healthier foods in a prominent position in the cafeteria or the

successful Neat Streets campaign to reduce littering which started in Westminster in 2015.

HOW BUSINESS CAN HELP

Every organisation needs to show that encouraging sustainability is both the right thing to do and profitable for the business. On a granular level, organisations can use their own website and social media to share infographics and tips to help consumers make climate-friendly changes, from sharing eco-friendly products to reducing energy consumption.

Additionally, being transparent about the organisation's own sustainability journey will help promote trust, including the areas that the business is still working to address. For example, tech company Mindsett is helping to transform how businesses manage their assets, supporting them to conserve energy and resources using IoT technology and PRISM device. Within a year of installation, it can provide a predictive maintenance solution by using data collected from a company's assets.

COLLABORATE FOR CHANGE

It's helpful to look beyond an organisation's immediate activities as this is something consumers will also consider. For example, look at a product's lifecycle, the company's Scope 3 emissions (the indirect emissions which occur in the upstream and downstream activities of an organisation) and the labour practices of suppliers. It's also beneficial to collaborate, even with competitors, if it means generating a positive impact on the environment.

Tools and technologies that automate sustainable practices are also becoming more widely available. Gamification tech, which adds game mechanics into non-game environments to motivate behaviour change, can help close the attitude-behaviour gap. This might include giving organisations simple suggestions on an app, such as to turn off the lights between 10pm and 4am the building is empty, and educating them on the cost savings. It's about making it as easy as possible to behave in a way that's more favourable to the planet.

Organisations have a responsibility to address

climate change by promoting environmentally sustainable practices. However, they also need to make it easy for consumers to take climate-friendly actions. By prioritising convenience, businesses can tap into consumer demand, drive behaviour change, reduce costs, and build brand loyalty, all while making a positive impact on the environment.

Climate change is a planetary-scale threat and requires mass behavioural change which can only be achieved through collaboration. We need to be open, share best practices, and go beyond improving sustainability in our own businesses by working with customers and suppliers.

Jeff Dewing is a tech entrepreneur and founder of Cloudfm and Mindsett which help organisations achieve net zero through innovative technology. •



Jeff Dewing is a multi-million-pound tech entrepreneur, the founder of Cloudfm & Mindsett, dedicated to helping businesses achieve net zero through innovative technology. His work has been recognised with the Queen's Award for Innovation and Gartner has named them a global leader in IoT-enabled predictive maintenance.

He is a speaker at 2023 World Energy Summit, sharing insights on using game-changing tech for sustainability. He's developed industry-leading AI and gamification strategies to reduce energy consumption, costs and CO₂, tackling Scope 1 to 3 emissions. He is also collaborating with The Reef Company (backed by IBM and Microsoft), to restore coral reef ecosystems and fight climate change from both the land and sea.

DEI in employee mobility: how to make relocating work for everyone

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) is part of a larger societal shift. Culturally – be it national, corporate, religious, gender, generational or socio-economic – recognising and addressing the needs of a wider array of people is working its way into many aspects of life explains **Caitlin Pyett**, Director of Account Management, Asia, Crown World Mobility.



Within the employee mobility sector, there are numerous traditional elements that do not meet current and evolving DEI standards. The predominance of male head of household transferees, referring to the employee's partner as a "trailing spouse", and limited family support are just three examples.

So, how can you encourage and support DEI in relocation?

1. ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CANDIDATE POOL FOR ASSIGNMENTS AND TRANSFERS

It all starts with recruitment. Managers may select a candidate based on work they have done together, or a high-potential employee may be earmarked for a relocation opportunity as part of a career development plan. Just as easily, someone can be excluded from consideration for these opportunities because they don't have the right contacts, or someone in the decision-making position assumes they couldn't undertake a move.

These unconscious biases are at the root of insufficient approaches to inclusivity. Mobility professionals can play the role of instigator by raising the topic of how to engender greater diversity in the candidate pool. For example:

a) Who else might be considered for these opportunities? Work with HR and senior leaders to identify the broadest possible candidate pool before applying criteria that might eliminate potential candidates.

b) Identify elements of your current programme that may not accommodate everyone's personal situations. Sometimes seeing where the problems are is the hardest part. Once you can pinpoint which aspects of your programme are contributing to exclusion, finding solutions follows naturally. That said, there are often unsolvable barriers, and knowing what they are is important, too (more on this later).

c) Encourage employees who may not see themselves as candidates to explore their options. It's easy for employees who notice past assignees or transferees fit a particular mold, to worry that they do not, and silently eliminate themselves from consideration. Make sure employees know that the company is consciously expanding its commitment to diversifying candidate pools.

2. UNDERTAKE A DEEP DIVE POLICY REVIEW

Policy serves many functions. It defines the mobility programme, describes the assistance available and the eligibility for that assistance, in addition to addressing process points.

Not surprisingly, then, there are many aspects of policy that may work against a company's DEI objectives, and a thorough review can uncover the ineffective elements and identify opportunities for improvement.

What to look for? Look at language of course, but also assumptions, definitions, unnecessary rigidity, lack of flexibility and overall purpose.

3. CHECK YOUR COMMUNICATION STYLE

This is a part of both steps described above, but it is also worthy of standalone attention because the impact of communication is the most visible and easily changeable aspect of making your approach to employee mobility more DEI friendly. Consider:

a) Written and verbal communications. Is everyone who touches employee mobility or assignment/ transfer candidate development focused on ensuring their communication is as bias-free as possible? This includes external partners, too!

b) Program design. In line with the review of policy, is the communication of mobility programs designed in such a way that people with a variety of perspectives and needs can see themselves in the program descriptions? Are your communications gender neutral, family-friendly, as well as family-diverse, and orientation-aware?

c) Exception management. In mobility, we strive to avoid or minimise exceptions to policy, and in general this is a reasonable goal. However, when it comes to supporting DEI objectives, there should be parameters that specifically consider when exceptions may be needed to align with the greater priority of inclusion.

All of the above, in theory, will help to accelerate your approach to DEI in relation to mobility. However, there is an elephant in the room – the issue that can become a full stop before we even get started – and that is the fact that efforts towards a more inclusive approach cannot be applied in all situations.

There are countries that do not grant visas to unmarried or same sex partners. There are assignment locations that are not appropriate for families. There are personal legal situations that do not lend themselves to workarounds.

What to do? Be honest, communicate openly and, where possible, look for alternatives so that all valued employees know that the company is focused on enabling opportunities for them, wherever possible. After all, isn't that the point? ◦

BE HONEST, COMMUNICATE OPENLY AND, WHERE POSSIBLE, LOOK FOR ALTERNATIVES SO THAT ALL VALUED EMPLOYEES KNOW THAT THE COMPANY IS FOCUSED ON ENABLING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THEM, WHEREVER POSSIBLE.

Enter our Innovation & Excellence Awards...



The 2023 Relocate and Think Global People Awards take innovation and excellence as their central theme. As global leaders, managers and industry experts, HR and mobility professionals, and service providers move forward post-pandemic, so new approaches are called for to respond to developing global, regional and local approaches to managing mobile people. **Dr Sue Shortland** sets out this year's Awards rationale, categories and entry criteria.

INTERNATIONAL TALENT DEVELOPMENT & EDUCATION

The mobility of employees to ensure excellent talent deployment across the world has once again come to the forefront of attention. The need to fill skills gaps and develop individuals for leadership in the future has never been more demanding. If organisations are to reap the rewards of successful business ventures in the years ahead, it is critical that the right people are developed and deployed in the most efficient and effective manner now.

To ensure future generations of skills and talent, emphasis is also necessary on ensuring excellence and innovation within education – from schools, through to colleges

and universities – so that our young people are prepared for future roles that today we can only imagine.

LEADERSHIP FOR ESG & GREEN CREDENTIALS

A further key area demanding both innovation and excellence is the leadership and governance of our employing organisations. Organisations today and in the future must follow ethical principles and the requirement for corporate social responsibility has never been greater.

Post-pandemic, and in a period of considerable political and economic instability, organisations that demonstrate ESG excellence will become sought-after places to work by the most talented

employees. And, as the climate crisis continues to mount, so those businesses that demonstrate innovative green credentials will also attract the best talent. Thus, leadership approaches that promote sound ESG principles, including carbon footprint reductions, will capitalise upon the excellence that can flow from the attraction and deployment of the best talent.

INTERNATIONAL ACCOMMODATION & SUPPORT SERVICES

Having people in the right place at the right time means mobility – locally, regionally, and globally – and this requires considerable planning and support. Moving individuals and their families means ensuring suitable places for them to live and support will be required as they adjust in different environments.

Service sector firms that provide assistance in finding accommodation, and in supporting individuals and their families in potentially different cultural or hostile environments, while delivering quality and green solutions in so doing, are crucial to the success of any mobility endeavour. Excellence and innovation in this area of support is therefore vital for businesses' operational success.

POLICY, TECHNOLOGY & RESEARCH

In order that leadership, talent development and accommodation and support services can operate effectively and efficiently, excellence in underpinning policy, research, and technology is critical. Practitioners must devise not only appropriate policy to service both the business need and the employee experience but also ensure that policy design and delivery is innovative in order to remain competitive.

Innovative solutions require understanding of past, current and future actions and, as such, both innovation and excellence are necessary within technology and data analytics in order to support policy making and implementation. And by drawing upon outstanding world-class research and ideas development, businesses will be able to develop and refine their approaches to global policy and mobility actions, improving success capability. ◦

AWARDS KEY DATES

ENTRIES CLOSE 30 APRIL

MAY – AWARDS SHORTLIST

THURSDAY 8 JUNE – FESTIVAL & AWARDS CEREMONY



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GAINING INNOVATION AND EXCELLENCE RECOGNITION

This year's Relocate and Think Global People Awards – now in our 16th year – therefore places innovation and excellence at the heart of the various award entry categories.

CATEGORIES 2023:

Excellence in global mobility/
global policy design/implementation

Destination services provider of the year – local/global

Best serviced apartment provider – local/global

Excellence in technology or analytics

Excellence in talent development, deployment,
diversity and inclusion

Excellence in education – schools/education consultancy

Excellence in engagement and employee wellbeing

Best research contribution or book

Excellence in ESG and/or carbon footprint reduction

Excellence in global leadership and innovation

Visit relocateglobal.com for details on how to enter & Awards entry criteria.

Email: awards@relocatemagazine.com

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Discover how industry sectors, international thought leaders, entrepreneurs and the creative sector are responding to the latest Innovations in Global Working.

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7-8 JUNE
LAMBERHURST, KENT

It is time to focus on how you and your organisation are going to lead the way in sustainable growth and what that means for your business.

Fast-paced change is becoming part of our DNA, but what can we learn from those in other disciplines and industry sectors? Last year's Future of Work Festival was a huge hit: you can watch the video highlights here and be part of this year's exciting two-day programme of events.

For the second year, the Festival will be held in the countryside setting of Lamberhurst in Kent. We will explore how we can push the boundaries on innovation and collaborate and learn from others on how to accelerate growth and productivity. Jayne Constantinis, international TV presenter and journalist, is our host and will make this a really special occasion. Watch the video from 2022.

We will be future-proofing, learning from the space sector about how to plan for the world of work decades ahead, and how to contribute to global conversations that encompass our planet, people,

political stability, health and world economics in our exclusive programme with NASA Astronaut, Tony Antonelli.



**BOOK
NOW!**

WEDNESDAY, 7 JUNE Taking innovation and leadership to the next level with Astronaut, Tony Antonelli

Step into the world of NASA leadership with a true pioneer, Tony Antonelli.

From serving as a US Navy Commander, to piloting two space missions as a NASA astronaut, to shaping the future of space exploration in executive roles with Lockheed Martin and Karman Space and Defence - get ready to be inspired by one of the most accomplished humans of our time.

Tony is ready to share his secrets to success and innovation with you! Join us for an unforgettable leadership event where Tony will impart his invaluable lessons, honed over decades of leading in the most challenging environments imaginable.

The question is, are you ready to take your leadership skills to new heights?



THE DAY WILL COVER:

- **From Earth to Space:** Antonelli's journey to becoming an Astronaut
- **Innovation:** Leading the way to Mars
- **Mastering the art of leadership**

Limited availability

THURSDAY, 8 JUNE The Innovation Festival for Global Working

The day opens with our host, presenter Jayne Constantinis, leading the keynote panel discussion. This will explore trends and learnings across the themes of leadership, the future of the work and the workplace, global mobility, talent, productivity and growth, and cutting-edge change across diverse industry sectors. Attendees will enjoy breakouts in our four stimulating Innovation Hubs:

1. LEADERSHIP, FUTURE OF WORK AND THE WORKPLACE

Enjoy case studies from the people behind the changes across industry sectors from around the world and their impact on working practices and workplaces. We explore how to open in a new dominion and the opportunities and support available. We cover geographical hotspots and the impact of disruption to global supply chains and the potential of new markets.



2. FUTURE OF GLOBAL MOBILITY

Is this the golden age for Global Mobility? Learn why the GM perspective is being heard at the sharp end of business decision making. Discover from those with a seat at the top table how global mobility can deliver a strategic role. Explore how latest technology is delivering analytics and solutions to support talent mobility. What is the secret of successful hybrid working and is there a future for international assignments? We will delve into the importance of tax and immigration in a compliance driven world and explore what is next for business travel and duty of care responsibilities in an uncertain world.

3. WELLBEING & ENGAGEMENT

With global talent shortages high in many sectors, this is your opportunity to meet a wealth of diversity, equity and inclusion experts and explore the opportunities to ensure recruitment and retention success. Have your questions answered and explore how to support your ESG agenda in a meaningful way. Meet professional development experts and coaches, and experience new approaches that could kick-start your productivity and support employee engagement. Take advantage of the outdoor space to reignite your creativity, refresh your thinking.

4. INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

International Education is hugely important to our audience. Find out how great schools and educators are preparing future fit generations. Understand more about positive transitions care programmes in school communities. Explore the potential to extend schools' experience and knowledge to the workplace to engage and retain your international employees.

Book now at www.thinkglobalpeople.com

Last year's Future of Work Festival was a huge hit: [watch the video highlights here](#) and be part of this year's exciting two-day programme of events.

Say **YES** to the 2023
**INNOVATION
FESTIVAL
FOR GLOBAL WORKING**

- Building on the success of the 2022 Festival & Awards
- Join the best thinkers and leaders in a glorious countryside setting
- Be stimulated by thought leadership and challenged by changemakers
- Engage with the Think Global People Community



Join the best thinkers in leadership, global mobility, HR and education, in a glorious countryside setting with a festival feel.

- Delegates will have the opportunity to share knowledge and collaborate with peers from international companies and visionary leaders across diverse industry sectors.
- You will connect with leading experts from around the globe, experience innovation at first hand and meet our award winners in person.
- Network in a relaxed professional environment.

RELOCATE & THINK GLOBAL PEOPLE AWARDS

Our fabulous Awards Ceremony will be held in the Tree Marquee on 8 June – join us to celebrate excellence and meet the winners.

SPONSORSHIP

Don't miss the chance to align your brand with the Festival and reach international attendees including CEOs, CFOs, HR, Global Mobility Professionals, decision makers and influencers in multinational organisations.

We had a global network of leaders and changemakers who joined us last year, including from the UK, Australia, USA, Germany, Singapore, France and Switzerland.

To discuss sponsorship, please contact David Ward:
david@relocatemagazine.com
+44 (0)1892 891334

HELP SHAPE OUR FESTIVAL

- Work with our experts to shape the content and play a key role in facilitating discussions and activities in our Hubs
- Exhibition and meeting space
- Benefit from access to our global audience of 30,000 unique users per month with extensive pre and post Festival and Awards coverage across our media
- Opportunity to present an Award
- Video and photography.

For further details and to book your tickets visit www.thinkglobalpeople.com

One- or Two-Day tickets available. Early bird prices to 30 April. **Discounts for Think Global People Members.**

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40

OUTSTANDING
GLOBAL WOMEN
2023

PART 1

SUPPLEMENT



Welcome to Think WOMEN

In March 2023, Think Global People held its annual events to mark International Women's Day. The theme this year is 'embrace equity.' With international exposure a core competency for progressing senior careers, the need to embrace equity – with intentionality – in our global community of thought leaders across international management, global mobility and education has great resonance if we are to increase the rate at which gender parity at board and executive level is achieved.

Both our events aligned completely with Think Global People's purpose of supporting ambitious individuals and organisations to grow, and ensure companies and people achieve their potential.

Our keynote speakers, retired NASA and ISSET's Sarah Murray, and 100 Women @Davos leader, Dr Anino Emuwa, are perfect examples of the qualities, skills and vision needed to progress, as well as hold out a hand to the next generation of female leaders coming through. You can find out more about each of these outstanding women in our videos and editorial on the Think Global People and Relocate Global websites, as well as in the following pages highlighting our Outstanding Global Women.

We were also delighted to have with us at the Institute of Directors over half of the truly inspirational women we have profiled for this, part one, of our series celebrating 40 Outstanding Global Women this year.

By sharing individual stories of how they came to be influencing policy, practice, their teams and others, these 40 leading women shine a light on what it takes to embrace equity, lead with purpose and intent, and carve your own fulfilling career path – including the pleasures and pitfalls of doing so – and very often, against the odds.

We are also looking forward to hearing their voices and yours again over the coming year as part of Think Global People's 'Think Women' network. We invite you to join us at our events and activities in this unique community. It offers everyone the opportunity to input and collaborate on actions to accelerate equity across all aspects of the diversity and inclusion spectrum as they relate to our international network of leaders working in a global landscape, global mobility, education and L&D.

The experiences of women in the following profiles offer a fantastic starting point for the journey we can take together as individuals and as a collective to embrace equity. Each woman profiled reflects the wealth of world-beating talent and depth of determination present in our overlapping and mutually supportive sectors, examples which can be shared more extensively across the international management context through our new website thinkglobalpeople.com.

We hope you enjoy reading about these outstanding and inspiring women as much as we have meeting, talking to and writing about them.

Fiona Murchie, Founder & Managing Editor
Think Global People & Relocate Global

Think
GLOBAL PEOPLE
thinkglobalpeople.com



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Blueprint for a new, more inclusive workplace:

Dr Anino Emuwa

Despite the increasing engagement of women in public life, bias against female leadership remains and in some countries is on the rise, according to the Reykjavik Index for Leadership, an annual international study, writes **Marianne Curphey**.

Even though women have made headway in leading private companies and public organisations, it seems that perception of female leadership is regressing. According to the 2022 Reykjavik Index for Leadership, worryingly younger people demonstrate less progressive views than their parents.

Against this background, Dr Anino Emuwa, Founder and Managing Director of Avandis Consulting, a strategy and financial advisory firm in France, a diversity and inclusion advocate and the founder of 100 Women @Davos, is still hopeful and positive that change is underway.

A former corporate banker with Citibank, she is a member of the Institute of Directors' Expert Advisory Group on Diversity and Inclusion. Anino also sits on several international advisory boards including Reykjavik Global Community, working to ensure that more women attain and retain power, and Empower Now which helps companies and organisations gain an overview of the status of DEI within the workplace. Anino is also a Regional Lead for Cartier Women's

Initiative which drives change by empowering women impact entrepreneurs.

"The assumption is that the workplace is neutral, but historically it has been built for men," she says. "With the emergence of new technologies such as Web3 which are set to shape the way in which we work in the coming years, we now have the opportunity to redesign the workplace to make it more diverse and inclusive so that it is supportive of everyone.

"Leadership qualities like empathy, cooperation and collaboration are found in the leaders of the most successful companies in the world, both men and women. It is healthy to have feminine aspects to leadership, whatever your gender, because in leading diverse teams means it is necessary to model inclusive behaviour across a range of employees."

Dr Emuwa says that another misconception and difficulty for female leaders is the idea that women's career paths should follow the same route as that of men.

"The career trajectory for women can be quite different than the male template, given that women are often balancing career progression with care responsibilities" she says. "In terms of successful women, a career might be cyclical and progress over a longer cycle, rather than a mad dash to the top and then the drop as we see often with men."

TACKLING UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

Another issue which women are having to overcome, and which organisations need to tackle, is that of "unconscious bias". This can affect companies at every stage, from recruitment through to middle management and promotion to executive leadership roles. It is also about perceptions of leadership based on the old "command and control" models, where top managers adopted a dominant rather than inclusive style.

