



Empowering Futures:

CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY AND PROGRESS IN THE TECH WORKPLACE

International Women's Day celebrates the achievements of women while advocating for gender equality. In recent years, significant strides have been made in the technology workplace, creating a more inclusive environment for women and inspiring young girls to pursue careers in STEM. Each year, Broadband Journal proudly celebrates the considerable achievements of outstanding achievers in our industry to celebrate International Women's Day.

This year we speak to Martha Galley, EVP of Corporate Social Responsibility at Calix, Helen Wylde, Founder and CEO at Cornwall-based altnet, Wildanet, Susanna Kass, Co-Founder at InfraPrime, which provides affordable, clean energy data centres and infrastructure, and Anne-Marie Vine-Lott, Director of Health at Vodafone Business UK.



**MARTHA GALLEY,
EXECUTIVE VICE
PRESIDENT OF CORPORATE
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY,
CALIX, USA.**

Martha was previously the Chief Customer Success Officer at Calix responsible for helping customers successfully adopt and realise value from their investments in our strategic products and platform. Prior to this, she held leadership positions at Digital Equipment Corporation, Microsoft and Salesforce, where she drove adoption for over 200K customers world-wide for Sales, Marketing and Support cloud products as well as developer tools, with an annual renewal portfolio over \$800M. At Microsoft, Martha ran enterprise sales for the majority of her tenure as GM of the business with Verizon. In her last role with Microsoft, Martha built the Telco Partner Channel and Go-to-Market strategy for launching Office365 as part of Value-Added bundles to Small Business customers across all major markets in Latin and South America. She is a graduate of Smith College where she serves on the Presidential Board and is a published scientific author.

WHAT FIRST ATTRACTED YOU TO THE TELECOMS/BROADBAND INDUSTRY AND HOW DID YOU GET INTO THIS BUSINESS?

I started working in the telecoms industry back in 2000, right after the 'dotcom' bubble burst. I was at Microsoft. Prior to that, telecoms companies believed that bigger, more complex and expensive solutions were the safe choice, like Sun and IBM. Once the money dried up, they looked for better, faster, less expensive solutions, like those offered by Microsoft. My mentors thought I was crazy to jump into an industry that was imploding, and

even at the best of times was considered slow on the technology adoption curve. But I saw an opportunity and I went for it. Fast forward almost 20 years and Calix called me – specifically the now CEO, Michael Weening, who explained that Calix was on a mission to completely transform the industry and he wanted my help to do it. He said all the right things – transformation, build what I had always wanted to build and do it at a company driven by a higher purpose – helping our customers improve the lives and economic future of the communities they serve. I was hooked.

WHAT, IF ANY, MENTORS HELPED YOU ALONG THE WAY?

I seek to learn something from everyone I work with, so almost everyone is an informal “mentor” to me. But specifically, I have had coaches, mentors and most importantly sponsors all through my career. Both men and women, and each role is different. Mentors help you craft and refine your professional goals, sponsors help you realise them. They are the ones to help you get new opportunities, to recommend you for opportunities when you’re not even in the room. Many women don’t realise that. Traditionally women have plenty of mentors but no sponsors. I feel strongly that it is the responsibility of women in leadership roles to be sponsors for other women – “reach back to pull up”.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED ALONG THE WAY AS A WOMAN IN A MALE-DOMINATED ENVIRONMENT?

Women need to find and use their voices. Great organisations realise that they need to build teams that reflect the communities that they serve and that including people with different experiences and perspectives builds strong teams and profitable businesses. Speak up. Contribute. We focus on building a culture where everyone’s voice can be heard, and it’s everyone’s responsibility to contribute to that culture. That way we become a “magnet” for all kinds of people with all kinds of skills and experiences, rather than a quota-driven organisation. I also believe that women need to be better at building networks from the very beginning of their careers. Most of the opportunities I have had come through my network. Again – reach out/back to pull up.

WHAT WOULD IMPROVE OPPORTUNITIES AND PROSPECTS FOR WOMEN LOOKING FOR A CAREER IN TELECOMS?

Learning that there are so many opportunities – more outreach to young people. We have an extensive paid intern programme, and some of our customers hire interns as well.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF IN YOUR WORK?

I am most proud of building – helping people build careers, building high performance teams, building profitable businesses, and ultimately building value for shareholders and stakeholders.

WHAT DO YOU SEE THE FUTURE LOOKING LIKE FOR WOMEN IN THIS SECTOR IN 10 YEARS’ TIME?

