

## Women at the Top Leadership Research

Started in 2017, this research project is about leadership from the perspective of women at the top. Always curious, I am fascinated by the potential for women at the top to inspire upcoming women essentially by sharing broader, different, surprising maybe even similar perspectives. Influencing, and encouraging the realisation that we are all role models, inspiring teachers, brave trailblazers.

How are those doors opened, glass ceilings dissolved, seemingly insurmountable cliffs scaled, limitations challenged, assumptions overturned? One courageous or foolhardy person or a combination of many making those ripples spread way beyond what might be thought possible?

What women at the top are thinking about leadership gives women the courage to say if that is possible, if she did that so can I.

Thank you for being one of those inspirational women.

As a result, I have invited women at the top to share their thoughts regarding leadership and create this series of interviews. I began with five questions and as the first interview was nearly finished two more questions were determined to be asked: What question would you like to have been asked? And who would you like to be interviewed or suggest that I interview?

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### Liz Barclay – Small Business Commissioner UK

#### 20th in the series – interviewed on 4 January 2023 by Halina Jaroszewska

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

There are quite a few.

My Grandfather (sadly no longer with us) is my number one. He believed that everyone is good, even if they sometimes do bad things. If you accept that you find the good to the benefit of yourself as well as the person in question. That's never let me down.

My first headmistress taught me not to sweat the small stuff. To get on with the important stuff instead. My dad taught me that we own nothing. However we must look after it for the people who follow. Those lessons were a pretty good start.

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

Understanding the importance of empathy, authenticity and humility.

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

The speed of change. Understanding how to help your people get there even if they all change. To accept the need to change. All at their own pace.

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

Creating an inclusive workplace where diversity of experience and thinking is appreciated.

If you put that team in place, listen and respect what they bring to the table then you won't go far wrong. Put your people (including your clients and customers) before the processes.

**What advice would you give to young aspiring leaders?**

Listen for at least 80% of the conversation; only talk for 20% at most. You'll learn much more that way.

**What question would you like to have been asked?**

What's your experience of this?

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

Emma Lovell, CEO of the Lending Standards Board.

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

- 1. Looking into the next decade what do you suspect / predict leadership might look like?**  
Sadly, not as inclusive as it should be.
- 2. When did you first realise that you were actually a leader and how did you spot it?**  
When I had the confidence (although it might have been exasperation) to say 'no, this isn't acceptable to me'.
- 3. What makes you curious about leadership?**  
People no matter who they are in the organisation. Everyone has a role; a right to speak and be heard.
- 4. If the myth about women not being able to hack it at the top is 'fake news', what would you suggest as a top tip to shatter that myth?**  
When you get there, you realise it wasn't as hard as other people made it look – so keep thinking: The moon is green cheese.
- 5. How do you encourage young/younger women in your team, organisation, community, network, family, friends to plan / prepare for leadership roles?**  
Personal development around communicating helps build confidence so take every opportunity to stand up and speak.
- 6. How do you spot an emerging leader?**  
They're willing to listen and act on what they've heard, even if they have to change tack.
- 7. What do women who want to step into leadership roles need to do and be to take / achieve that step?**  
Be brave and step out of your comfort zone. One day you will suddenly realise you are confident.
- 8. How would you advise aspiring women leaders to deal with stereotyping; discrimination; obvious and hidden glass ceilings / walls?**  
Have the difficult conversation.  
Politely call it out.  
Often people don't know what they're guilty of as no one has ever challenged them.  
What's the worst that can happen?

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### **Details of previous interviews in Series One**

1. Fiona Jordan – Associate Dean [External Engagement], Faculty of Business and Law UWE (03.02.17)
2. Michele Crossman – Senior Leader in Defence (24.03.17)
3. Katharine Finn – Regional Leader, PwC West and Wales; Assurance Partner (15.03.17)
4. Laura Stambouleh – Partner, Public Sector Advisory – UK Consulting, Cushman & Wakefield (09.05.17)
5. Isla Baliszewska – UK Director Smart Coaching Training Ltd (26.06.17)
6. Fleur Bothwick, OBE – Director of Diversity & Inclusive Leadership, EMEIA Ernst & Young LLP (15.10.17)
7. Donna Whitehead – Pro Vice Chancellor and Executive Dean, Faculty of Business and Law UWE (15.10.17)
8. Sarah Pullen – Commercial Director - Regionals, Reach plc (30.06.17)

### **Details of previous interviews in Series Two**

9. Vicky Gardner – Director, ZiaBia Events Consultancy (01.09.21)
10. Patricia Patilla Sanchez – Technical Service Representative, Rolls Royce plc (23.09.21)
11. Kate Redshaw – Senior Associate, Burges Salmon LLP (09.11.21)

### **Details of previous interviews in Series Three**

12. Heledd Wyn – Director and Head of Private Client & Long Term Care at GL Law (25.02.22)
13. Tracey Burleigh – MPWR Business Club Founder & CEO (04.03.22)
14. Michelle Michael, MBE – Director Grand Pier Weston super Mare & Director AGM Holdings Ltd (09.05.22)
15. Pauline King – Regional Employer Engagement Director, RFCA (31.05.22)
16. Susie Warran-Smith, CBE – Award-winning business woman, author, speaker; The Food talk Show; Breakthrough Funding Founder (31.05.22)
17. Sarah Brooks – Head of Business Development, EVO Ultra (21.06.22)
18. Emily Gee, FCILEx – Chartered Legal Executive, Sadlers (11.07.22)
19. Emma Godivala – Director & Founder, York Gin (11.07.22)

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

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**To discuss how Halina Jaroszevska can help  
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Compassionately Ruthless Executive Coach  
Chosen by High-Potential Leaders and Teams to Deliver Remarkable Results  
Inspires Change ~ Be Halina'd

Halina helps fast track and aspiring leaders, also key teams, to turn uncertainty into a powerful tool for exponential growth. Her aim is to enable clients to switch surviving into thriving, take business and personal performance to the next level and maximise their potential during challenging times.