"We're used to seeing leadership as male and so there is an unconscious bias, which is inbuilt and socialised," she explains. "In the past we have celebrated the masculine aspects of leadership and ascribed them solely to men. But in fact, successful male leaders often thrive because they have incorporated feminine leadership aspects into their leadership style – those of empathy, collaboration and communication. So it is not the case that it has to be one or the other in terms of a management approach."

She is concerned that despite the innovations that the Covid-19 pandemic brought – hybrid working, more flexibility, and more open discussion about work/life balance – there is a danger of reverting to type.

"When there is a crisis, women's rights and equality among workers tends to take second place," she says.

This can be seen in terms of women shouldering the greater burden of home schooling and family care, and the insistence of some organisations that all staff should now return to the office.

Yet having more women in senior roles is good for decision making, innovation, risk, for future-proofing an organisation and for society.

"In countries where leadership is more inclusive across genders, we find lower suicide rates in men," she says. "Gender balanced leadership is better for the good of society and for organisations in terms of business performance. Organisations are realising that the issues that they are facing in today's world are far too complex to leave to just one half of the potential talent pool."

EMBEDDING SUSTAINABILITY

One aspect where female leaders make a clear difference is around ESG – Environmental, Social and Governance issues, including sustainability, climate change, diversity and inclusion and robust risk and governance policies.

As stakeholders and customers start to ask tough questions about sustainability and diversity from the companies they interact with, having an ESG lens is one way that organisations can start to think about how to change business practices for the future.

"Another aspect where female leaders can make a clear impact is around ESG," she says. "When they are in senior positions, ESG considerations play a greater role in decision-making and strategy within organisations and companies.

"All people deserve to have the same opportunities, and decision-making is better when you have more diverse teams and different views and voices. Your customer base is diverse so how could you possibly build products and services for those diverse customers, if the leadership at the top is chosen from a narrow base?"

While some progress is being made, women who lead in the current environment have to work within the organisations and cultures which currently exist, she says.

"We need to fix the organisations and policy, but we also need to equip women with the skills they need to succeed. One key skill is making yourself visible and communicating to your managers that you are interested in taking on more senior roles and more overseas assignments.

Visibility – "Women should not feel reticent and they should be ready to step up into those roles. Talk about your career progress with your boss. You absolutely have to bring it up. Don't wait for it to happen, and don't wait to be recognised.

Networking – "Find a sponsor within the organisation, someone who is willing to speak up for you as well as a mentor who can share their experiences with you. Build your network of contacts and community – find out what opportunities are out there.

Be ambitious – "Talk about what you do and make sure that you also reflect where you want your future career to go on business networking sites such as LinkedIn. If you are a CFO who is interested in transformation strategy, then talk about it in your posts.

Develop transferable skills – "Sometimes women feel that they lack the experience or previous roles that they need in order to apply for a promotion. Look into making an audit of yourself of the transferable skills you have which could be used in different roles.

Be inclusive – "Leaders, male or female, need to lead teams in an inclusive way. Make an effort to be inclusive and empathetic. Soft skills are critically important to leadership right now.

Reconsider your recruitment processes – "It is easy for managers to hire people who look and sound like them. That is an issue that organisations need to address, and something managers need to think about. It is hard to manage diverse teams if all the managers are one kind of person.

Create a management style that is progressive –

"When you have a diverse workforce you need to have a management style that allows you to get the best out of all your talent. It is about modelling inclusive behaviour right across the organisation, starting from the top."

The opportunity to rewrite the workplace – while many organisations still have the legacy of homogenous boards and non-inclusive recruitment policies, there is the opportunity to change, she says. Companies which are active in emerging technologies – Web3, Artificial Intelligence and the Metaverse – are at the forefront of hiring the best talent globally. Dr Emuwa sees this as a challenge to rethink radically how and why we work, rather than taking for granted the post-industrial culture which is hard-baked into so much of what we do.

"What we don't want is to create all these new and exciting technologies and then find we still have the same, 100-year-old structures," she says. "We need to create inclusive spaces and organisations with the emerging technology."

100 Women @Davos – Dr Emuwa was moved to create a community of impact-driven women leaders which she founded alongside the World Economic Forum in 2019. It supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (UNSDG) 5 Target 5.5 to: "ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership". The organisation holds regular 100 Women @Davos Leadership Dialogues with inspirational leaders to generate debate and move the needle on gender diversity in leadership across the world.

"At the World Economic Forum, the proportion of women who attend is much higher than the top leadership in companies," she explained. "There is now a female representation at the WEF of around 27%, compared to the percentage of female CEOs in organisations which is currently around 5% to 7%. But we still have a lot of progress to make. I felt we needed to have this conversation about female leadership."

As well as promoting women's individual progress and career progression, Dr Emuwa believes we need to look at how women can play a greater role in decision-making.

"Women need to be part of the debate around how we fix the world's problems, the impact of the decision we make," she says. "Women have a valuable role to play in organisations all around the world and 100 Davos Women is about helping to facilitate that change." ◉





DR ANINO EMUWA
 FOUNDER & MANAGING DIRECTOR, AVANDIS CONSULTING

MAKING PROGRESS THROUGH IMPACT-DRIVEN NETWORKS, CONNECTION & COLLABORATION

Dr Anino Emuwa is a world-renowned advocate for better gender balance in leadership globally. She convenes impact-driven, change-making communities of women CEOs and founders, including 100 Women@Davos and the Africa Women CEOs Network. She is also Managing Director of strategy and financial advisory firm Avandis Consulting.

Working in an international context and gaining international experience is now of vital importance for women leaders. It is also critical for de-risking enterprises around the world as we shift to a more ESG-driven business model.

Economist, former banker, and holder of multiple governance positions in diverse organisations from higher education, business and advocacy bodies, including the Institute of Directors (IoD), Dr Anino Emuwa is collaborating, leading and inspiring others in this critical space and making change happen.

Dr Anino Emuwa is also a global business leader, honing her thinking and practice through leading universities, one of which – Nottingham Trent University – she is now serving as a governing board member alongside her other roles, including action advisory board member of the Reykjavik Global Community – Women Leaders.

Born in Nigeria, Dr Emuwa has lived in six countries and is bilingual in English and French. Dr Emuwa completed her Doctorate in Business Administration at Nottingham Business School and holds an MBA from Cranfield School of Management. She also holds a BSc Economics from the London School of Economics, is a Fellow of the Chartered Management Institute and a member of the Institute of Directors.

CAMPAIGNING AND INFLUENCING

This impressive academic CV coupled with her successful career in the finance and corporate world underpin Dr Emuwa’s current work around improving female representation. “We are at a time where we are facing a global crisis,” said Dr Emuwa in a recent interview with France24. “In fact, economists will call it permacrisis. And this is a time where we need to have all the talent aboard in order to help solve problems, particularly in leadership.

“We’re coming out of Covid and haven’t sorted out its effects yet. We’ve been dealing with the fallout from Afghanistan, also from Ukraine and a global recession.

There are so many challenges that are facing the world right now. We need to have the best talent on board.”

A key aspect of Dr Emuwa’s work today is championing change and building a global network of men and women engaged in making a positive impact and changing mindsets around what is possible. One of these networks is 100 Women @Davos.

“As a student of economics many years ago, I’d always heard about the World Economic Forum and I never imagined I would be invited to attend,” explained Dr Emuwa. “But I did attend. And what I found in this conference centre with 2,500 people was that it was mainly men and not very many women. It was when another woman came up to me to speak to me and then you know there was a third.

“We know the talent is obviously equally distributed between men and women. And not having sufficient representation means that we’re losing out on dealing with the challenges and problem solving.”

NORMALISING WOMEN IN GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

As Dr Emuwa articulates and explores in the previous article, ‘Blueprint for a new, more inclusive workplace’, unconscious bias remains an ongoing challenge. This is why every story told in this celebration of outstanding women leading internationally is so important – and why connecting and collaborating to support systemic change is vital.

“What we see with the data it tells us that actually the perception of women as leaders is not very positive,” said Dr Emuwa in her France24 interview. “In fact, the trend is downwards. So, we need to spotlight more women so that we normalise the fact that there are women as leaders in finance, in economics, in all fields and that it’s normal.

“The second thing we need to do is to make sure that we bring them together. We find that when you have the power of community, when you have more women together, people get attuned and aligned to this because without realising it both men and women are biased because we are used to seeing power as being [in the hands of] men. So, we need to normalise the image.”

Supporting each other is also fundamental to bringing about change and absolutely what Dr Emuwa embodies as a leader. “We need to have access to the decisions that are being made behind closed doors. We need to get women into those rooms. We also need to get them into the informal networks, which is very often where contacts and appointments are made at senior level. It’s not about filling the application: it’s about the people who know you.

“What we’re doing is trying to create a workplace that is more attuned to women.” ◉

“We know the talent is obviously equally distributed between men and women. And not having sufficient representation means that we’re losing out on dealing with the challenges and problem solving.”

Below: Keynote Speaker at our 2023 Think Women event Inspiring Global Women for Growth at the IoD, London





**ZARINA
WARD**
CHIEF PEOPLE
OFFICER,
KANTAR PUBLIC

Seize the opportunity to be authentic and be yourself in your leadership role

“When managing global teams and working with different cultures there is not a magic formula. It's about mutual respect, and really trying to understand someone's perspective,” says Zarina Ward, Chief People Officer at Kantar Public.

Zarina has led people and talent functions in major professional services firms, as well as having run her own business. Before joining Kantar Public she led the People Function as Senior Vice-President at MindGym, worked at Ernst & Young, and held senior roles at Oliver Wyman. Kantar Public currently employs more than 700 people in over 20 countries.

“At times in my career I have felt like I needed to act like a leader rather than just bring myself to work,” she says. “I ended up feeling quite conflicted, as though I was playing a role. Through my career I have learnt that it is important to find where your leadership style resonates, and find a place where

people appreciate you, rather than trying to mould yourself into something that you're not.

“My career has been a series of serendipitous moments where I've taken a leap into something new,” she says. “Initially I did a law degree, because I'd always wanted to be a barrister. When I got to the end of my law degree, I thought it was a bit dry.”

Zarina's first job was working for one of the fastest growing recruitment consultancies in Europe, where she experienced an incredibly progressive people policy and a commendably meritocratic structure. By the time she left at aged 25 she was head of recruitment and resourcing and leading a team of 10 people.

WHAT ARE THE QUALITIES OF FEMALE LEADERSHIP?

She says that female leadership and the importance of authenticity and empathy is becoming more recognised.

“Having been through redundancy myself, I try to have as much human kindness and empathy as I can when having to make other people redundant, and it doesn't always have to be an adversarial negotiation,” she says.

She argues that women should not try to fit into societal norms or whatever version of female leadership they might think is the right one. Instead, just be yourself and seek out the opportunities that enable you to shine.

“For example, I think it's important to have a bit of a laugh and a joke because otherwise I just don't think you get through the day,” she explains. “In some organisations that wouldn't be that accepted: that's fine, but that organisation isn't for me. You have to be bold about making those decisions, not feel grateful for having a job but instead thinking about what really works for you.”

ZARINA'S TIPS FOR WOMEN LEADERS

- **If you work hard, you will do well:** I worked really hard and opportunities landed at my door because I delivered on things I had been given to do.
- **Move out of your comfort zone:** sometimes it is OK to learn on the job.
- **Give yourself permission to take time out:** after I had been working for a while I took time off and went travelling around the world. When I got back I set up my own business.
- **Don't give in to imposter syndrome:** I got a job at Ernst & Young (EY) in London and I remember walking through the doors thinking I had never dreamed with my background and my education that I would work in a place like this and be treated as an equal.

• **Be your authentic self at work:** often people in senior positions don't feel able to share the professional and personal challenges they face, particularly as a woman around childcare and family, but it can make you a more authentic and human leader.

• **Don't be afraid to have fun:** people always comment that I bring quite a lot of levity to my work and that I always have a smile on my face. I think life is too short to be miserable at work.

• **Don't underestimate the power of networking:** I got my job as Director of Talent at Oliver Wyman through chatting to a colleague over a cup of coffee.

• **Try to get the balance right:** I'm a really big believer in work-life sustainability, as opposed to work-life balance. I can work through periods of high demand at work as long as there is an opportunity later to spend time with my family.

• **Find yourself a coach:** if you can ask someone to be a mentor or coach, then seize the opportunity. I have benefited from professional coaching which has been life-changing in helping me set my personal and professional goals. •

“I think it's important to have a bit of a laugh and a joke because otherwise I just don't think you get through the day. In some organisations that wouldn't be that accepted: that's fine, but that organisation isn't for me.”

“Through my career I have learnt that it is important to find where your leadership style resonates, and find a place where people appreciate you, rather than trying to mould yourself into something that you're not.”



Encouraging leaders to recruit inclusively

Organisations need to rethink their recruitment strategy in order to find and attract a more diverse selection of leaders, says Jenny Hinde, Executive Director at The Clear Company, a UK-based diversity and inclusion (D&I) firm specialising in inclusive recruitment and talent management insight, training, and technology.

Rather than judging candidates by traditional standards or a conventional career journey, employers need to examine what skills and qualities they can bring to a role, she says.

“We work with a lot with search firms who say they have been asked to provide a diverse shortlist, while also being briefed that the candidate needs to have had 15 plus years’ experience in a specific sector or role,” she says. “Because of the historical context, those two things are often not compatible.

“The challenge instead is to encourage leaders and organisations to step away from some of those very traditional approaches to recruitment which continue to create barriers to candidates from different backgrounds.”

In her varied career Jenny has worked in the HR departments of large corporates, advising on mergers, acquisitions, restructuring and major tenders, and always through a lens of diversity and inclusion. She has more than 20 years’ HR experience and before joining The Clear Company she was HR Director of Amey where she led a successful Diversity and Inclusion agenda in the construction and engineering sector for 10 years.

“I always had a great interest in equality and I remember doing school projects around women’s equality,” she says. She became women’s officer at university and from early in her career was involved in projects bringing people on long-term absence back to work, and supporting those who had disabilities or caring responsibilities who wanted to return to the workplace.

Her passion developed further around D&I and five years ago she stepped out of the corporate HR world and became the leader of The Clear Company.

“Now I am in a leadership role where I can be 100% myself and genuinely lead in the way that I want to lead and that has been transformational,” she says. “In many ways, I wish that I’d made that leap much earlier on in my career.”

WHAT MAKES A GOOD LEADER?

Jenny believes every leader is unique, and there is no one way of leading a team. However, there are key outcomes of leadership that are universally desirable, regardless of style or gender and these include:

- Creating psychological safety for teams, so that they feel valued for their contributions
- Role modelling inclusive behaviours and demonstrating to your team what you expect in terms of those inclusive behaviours
- Empathy when leading teams, whatever the sector your industry is in.

IS THERE A MALE VERSUS FEMALE LEADERSHIP STYLE?

Jenny says that the challenge many organisations face is that their board and leadership team have become homogenous over time. A board dominated by men tends to make decisions in a certain way.

“Typically, those homogenous teams are male dominated with a certain style of leadership,” she says. “If this is the case, then you’re not embracing difference, you’re not bringing in different voices, and you are shying away from anything outside a narrow zone of operation.”

She cites studies which show that bringing women into leadership roles can create improvements, both in financial and non-financial terms, for example in improving health and safety outcomes.

“The evidence is there that teams perform better not just financially but in other ways. However, women in leadership still have a massive mountain to climb in terms of achieving equality from a leadership perspective.”

She believes that millennials are and will continue to change the working environment, pushing for a more inclusive culture and eschewing the 70-hour working week that previous generations considered necessary to ensure promotion to leadership positions.

While working women face systemic barriers in society around access to childcare, shared parental leave and caring responsibility, Jenny suggests that encouraging men to embrace flexible working could be an approach that benefits families.

JENNY HINDE’S TIPS FOR WOMEN LEADERS

- Keep a record of your successes and positive feedback. You can refer to it in appraisals and use it to remind yourself of your value if you are not feeling confident.
- You can be a really impactful and a strong leader and still be inclusive. You need strength to be inclusive.
- Be courageous around your personal leadership style.
- Build your evidence base. It used to be you were told to Build your Brand, but gathering evidence of your value is better. •

“The challenge is to encourage leaders and organisations to step away from some of those very traditional approaches to recruitment which continue to create barriers to candidates from different backgrounds.”

Below: Jenny speaking at our 2023 Think Women event at the IoD, London, alongside panellists Salma Shah and Caroline Thorley-Farrer





Overcoming adversity to build better organisations

Sharmila has served as President of Global Markets, North America, Europe & UK, Asia, and Africa, at Duke CE before being appointed CEO in 2019.

She now leads the company, driving strategic alignment for the organisation globally and operations for its regional practices around the world. For two decades, the *Financial Times* has consistently ranked Duke CE among the top global custom executive education providers. “When you start a new brand, or face a new challenge, you need tenacity, drive, resilience, agility and creativity,” says Sharmila. “You also need to take risks and to own the consequences of your decisions, however they turn out.”

ADVERSITY INTO SUCCESS

“The skills and discipline that I learned early in my career in banking, I now apply to my current role,” she says. Having grown up in Durban, South Africa, during the apartheid regime, Sharmila developed a strong sense of social justice, and a desire for change and progress.

“I was shaped by adversity but also by the women around me, particularly my mother and grandmother” she says.

She recalls the keen sense of injustice she experienced as a child when banned from visiting “white” beaches in Durban, and how, at just five years old, she experienced discrimination when she and her grandmother were refused entry to a restaurant because of the colour of their skin.

“Although they were oppressed, my mother and grandmother were women of respect, dignity, and life-long learning. They instilled in me the importance of education as a path to opportunity, growth, and a way to escape poverty, particularly for girls and women.”

From the age of 15, Sharmila was a student activist speaking up against the deep prejudice of apartheid in South Africa. This experience instilled in her a desire to work for social change and a single goal to transform organisations and society through leadership. Sharmila founded the South Africa office for Duke CE in 2007. Her areas of ongoing research include board leadership,

the future of work, humanity and technology, and people practices. She is now focusing on developing leaders to shape a sustainable and inclusive future and create a new mindset for an ESG world.

Prior to joining Duke CE, she was Head of Human Capital Development at Nedbank for over 19 years. She holds an MBA from Henley Management Business School in the UK and a Masters in Management and Executive Coaching from Wits Business School.

PUTTING A 'W' INTO ESG

As businesses with global teams begin to adjust to demands from customers, stakeholders, investors and employees to demonstrate greater sustainability and diversity, Sharmila believes the contributions of more women in senior roles will enhance performance and reduce business risk.

“Women leaders have a more empathetic style: they build trust, they listen and they can bring diverse voices,” she says. This can have a positive impact on performance, and can also help derisk the business and reduce the chance of poor board decisions being made as a result of groupthink.

“Leadership is not a person or a position,” she says. “It is a relationship of trust and a shared vision and purpose to bring your team along with you. Leading an organisation through change is not always easy, and you need to be prepared to push through times of adversity and develop resilience. You need a growth mindset. Progress is not going to be linear, but women need to be part of the trend towards breaking that glass ceiling and playing their full part.”

She benefits from the support of her team, and her connections with other women who share her agenda for change.

“When I started out in my career and I was sitting on the board of a large engineering company, I felt very alone. I would have benefited from female role models around me. That is why I am very keen on supporting and promoting other women. I founded the Mentorship Circle, a collaborative mentorship scheme which aims to equip, inspire and nurture future leaders so they can in turn run a mentorship project of their own.”

With her deep commitment to build leadership for a better world, she led Duke CE in hosting The Davos of Human Capital event in 2020, convening global CEOs and CHROs and thousands of participants to discuss how leadership can be the force multiplier for positive change in business and society.

“As we women leaders rise in seniority, we need to pay it forward and bring others with us,” she says. “For me, there's the whole notion around being stronger together. Women can support each other and in that way make progress towards equality and social justice.”

Never one to sit still, Sharmila recently launched the Duke CE ESG Leadership Academy which supports organisations across the globe in getting to grips with the changes required for a more sustainable and just world.

“Women executives are critical to the success of ESG too,” she says. “I often say the W is missing from ESG, and it is time to double down on women being equal partners in an ESG era.”

“Leadership is not a person or a position. It is a relationship of trust and a shared vision and purpose to bring your team along with you. Leading an organisation through change is not always easy, and you need to be prepared to push through times of adversity and develop resilience. You need a growth mindset.”