The opportunity across the industry right now is literally once in a generation. The billions of dollars pouring into the industry, specifically in the United States (BEAD, ACAM, etc.) is nothing short of the third historic transformation – akin in impact to rural electrification and the inter-state highway system. The infrastructure improvement act is focused at eliminating the “digital divide”, bringing high-speed internet to rural communities. Calix is at the centre of that process; providing systems, cloud and managed services to help Broadband Service Providers (BSPs) fulfill their mission to improve the education, business opportunity and the lives of the communities they serve.

Women have an incredible opportunity to be a part of that growth and transformational change.

WHERE WILL WE SEE YOU IN 5 YEARS’ TIME?

My husband jokes that I’ll “never” retire, but my work has changed. The role I have now – head of the Office of Sustainability gives me the opportunity to focus on things that I am passionate about and are important to the company and frankly the planet – doing “good” while doing “well”. It also gives me time to prepare for Board work which I see as a path to share my experience with companies to help make them better.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE A NEW FEMALE ENTRANT TO THE INDUSTRY?

Be a lifelong learner – the business changes, new opportunities are created. Take chances when you’re young, smart risks. What scares you could be the best career decision you ever made. And build your network.

Mentors help you craft and refine your professional goals, sponsors help you realise them. They are the ones to help you get new opportunities, to recommend you for opportunities when you’re not even in the room.



**HELEN WYLDE-ARCHIBALD,
CEO, WILDANET, UK
WILDANET**

Helen Wylde-Archibald joined the Wildanet board as a non-exec director in 2021 and became CEO in 2022. An expert in innovation and digital transformation, her experience spans Vodafone, O2, Parcellforce and the Transport Systems & Connected Places Catapult. Helen received the Women Business Leaders Award for Technology and Digital 2019 and joined Wildanet from her previous role as MD of LUMO, the alternative sustainable train company which she launched in 2021. In 2023, Helen was appointed to the newly formed Business Council, launched by the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC), to work in partnership with government and politicians of all parties to drive the future of the economy. She is based in Cornwall.

WHAT FIRST ATTRACTED YOU TO THE BROADBAND INDUSTRY AND HOW DID YOU GET INTO THIS BUSINESS?

When I left university at the start of the 90s I managed to eventually find 2 jobs and I went home, talked to my dad. One was for a company called Coca Cola, and the other was for a little tiny company called Vodafone which was doing the very first bit of wireless at that point. I didn't think Coca Cola was quite right for me. I felt that Vodafone are doing something worthwhile and that's it. It was the single best decision that I have made in my entire career; they were so good to me.

I had one of the best entrances into the workforce that I could have ever had. It was so exciting at that point; you couldn't even be sure the technology all worked. We discovered there was this sort of accidental capability to text, that kids were texting each other on the dance floors in clubs, which led us to ask, how do you monetise that? It was just so much fun, and the people who were running it were a once-in-a-lifetime team.

WHAT, IF ANY, MENTORS HELPED YOU ALONG THE WAY?

My father; he absolutely didn't look at me as if I were female; he and I constructed together all sorts of things, we built microlites together in the garage over the winter months. He was quite a character, so I was very lucky because there were no boundaries. I had a fairly modern upbringing.

I was really lucky at Vodafone. I met a lady called Mary McCrory and a lady called Jenny Dusart-Murray. Jenny was ahead of her time. She was one of our sales leads and just inspirational, she would breeze into an office and light up a room and take no prisoners. And I realised actually that

took an incredible amount of energy; I sort of suspected she had to breathe in when she got out of the car in the morning to do it, but she really filled a room.

Mary McCrory had an intellectual background. She worked in the marketing team and she brought so much to that party in terms of, you know, challenge and overturning things, not being afraid to have conversations with people. So both these gutsy, really powerful women - I found them both inspirational. They would never, ever use their gender as a reason why they couldn't be successful.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED ALONG THE WAY AS A WOMAN IN A MALE-DOMINATED ENVIRONMENT?

I absolutely refuse to be the 'bird on the board'. I am here because I deserve to be here. I've worked really, hard. I would not take a job where I was selected because I was female. That's just wrong, and it also demeans me as a person, and it would demean any other woman who took a job just because they're a woman. So you're on my team because you deserve to be there. I don't care how old you are. I don't care what gender you are and I don't care about your sexual orientation. I don't care what your background was.

What makes me really angry is that I sometimes have felt I've had to be better than the boys to get there. It's awful to actually find yourself thinking 'I'm gonna have to be better than them to even get considered'. That does now seem to be less of an issue, but in my early career I felt the need to actually prove I could be better than any of them instead of actually being selected as the right person for the job.

I think things are getting better.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN CHALLENGES FOR WOMEN IN THIS INDUSTRY?