**MERIDYTH
PARK**

HEAD OF MARKETING,
CMC INVEST UK

MAKE CAREER PROGRESSION PERSONAL

Fintech is a male-dominated sector. Just 5.6% of CEOs in the industry are women, only 11% of total board members are women, and 19% are company executives, according to the Fintech Diversity Radar 2021, the world's first global platform gathering progressive data on women in fintech to understand their impact and contribution to the digital economy.

As Head of Marketing at CMC Invest UK, Meridyth Park is immersed in the fintech sector. Her mission now is to uplift other women and give them as many opportunities as possible to progress their careers in the tech and fintech space too.

"It's really important that as managers we take care to champion our team," she says. "It is not necessarily a male or female trait to have, it's just that any manager needs to understand that we're all people and we're all human. We have families and lives outside of work, and it is important to respect and understand that. We spend 40 hours minimum a week in the office or hybrid working together and that is a huge time commitment."

She believes that building a team that works together and keeping morale high is good for everyone.

"It is about enjoying each other and bringing joy into what we all do. In so many cases, especially in Fintech, it's all about the work, but it is also important to take some time and actually think about the health of our teammates and our peers."

Meridyth has had a global career, having worked at BBDO, Grey, and DMB&B (now Publicis) before entering the financial services world at UBS and Bank of America. In the latter, she led brand strategy for the global corporate and investment bank, as well as Merrill Lynch Wealth Management.

"I started off in university in the US thinking I was going to be a doctor, living my parents' dream," she explains. "But I realised it wasn't my passion and being exposed to such a large group of people with more perspectives and even more diversity opened my mind to other possibilities."

TRANSPARENCY KEY

As a leader, she approaches everything with transparency. She doesn't believe her team can work at their best without knowing the whole truth. So she keeps nothing from them. Meridyth's take on being a leader stems from her mantra, "It's not about being the smartest person in the room, but about bringing out the best in others." Her leadership style is a solid testament to how to adapt to different environments, using your strengths to convey your voice.

"I've had a lot of managers in my career," she says. "I have seen some managers who have held information back and it's been really counterproductive. Staff end up delivering without having the full context, and working in silos is never an effective approach."

She worked for over a decade in New York at advertising agencies and banks, but after being made redundant from UBS at the height of the 2008-10 financial crisis, she decided to go travelling in South America.

When she returned, she was hired to run the brand strategy for Bank of America for their global B2B businesses. Bank of America had just bought out Merrill Lynch and the role involved navigating a lot of internal politics caused by two larger organisations being merged.

"I loved being part of the discussions around market strategy and branding across multiple countries and jurisdictions, understanding the compliance and legal requirements in various regions."

She was instrumental in managing and building brands around wealth management for Merrill Lynch, before deciding that after 16 years of living in New York City, she wanted to explore more of the world.

"I love New York. I still think of myself as a New Yorker. But just from a personal growth perspective, I found that I wanted to move on."

CONVERSATIONS DELIVER CAREERS

A firm believer in networking, Meridyth got a job in London leading sales and marketing campaigns for the global transaction services team out of London by chatting with a colleague. Despite having global expertise, the actual experience of moving to London was another revelatory moment.

"I have worked on global brands prior to the move, so I had understood that there were cultural differences, but it was still from a very US centric mindset," she says. "Once I was actually sitting in a London office, I realised there was so much more that we could do, and that while we speak the same language there really is a cultural gap. You absolutely have to live it to understand it."

After four years in the London office of Bank of America she was ready for a new challenge.

"I'm very animated, very energetic. I am a huge cheerleader outwardly and I wear my emotions on my sleeve. In a very corporate structure, and especially in a London office, I just felt that I needed to hide a little bit more of who I was. I wanted to go to work for more of a small to midsize company where they would be much more open to some of my type of energy!"

She left to work for a startup, before joining CMC via another informal networking conversation.

"It's my dream job. It's a medium sized company but I am able to work on the launch of a brand new platform and be able to define the framework from the outset," she says. "I'm with the leadership team, helping to define the product that gets to be launched."

While networking and personal contacts have helped her move onwards and upwards in her career, she doesn't believe networking needs to be formalised.

"I remember people telling me in my 20s that I needed a network. I realised later it is actually about staying in touch with people. It's about letting them have you top of mind when opportunities arise. By having a regular cadence with people, you will always be somewhere at the forefront of their mind should an opportunity come about. Just grabbing a drink with them, having a coffee, just touching base. It's a conversation. It's not that you have to go in there with any hidden agenda."

Meridyth's belief that work should be collaborative and open is at the core of how she approaches her role.

"The phrase 'It's not personal. It's just business' doesn't sit comfortably with me," she says. "We spend over 40 hours of our week with people from work. We've invested years of study and our career in pursuit of the role we have. So of course, it's personal, especially for those who take great pride in a job well done." ◉

"IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT THAT AS MANAGERS WE TAKE CARE TO CHAMPION OUR TEAM. IT IS NOT NECESSARILY A MALE OR FEMALE TRAIT TO HAVE, IT'S JUST THAT ANY MANAGER NEEDS TO UNDERSTAND THAT WE'RE ALL PEOPLE AND WE'RE ALL HUMAN."



Championing DE&I, so everyone can perform their best

Sonya Rees, a Partner at tax, accounting and business advisory firm Blick Rothenberg is a passionate advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion in all its forms, including financial wellbeing for women. Sonya is using her experiences to help change perceptions and redefine the workplace for the benefit of everyone.

Relocate Think Global People Award-winning Blick Rothenberg is in the business of looking after people's assets worldwide. Key to its success is looking after its people. This ethos runs through the business – from the CEO, to Partners, managers, graduate recruits and mid-career returners – supported by a dedicated Head of Diversity & Inclusion, Angela Cooke. Its practices are meeting the demands of the current and future workforce. Together with her colleagues at Blick Rothenberg, Sonya Rees, US/UK Private Client Partner, is breaking the mould around inclusive talent management. A passionate advocate for true inclusion across every aspect of intersectionality, Sonya is an outstanding leader, a co-founder and former chair of the company's Women's Network, and a tireless champion of making working life better for everyone.

WIDENING OPPORTUNITIES

Within Blick Rothenberg's inclusive culture, Sonya's personal values and leadership style exemplify how DE&I is all our business. Core to this is Sonya's lived experience and her appreciation of the importance of knowing your own value and appreciating the worth of others.

In her previous role, which she joined straight from university, Sonya was made a Partner relatively early in her career. She also negotiated a part-time role while at this senior level. "Ten years ago, this wasn't that common," says Sonya. "Obviously, now we know flexibility is very important and Covid has moved us on at least five years, but back then not many places offered it.

"I've been very lucky with where I've got to. I want other people to have that opportunity. For example,

flexible and part-time working shouldn't be a seniority-led benefit. If you can make everybody's lives easier everywhere, they are going to perform better. You are removing barriers and giving them opportunities."

Sonya traces the origins of her personal leadership style to her childhood. "I come from a male-dominated background and have been surrounded by male influences my whole life. My mother died when I was relatively young. I was at home with a dad and a brother. I went to a school when I was eight in the first year they took girls, so I was one of 16 girls in 160 children.

"I subsequently went to a very male-dominated college at Oxford and then into accountancy. I was used to being friends with men and quite frankly, feeling their equal. I was very lucky to have a lot of opportunity in life. I never felt the barriers to progression that some women face in my journey to partnership."

PEOPLE AND PURPOSE

In common with many other women featuring in Think Women's 40 Outstanding Global Women series, starting a family was a critical point in Sonya's career. "It wasn't until I had my first baby that I really started to gather a sphere of female friends who were showing a very different experience to mine," says Sonya. "In the area I lived there were a lot of like-minded people. The experiences that we shared and the support that we got from that led to me thinking, 'how can I support other people?'"

Around this time and after 17 years with the firm, Sonya bucked the expectation of a life-long career in the company and started to look for a new opportunity that aligned more with her values. This led her seven

years ago to a boutique US/UK tax start-up company; a company that was shortly after acquired by Blick Rothenberg, which was starting its own acquisition-led, transformation journey.

The start-up was seeking a Partner-level technical specialist to work three days a week. This requirement had put other applicants off. However, it was this "stars aligning moment" that offered Sonya a platform and workplace culture to continue to share her experiences. Today she helps influence policies and practice at Blick Rothenberg – a place where she says she has "found her people".

"One of the biggest benefits of the move for my career is not tax and accounting related," says Sonya. "What has really been interesting, and what I've loved doing, is the diversity, equity & inclusion (DE&I) journey. Nobody at Blick Rothenberg had really thought about that before.

"About a year in, one of our female audit graduates came to us when our gender pay gap figures first came out. She noticed that she didn't have any female Partners, directors or senior managers at that point in time in her audit part of the business and wanted to know where her path was. She reached out to one of our Partners and we all got talking about setting up a women's network. Its role primarily was to connect women like her to senior women in Blick Rothenberg. Until then, we were there, just not in her line of visibility.

"That developed into the Women's Network, to 'what do we want it to be?', into today. Five years down the line, we've now got a head of DE&I. That was one of the biggest things we managed to achieve; getting the firm to put some money behind a non-chargeable role and to have the support of our CEO to do that."

The Women's Network remains as strong as ever. Now it is helping shape Blick Rothenberg's thinking on policy and practice around menopause and fertility planning, for example, as well as continuing to connect people within the business. Sonya also continues to work with other leaders in Blick Rothenberg to heighten understanding of individuals' unique circumstances, including emerging work around social mobility, neurodiversity and financial wellbeing.

Recognising how formal education does not include key financial life-stage skills, Sonya has run popular lunchtime drop-in sessions for new graduates on the wealth-related aspects of homebuying, parental leave and pensions. "If I had more time, I'd campaign on financial wellbeing," says Sonya. "You aren't going to balance society if you don't balance those easy things."

These sessions are alongside Blick Rothenberg's very successful offer of personal financial coaching to all employees; something that is particularly important for women – and increasingly, men – if they take family-related leave because of the impact on lifetime income and pensions savings. This has seen a firm-wide 61% take-up rate for a financial consultation in partnership with Octopus Financial.

EMBRACING EQUITY

"One of the biggest things I like to talk to anybody going off on maternity leave about is that we can give you all the opportunities at work – that is quite structured," says Sonya. "The bit that people don't talk about that much is what is happening at home. If you don't set that up equally, and it's so easy for that to happen, then it's going to be harder to succeed. The mental load must be more

evenly balanced."

In the office too, everyone – not just women – is encouraged to work flexibly and feel safe about being open when it comes to their external commitments or wellbeing needs if their circumstances need it. This includes paying attention to perceptions around childcare for example. "The thing that I try to do and enjoy doing is picking up on language," says Sonya. "If people are saying dad is babysitting. He's not – he's looking after his children, the same as their mum would be. It's just so important – for both parents – to get that right and not create difference with the tone of conversations. The language, as well as the impact of shared caring arrangements, needs to be balanced."

Offering advice to young people entering the labour market for the first time, Sonya says: "Be confident that what you want is there for the taking. Find the firm that is right for you. The wrong firm will have barriers and you don't have to settle for that. There are opportunities for hybrid and flexible working so you can make your life work, flourish and achieve your dreams.

"Days like International Women's Day are so important for raising awareness around this and for influencing others. There is too much lip service paid to gender and other equity issues. Talking about what we and others are doing in practice and what you need as an individual makes an impact." •

"I've been very lucky with where I've got to. I want other people to have that opportunity. For example, flexible and part-time working shouldn't be a seniority-led benefit. If you can make everybody's lives easier everywhere, they are going to perform better. You are removing barriers and giving them opportunities."



The business case for having more women around the boardroom table

Increasing the number of female leaders in an organisation has many benefits, says Rachel Davis, Co-CEO Armstrong Craven, a global talent mapping and pipelining partner for scarce and senior positions.

Having more female leaders ensures a more equitable representation of a company’s investors, customers, stakeholders and employers. It derisks the organisation by removing the liability of poor decisions made through ‘groupthink’. Achieving true gender diversity does not happen overnight, though, and it is not quick fix. Companies need to review how they conduct their search process for executive talent and think outside their own niche industries in order to find the right candidate.

“There have been big changes at board level due in part to legislation in some countries, which have enhanced female non-executive representation on boards,” she says. “However, when it comes to the executive leadership team, change has been slower. While functional roles like Chief Information Officer (CIO) and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) are increasingly occupied by women, the more corporate or business roles too often are still male dominated.”

She feels that there needs to be more emphasis on building a pipeline for the future, giving younger women more opportunities to build and develop leadership skills.

Rachel was part of Armstrong Craven’s MBO in 2013 and has held board roles since then, so as well as being in touch with recruitment trends in executive leadership, she also has lived experience of being a female leader. She joined Armstrong Craven in 1998 and as Co-Managing Director, oversees operations and retains key client relationships globally.

CHANGING MINDSETS

From the perspective of talent search, she says the effects of the pandemic – a growing talent shortage due to the Great Resignation, demand for more flexible working and an increasing need for digital-savvy managers – has driven more employers to consider potential candidates from outside their niche industries.

“Businesses overall have appreciated the greater access to talent that flexible working brings,” she says. “There’s also the fact that the talent itself is demanding this flexibility now, although during lockdown the benefits of flexible working may well have been offset by the challenges women faced around home schooling and juggling family life. Women with school-age children may decide to step out of corporate life and run their own business or become consultants in

order to maintain flexibility during those school years.”

Executive search organisations are now having conversations with boards about how finding the best candidate for the role might involve a mindset change.

“As an organisation we are helping businesses to remove the reactivity involved in an executive search, which by definition is reactive because there’s a hole in the organisation and you are scrambling to fill it,” she says. “We were finding that the ‘best’ candidate in terms of coming forward first is often male. Our experience over many years is that it takes double the amount of outreach attempts to have a woman engage with you for a potential role.

“Then bias creeps in, because the first interviews will have been all with men, and therefore by the time women make it to the shortlist, assumptions may already have been made.”

To remedy this, Armstrong Craven starts by engaging the female candidates first, in order to ensure a more level playing field.

“It comes back to some of the research around a woman only applying for a role if she thinks she might fulfil 90% of the criteria, compared to 60% for men. Then there is the imposter syndrome, which does also affect men.”

For this reason, companies are now being urged to look at candidates from outside their industry sector who have the transferable skills, experience of leading through change, and the ability to influence that a modern leader needs. The old leadership style of ‘command and control’ is being replaced by one of purpose and collaboration, and all leaders, male or female, need to be able to demonstrate high EQ, empathetic leadership styles and the ability to communicate and influence.

“Women can be and tend to be more empathetic and tend to be more collaborative than men. If you want that kind of leadership skill set in your business – and you should – then it is a double positive to appoint a woman.

“I’m a business person first and foremost. The second you label

yourself as a woman, you are in a potentially different mindset. Your opinions are interesting and they count and it doesn’t actually matter that you’re saying them as a woman as a man. Build that inner confidence regardless of gender, so that you feel able to debate openly rather than waiting for permission to contribute.”

RACHEL’S TIPS FOR SUCCESS:

- Understand your own natural leadership style
- Do your absolute best not to put your own gender front of mind
- Seek out mentors
- Don’t be afraid to put your opinions out there and take real strength from the fact that the world has changed
- Be transparent about your decision making and communicate that to others
- When people feel included and listened to they are much more likely to understand and support the decisions you have made. ◦

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Helping individuals and organisations flourish

Gina Lodge, founder of World View Mentor, talks about her journey from leading IT projects early-career at Shell Chemicals International to the impactful Reykjavik Forum of Women Political Leaders.

Looking at Gina’s impressive CV, it might be easy to imagine there was a plan in place the moment she stepped into her first job. But as Gina is the first to admit, “there was no plan.”

Now co-chair of the British-Swiss Chamber of Commerce; UK, Africa and India Chair of the Association for Coaching (AC) global accrediting coaching body; founder member of the Intelligent Leadership Hub; 100 Women @Davos member; and adviser for tech company, Ovida, Gina’s career supporting organisations and individuals to thrive is borne of a real desire to see the humanity in workplaces, develop and champion leaders and let this live authentically in organisations.

Gina’s personal motivations of “curiosity, collaboration, care and humanity” have real resonance today as employers tackle the Great Resignation. They are also inspirational for all women working in the international context.

“Networks and communities like 100 Women @Davos, Relocate Global’s Think Women and others like the Female Quotient are absolutely key. They are incredibly important as a space for women, and men, to connect, make contact and support each other.”

EARLY-CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Gina started her career at Shell International Chemicals. Here she managed a range of teams, worked with people in various countries around the world and led pioneering IT development and support. The authentic leadership Gina encountered throughout her time at Shell, together with valuable practical and cross-cultural experiences, provided the platform for Gina to ignite her career and professional development.

“My first employment at Shell International Chemicals has been a huge influence,” says Gina. “I went into the role with naivety and no expectations. As a young woman, I just enjoyed the learning. It was here early on that I realised the importance of the whole human in business.

“We all have the capacity to learn the practical side of a role. But looking back, all that exploration and travelling around to different countries made me realise that what we had in common is that we are the same. How we face life and interact with others is different, but it’s about having kindness and the willingness to grow.”

These realisations have been a guiding principle and ‘North Star’ throughout Gina’s career. Taking up opportunities early to lead teams, Gina reflects on how supported she was – often in ways that were progressive, including senior leaders who walked the floor to garner colleagues’ insights.

“When I was heading the IT development team, one very senior manager would come to our office and ask my opinions. Looking back, that was a real privilege and the sign of a leader ahead of their time. I look back with appreciation on this. I was also invited to senior meetings

and asked to share my thoughts. People often talk about big companies in a negative way, but my experience was that it was a very good start.”

MID-CAREER CHOICES

In common with many women, for Gina parenthood was a point where careers could be put on hold or reshaped. Like many companies then and still today, Shell recognised that it was losing women mid-career, often to be replaced by men in the senior talent pipeline. This remains one of the key factors behind gender imbalances in pay and boardroom representation.

Three decades ago, Shell had started to look at what it could do. Policies and practices pioneered by companies like Shell are now commonplace, for men and women, and supported by wide-ranging legislation in many parts of the world.

“I was asked to take part in a pilot programme, which was how to engage with women who had career as well as caring responsibilities,” says Gina. “Shell organised people to look at local nurseries for example and report back to us. Part-time working at this level was also not at all common, but Shell offered me that as part of the pilot options for a four-day week without me even asking. They really were at the forefront of supporting parents and women at work.”

While Gina stayed with the company for a year after the arrival of her first child, it was the arrival of twins and a conversation with her partner that saw Gina temporarily step out of the corporate world, with the commute into London helping to tip the balance.

THE IMPORTANCE OF LIFE-LONG LEARNING AND STAYING CURIOUS

While perhaps not the hoped-for outcome for the company, Shell’s genuine care and efforts to retain female talent have been amplified in the intervening years through Gina’s work and personal and professional development. Through Gina, it continues to create ripples of positive change.

Away from the corporate world, Gina used her practical skills and volunteered at her children’s school to set-up new IT infrastructure and whiteboards. Gina also collaborated with three other women with international backgrounds to write a fundraising book.

As her three children grew up and became more independent, Gina’s thoughts turned to re-entering the formal workplace. Again, it was an enlightened job advertisement and employer that caught Gina’s attention. “I didn’t know what I wanted to do, but I saw an advert in the local paper for admin work in what I didn’t know then was a coach training company. It was a work-from-home role, which was very rare, but it was that which piqued my curiosity.”

The company was the Academy of Executive Coaching (AoEC). Here, Gina – supported by the coaching culture and the forward-thinking founder-owner – followed her instincts and passions to move from an administration role into marketing, then to marketing director. Then, after seven years in the company, to her successful tenure as Chief Executive, which also lasted for seven years, and saw the company continue its growth trajectory.

“The admin role was not what I wanted to do. It didn’t seem like the right fit for me,” says Gina, underlining the importance of taking roles that align with who we are

and being aware of what makes us tick as individuals. “So, I was honest with the founder-owner, who offered me a different role in marketing. I had never worked in marketing before, but I love to learn and soon after was promoted to the board. It was a very fast trajectory that also cemented the fact that my favourite subject is good leadership and how we are always learning together.”

This step up to the board exposed Gina to all the moving parts of the company, from compliance to daily running and at a time when the company was growing. It was also the moment Gina qualified as a certified coach so she could “walk the talk”, something Gina valued from her time at Shell.

BUILDING FLOURISHING CAREERS FOR EVERYONE

Now, in what Gina calls the “third-quarter” of her career, she has handed over the reins of the AoEC and founded World View, a coaching, mentoring and thought-leadership consultancy, which supports DEI and champions a future-focused global mindset. This move was prompted by the recognition of “if not now, when?” This is something Gina says is echoed back to her from her coaching and mentoring clients.

Gina is also the chair of the British-Swiss Chamber of Commerce and recognises the fundamental importance of personal connections, mutual support and networks in business. “My hope is that in a humble way, I can help people and organisations flourish,” says Gina, reflecting both on her career and her involvement in events like Relocate Global’s Think Women celebrations for International Women’s Day 2023 and the Reykjavik Forum of Women Political Leaders at the end of last year.

“Networks and communities like 100 Women @Davos, Relocate Global’s Think Women and others like the Female Quotient are absolutely key,” says Gina. “They are incredibly important as a space for women, and men, to connect, make contact and support each other. I always feel so energised by them because we all have something in common and we can help one another.

“There’s this amazing generosity of spirit from what we give to one another and share. It is a positive step and helps us all to grow.”

Gina at our Think Women event at the IoD, London



SALMA SHAH
FOUNDER, MASTERING
YOUR POWER



WHEN WOMEN ARE LISTENED TO, ORGANISATIONS START TO CHANGE

Organisations need strong and inspirational women leaders who can challenge the status quo, promote and support other women, and start to transform and re-energise organisations, says diversity, inclusion and coaching expert Salma Shah.

Salma has travelled internationally delivering coach training and leadership programmes for major organisations including Oracle, Lexmark, Ernst and Young (Kuwait), Pearsons, the Met Police, John Lewis Partnerships, Co-op group, O2, Reuters, HP and Microsoft.

She says she has met “phenomenal women leaders in large organisations” and those that stand out for her are “highly empathetic, they have great relationships and are supportive, and are holding the ladder up” for other women to progress.

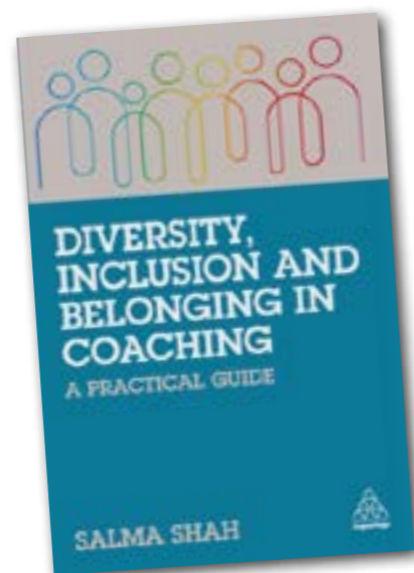
“When that starts to happen in organisations, then things start to change,” she explains. “Other women start to feel they can also become leaders. Women who are real and open and supportive of

other women, when they are in a position of power the decision making starts to change. The questions that get asked start to change, the answers start to change, and change starts to happen. They bring in different people and they see and hear things that could otherwise get missed because everyone else has a similar perspective.”

Salma launched her book *Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging in Coaching* in April 2022, a practical guide full of tools, case studies, interviews, examples and activities that allow coaches, leaders and line managers to create an inclusive culture of belonging and psychological safety to ensure that all employees flourish. In March 2023, her book was shortlisted for the business book awards.

Prior to starting her coaching

and training business she had gained over 15 years of leadership, transformation and commercial experience in the information technology and digital industry.



Working with the UK's largest FTSE100 clients to understand their strategic objectives, financial management and human relationship management challenges, Salma determined appropriate solutions (both business and technology) and mapped those solutions to roadmaps for execution.

She says that coaching and developing employees is not a one-size-fits-all activity. Race, gender, class, education, culture and religion can all affect the needs of employees. Coaches, leaders and line managers must address this.

Based in London, Salma now works with clients at a senior level in public, private and voluntary sectors; supervises and trains other coaches; and presents keynotes at events both in the UK and internationally.

A WOMAN IN THE TECH INDUSTRY

After gaining a degree in psychology and an MSC in Information Systems, Salma went to work in the tech sector for a small UK software house. She says being brave enough to ask for the job at interview, even when she was inexperienced and not full of confidence, was a turning point in her career.

“They were looking for somebody who had one year of work experience on the graduate training programme. I had none. I just had my MSc but at the interview I told them: ‘I assure you, you will get a lot from me if you give me this opportunity’.”

It paid off and she got the job and ended up travelling all over the world.

“Even if I haven’t always felt confident on the inside, I’ve put myself out there and that’s paid off,” she says. “My parents came to the UK from Pakistan in 1963 and one of the things I did was learn how to navigate different worlds quite early. When I started getting given global assignments at work in my twenties it was actually really easy for me to navigate different cultures. I was curious and open to learning about other cultures.”

She spent over five years at the software house before moving to Oracle, where she learnt how to navigate the tough corporate US

culture that was prevalent in the 1990s in technology.

“They were looking for somebody more experienced than me, but I went for the job. It was a very different culture from my first job and it took me a while to figure that culture out. I learned a lot and found that being in a minority meant that I was remembered, often as the only female.

“I learned that if I had something good to say, people did listen. What I was not aware of naively, in my late 20s, was that there was a whole layer of people and groups I had no access to.”

After working for a number of other smaller software companies Salma studied for a coaching qualification and began to take on clients in the evenings and weekends.

“In my early thirties I was really passionate to get back to human behaviour and coaching, but I had to keep it a secret from my corporate world. At that time, psychology and coaching were seen as fluffy and not serious. I was in the sales part of the company which was very macho and aggressive.”

Running her own business was also a departure from her family background, which she describes as “risk averse”.

Learning to be self-employed was a big change from working in the corporate world, where she had a car, pension and sick pay. Learning to manage her cashflow, set boundaries, build up a support network and avoid burnout have all been important lessons.

“Running my own business is one of the hardest things I have ever done, but now I would not want to go back as an employee. I’m a people person and I am innately curious about people.”

She says that if organisations really want to change, then leaders need to be prepared for “discomfort and challenge”. They also need to look

at what changes need to be made through an intersectional lens, so that the conversation is not just about women as a single group, but a recognition that people have different strengths and backgrounds.

“Some leaders want to make changes because they have a strong ethical belief that diversity and inclusion are important,” she says. “Others can see that there is a business case for change. Organisations are now waking up to the fact that this change is necessary, and that it is not about box ticking.”

Below: Salma speaking at the Relocate Global Think Women event at the IoD in London





**LAURA
ASHLEY-
TIMMS**
CEO, NOTION-STAR®

HOW TO AVOID EXECUTIVE BURNOUT

There has never been more pressure on leaders and managers of global teams to achieve more with less. Post-pandemic, managers have less time, fewer resources, more pressure and a hybrid workforce. Yet many managers have had scant training in people skills and are expected to learn on the job.

Laura Ashley-Timms observes that “larger organisations are starting to understand that until we properly support and address people management capability, these issues aren't going to go away. It's come to a perfect storm.”

The top leadership coach recently conducted a study with London School of Economics on management techniques and how to raise engagement, capability, recruitment and retention in large organisations. She suggests that the answer to relieve much of the executive burnout and stress is as simple as changing the way you communicate in order to empower your team.

“Expectations have changed,” she says, explaining that the old ‘command and control’ style of

leadership has long been out of favour in progressive organisations.

“If you don't make that shift, you are going to have issues with retention and engagement,” she says. “Nobody now wants to work with somebody that treats them badly or that doesn't respect them or want to engage with them.”

“The current market trends and social expectations have come together to make this an imperative. If people don't start addressing this now it is going to really impact the organisation's success. We've noticed that trend even in the last 12 months, with management capabilities coming to the top of the agenda.”

Her company, Notion Business Coaching, has first-hand experience working with companies such as Sainsbury's and Royal Mail. Notion runs a virtual development

programme, STAR® Manager, which has been launched in 15 countries including the UK, USA, Canada, Dubai, South Africa, Hong Kong, Japan, India, Croatia, Czech Republic, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Finland and the Netherlands. The company has an office in Shanghai and provides coaching in multiple languages across Asia and Europe.

HOW ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS CAN EMPOWER YOUR TEAM

She says that to be really transformational in your role and demonstrate your talent, you need to learn and instil an enquiry-led approach into your everyday life and work.

“The one key skill to develop over all others is the ability to ask powerful questions for the benefit of those we are talking to and actively listening to their answers,” she says. “This not only strengthens working relationships it also opens up ideas, creativity, innovation, engagement, productivity and performance. In doing so, you create the space to support, challenge and grow the capabilities of those around you. This results in colleagues that are more engaged, recognised and rewarded.”

When working with large organisations, she has found that this fosters competency and confidence in teams. In turn, managers have up to 20% more time to concentrate on their key tasks and strategic responsibilities because they do not have to be the sole problem solver in the team.

“When people learn to move

from a ‘command and control’ culture, that can be a lightbulb moment,” she says. “As a manager, it is fantastic to have a high performing, engaged team who come up with solutions not with problems and are capable of doing higher value work. We are so stressed and overwhelmed as managers and we are working so hard at the moment. That one shift in your behaviour can unlock so much potential so makes your life so much easier and it is a skill worth learning.”

Regardless of where your skills lie, learning how to retrain your brain so that it is permanently on alert to incorporate more powerful questions can impact engagement at both the organisational and individual level as individuals take ownership. In turn, this drives capability and productivity.

“The goal isn't to become more skilled at asking difficult questions, it's about reading the conversation and the person, and then selecting the type of question that will serve them best in the moment,” she says.

She is reluctant to stereotype gender attitudes to management, having worked with a huge variety of managers.

“There are plenty of strong opinionated females who can have a very direct command and control approach, and there are plenty of male leaders who can have a fantastic inquiry led approach and can be very inclusive and open in their in their style,” she says. “Every race, gender, age and level of management can learn this skill and change the way we all communicate.” ◦

“THE ONE KEY SKILL TO DEVELOP OVER ALL OTHERS IS THE ABILITY TO ASK POWERFUL QUESTIONS FOR THE BENEFIT OF THOSE WE ARE TALKING TO AND ACTIVELY LISTENING TO THEIR ANSWERS.”

DR SUSAN DOERING

CAREER & LEADERSHIP COACH, 'SMART CAREER MOVES FOR SMART WOMEN'



Signposting routes to personal career success

For many women, there comes a time in their career where they reach a crossroads and have to decide whether they want to pursue promotional opportunities with their current employer, move to a new job, or perhaps leave and set up their own company. Since the pandemic, many women, and men, have been questioning their work-life balance and how their career could fit with family life and interests outside work, as well as the meaning and purpose of work itself.

Dr Susan Doering, Executive Trainer and Coach, believes that many women would like to push on to the next stage of their career, but lack the route map or support from their employer to do so. As a result, some talented women leave organisations at a time when their experience and seniority will be missed.

Certified as a coach since 2006, Dr Doering coaches corporate and private clients at turning points to find the best way forward. Fluent in English, German, and French, she has worked internationally and understands the demands and specific difficulties of negotiating overseas assignments. She holds a Masters' degree from the University of Oxford and a PhD from the University of Vienna, Austria. Her clients come from corporate and private and public sector organisations globally.

Finding self-confidence, understanding negotiating skills and taking a clear focus on what you want out of your career and how you want to progress are all building blocks of the coaching that she offers. She is also particularly interested in helping women grow into leadership roles.

"The qualities that are ingrained in women and have been emphasised in women's development – empathy, understanding the other person, putting yourself in the other person's shoes, finding solutions – are so important and have become even more so in this hybrid working world," she says.

"I work with women who want to move into leadership but who want to stay with the organisation and be successful and use their strengths. We can't all be entrepreneurs and not everyone wants to leave and set

up on their own, and many people want the support of an organisation.

"It is about recognising options and choices that you have, getting sponsors within the organisation, finding a mentor and perhaps working with a career coach.

"You need to gather information and you need to do it at every point of your career. Even right at the very beginning, as soon as you move into an organisation, ask yourself: what is the organisation going to offer me as a woman in my career? Is this the right place for me? Where's the mentor in my organisation or do I have to look outside for support and promotion?"

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP – STILL A LONG WAY TO GO

On average, still only 25-30% of leadership roles in the UK are held by women. Although the reasons for this are partly systemic, they are often reinforced by patterns of behaviour that are unhelpful for women's career progression, she says. When facing a crossroads, women often shy away from making big decisions or applying for next level and top jobs, even when they are highly qualified and extremely suitable. In addition, many women have become dissatisfied with the corporate world and are seeking new ventures, to go it alone, for example, and are asking how they could manage this. "With coaching, my women clients discovered that through careful preparation and planning they felt more self-confident and ready to take on the challenges of a career move and could settle more easily into the new role."

Dr Doering's own career has had three phases: as an academic, as a project manager running international assignments and as a coach.

She cites the example of a high-achieving lawyer she helped coach to negotiating a two-year maternity leave, and international clients who need support around moving to a new geography, managing a new team and working with managers and employees from different cultures and countries.

"Self-confidence is a big topic. It's about reminding yourself of the moments in the past when you have done something out of your comfort zone and succeeded," she says. "With more agile working, joining new teams and more project-based work, this could really benefit women.

"I have worked with a lot of women in international organisations where moving globally is a prerequisite. You've got to learn how to have the right mindset, be flexible and be prepared for things not to go right."

DR DOERING'S TIPS FOR WOMEN AT A CAREER CROSSROADS

- Be confident in yourself and your abilities
- Look very clearly at where you want to go
- Stop for a moment and think what brings you joy in your job and in your life
- Where do your interests really lie? What do you value in life? What's most important to you?
- What needs to change? Would it mean perhaps just a few adjustments in your current work life? Or is it going to take much more, moving to a different job, or a leap to a different way of working?

Dr Doering's new book *Smart Career Moves for Smart Women*, has been written for the businesswoman and professionals, and offers insights and guidance on making the right decisions about career paths and

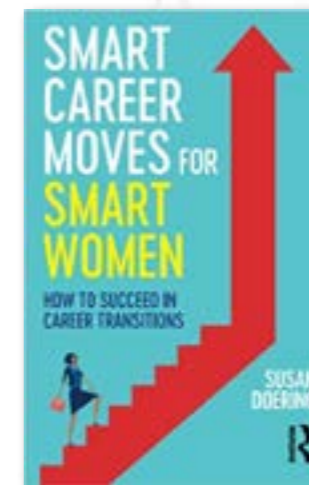
ways to strategically prepare for a career transition, be it a promotion, change of sector, setting up one's own business or even changing careers altogether.

The insights and actionable steps contained in this book make it an invaluable resource for professional women looking to achieve success and navigate the transitional stages of their career, re-enter the workplace after a career break, or who simply want to develop the tools and skills to make smart career moves.

"My own experience changing career and then working with women as a career coach showed me that women need extra support and guidelines to navigate the world of work, especially when facing a career move of whatever kind," she says. "Having experienced the value of coaching with a focus on these transition points with my clients I wanted to spread the word and reach a wider audience. The women I coached who developed the self-confidence to make their way forward are my inspiration for the book.

"International Women's Day is very important to me," she says. "International Women's Day gives us the opportunity once a year to be inspired by the achievements of outstanding women and take stock of the progress that has been made, but also shows us what still needs to be accomplished. We are reminded that we have still not achieved equality with men in so many areas of life and so many parts of the world and that we need to continue to fight for it. It's also vital that men feel included in the fight. It is a day for celebration and for reflection." •

"The qualities that are ingrained in women and have been emphasised in women's development – empathy, understanding the other person, putting yourself in the other person's shoes, finding solutions – are so important and have become even more so in this hybrid working world."





CAPITALISING ON WORKPLACE SHIFTS TO BOOST WOMEN'S CAREERS

For Alison Green, corporate coach and director of WOMBA (Work, Me and the Baby), growing up in South East Asia during her teenage years was a transformative experience, both personally and professionally.

She says, “It widened my horizons and has strongly influenced my career choices and direction. During the early part of my career I spent a work placement in Hong Kong at 19, specialised in global advertising accounts and moved to Singapore to set up an advertising agency network across Indochina at 27.”

She found that experiencing different cultures prompted her to become more aware of and question her assumptions and understand the importance of different perspectives and value differences. She built on this early experience during her career, at the centre of which has been communication and an understanding of people and relationships.

Alison is a champion of diverse and inclusive

workplaces in which everyone can thrive. She has served on diversity and inclusion (D&I) committees, led culture change programmes and is currently chair of an ESG (environmental, social and governance) committee. Alison is also an Associate Coach at Hult Ashridge and a European Mentoring and Coaching Council Senior Practitioner.

COMMUNICATION IS KEY

“At the heart of my skillset is an understanding of people – consumer behaviour, customer relationships, employee engagement, cultural change and leadership development,” she says. “I’ve updated these skills and applied them in different ways throughout my career.”

“My early experiences led me to truly appreciate how valuable diverse thinking is, and inclusive cultures are, to our world. This has become increasingly central to my career and purpose.”

“Increasingly organisations are recognising and realising the benefits of a more diverse workplace and leadership,” she says.

There is now a wealth of data and evidence demonstrating diverse leadership makes commercial sense. In fact, McKinsey research has shown that companies in the top quartile for gender diversity on executive teams were 25% more likely to have above-average profitability than companies in the bottom.

Alison believes that the shift to more flexible and hybrid working practices will also make it possible for more female leaders to take advantage of the opportunities to step up and not to have to make tough choices between career and family.

However, one area for improvement is a greater understanding of the differences between male and female career paths. Offering targeted support to female leaders at all stages of their career, for example by providing access to mentors, coaches and role models, will encourage them to put themselves forward for stretch roles and opportunities.

FROM ADVERTISING TO MARKETING AND COACHING – A VARIED CAREER

Alison started her career in advertising directing the accounts of some of the world’s leading brands including Singapore Airlines, VISA and BP, establishing an agency network for the Saatchi & Saatchi group in South East Asia and setting up her own brand consultancy.

When she became a parent she moved client-side to marketing. For 14 years she led marketing departments and transformation programmes at AXA and served on AXA’s Diversity & Inclusion Board.

“As my career developed, I realised my greatest enjoyment and successes came from building high performing teams and developing talented individuals,” she says. This insight, along with the transformational experience of being coached during a pivotal time in her career, led to her transition into executive coaching. She re-qualified through a BSc in Psychology, an MSc in Executive Coaching and becoming an accredited executive coach.

“Transforming my career whilst balancing work, family and training taught me a priceless lesson: with the right support, mindset and tools, it can be done. I feel fulfilled – professionally and personally – and I thrive helping other people do the same as they progress their careers and navigate their work life.”

In addition to her own coaching practice, Alison is Director of WOMBA (a coaching practice that specialises in programmes for working parents) and an Associate Coach at Ashridge.

“Becoming a parent gave me an altogether new perspective on what was important to me,” she says. “I made choices that helped me to balance my career with motherhood and my experience as a working mum helped me to become a better leader; I learned to delegate, use my time smartly and, armed with first-hand experience of the challenges facing working parents, I became a more empathetic leader.”

WHAT ARE THE TOOLS FOR SUCCESSFUL LEADERSHIP?

She says that as the world has become more complex, uncertain, and volatile, the qualities of a successful leader have changed. The modern leader has three qualities that stand out:

- Having a clear sense of purpose and values and communicating this in an inspiring and authentic way
- Being resilient and able to adapt to change
- Maintaining an open and curious mind – seeking out and actively listening to views and opinions from individuals and groups with diverse experiences and perspectives.

Her advice to women is to build their own skill set based on their personal strengths, be bold, and take credit for their successes.

“Above all else, run your own race,” she says. “Don’t compare yourself to others around you or wish you had their strengths. It may sound obvious, but often we don’t. Invest time in finding out what your strengths are and build your career around them.”

A key change that women need to make is to shift their mindset around success and failure and embrace all aspects of their experience.

“When women are successful they tend to put it down to luck or play down their achievements often believing that it’s something anyone could do,” she says. “When they’re unsuccessful, they tend to blame themselves. It’s important to be aware of this tendency. Take credit for your accomplishments and achievements and look at failures not as something to hold you back but as a valuable learning opportunity. As you progress in your career it is important to put yourself forward for stretch assignments or opportunities, apply for a promotion or new job even if you don’t feel 100% ready.”

“Know that it will feel uncomfortable and may take you outside of your comfort zone but you’ll reap the rewards in the long run.”

“Above all else, run your own race. Don’t compare yourself to others around you or wish you had their strengths. It may sound obvious, but often we don’t. Invest time in finding out what your strengths are and build your career around them.”



CAROLINE THORLEY-FARRER

GROUP GLOBAL MOBILITY DIRECTOR, WORLEY



INNOVATING SUSTAINABLE TALENT MANAGEMENT

Caroline Thorley-Farrer, Group Global Mobility Director at Worley, is at the forefront of innovating inclusive approaches to recruiting, retaining and developing internationally mobile talent. Drawing on her own global experience, Caroline is finding ways to make the benefits of a multinational career available to all.

For Caroline, a “mobile life was in the blood from day one”. The child of a Forces family, Caroline moved frequently with her father’s postings. These early formative experiences, coupled with a burning desire to find an international role straight from university, have seen Caroline take calculated risks, pivot and seek opportunities to develop her own international career with self-initiated moves and employment with some of the world’s largest and most mobile companies, including Eni, BAT and Mott MacDonald.

In her current role at engineering company, Worley, Caroline is firmly on the frontline of aligning global talent with strategic goals. She is innovating progressive and sustainable approaches to overcome significant talent shortages in the sector, including a pilot programme for engineers with refugee status, and positively influencing what is possible in global mobility.

EARLY-CAREER GOALS

“I can’t remember the number of primary schools I went to,” says Caroline. “The shortest we lived in any house was 7 weeks before my dad got another posting. As soon I left university, I knew I desperately wanted to work overseas and looked for opportunities to do this immediately.”

This early-career wanderlust saw Caroline put herself forward and be selected as a graduate recruit with Arthur Andersen as one of two people assigned annually to its US expat tax office in Brussels. It was during this time that

Caroline’s started to work on how she could realise her ambition of moving into global mobility.

“When you work in tax, you are reporting what’s already happened,” says Caroline, explaining the appeal of global mobility. “In mobility, you get on the front end of it. That was my interest in moving to mobility: to try and get more involved in the front end, foresee the challenges and try to resolve them before they happened.”

This realisation continues to shape Caroline’s personal leadership in the sector, which is creating positive ripples of change and growing more inclusive talent pools.

REVERSING TRADITIONAL ROLES

“Being in Brussels was a wonderful experience,” says Caroline. “But I really wanted to be on the mobility side. It was difficult to make that change in Brussels. So, I figured I would come back to the UK and make the change from expat tax to mobility, which is quite a well-trodden path.”

After a sabbatical in Vietnam, a client-side role at Deloitte followed in 2005. These were to provide the springboard for Caroline’s next in-house roles into some of the world’s largest fast-moving consumer goods and energy companies and a self-initiated move to Singapore with her husband and two young children in 2013.

“I had a couple of different roles in Singapore,” says Caroline. “It was quite easy moving when I was 21 to Brussels. I had a suitcase and I got on a train. But all the challenges and life admin that needs to happen to make it work and move my family to the other side of the world

was a challenge.

“Then that guilt as well. My husband was very happy to take a risk, even though it meant leaving a successful corporate role to follow me and it eventually worked out brilliantly. My husband didn’t work for the first couple of months because he was the one who was doing all the settling in, house hunting, children settled into school, essentially setting up our new home life overseas.

“It’s incredibly helpful to have a supportive spouse who can flex their own career. Often, I know that women do that and take a step back if it’s a man’s career which is flying. But in our situation and in our family, my husband, who actively supports Women in Leadership initiatives, has found his niche building his own company which offers great flexibility.”

Assignment success is often determined by how well the family settles, and social and cultural acclimatisation. With the traditional roles reversed, Caroline joined an informal group of women in senior roles in Singapore who, like herself, “had chosen to push ourselves out of our comfort zone and take a job on the other side of the world.”

What they all had in common was that “it was us who had said ‘actually, this is good for my career, this is good for my family, this is interesting and it’s an opportunity I want to take.’”

“I do think there are opportunities for male trailing spouses to set up organisations to help each other. We were considering a move to Switzerland. There are a couple of male trailing spouse organisations there and that was quite a draw for us.”

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Caroline and her family moved back to the UK where Caroline is now working at Worley, focusing on global mobility to support the company’s goals. “At Worley, I find it really interesting how the organisation is putting sustainability and the messaging around the purpose and values at the heart of everything it is doing. It really hooks you in as an employee.

“To be part of an organisation that is supporting how we can develop more sustainable energy and focus on supporting our customers – like the BPs and the Shells – when they are on their journey to be more sustainable, is fascinating. It really speaks to me and other employees I talk to. Worley is doing an incredible job of bringing their employees on the journey to sustainability and putting those strong values at the heart of everything we do.”

An important aspect of Worley’s work is looking at new ways to engage more diverse and inclusive talent to support customers, the business and individuals. “We have focus areas within Worley on the women that are coming through,” says Caroline. This includes early on with schools outreach to spark young people’s, particularly girls’, interests in the range of opportunities.

“There are so many different focus areas in the engineering space. You don’t need to be a pure engineer. We need to make sure we are opening the eyes of all people, of all abilities and backgrounds, to show that there are careers and interesting opportunities for them everywhere they want to go. No one should think it is beyond them or not available to them.

“I’ve also been involved recently in setting

up a small working group to look at how we can hire refugee professionals. Many tend to come from war-torn countries like Syria and Libya, where they have a higher number of female engineers than we do in the UK. From a sustainability perspective, we want to make sure we are hiring a cross-section of people.

“I also love the fact that more companies are getting involved in apprenticeships and taking away the degree requirements because some people could be late-bloomers rather than tick it all off at 18 or 20. There is space for all of us to have interesting careers and exciting roles everywhere really.”

RAISING VISIBILITY

Influencing and leading people is a core aspect of Caroline’s current role. “My parents drummed into me to always treat people as you would like to be treated yourself. So, that’s been the leadership style I take. I also trust my team. It’s about letting them get on with it so they can fly their wings.

“There’s a real focus as well in Worley on wellbeing and psychological safety; knowing that if you are unwell – physically or mentally – you need to take time off. We want to make sure people can give of their best.”

When it comes to events like International Women’s Day and networks like Think Women, Caroline believes they are crucial for raising visibility and learning from each other.

“We need to see people who look like us who are succeeding to realise sometimes it’s possible. To be able to offer other opportunities to other people to grow is fantastic. When I also look at diverse ethnicities and see more women and people of colour coming through the ranks and taking senior positions, I just think that is fantastic because it shows everybody it can be done.”

Offering advice for the next generation of leaders and young women, Caroline says, “Keep looking for something that makes you passionate and don’t be afraid to pivot. I’ve found my passion – expat tax wasn’t it – mobility is, so don’t be afraid to take a risk, because it should pay off in the end.”

Left: Caroline speaking at the Relocate Global Think Women event at the IoD in London





JULIA PALMER
 COO RELOCATION & CHRO, SANTA FE RELOCATION

Leadership is about positive attributes, not gender

Growing up as an expat teenager, Julia Palmer attended five different high schools across the globe – in the UK, US, Thailand and Australia. So she is well placed to understand that the challenges that globally mobile families face when planning for overseas assignments.

It was the experience of having to find new friends and integrate into new schools which developed her skills of adaptability, resilience, flexibility and the ability to tolerate uncomfortable situations. All these attributes have served her well in a varied career which has seen her work in senior positions in Arthur Andersen, EY and Santa Fe Relocation.

Julia is Chief Operating Officer of Relo at Santa Fe Relocation. Relo includes Immigration services, Destination Services, Assignment Management, Compensation and Payroll Services. In addition, Julia was appointed Chief Human Resources Officer in January 2023.

She has been with Santa Fe Relocation since 2019 and works with a diverse range of clients, from organisations with large global programmes to those starting with only a handful of assignees, where she advises on creating and implementing a suitable mobility framework.

Julia has over 25 years of expertise in the profession. She started out working for a leading DSP company in Sydney and spent 20 years at EY where she led the Assignment Management and Mobility Performance Improvement practices in Sydney and London.

ADAPTABILITY AND CALMNESS – SHOULD THEY BE CELEBRATED IN LEADERS?

“A lot of my adaptability came from being moved around as a teenager. I went to five high schools as a result of the move. I think that just is within me now. I’m generally a very calm person.”

She acknowledges that her demeanour – calm under pressure, “like a swan swimming serenely on the surface but paddling frantically underneath” – has sometimes not tallied with the traditional view of a hard-driving, desk-thumping, demanding boss.

“Being calm has sometimes been to my detriment,” she says. “I am not a desk banger, I don’t shout. I’ve had feedback over the years, which I’ve tried to listen to, that I don’t seem affected by high pressured situations. Actually, I am bothered by it, but I think with my style combined with strong ethics and integrity, that doesn’t always show.”

“In the past, I didn’t have a lot of female role models and I looked at the few female role models available and thought I am not like that. I’m not necessarily always initially comfortable to speak out or interrupt in meetings or different situations.

“We need to open up the discussion around leadership

and look at what qualities are valuable in a leader,” she says. “I have done multiple personality tests at work over the years and I’m never in that red quadrant, the driver. I’m a collaborator: that’s where my strengths are. That’s not necessarily typically been seen as a leadership trait.”

In many ways, however, her equanimity has also been an advantage when managing teams and clients at work.

“I have been able to manage difficult clients and call out negative behaviour that I’ve seen in the workplace. Having honesty and integrity has also helped to build people’s trust and confidence in me as well.”

She believes that having open discussions about what makes a great leader will help to shift the dial in organisations and open up greater opportunities for women in global mobility.

“The only way we’re going to remove the gender barrier is to change the conversation to be about leadership style, traits and attributes,” she says. “We need to remove some of that unconscious bias.”

It is also possible, of course, that many of the workplace personality tests could carry an unconscious bias which favours and promotes more ‘masculine’ style leadership qualities such as drive, assertiveness and competitiveness, although that conversation is now changing.

WOMEN LEADERS IN GLOBAL MOBILITY

Julia believes that the global mobility community is actually further ahead than many industry sectors in its integration of female talent, and diversity and inclusion.

“I think we’re a step ahead of many other industries in global mobility and to maximise that talent we need to look at recruitment strategies, promotion opportunities and international assignments and make sure that we approach them in an equitable way. That means asking women if they want an assignment, and not discounting them before the interview stage because of their gender and potential family commitments.

“It was quite interesting to me when I told people at EY in Sydney that I was going to London on assignment with two children and a working husband,” she says. “Even though I was in a global mobility practice, people were saying to me: ‘Wow, that’s amazing. I never thought that would ever be possible.’”

GLOBAL CAREER IN MOBILITY AND ASSIGNMENTS

Julia’s formative years were spent globetrotting. She was born in the UK and moved with her family and father, who was a global commodities trader, to the US when she was 12. Then the family moved to Thailand. Julia went to boarding school in the UK, and then relocated to Australia where she finished school and university.

“Having a global childhood really opens your eyes to all sorts of different people,” she explains. “You become more resilient. You become more flexible and able to adapt to different scenarios. You learn how to navigate people and situations and develop how you communicate.”

She first worked in Sydney for Arthur Andersen’s global mobility practice in what was then called “assignment management services”.

“It was very new and the whole global mobility practice was very small. It was a very exciting time and there were never two days the same.”

When Arthur Andersen was dissolved after the Enron scandal, Julia moved to EY which she describes as “a very fast paced, high pressured environment”.

“In a partnership, although you’re a team you’re also needing to go out and win business for yourself and possibly your own survival in the organisation,” she says. “I learned about the full spectrum of global mobility from compliance to advisory skills. I developed the ability to work under pressure, and to work with highly driven people in a male dominated environment.”

She was sent to the UK on an assignment with EY, which was supposed to last three years, but which ended after 24 months when she was headhunted by Santa Fe.

“I’m your classic failed assignment,” she says, “It was a three-year assignment and I was very happy at EY but I was approached by Santa Fe and the more I spoke with them, the more intriguing the role was. I ended up leaving EY early and joining Santa Fe two years into my assignment and became Global Head of Relocation and Assignment Management there.”

As well as a demanding job, Julia has two teenagers, a husband, dog and two cats. “There’s a lot going on in my house,” she says. “I’m quite strict about working hours and I rarely answer emails late at night. I’ve always been very strict about family and non-family time. When I’m at work, I’m 100% work and when I’m with family, I’m 100% family and I try to enable my colleagues to do the same.”

“Early on in my career again, when there were limited role models, workplace personality tests would give you feedback on your skills gaps or your unknown weaknesses. I think we should instead be talking about maximising your strengths. I’m glad the conversation is starting to move that way. It shouldn’t be about not speaking loud enough but instead celebrating someone who develops good teams and motivates their staff. Surely, that’s what should be maximised.” ●

Below: Julia speaking at the Relocate Global Think Women event at the IoD in London



DR SUE SHORTLAND

SENIOR LECTURER
IN HRM AT UNIVERSITY
OF WESTMINSTER



Promoting evidence-based decision making

Dr Sue Shortland is bridging the gap between theory and practice in global mobility. During her career across the corporate world, research and teaching, women's participation in international assignments – important for promotion to senior levels – has edged up such that women now hold 35% of expatriate roles.

A lifelong advocate for employers and everyone on international assignments, Sue has championed what the CIPD is now seeking to embed as one of the profession's central tenets: evidence-based decision-making. This is critical now as HR, talent mobility and inclusion are centre of the C-suite agenda. Sue has committed her career to putting facts and peer-reviewed research within people professionals' reach, including in roles at KPMG and the CBI, as well as academia and publishing. In many ways, Sue's life's work has come of age. Combining research and practice around global mobility and inclusion have been a consistent theme all the way through Sue's career. As is nurturing her own professional development alongside her formal roles. Sue has earned a bachelor's degree, the CIPD's HRM Diploma, two masters degrees, a post-graduate Diploma in Higher Education and her PhD in women's expatriation in the oil and gas sector by extending and applying her knowledge at every stage.

LIFELONG LEARNING IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

Sue – the first of her family to go to university – graduated from Cambridge University in the late 1970s. Her first role was at Incomes Data Services (IDS) in the Studies department. This offered Sue a unique insight into hundreds of organisations' HR practices. It was to prove the foundation for a lifelong career focused on mobility and diversity, equality and inclusion. "I did quite a lot of research then into things like diversity and studies in race relations," says Sue. "I also examined mobility, which is where some of my early forays into global mobility and diversity came."

After IDS, Sue went on to work for *Personnel Executive* as the Deputy Editor. "Again, there I tended to write on things that were diversity or mobility related." Her next move was to Industrial Relations Services (IRS), an organisation which offered valuable and robust

benchmarking data to employers, government and unions. "I was in this role for 18 months working on issues to do with pay and writing for the *Equal Opportunities Review*." To consolidate her expertise, Sue studied for her CIPD qualifications while at IDS and Personnel Executive. "I did the Post-Grad Diploma in Personnel Management," says Sue. "That pushed me down the HR track. Once you're on it, you kind of stay on it." Sue also wrote her first book on managing relocation while at IRS, which was published by Macmillan. Her next step followed an approach from the CBI to run its newly formed Employee Relocation Council, where Sue was to stay for the next ten years before taking maternity leave.

INVESTING IN KNOWLEDGE

Sue "is always doing something." This continued during her maternity leave when she received two senior-level corporate job opportunities as well as a teaching role. "A friend of mine who was a lecturer at Westminster University said, 'you know all this stuff about global mobility and international HRM; would you be a guest lecturer?'" So, I did some of that. Then I was offered two similar jobs, but chose to go to KPMG to help with its newly launched UK-based international HR research consultancy." While at KPMG for the next two years, Sue studied for her PG Diploma in HE which led on to her second master's degree. "I enjoyed going into the university to teach more than I enjoyed going in to be a consultant," says Sue.

Stepping off the corporate career ladder into academia saw Sue rise through the ranks here, too to Associate Dean of the Business School at London Metropolitan University, before 'retiring' after 17 years as a Professor Emerita. She returned to academia after a short break to take up a part-time research and teaching role at the University of Westminster. Sue was – and still is – also involved as a spokesperson for the global mobility sector and a judge for Relocate Global Think People awards.

THE FUTURE

As a hint of where the global mobility, people and inclusion agendas are going next – especially with the overlaps between DEI and environmental, social and governance (ESG) agendas becoming clear – Sue – far from retiring – is currently, "doing quite a lot of work on top/executive pay determination and role of remuneration committees. I'm working on an article about diversity and remuneration, and corporate governance. Really my main focus is on getting research published. That's what I really like doing. Obviously then bringing research into the teaching in the hope of inspiring students to do research and so on."

The importance of evidence-based decision-making – especially with the amount of data to hand today – is something Sue is particularly keen to promote. "It would be wonderful if HR people read academic peer-reviewed journals. Every single research paper you write

is not just about theory. There are always implications for practice."

"If, as an academic like me, you can find an avenue for academic research that is more practitioner-oriented – like Relocate Global – you can start tailoring the research and findings to an HR readership. Busy HR people can read academic research when they are turned into a more practitioner-friendly format and it's available online or in magazines like Think Global People. I'm always trying to get HR and GM professionals to think beyond what they've always done and to see things with a much wider perspective, which I think is what Think Global People magazine, is really good at."

In terms of the advice Sue can offer other women on how to navigate their careers, Sue says: "Collaborate. Take note of people who you can build relationships with, go back and revisit things, and find new ways to propel yourself to what it is that you want to do." ♦

"IF, AS AN ACADEMIC LIKE ME, YOU CAN FIND AN AVENUE FOR ACADEMIC RESEARCH THAT IS MORE PRACTITIONER-ORIENTED – LIKE RELOCATE GLOBAL – YOU CAN START TAILORING THE RESEARCH AND FINDINGS TO AN HR READERSHIP."

Below: Dr Sue Shortland at the Relocate Global Think Women event at the IoD in London





“THERE HAS BEEN A HUGE SHIFT IN THE INDUSTRY AND THE GLOBAL MOBILITY FUNCTION IS TAKING ON A MORE STRATEGIC ROLE WITHIN ORGANISATIONS AS MOBILITY IS RECOGNISED AS AN ENABLER TO SOLVE CRITICAL TALENT SHORTAGES.”

Valuing cross-culture collaboration

Siobhan Cummins has worked in Global Mobility for over 35 years and during this time has seen many changes in the both the demographic of mobile employees and the increased complexity in global mobility programmes.

Siobhan is a seasoned global mobility professional with deep subject matter knowledge. She has worked in the industry as both a consultant and in-house practitioner. She has specialist expertise in global talent strategies, international reward, mobility programme transformation and optimisation, along with policy design and development. She also has a special interest in dual career and family issues and is a founder Board Member of the Permits Foundation.

“The world of mobility has evolved significantly over the past 30 years or so but since Covid has become even more complex with the ever-changing geo-political situation, the war in Ukraine, increased compliance and the impact of new ways of working.

“There has been a huge shift in the industry and the

global mobility function is taking on a more strategic role within organisations as mobility is recognised as an enabler to solve critical talent shortages”.

She has had a stellar career including the role of Head of Global Mobility at Thomson Reuters; Executive Vice President at ORC, Director of Global Mobility Transformation at Deloitte; Associate Partner, Mobility Performance Improvement at EY; Head of Global Mobility at Naspers, Interim Director of Global Mobility at Pandora and now runs her own consulting business advising a number of start-ups and organisations on all aspects of global mobility. She has been recognised with several industry awards for her contribution to global mobility.

INCREASING DIVERSITY IN MOBILITY

Siobhan had plenty of experience of living abroad having been an expat child moving with her family every couple of years to different countries around the world. She has lived in the Middle East, Asia, Australia, Europe and the UK.

In terms of career choices, “when I started out, career options were much more limited for women than they are nowadays. Initially I joined the diplomatic service as having spent much of my life abroad I wanted to continue to be able to live and work in different countries and cultures. But other opportunities eventually came along and I started my journey in global mobility which has been amazingly interesting and rewarding but not without its challenges.”

Siobhan’s first exposure to global mobility was in an engineering consulting firm and she often managed moves of families to very remote and difficult locations. Following this she moved into consulting and has worked both within corporations and more recently as a freelance consultant. She is a recognised industry thought leader and writes and speaks regularly on the topic.

“When I started out in mobility the typical mobile family was a husband and non-working wife and a couple of children who moved abroad for five years on a ‘one size fits all package’ with generous allowances and often tax-free status. Fast forward to 2023 and it’s a very different picture. Companies are dealing with multiple types of moves and different compensation packages. In addition tighter compliance regulations mean that the mobility function needs to be more agile and creative in coming up with policy solutions.”

Assignee demographics have also changed with more non-traditional families taking up assignments and global mobility teams have to manage multi-generational expats all with different requirements. “Partners of expats frequently have good jobs and are reluctant to give up their career for an international move unless they can work in the host location which can be a significant barrier to assignment take up. Global Mobility needs to focus more on the ‘care plus’ aspect of packages to ensure the relocating family is seen as a unit and are all included in the move planning.

“With a greater focus in organisations on employee experience and the changing relationship between employers and employees global mobility teams are focusing more on improved support to mobile employees through digital solutions and more flexible approaches to relocation.”

WOMEN IN GLOBAL MOBILITY

In terms of female assignees, the percentage of women still lags behind that of male assignees. One of the problems for women is that they often self-select themselves out of the process because they don’t believe they will get chosen but this is gradually changing with a greater focus on DE&I and more women in professional roles in the workforce. It is important for women to push harder for international opportunities, particularly as there are many different options available such as virtual or short-term assignments.

Siobhan cites her international experience and communication skills as being an important part of her leadership style. Managing a global team is very much part of a Global Mobility leader’s role in today’s world. Having lived and worked in a variety of countries she has developed a good understanding of different customs and cultures which has been invaluable.

In terms of leadership style, “I believe in a collaborative working environment and encourage my team to do well and shine as individuals as well as being part of a team. If you hire good people, you need to give them the freedom to get on with the job and succeed.” Mentoring and coaching is an important part of leading the team and providing encouragement, so people learn and develop.

On the future of mobility, the industry is changing rapidly. The role of global mobility is expanding to take on new areas of responsibility, including talent acquisition, ESG, DE&I and new ways of working. Global mobility needs to play a more active and strategic role in organisations to provide creative solutions to the business in attracting and retaining talent. •

“I BELIEVE IN A COLLABORATIVE WORKING ENVIRONMENT AND ENCOURAGE MY TEAM TO DO WELL AND SHINE AS INDIVIDUALS AS WELL AS BEING PART OF A TEAM. IF YOU HIRE GOOD PEOPLE, YOU NEED TO GIVE THEM THE FREEDOM TO GET ON WITH THE JOB AND SUCCEED.”



**JULIA
ONSLOW-COLE**
PARTNER, FRAGOMEN,
GLOBAL GOVERNMENT
STRATEGIES &
COMPLIANCE

SHARING HIGHS AND LOWS LEADS TO SUCCESS

Increasing geopolitical tensions around the world and a complex landscape around the issue of immigration and work permits mean that Julia Onslow-Cole's expertise in law and international agreements is highly sought-after.

"As you progress in your career you have a lot of experiences to share. I believe it's important to share the highs and lows. Otherwise, you can inadvertently create a misleading impression. The important thing is for people to have confidence to try new things and learn by their mistakes. In my view, this is the pathway to success."

Julia is a Partner at Fragomen focusing on Global Government Strategies and Compliance and was previously head of global immigration at PwC before joining Fragomen five years ago.

She has extensive knowledge of international law and has just been appointed Chair of the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) board, the first woman to hold such a prestigious position. In addition, Julia sits on the board of directors of the International Chamber of Dubai.

In her role at Fragomen, Julia provides expertise on migration issues and policy. She has a wide range of experience advising governments, businesses and entrepreneurs and high net worth individuals on complex international migration.

She is a specialist on global mobility and crisis management in immigration policy.

In her previous role she was a Partner, Legal Markets Leader and Head of Global Immigration at PwC. Her areas of expertise include strategic global immigration advice. She has worked with governments on visa processing systems, residency legislation, communications and citizenship by investment programmes. She liaised with the UK government and business on Brexit and has given expert evidence at the European Parliament.

MANAGING COMPLEXITY

Julia was recognised in the area of immigration law in the 2023 edition of 'The Best Lawyers in the United Kingdom™'. She was also named

a 2023 "Lawyer of the Year" for London immigration law. Julia is the Chair of the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute Charitable Trust and is on the board of Breaking Barriers.

"I advise governments and clients about global immigration issues and I would say that the landscape in which governments and businesses are operating has never been so complex," she explains.

She describes the outlook as very uncertain, with geopolitical tensions rising around the world with the pandemic, the war in Ukraine and supply chain issues in China.

"The last few years have brought a lot of different shocks and challenges for businesses, governments and individuals, and therefore the legal support that is needed is much more strategic. There is renewed tension between East and West because of the war in Ukraine, tension between the US and China and the rise of the middle powers like Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

"We are in a more unstable environment than we have been for a long period of time, where sudden change wouldn't really surprise anyone."

While business travel is starting to return, although not to 2019 levels, she says there is ongoing concern about the impact on the environment about travel and some uncertainty among assignees about working abroad.

"As a result of the pandemic people are more hesitant about taking assignments," she explains. "During the pandemic, we had many cases where people were separated from their families. This means people may be more reluctant to take on assignments. Therefore, looking after your assignees' welfare is really important.

"With the advent of hybrid and remote working, people sometimes have less experience and less confidence about taking on projects, especially younger people who maybe have finished their university studies just working from home and started a job working

remotely. Then it is quite a big undertaking for those same people to go on an assignment overseas, whereas maybe pre-pandemic that wasn't such a leap. So I think that has introduced an area of complexity into the whole picture. It is very important for that reason to really focus on the mental and physical welfare of your assignees and make sure that people have all the equipment and things that they need, if they are being asked to move."

This might include having more cultural support, something which some companies have cut back on in order to save costs. Another option is to offer more flexible packages to assignees.

ENSURING EQUITY

Julia is on the board of the Permits Foundation, which lobbies for the rights of partners to get automatic work rights in different countries. She passionately believes that that is important, because it is very isolating for partners if they move but are unable to work.

"It can be very isolating and in some countries partners are not even allowed to do charity work," she says. "When you look at the success of the assignments, you often find it has failed because the partner is not very happy."

She says that creating a more equitable workplace will require a cultural shift. Britain is still well behind countries like Sweden where parents share childcare responsibilities and are entitled to greater parental leave.

She describes her leadership skills as collaborative in style and enjoys working as a team and training, development and teaching.

"As you progress in your career you have a lot of experiences to share. I believe it's important to share the highs and lows. Otherwise, you can inadvertently create a misleading impression. The important thing is for people to have confidence to try new things and learn by their mistakes. In my view, this is the pathway to success." ◉

"It is very important to really focus on the mental and physical welfare of your assignees and make sure that people have all the equipment and things that they need, if they are being asked to move."



ANN ELLIS
CEO & CO-FOUNDER,
MAUVE GROUP

Having the confidence to seize opportunities

If you want to know where global mobility and international management are going next, then it might be good to ask Ann Ellis.

Spotting an opportunity to help people on the move back in 1996, Ann and her husband, John, established her employer of record business Mauve. Developing from its origins in a windowless office in Italy – leading Ann to nickname it ‘the company in a cupboard’. Mauve is now a multinational company operating in 64 countries – and covering many more – and employing 90 staff. Mauve is equipping all kinds of businesses and international organisations with the tools they need to expand internationally, thrive and grow. Its services include company set-up, employer of record, international payroll and compliance, local HR and contracts consultancy, international market research, risk assessments and project management.

ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES TO HELP BUSINESSES GROW GLOBALLY

In many ways, Ann and her husband John have built a company ahead of its time and one always poised for the future. Mauve was one of the first companies in this now booming and highly competitive sector of the global mobility services market.

“In the early days when computers really started, we had online banking and nobody else seemed to have that, so we’ve always been ahead of the times,” says Ann. With resilience and agility core features of the business, Mauve is continuing to grow.

The company has tripled in size since the pandemic when international remote working became a vital solution to lockdowns and relocation lifecycles thrown into uncertainty.

“We have always had remote workers, so when the pandemic happened, we didn’t find it that difficult to adapt and continue supporting our clients. Our systems were all on the Cloud, most employees had laptops and

this way of working wasn’t something new for us.

The pandemic raised financial and immigration compliance – already top of the Global Mobility and international HR managers’ agenda – even higher. Yet for Ann, who has worked in this challenging area for almost three decades, supporting employers to manage this business-critical arena was an opportunity.

“I’ve always loved a challenge,” says Ann “I think doing what I’ve been doing in the last 26 years has been continual challenge. I really enjoy that.”

TAKING AND MAKING OPPORTUNITIES

Ann, who started her career in teaching, has carved a role for Mauve at the forefront of this emerging sector by having the confidence and focus to take and make opportunities.

Mauve was created when her husband was relocated by telecommunications firm, Orange, to northern Italy to help install its networks. “He was one of Orange’s first 30 employees and there when it was launched,” says Ann. “Then he and his colleagues were headhunted to go and help set up networks outside of the UK. He was lucky to get offered a contract in Italy. I had studied languages and I loved Italy so when he said, ‘I’ve been offered a job in Italy’, I was like, ‘when are we leaving?’”

“We moved to Italy in 1995. John and his colleagues needed to be paid in different currencies, so we decided it would be easiest to set up our own company. We invoiced on their behalf, made sure they were compliant in the country they worked in, and worked on getting them visas and registered on local payroll, then paid them their salaries and made sure they were paying their taxes in the country they were working. That was how we set up the company initially.

“We then just followed the likes of Nokia and Ericsson as they grew and built networks all over the world. We

supported them by employing the engineers and making sure they were compliant in-country.”

Again turning a challenge into a growth opportunity, in 2010 after the global financial crisis, Mauve decided to extend its offering to anyone who wanted to have support working, expanding or projects overseas.

“We went to our first conference and expo, in the US, in Atlanta – SHRM – with 12,000 attendees,” says Ann. “We had a stand and in those days nobody understood what we did. ‘Well, we employ people on behalf of other companies when they don’t want to set up their own companies.’”

“Obviously, since then, in the last few years this sort of service has become extremely popular. And that’s where we are today. We are offering this service now to any industry. We work a lot with NGOs, with universities and any sort of educational industry, tech companies – everyone really.”

BUILDING A GLOBAL BUSINESS

The next step for Mauve is the launch this spring at Wales Week London of Mauve Cymru. The event comes just after the announcement of Air India’s record-breaking deal with Airbus, which will see the wings of the jets manufactured in Wales in another boost to the Welsh economy.

The launch of Ann’s new company is a sign of confidence in Wales’s attractiveness, both for global businesses looking to invest, and businesses already based in Wales looking to export their products and services and expand internationally.

“What’s nice about Mauve Cymru is that I’ve gone out of Wales, travelled the world and had an opportunity to set up companies in over 60 countries and now gone full circle and come back to Wales to support Welsh companies that want to expand. I’m excited about that.”

Everyone at Mauve is also thrilled to have won the Women in Business award from the International Trade Council at an event in October in Estonia. “I’m also really proud and chuffed about this. Demetra and Teresa had to do a five-minute pitch in front of the audience and we went on to win the award.”

This accolade and Mauve’s growth story are testaments to the professionalism and skills of Ann’s team, as well as the leadership culture in the company that understands the importance of people as individuals in the workplace.

“I like to be collaborative,” says Ann. “I like being operational. I’m not one of these CEOs that sits in my office. I like to be involved and approachable. People come to me if they’ve got any issues or problems. I like to be there for anybody.”

“I also like to be innovative and I have lots of ideas, but I’m happy to delegate to implement those ideas too. I also like to think I am adaptable and flexible. I think that also links to the fact that I love change. To me, it’s always about looking forward.”

FINDING BALANCE

This foresight is seeing Ann continue to expand her networks and offer support and guidance to other women leaders and entrepreneurs around the world. “From the time I started Mauve in 1996, I can see things have changed a lot for the better and I want to get more involved in supporting women in business.

“I’ve just had a call from a lady in banking about promoting and supporting women in business. She is interested in me getting involved so I’m quite excited

about that. I’ve got involved in networks in Dubai. There’s a lot of networking going on there now with women in business.

“In telecoms when I started, there were no women. The only women then were HR managers. Most of the engineers working on these projects were men. But I do see that changing now, especially in tech. The difficult thing now for women in particular is trying to balance looking after the children and family aspect and the business aspect. I still think that is so difficult to balance. With hybrid work, it is easier sometimes.

Supporting women in companies, networks like Think Women and events to mark International Women’s Day Ann says are “so important for women to talk to each other and discuss the challenges they have.”

“As women, I do think we are very supportive of each other. The last Think Women event I went to was at the IoD in 2020 just before the pandemic. That was a really good meeting. It was lovely to hear other women’s stories. These sorts of events are really important for listening to other people’s experiences as well and these networks are growing all the time.

“Building a business, it’s always important to feel confident,” continues Ann. “Just focus on your aims and keep to them and not give up. You need to stay confident and feel that you are capable of doing what you want to do. Keep whatever you have in your mind as your ultimate aim.” ●

“SUPPORTING WOMEN IN COMPANIES, NETWORKS LIKE THINK WOMEN AND EVENTS TO MARK INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY ARE SO IMPORTANT FOR WOMEN TO TALK TO EACH OTHER AND DISCUSS THE CHALLENGES THEY HAVE.”



**ASMA
BASHIR**
CO-FOUNDER,
CENTURO GLOBAL

Leading with accountability, responsibility and client focus

Too few organisations are taking diversity and equality seriously, and for many, promoting women is just a tick-box exercise, says Asma Bashir, co-founder of Centuro Global.

Asma, who has huge amounts of experience advising clients around the globe, says that the problem is that corporate culture hasn't got time for people and fails to make the real changes and innovations that are needed to enable change.

"Companies are only as strong as their employees and at the moment too many businesses are visible and vocal about making statements but there is no evidence that those changes translate through internally," she says.

"For example, with women, they perform well when managers show that they understand their needs and the pressures they face. You can't get away from the fact that women juggle family and career but their importance in the workplace is often understated. You have to be open with people and maintain consistent communication to help them feel safe and secure in the workplace. When

people feel comfortable, and you create a level of trust in the team and the organisation, then people feel invested into what the organisation is doing."

Asma began with a career in law and started her own company in 2004, Newland Chase. This entity grew to become a global business supporting multinational clients around the world. Her business was then acquired in 2015 and she remained as the Global Head continuing to grow the company to offices worldwide until 2017.

Asma co-founded Centuro Global, a company which simplifies the international expansion journey by bringing together up to date advice on requirements and process for new market entry in an innovative and revolutionary technology platform. She is a serial entrepreneur as well as an investor and continues to work with companies entering new markets globally advising on risk and compliance.

CHALLENGING THE STATUS QUO

She is a mentor on the Mayor's International Business Programme as well as a Senator for the World Business Angel Forum. Asma has worked with both multinational clients and SMEs to help them expand into complex regions across the world.

During her early years Asma did not have the privilege of an easy education. She had to study for her law degree by working during the day and studying

at night because, having come from a culturally strict family, she had been expected to marry young rather than go to university.

"I did go slightly against the grain and challenge the status quo because I didn't understand why I couldn't study further," she explains. "I was a bit more rebellious than the average child. I got a job as an intern at a law firm and studied in the evenings.

"I had an inner voice that kept telling me to spread my wings further. I think when you've gone through the problems that I've had, you've got to have grit, to have mental strength to be able to get through difficulties.

"I have a strong sense of responsibility and accountability and the desire to succeed which is what drives me. I also like to inspire and motivate others and build teams that are high achievers. I like listening to the team and their ideas and creativity which help me with my own continued learning."

BE FEARLESS

At the heart of Centuro Global is a technology platform that can help clients with challenges around global mobility, workforce solutions, immigration, tax, and setting up entities in a variety of overseas regions.

"I like to mentor and to empower people in my leadership role," she says. "I'm good at giving ideas and suggestions and then letting people go away and come back with a solution. When you empower people and give them the tools to succeed then everyone wins."

She says in today's commercial world you need to be quick on your feet.

"You've got to think what is it that your clients are looking for? Listen carefully and thoughtfully and offer bespoke strategic solutions. Clients want to see value and impact so providing advice that they cannot get anywhere else leads to loyalty and long-term relationships. I have been called 'Yoda' by a client once because they felt they could come to me with any problem and I would offer an instant answer without reference to anything." Her advice to young women starting out in their career is to "stand your ground and be clear on what you want".

"If there is something you set out to achieve, and you want it bad enough, you've got to find a way to get it," she says. "Life is always going to be full of challenges and there will be many hurdles, but you cannot be deterred from what you want to achieve.

"I've always been a risk taker, and I've never cared about the consequences, especially since I had to endure so many hardships early on. I always say to myself, am I going to take this risk, what's the worst that can happen and can I handle it? Could I deal with the worst case scenario? And if the answer is yes I can handle the worst case scenario then I'll go ahead and take the risk. I have had to be pretty fearless which has led me to where I am today." ◉

"I LIKE TO MENTOR AND TO EMPOWER PEOPLE IN MY LEADERSHIP ROLE. I'M GOOD AT GIVING IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS AND THEN LETTING PEOPLE GO AWAY AND COME BACK WITH A SOLUTION. WHEN YOU EMPOWER PEOPLE AND GIVE THEM THE TOOLS TO SUCCEED THEN EVERYONE WINS."

**REBECCA
HOLLANTS
VAN LOOKE**
COO EMEA,
FRASERS HOSPITALITY



Find a career you are passionate about and invest your energies into it

Embrace any opportunity that you are given, try as hard as you can, and never beat yourself up if you fail.

That is the advice that Rebecca Hollants Van Looke would give to any young person starting out in their career today. “Falling down is often one of the best ways to learn,” she says. “Failing is actually succeeding as long as you learn from it. Embrace it, do it even if it's tough. Learn from your mistakes. Put your heart and soul into what you are passionate about if you really want to have an exciting and successful career.”

She acknowledges that for some people, particularly since Covid, hybrid working and work-life balance come before making sacrifices in pursuit of a career.

“I still believe if you really want a successful career, you need to invest in it. It is a choice. Today I see a lot of younger people who seem to put the comfort of their lives ahead of potentially what they could ultimately succeed at. Perhaps that is just because I am very driven, but I believe they have so much more that they can give and do and for me that is wasting time, but perhaps they get the better life balance.”

AN INTERNATIONAL CAREER IN THE CHANGING WORLD OF HOSPITALITY

Rebecca has had a career spanning industries and continents, and has expertise in hospitality, luxury serviced apartments and real estate.

She has held management roles with Hyatt hotels in Paris and Istanbul and worked at The Ascott Limited for 10 years as country general manager for the UK, Germany and Georgia. She has experience in managing and developing diverse teams across different regions and countries and focuses on customer satisfaction, revenue and room sales. She has been with Frasers Hospitality since 2017 and has seen many changes in the years she has worked in hospitality.

“In the very early years when I was working at the front desk travel was still quite an elite thing. People were demanding, customers were privileged, but there have been many changes and there is so much more opportunity to travel today. It is far easier to get around and demand for rooms in terms of quick turnaround, shorter stay, and a broadening of the market from corporate to leisure has changed completely.”

In many senses, travel has become more transactional, and less about the adventure, she believes. However, people are now reverting again to seeking experiences

that are unique and personal.

“I worked in hospitality long before you checked somebody in on a computer. It is a very different world from a technical point of view and I think that has changed the emotional aspect. People come and they buy a room and it's a transaction. That experience element has actually changed a lot.

“In the future I think there will be hotels that are purely transactional. You probably won't see a person at all and there will be hotels that really give you an experience that's exceptional. There will be a lot of consolidation among the bigger players.”

OPENING UP A WORLD OF EXPERIENCES AND CONNECTIONS

Rebecca's journey to become a senior leader in hospitality began on a memorable family holiday to Scotland when she was seven years old.

“I was a really very shy child. I would never go anywhere and I wanted to stay in the comfort of what I knew. Every year my poor parents dragged me around on a holiday in the summer, crying and screaming. All I wanted to do was go home until one year we went to a little tiny hotel in Scotland. The receptionist made all the difference in the world to me. She came out from behind her desk, she went down on her knees and she spoke to me and she asked me why I was crying and actually it was wonderful to be on holiday and she was going to help me make it the most exciting experience that I had ever had. And she did. And I never ever looked back.

“I said to my parents at the age of seven in the car on the way home. ‘I know what I'm going to do when I grow up. I'm going to work in a hotel.’ I never changed my mind and that's exactly what I did. I worked from the bottom up and worked with a lot of the big chains. Grosvenor House was one of my first experiences and I met many presidents, prime ministers, pop stars, and it really opened another world to me. I was determined to do a degree in Hospitality Management which I completed with A*.”

From there she went into sales, marketing and revenue and built up her skillset with big brands and international exposure. After working in Europe for a few years she joined Hyatt Hotels and Resorts and experienced the quality product delivery. She worked in Paris, Indonesia and Turkey.

“I've had a wonderful career. Hospitality has enabled me to see the world and to experience different cultures. When I came back to the UK, I had managed to collect a husband and two beautiful girls and decided it was a bit of a challenge for us both to work in hospitality and I met two entrepreneurs who were setting up a business in serviced offices at the time.”

After years of hard work she became managing director of that company and sold it to a competitor. She was then headhunted by The Ascott Limited where she started as Regional General Manager for UK, Belgium, Germany and Georgia.

“Frasers offered me the opportunity to go one step beyond and look after Europe, Africa and the Middle East. And I'm now here as Chief Operating Officer looking after growth, acquisitions, investments,

divestment, and delivering the operational experience to the guests at the frontline, which is the backbone of what we do.”

Rebecca still glows with the absolute passion for her job and her love of developing individuals within teams.

“I'm very practical and very hands on. I get involved. I care. I would like to think I show great empathy to my teams. But I think the absolute overriding point is just that I absolutely love to give an experience to someone that makes a difference when they travel.”

She says that her early international experience was initially quite scary but forced her to become independent, learn a new language and immerse herself in the culture of a new country.

“I prefer to be surrounded by people who are far cleverer than me. I would say one of my skills is knowing how to put those people together and getting the best out of them. I know how to pick those people and get them working together so that I've got surrounding me a very strong skillset to deliver what we need to deliver well.”

She acknowledges that being a woman in the C-suite can sometimes be lonely.

“I'm one of five people in an executive team and all the others are men. I sometimes feel a little bit on the outside of things and in those situations you've got to be quite strong and self-reliant. I'm very lucky that I have a wonderful husband and family who are behind me.”

She is enjoying her current role and has no plans to stop working.

“I will never retire. I'd go crazy,” she says. She has plans one day to set up her own B&B and deliver an amazing experience to her guests. It won't be in Scotland, though.

“My husband is European, and he needs the sun, so it would probably be France or Portugal. I think that would be very much our hope to enjoy the good life but equally, to work and deliver that experience to other people because I think that brings us a lot of pleasure. We still love to travel and we love to meet people internationally and talk about the world. That's what gives us pleasure and by inviting people into our own home in a very particular kind of way, would bring pleasure in itself.”

“FAILING IS ACTUALLY SUCCEEDING AS LONG AS YOU LEARN FROM IT. EMBRACE IT, DO IT EVEN IF IT'S TOUGH. LEARN FROM YOUR MISTAKES.”



BUILDING AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

Anna Kavelj is the MD of multi-award winning Elite Woodhams Relocation, a destination services provider covering Australia and beyond. A regular speaker and panellist at global mobility events, Anna’s collaborative approach is raising the bar for values-driven support for relocating families.

A decision at 18, a few career twists and turns and a move to Australia via China – three times – have paved the way for Anna Kavelj to her current role as Managing Director of leading-edge relocation company, Elite Woodhams Relocation.

But it wasn’t just these geographical moves that got Anna here. A global mindset and genuine interest in people have been the foundation for Anna’s inspirational career path. Anna navigated the successful merger between Elite Executive Services and Woodhams Relocation Centre to create Elite Woodhams Relocation (EWR) just weeks before the Covid pandemic in early 2020 and during the sector’s toughest of times.

Yet under Anna’s authentic, people-focused leadership, EWR rode out the global crisis by taking care of its team and clients, innovating new services, and building the business from scratch to come out of the pandemic poised for further growth.

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Reflecting her credentials as a global leader, Anna is based in Australia, British born and has extensive experience in China. Before studying for a degree in linguistics, Anna, aged just 18, left the UK to teach English in China’s second-tier city of Suzhou, west of Shanghai. Anna returned to China during her university placement year to study at Shanghai University, then again after she had graduated in 2004.

“When I graduated, I hotfooted it back to Shanghai and kind of fell into the destination service provider [DSP] world. This was the time when all the leading global companies thought ‘Quick, we’d better be in China; we don’t know what we’re going to do when we get there, but we need to be there.’”

“Companies like IBM, Dell and Unilever were sending hundreds of expats in and so we were really trailblazers at that time. The relocation industry was very much in its infancy here. As foreigners, people clung on to the idea of ‘help, goodness me, where do I start?’”

Anna rose to the role of Country Manager for destination service provider, Orientations, started by Beverley Mayhew. “I was running her China operation,” says Anna. “I was sitting in business meetings, speaking in Mandarin, reading Chinese contracts and dealing with a lot of complex issues.”

But after 10 years, Anna was also ready to take on new challenges and moved to Australia; first to Sydney, then to Melbourne, where she is now based. Despite the invaluable experience life in China offered and the abundant transferable skills the decade had provided, “when I landed in Sydney, I could not find a job,” says Anna. “I had people saying to me ‘but you don’t have any Australian experience, you don’t understand our local markets’ and I didn’t know anyone in Sydney.”

Anna persevered to overcome the obstacles, thinking differently about how she was going to secure work. “At first, I was just going through the standard channels of websites trying to get a job. It was a real eye-opener and

quite shocking really. I had just run a business in China, and I was pretty sure I could do all the jobs I was applying for, but employers were just not interested. That was a real wake-up call for me. I realised I had to do something different as clearly Australia was a different market and very network driven.”

Anna started to flex her global connections, contacting people she knew outside of Australia and sidestepping the standard job sites and adverts. “I ended up getting my job in Australia through a gentleman in Texas who made an introduction. I think it just goes to show that even when you think you don’t have a network, you really do. My experience proves you can do what can sometimes seem out of reach.

“It was a sobering experience for sure. Australia was not a dynamic market like the one I had been in in China. I did have to take a step backwards to take a step forward because I wasn’t going to get a job at a similar level in a country where I knew nothing and nobody.

“I think if you can swallow your ego and just get on with it and do a good job, you eventually come back to where you were, hence why I am now MD of EWR. It takes time, but you get there in the end.”

LEADING AUTHENTICALLY AND WITH HUMILITY

Anna’s leadership style is key to her personal success and the exemplary work she and her team at EWR are doing, including tailoring an accessible destination service for inbound healthcare workers.

“My leadership style is authentic for sure. It’s human, empathetic and I’m very clear on my values and the values of our business. We hire, train and mentor accordingly. When you are clear on values, bringing people on is quite easy because you really believe it and everyone else naturally follows on along the way because they can see how genuine it is. It isn’t just some business speak put up on the wall.

“I think authenticity is so important,” continues Anna. “Authenticity and vulnerability are key in modern leadership. I think the rebalancing and greater presence of women has had a broader impact on the whole business community – and for good. You see men who are now showing their vulnerability and authenticity as well. I think that’s been very impactful.”

Anna’s people-centric approach is, she says, also partly because of the values her father practised in his work. “My Dad inspires me,” says Anna. “He was a City lawyer, but always managed to see and appreciate the human within the person and see the best in people. I think at EWR we do that too.

“The team knows when people are getting stressed about their relocation that we are dealing with individuals. We are not dealing with case-file numbers or jobs. We are dealing with people who have issues at home, troubles with family, partners, whoever. I think that human element is so important.”

This understanding is also the bedrock of Anna’s support and leadership of her own team, which is about “absolutely treating people as individuals.” This means living the values of EWR by empowering colleagues to be proactive, curious and ask questions, listen, be meaningful in your connections, dependable and show up for each other, clients and suppliers.

“In the world of relocation, no one relocation is the same,” says Anna. “This is not the space for people who

“AUTHENTICITY AND VULNERABILITY ARE KEY IN MODERN LEADERSHIP. I THINK THE REBALANCING AND GREATER PRESENCE OF WOMEN HAS HAD A BROADER IMPACT ON THE WHOLE BUSINESS COMMUNITY – AND FOR GOOD.”

can’t be flexible. It’s about getting to know who you work with and your clients as people and what makes them tick, because when challenges arise – which invariably happens – they are much more likely to help because you have invested in them. You are not just treating them as an email address. Another of our values is ‘be delightful’, because if you are a pleasure to work with and provide a positive experience, then that will reap rewards ten-fold.”

Anna lives this approach in her interactions with the wider global mobility community. “So much more can be achieved if you are collaborative,” says Anna. “Get to know your competitors. A combative, negative, fear-driven mindset doesn’t help any of us at the end of the day. I think it’s wonderful we have so many connections around the world that we can all learn from, all the different cultures and ways of working. It’s brilliant.”

This includes on issues like equity, diversity and inclusion and intersectionality. “In Australia, increasingly we have recognition of the traditional owners of the land front of mind,” says Anna. “It’s essential to have conversations like these and those around International Women’s Day. It’s not enough to have greater gender equity on boards. That’s obviously important, but there is still bias and inequality right through society. The more we can have these conversations, the better.”

Below: Anna collecting her 2022 Relocate Award.





**CAITLIN
PYETT**
DIRECTOR OF ACCOUNT
MANAGEMENT, ASIA,
CROWN WORLD MOBILITY

PROMOTING WOMEN ON INTERNATIONAL ASSIGNMENTS

"I always knew that I wanted to work overseas, and I wanted to have that experience, but I just thought that would never happen for me, because there were no examples out there," says Caitlin Pyett.

For Caitlin, it reminded her of that phrase: you can't become what you can't see. "As a much younger woman, I couldn't see any assignees that looked like me. There were a handful of very well-paid high level traders, but for someone in my kind of role, and a woman, I just didn't think it would ever happen. I kind of mentally wrote it off, which is tremendously damaging, really."

Yet at age 40, Caitlin was offered a role working in Singapore, and she now lives and works in Hong Kong. As well as being Director of Account Management for the Asia region, Caitlin is also Consulting Lead and Client Advisory Board Lead at Crown World Mobility.

She is a senior global mobility professional with 20 years' experience across policy, operations, advisory and strategy. She joined Crown in 2018 and before that she worked as Global Mobility Policies & Practices Manager at AMEC in Singapore, and for BHP, Standard Chartered, ABN AMRO and BNP Paribas banks in London.

"When I first started working in mobility in the late 90s, most of the assignees were men of a certain age, 30 to 40, with what they called a 'trailing family'," she explains. "Things are definitely changing now, but one thing that companies can do is to change the narrative internally by creating visibility about diversity in their assignment demographics. They can highlight women who've gone on assignment and they can make sure that all the policies are inclusive. That can go a long way to making a difference."

A GLOBAL CAREER AND A WEALTH OF MOBILITY EXPERIENCE

Caitlin always knew that she wanted to work internationally, having studied languages at university.

"I've always been very interested in other places and cultures. I got offered a role quite by chance when I was in my late 20s to be the relocation person for an IT

recruitment company in London, and this was in the late 90s. It was all about Y2K and the fears that, come the year 2000, computer programmes might crash. We were bringing IT specialists into the UK from South Africa and Australia. My job was to find them somewhere to live and find schools for their children and get them a work permit. It was a baptism of fire because I had no experience in any of that and it was very hands on. I used to drive out to Heathrow to meet them and find a hotel for them and go househunting with them. Then I moved into what used to be called Expatriate Management." Caitlin later moved to BNP Paribas and worked in various corporate roles for 15 years in London, managing expats and dealing with the ever-changing UK immigration rules.

"When I was 40, I was offered a job in Singapore, and my husband and I made the move from London to Singapore. It was a policy-based role for a company which provided engineering staff to various projects around the world, finding staff for oil rigs and engineering projects in the Gulf or on-site in Papua New Guinea."

When her husband was relocated to Hong Kong five years later, Caitlin moved with him and after a year of freelancing, was approached by Crown World Mobility to work on the vendor side.

She says the experience of relocating was "definitely more stressful and emotional than you can appreciate unless you've done it".

"We had all of those discussions that go on behind the scenes, the things that families and assignees probably talk about with their partners and families, but which don't necessarily get conveyed to the employer," she says.

HOW TO BRING MORE DIVERSITY INTO GLOBAL ASSIGNMENTS

Caitlin says that increasingly clients are focusing on DE&I policies, not just for their staff but often for their entire supply chain.

"Clients want us to guide and inform their assignees about the policies and the benefits they will receive. They want us to make sure that they know that there are resources available for specific situations. People might not want to share personal information, but we can make sure that they know there are resources available if they need them, so that they feel supported."

For example, women might be more likely to turn assignments down if they are thinking about having families or they've got young families.

"There needs to be a financial commitment on the part of the company that if you have a woman who'd be perfect for an assignment position, but she's got a young family, then maybe she needs some more help in the host location. That could go for single parents as well, whether they're male or female. So it is about rethinking your benefits and starting from a place of wanting to say yes, so that you can facilitate and encourage diversity in assignments." •

"There needs to be a financial commitment on the part of the company that if you have a woman who'd be perfect for an assignment position, but she's got a young family, then maybe she needs some more help in the host location."





JO WAKEHAM
 GROUP MANAGING DIRECTOR, K2 CORPORATE MOBILITY

MAKING A DIFFERENCE WITH A FOCUS ON PEOPLE

Jo Wakeham, Group Managing Director at relocation management company K2 Corporate Mobility, has crafted her career around helping international businesses thrive. Jo’s story highlights the global mobility sector’s vital role in supporting talent.

Jo Wakeham has always worked in mobility. Over the course of her three-decades-long career, Jo has seen the sector grow and align ever more closely with clients’ goals as both international trade and talent resourcing become increasingly nuanced and challenging. From her first role in the 1990s, to international business development at Cartus, BGRS and Airinc, and now in the UK-headquartered international corporate relocation company K2, Jo has always been driven by a passion for both meeting clients’ needs through operational excellence, as well as helping develop new and experienced talent within the industry – with people at the heart of both.

K2’s Great Place To Work® certification reflects how Jo and all the senior leadership team at K2 – an owner-managed company headed by Nick Plummer – approach their own talent strategies – by attracting, retaining and

developing the best talent, not only making K2 a great place to work, but also remaining agile in their help and support of clients. Jo’s inspiring story is also one that will surely resonate with other leaders in global mobility working out how to win the war for talent in this fast-evolving sector, as well as people in their early careers working out what global mobility can offer them and people outside of the sector assessing their options.

BEING PRESENT AND PREPARED

Being present, setting goals and responding to challenges are clear hallmarks of Jo’s time in global mobility and relocation. “I always loved the fast pace,” says Jo of her first role in the sector as a relocation administrator at Black Horse. “I’ve always been driven by the speed of change and making a difference wherever I can.” As well as an energising place to be, Jo found the industry could also offer her a route to achieving her ambitions. “At that time, in the early ‘90s, relocation companies were really starting to focus on expanding their service offerings internationally,” says Jo. “That seemed like such an aspiration for me, to be able to work for a global company. It could offer me new experiences and new learnings and teach me things I hadn’t seen before.” The progression to international exposure came a few years later, but Jo used this early part of her career to learn as much as she could about what she and those around her were doing. “I have always had a passion to learn and achieve as much as I could,” says Jo. “So, it was around doing the very best I could at everything and volunteering myself for other projects. Working with a

lot of people all doing the same role, it was always great to find ways in which I could do something a bit different or take on projects, or something that would help me learn something new”. In the early 2000s, Jo achieved her first ambition of working on the international side of mobility, joining Cartus as Director for International Services. When she left in 2012, 22 years after starting her career at the company, Jo had risen to the role of managing Cartus’ large global financial clients and global operational teams. “I just found it so interesting,” says Jo. “The biggest thing for me was recognising that you will never know it all in international mobility as it is so fast-paced and ever-changing. Being comfortable with this, especially as my career has progressed, has been a big part of my own development – I have learnt that bringing great people together with varying skillsets, all having expertise in different areas, is so much more valuable to both our people, and our clients.”

PEOPLE FIRST

As well as international exposure, Jo’s career has always been a combination of client engagements and people management/development. “One of the areas that probably drives me most is seeing people develop, especially their management and leadership skills. “My style in this area has changed and matured a lot over my career and I try and share those learnings with others coming up through their careers. We all have areas to develop and work on and being able to communicate and coach that in a positive, encouraging and also effective way, is so important, especially as one starts to manage people and their careers. With talent being so critical to the success of organisations, getting those conversations right, first time, is essential.” After two decades at Cartus and now highly experienced in both client services and operations domestically and internationally, Jo next sought out opportunities in general management. This took her to BGRS, where, over the next eight years, she moved to a general management role, starting with responsibility for Europe, then Asia, and finally to leading the global client services function. Whilst Jo relished this time, and the experience in general management was fulfilling, “I realised, over time, that I was becoming further removed from people,” says Jo. “I wanted to work more closely with our teams and clients. Fortunately, I have always been very clear in my head about what I want to do and I felt my final career move would be to work for a company where I felt I could really make a difference – where I had the autonomy to help people and help clients, and visibly make a difference in a relatively short period of time.”

It was K2 that was to provide this home for Jo’s expansive skillset and strong leadership attributes. Today, Jo runs the European business, manages global projects and has a seat on the board. “It’s so great to work so closely with our board and senior leadership team – we make decisions together because we believe in collaboration. No one is on their own. It is just such an amazing company. You’re involved in everything, so I’m very close to our clients and our people. We also have a unique culture, which is based around ‘because it’s personal’: treat people like they are your family; do what you say you will, excel in everything you do and do everything to your best possible

ability.” With people and culture – including wellbeing and DE&I strands – being one of the six pillars of K2’s 5-year business plan, KINETIC “the focus on talent is intrinsically woven into everything we do”. The pillar is one that Jo co-leads with another board member and front of mind in business decisions. “It is why the Great Place to Work survey results were so valuable – and even though we were overwhelmed with the positive results, we can never rest on our laurels which is why the focus on talent and our people will never end and will always be front and centre at K2,” added Jo.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FLEXIBILITY

“We’ve created a fabulous environment where people feel they are accountable, get rewarded for the work they do and feel like they are totally supported,” says Jo. “It’s an environment that people want to be part of. Maintaining this dynamic means investing in training, being approachable and keeping an open mind on best practices,” says Jo, including how they relate to very important areas like race and gender at work. “We are a global company with global and diverse people and clients, and that means being mindful of diversity, equity and inclusion as a concept and how it relates to everything we do. “We look at people as individuals, and this includes women who have parental and caring responsibilities, and being aware of the impact that parenting-related career breaks can have on many people, particularly women,” says Jo on this timely issue. “Any company worth its salt must continue to be more flexible about working practices. Companies will not only lose great talent if they don’t, but they will miss out on attracting the talent that is out there – it just isn’t always in the obvious places. There is a lot more we can all learn from each other about how to retain and attract people with all kinds of different needs and backgrounds.” ♦

“Any company worth its salt must continue to be more flexible about working practices. Companies will not only lose great talent if they don’t, but they will miss out on attracting the talent that is out there.”



ESTHER CLARK
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OF MARKETING ONLINE
SCHOOLS, INSPIRED
EDUCATION GROUP

Finding your voice on a global stage

"I started my own business when I was 13. I have been around entrepreneurs all my life," says Esther Clark. "My parents started a sailing school so I was constantly traveling and exploring the world. I spent several years on board a 111-foot schooner while I studied long distance. That's one of the reasons I am so thrilled to work for the largest online school – it gives families and children the choice to study the way they want – which may be different from the norm."

Esther has had a truly international career and is a thought leader in learning and e-learning. She has 15 years' experience leading marketing, communications, external relations and partnerships with start-ups, scale ups, global firms, government organisations and, most recently, international schools. Esther holds a BA from the University of British Columbia and an International MBA from the Schulich School of Business, York University (Canada).

Although she lives in London, Esther considers herself a Canadian global citizen having spent more time outside Canada than in any one country.

Her experience includes managing high performing marketing teams and working in trade and partnerships in the Americas and Europe. She has worked for global brands such as BMW and the Government of Canada (Trade). She is a contributor to *Forbes Mexico* and *America Economia* magazines as well as to the Global Peter Drucker Forum and World Economic Forum on themes related to marketing, strategy and education.

"While the last few years I have dedicated my professional life to international schools marketing, my career has been punctuated by exposure to a variety of industries and roles," she says. "These include project manager of a major infrastructure project in Quito, Ecuador, consultant to a photo crowdsourcing app, and strategy at BMW Group. I currently lead Marketing for Inspired Online Schools, part of Inspired Education."

MAKING CONNECTIONS

"I have always been around entrepreneurs and business. I could never understand why business and organisations didn't show their capabilities for furthering ideas, innovation and value creation. There is so much potential in well-run, global and forward-thinking businesses."

Her childhood experience taught her about adapting

and observing. "My parents are very adventurous," she explains. "They started a sailing school, and my dad was a captain, my mum was the first mate and the nurse on board and we would take trainees and travel around the world. The first trip I went on was from the west coast of Canada to Australia and back when I was 10."

"I did BC correspondence, which is basically like a home school. In Canada the home education system is very good because a lot of people live outside the school catchment area. I was seeing and meeting people and understanding different cultures and languages and looking back, I realise how absolutely fantastic that experience was. I spent three years of my childhood 100% on the boat."

This led to a lifelong interest in understanding different cultures, languages and walks of life, as well as striving to identify and connect ideas. Living her life aboard also taught her teamwork, tolerance and cooperation.

"It can be a challenge, because you're living in such close quarters on a boat, but it's also really an opportunity to get to know people and to understand people and if there's an issue, you have to deal with it straight away," she says.

That background and international experience had had a big influence on her work.

"I don't see myself as one dimensional or just a title or role," she says. "In fact, I like to say to people that we should all 'lead without the title' – sometimes we are not given the title or the salary but that shouldn't stop us from making waves, creating connections and making our voices heard."

DEVELOPING A GLOBAL MINDSET

Family life on the boat was very adventurous, and they often stopped in ports of call for a month at a time, which gave Esther time to experience the local culture and make friends.

"Whenever we went into different ports of call, because we were this beautiful traditional 111-foot schooner tall ship, people would come to the boat, and they'd want to show us their town or city or their village," she says. "It was this instant connection because we were doing something different and connecting with people from different walks of life, both on board the boat and where we were sailing to. The most important thing is having that international mindset and you have to really be open to knowing it's not going to be like it was at home."

She studied for a BA and MBA and on finishing her studies, went to work for BMW Group Canada. Then she moved to South America and worked for the Canadian Foreign Service. In the American School in Quito they needed someone to liaise with the government and handle their PR, and Esther rose to the challenge.

"I've always been passionate about education because of my upbringing. The idea of learning from different people in different ways is amazing. Once I started in the international schools sector, I found it fascinating. School is probably the most important decision a parent will make, and it is also one of the biggest investments."

She believes that being a woman leader in a global world is about what you bring to the table and finding your voice, rather than trying to fit

into a structure.

"Everyone has a voice, and everyone has something to say. It is about giving the younger generation the confidence to stand up and find their voice and share it."

Esther is an Outstanding Contributor to Forbes and contributes through panel facilitation or with articles to international forums like WEF, the Global Peter Drucker Forum and the Christensen Institute. She writes about strategy and innovation in English and Spanish. Her first book (in Spanish) is coming out this year. It's a playbook about leadership and balance entitled *Liderazgo y Una Taza de Te (Leadership and a Cup of Tea)*.

"The best advice I can impart is don't be so hard on yourself – things sometimes don't work; learn from them and move on," she says. "Sometimes we figuratively beat ourselves up when actually the cause or correlation has nothing to do with us. I have learnt this many times over. There is a whole world out there for us to explore, discover and enjoy; it is not always made for us – that's why we need to be trailblazers and to support those making change and leading without the title!"

"EVERYONE HAS A VOICE, AND EVERYONE HAS SOMETHING TO SAY. IT IS ABOUT GIVING THE YOUNGER GENERATION THE CONFIDENCE TO STAND UP AND FIND THEIR VOICE AND SHARE IT."

Esther at our Think Women event at the IoD, London





**MARY
BIDDLECOMBE**
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
TASIS

SUPPORTING THE NEXT GENERATION

Mary Biddlecombe, Executive Director – Development and External Relations, at TASIS, The American School in England, has forged a successful career across multiple sectors by connecting and leading people.

Mary Biddlecombe has built a career on breaking the glass ceiling. Moving from HR to business development, Mary’s career progression also shows the transferability, value and relevance of HR’s professional certification in today’s workplace.

Mary’s ambition, coupled with strong leadership attributes spotted early on by employers, enabled Mary to help organisations and individuals grow. Today, Mary is supporting the next generation of globally minded leaders and their families by championing TASIS’s vibrant diversity, equity and inclusion programmes, STEAM subjects and innovation.

BLAZING A TRAIL TO SENIOR LEVELS

Mary started her career in graduate roles in HR with SMEs in the electronics and mining sectors. “My very first graduate position was

with Racial Defence Electronics,” says Mary. “I remember going on an Outward-Bound course with a group of fellow graduates in Wales. I was terrified about how I was going to get through sleeping on a mountain top without access to cloakrooms and things, but it was fantastic!”

Out of a cohort of 25 graduates, Mary was one of only two females in the group. “It was very male dominated, but I didn’t pay much heed to it. I’ve always worked very hard and was lucky enough to be offered promotions.”

From Racial Defence Electronics, Mary’s next significant move was to a global mineral producer. Here, Mary was soon promoted to Divisional Director of HR and became the company’s first female director – something very remarkable at the time. “Twenty-five years ago, that was such a big deal,” says Mary. “Now it’s just something that we don’t even dwell on. It’s

completely unexceptional now for a woman to be in that role.”

These senior roles brought with them the opportunity of further personal and professional development. A prestigious leadership course proved pivotal for Mary while she was at Omya. The course leader spotted Mary’s potential; a moment that highlights the ongoing importance of ensuring diversity, equity and inclusion in training and leadership development opportunities.

“On this leadership course, I just went about my business being myself,” says Mary. “Then the course leader took me to one side to say, ‘you have a lot of talent, you could be doing this.’ He very much inspired, encouraged and promoted me to others as well. He was pivotal and really changed things.”

This course, like the Outward-Bound course in Wales a few years earlier, again took Mary outside her comfort zone, but also brought opportunities. This time “a chance to project manage a small sales team within the organisation,” and an opportunity for Mary to extend her leadership qualities and business development skills in a new area.

BUILDING MUTUALLY SUSTAINING NETWORKS

After a career break and consulting projects, Mary moved into the education sector to capitalise on her passion for people and wider understanding of business, including the importance of relationships. This move has been equally as successful and fulfilling for Mary.

“It’s a privilege to work in such a vibrant organisation helping to shape the next generation,” says Mary. “I’m in my seventh year now at TASIS and I’ve had amazing opportunities. My current role is as Executive Director on the Leadership team. I mainly look after the leadership of marketing, admissions, communication and external relations. We are very much an organisation that cares about enduring relationships. So that suits me to a tee. It’s a very good marriage there.

Supporting and promoting the school and collaborating in networks “goes with the territory now,” says Mary. “External relations cover

alumni and parents, but it also very much relates to business partnerships; so professional services organisations, education, relo. Our school is a member of BritishAmerican Business, for example.

“I also still connect with some of my colleagues from my HR days in forums. Then a couple of years ago I completed a counselling diploma, which is something I always wanted to do. I thought it tied in well with the people aspect and I connect with people there too.

“There is always the same old challenge that we are all terribly busy and there are so many networking events. But networking is so important. You always learn something and pick something up from other people.”

One area TASIS can share its experience in is its leading DEI and wellbeing initiatives, which underpin the school’s mission “to embolden our learners to flourish as principled, open-minded and compassionate members of a global community,” which ties in with worldwide events like International Women’s Day.

“We work really hard, as I’m sure many organisations do, with our DEI initiatives,” says Mary. “I think the thing that really shows our commitment to wellbeing is that we now have a senior leader – Darren Singh-MacPherson – who now works with inclusion, compliance and wellbeing. It’s quite awesome to have a leadership position dedicated to that.”

EMBRACING EQUITY AT TASIS

Embracing equity – the main theme of 2023’s International Women’s Day – is clearly a common goal at TASIS, which has been working hard to break traditional gender stereotypes that play into the career choices of young people.

“The very best way to get that message across I think is to role model,” says Mary. “We have exceptional teachers at TASIS, including generalist science teachers in our lower and middle schools. In our upper school we have exceptional teachers in these traditional male subjects like physics and chemistry, as well as biology. We have some amazing role models.”

Former students also have a key

role to play in influencing the next generation. Mary had just shown a former female student around, who was now working in engineering and on assignment in the UK. Many alumni also return to talk to current students and support their projects in school. They show how much has changed over the decades.

“Now, I can’t think of any areas where we don’t have female leaders,” says Mary. “I’d like to say now the question is more ‘what does a good leader look like?’ I think that’s very encouraging.”

“NOW, I CAN’T THINK OF ANY AREAS WHERE WE DON’T HAVE FEMALE LEADERS. I’D LIKE TO SAY NOW THE QUESTION IS MORE ‘WHAT DOES A GOOD LEADER LOOK LIKE?’ I THINK THAT’S VERY ENCOURAGING.”



ELLEN SHUSTIK

HEAD OF PROGRAMMES & EXTERNAL RELATIONS, INNER WINGS FOUNDATION

Developing a growth mindset among young girls

A pioneering programme which helps children to build self-confidence and develop a growth mindset has now reached more than 5,000 children and trained over 300 teachers in more than 100 schools in the UK.

Ellen Shustik, Head of Programmes and External Relations at the Inner Wings Foundation, has had an international career in politics and democratic support which led her to develop a programme mentoring, with a particular desire to support for young girls and women.

“Post-Covid we have had a real mental health crisis and anxiety is on the rise among children,” she explains. “That makes it a crucial time to help schools. We provide the resources to the schools for free and

the training for teachers.”

There is a lot of pressure on schools and Inner Wings provides an holistic programme around mental health and confidence-building for schools to help them with their pastoral care.

“It is something I am really proud of because we are providing something that's so crucial right now for young children,” she says. “We hear all the time from teachers how much children's confidence has suffered and how much anxiety has increased since Covid. We are receiving such

positive feedback on the impact of the programmes on particular children or groups of children and certainly girls in particular.”

The training is designed to give young children the tools and skills to be more resilient, more confident and to develop their own personal intrinsic value and develop a growth mindset. It helps nurture and develop their public speaking skills and teach them that they can do whatever they want and that they should pursue their dreams. For girls, that might be to go and study STEM subjects, break down these barriers and reach leadership roles in industry.

Ellen is a dual Canadian-British citizen now living in London. The Inner Wings programmes, Finding Your Superpower and Finding Your Voice, are designed to equip the next generation of school leavers with the skills they need to be active and fulfilled members of society and the workplace in whatever they choose to do. The foundation is the initiative of co-founders Darren Roos, South African-born CEO of global software company IFS, and Melissa Di Donato Roos – an acclaimed American-born British business and technology leader, the first female of SUSE, the world's largest open source software company, and technology group chair of the 30% Club, which has the goal of achieving a third of women on S&P boards by 2023.

Ellen has over 20 years of experience working in the fields of democracy and governance, international development and politics. She has worked for large international and multilateral organisations around the world and spent several years working for the Liberal Party of Canada. As a democracy practitioner, she has worked with political parties, parliaments, civil society and on women's political empowerment, to strengthen democratic processes. With a strong background in elections, she has been an observer with over a dozen international election observation missions in all regions of the world. As a human rights advocate, she has worked on global campaigns against modern slavery and violence against women in politics, as well as preventing

extremism through education. She holds a Masters in European Studies and a Masters in Human Rights Law.

A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE CAN BRING EMPATHY TO LEADERSHIP

“In terms of a global perspective, I've lived and worked in a lot of countries,” she says. “I've lived in Egypt, Nepal, Malaysia, London, Paris, Stockholm and Dublin for multinational, multicultural organisations.

“Growing up, I went to very good schools. I went to an all-girls school and had a very positive experience. We were told we could do whatever we wanted to and that was very positive and very encouraging. Not all girls get that. I recently went back to my secondary school in Montreal to be their keynote speaker and to talk to the girls about my unpredictable career trajectory, and that you need confidence to go after what you want to do.

“We are now in a more global world, thanks in part to social media, and I think that a global focus is a more accurate reflection of what the world is. Living and working abroad, and having that exposure early on to other cultures and places, makes you more tolerant, open-minded, accepting and empathetic.”

She describes her own leadership style as “kind and compassionate” and says that, having had many different managers with different styles, she has always appreciated line managers who have been kind and compassionate and empathetic, while also being demanding and expecting hard work.

“I think you can get to the top being really kind, and a nice person to work with and that breeds a lot of loyalty.” ◉

“LIVING AND WORKING ABROAD, AND HAVING THAT EXPOSURE EARLY ON TO OTHER CULTURES AND PLACES MAKES YOU MORE TOLERANT, OPEN-MINDED, ACCEPTING AND EMPATHETIC.”

For more information on how your school or workplace can access these free confidence-building programmes and help build the next generation of confident leaders one child at a time, visit www.innerwings.org.

Discover a wealth of material on YouTube including a mini-series of short videos on Finding Your Super Powers for parents, children and teachers to access at home.

“I THINK YOU CAN GET TO THE TOP BEING REALLY KIND, AND A NICE PERSON TO WORK WITH AND THAT BREEDS A LOT OF LOYALTY.”

CLAUDINE HAKIM

HEAD OF ADVANCEMENT,
TRANSITIONS AND STUDENT
SUPPORT, INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL OF LONDON



Supporting healthy transitions for everyone

Claudine Hakim is the Head of Advancement, Transitions and Student Support at the International School of London. A pioneering educator, pedagogical leader and current chair of Safe Passage Across Networks (SPAN), Claudine is actively enhancing the wellbeing of students, internationally mobile families and school communities around the world.

A long-held appreciation of diversity and inclusion is the bedrock of Claudine Hakim's trailblazing career in international education. Through her innovative work at the multi-award-winning and truly International School of London (ISL), and now as governing chair of education charity and training organisation, Safe Passage Across Networks (SPAN), Claudine's personal leadership is helping to break new ground around the support schools can provide for relocating families.

Currently half of international schools have an active transitions programme; and just 6% say that it is fit for purpose. Yet under Claudine's leadership in positive transitions care, ISL and SPAN are lighting the way for other schools.

ISL has developed a global reputation for innovation and excellence through its IB, home languages, positive transitions care programme and inclusive school community that promote individual and collective wellbeing. It offers lessons in 25 home languages to support students' attachments to their home culture or cultures and identity, as well as English lessons and communities for family members, so everyone can make their personal transitions in the best possible way.

Thanks to Claudine's tireless work and authentic leadership, internationally mobile families, forward-thinking international schools and employers are therefore much better placed to support the wellbeing of every family member during times of transition, improving the chances of assignment and educational success.

"The driving force behind our positive transitions care programme has always been based on the recognition that we have a duty of care to educate children. We therefore need to look at every aspect of what impacts their learning to do this effectively," says Claudine.

"Wellbeing is something we understood even prior to Covid as being important. I see it as our responsibility as educators to make sure that we collaborate to support the family, our students and staff before, during and after transitions. I strongly believe every school should have a positive transitions care programme in place."

APPRECIATING INDIVIDUAL JOURNEYS

Claudine's thinking and practice is informed by her own journey and life-defining moves. Born and raised in Ghana she then moved to Lebanon, her country of origin, in her teens. Claudine then relocated away from the country's upheavals in the 1980s to settle in London.

Claudine's transient and culturally diverse experience mirrors that of many children and families she helps settle today at ISL. With a background in psychology and 20 years' experience of working with children who are neurodiverse, Claudine has developed a unique, empathetic and valuable perspective on what is needed to make a good move. "The welcome and compassion shown to me from the British community when I came to London to study as a young woman gave me an understanding of the importance of good transitions and an appreciation of valuing diversity and inclusion within this," says Claudine.

This experience of moving to the UK to study in the 1980s was a catalyst for Claudine's lifelong journey as a leader in education and positive transitions care. Claudine completed a bachelor's degree in psychology before completing a master's in educational leadership at UCL's Institute of Education. Her studies included a placement at a school in Battersea, London, for children with additional educational needs, where she returned after graduating. Claudine's warmth, passion and natural flair as an educator saw her become the school's youngest-ever headteacher and gain further valuable leadership experience. This Claudine progressed in her next roles; first as the headteacher of an international school, then the founding headteacher at ISL Surrey. This role was a watershed moment for Claudine and her work in positive transitions care.

It was while at ISL Surrey through the Families in Global Transition network that Claudine met and began to learn about the work of psychologist and author, Doug Ota. His ground-breaking studies based on established neuroscience build on Professor John Hattie's work, which includes the world's largest ever study of students. Both focus on the importance of positive transitions for all students, particularly those who are internationally mobile, for educational attainment and all-round lifelong wellbeing.

VALUING WELLBEING IN POSITIVE TRANSITIONS CARE

This intersection of research and practice defines Claudine's approach. Under her leadership as Head of Advancement, Transitions and Student Support, ISL's positive transitions care programme has been established for over ten years and is part of its DNA. Through Claudine, ISL is now working with the wider international school community to promote and share learnings around healthy transitions. "I attended a workshop that Doug provided, and the rest is history," says Claudine.

As Covid proved, staying connected and having a feeling of belonging and attachment to a supportive community is critical during times of change and helps build resilience. SPAN's own NEST network was also set up during this time, connecting people all over the world.

"Environments that put wellbeing at the core are healthier communities," says Claudine. "It doesn't mean

life's all perfect. But it does mean there is a framework for everyone – families, schools, educators – to work together to address challenges collectively and empathetically. It's a way of responding positively and proactively to real life."

For Claudine – as well as encouraging and supporting other schools to embed excellence in transitions care – the focus at ISL now is on continuing to learn and sustaining healthy communities and positive attachments. "A transitions care programme – even in the international schools' sector – is by nature transient," says Claudine. "Students and staff will come and go. Even as you set up a programme designed to ensure a family's and the entire community's experience is a positive one, you still have to work carefully at passing the baton to new members of staff and new families. Likewise, always building relationships with other schools to ensure that smooth passage of staff, students and families. It takes a truly dedicated team to run a successful programme."

THE IMPORTANCE OF INTENTIONALITY

Encouraging other schools to develop their own programmes and collaborate with each other is a key part of Claudine's leadership today, both at ISL and SPAN. "The 'network' bit of SPAN [Safe Passage Across Networks] is about working with other schools," says Claudine. "We need to have that collaborative approach. Sharing good practice is about creating consistency and a safe space, and through SPAN, a 'passport' for children, families and other schools as they move.

"It's about making positive transitions care intentional. The more we learn, the more we realise there's more to learn. Now at ISL we are looking at the stayers, whether it's a staff member, student or family. We used to put a lot of emphasis on new people. But we also have staff members who have been here for 20 years or so. It's about how we validate their experiences. Without them, the institution's history and culture wouldn't be there. It's exciting because it's new to learn and something more we can do for our community.

"This is what I am working towards, this sustainability. You will always have certain champions, and people who hold the torch, but if you really want something to be embedded and part of the ritual, you need to be intentional about how you do that." There are clear crossovers here with retention in the labour market, and the constant change and transformation of companies and organisations, including more widely across education as a whole. "I think maybe my biggest lesson is that this isn't just for international schools," says Claudine. "This has been my biggest 'ah-ha' moment over the years. I realised that even if a child is staying in one school or country and moving into different education stages, the transition is the same. The international aspect may add more layers, but regardless, that emotion is still there."

With this insight, and armed with new research around healthy transitions care, education attainment and wellbeing, Claudine is continuing to improve the experience for all students, families and the communities she is part of. "That's my mission now. It goes beyond ISL. This is where my work with SPAN is; to spread the word to all schools and every school can benefit from this kind of programme." ●

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