This is an industry where experience matters. Women are entering the sector but it's going to take a little bit of time because you need that experience and there isn't any way really to fast track that.

It's tricky to get women into engineering and the network side still. We take as many apprentices as we can, and we've got our own training academy and pole field down here because we're so far from anywhere else. We've got female engineers coming on board, they are so good and you know, I have seen them scuttling up the poles, and they're absolutely great at it. They also make good advocates.

If we can get girls interested from 11 to 14, we've got a chance of training them up as employees. People are nervous about going off to university. Engineering within apprenticeship is a better way to get into the workforce if you are worried about the debt; actually, you could probably take this path and achieve the same thing as you would have a university degree. Why wouldn't you do that?

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF IN YOUR WORK?

That was when we won the two Type A Project Gigabit bids last January. Collectively worth £36m, these bids will deliver a significant step forward to rural Cornwall communities in accessing gigabit-capable broadband. It was a great moment for all of us.

I was standing in our Head office at 7:00am as the news went out and I could hear everyone running towards me so excited as we had won the bids – it was a gamechanger and we all knew that in the company. Our HQ is an old stately home that we have renovated for our purposes and the corridors really echo, we are also dog friendly so the noise was quite something – its one of my best work memories as it was so Wildanet in its expression, and it was such an important moment for us all and we knew it!

It was 7:00 o'clock in the morning on the January morning when we heard the announcement.

I'd known for a few days and said nothing, and I suddenly heard everyone

running down the corridor at 7am on the Tuesday morning and literally the customer service team flattened me saying, we've got the bid, we've got the bid! For me it was the realisation that they believed they could do it. You only get a government contract because it's too bloody hard for anyone else to have done it otherwise. So we've got to be really good at what we do and with being in Cornwall and knowing the people who work for me, it makes me realise we can do this. I feel incredibly humbled by the strength of the people I work with, are prepared to go to make sure this is successful. And it's not just the people who work for me. It's Cornwall. So for me, what I'm proud of is that we've managed to take something which everybody thought was a joke and actually make it work.

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE OF WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE LOOK LIKE IN 10 YEARS' TIME?

In 10 years' time I think we will have won the battle and it will be over and done with and I tell you why - what I love is the women coming through now. I love their sense of challenge! They just won't accept it and I just think that that confidence is just such a gift. As a result, I really believe that diversity is the best thing for any board. You need depth and strength. I mean in age, ethnicity, orientation, gender.

The one thing I absolutely hope we see beyond anything else is equity in pay and recognition, because it's still not there. The only thing I'd say to any young woman is make sure you're paid what you're worth, do not be afraid to ask what the peer sitting next to you is being paid and ask them to justify it. How can you expect to be confident in an environment where people won't recognise your talent and treat you equally? In 10 years' time, we'll have better working conditions for everybody. We'll have better boards. We'll have better systems, better workforces and I think our companies will go a lot further as a result of it.

WHERE WE SEE YOU IN FIVE YEARS' TIME?

Wildanet is still very much the focus at the moment. What I'm doing right now is really important. It's personal for me, having come from the South West. If I can do this for the South West then I'm quite happy with that as an outcome.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE A NEW FEMALE ENTRANT TO THE INDUSTRY?

I would say be brave. Think about what you're doing. Think about what you need. Go and find people to help you, so get a range of people around you to help you, so make sure you've got buddies, mentors, people you can talk to. If you don't have the support network, that's OK. Create it for yourself. Don't think you will be judged on that. You don't need a silver spoon in your mouth to be successful.

I am not privately educated, right? If I can do it so can you; be confident and ask for help and have a plan. Have a plan about what are you doing now. What are you trying to do? Is this gonna take you on the right course? One big advice I give anybody, female or male: if it doesn't feel right, don't do it.

Increasingly, I have realised my gut is equally important to me. Trust your instincts. If something doesn't smell right, it probably isn't right. If you think that you can't do something with the moral framework you've been given, don't go there; know that in the long term, 20 minutes of agony of saying I'm not prepared to do this, will keep you in good stead for the rest of your career; don't compromise. It is difficult when you're thinking, 'I've got a mortgage to pay. I've got people to look after. I've got to have this tough conversation.'

Tough conversations are worth every nice conversation because it just puts you in the right place and your confidence grows with finding the right language. Ultimately tackling a situation, however difficult, there and then makes it nicer for you in the long term, especially as you get more practiced at it.

In 10 years' time I think we will have won the battle and it will be over and done with because what I love is the women coming through now.



**SUSANNA KASS,
CO-FOUNDER AT
INFRAPRIME, USA**

Susanna Kass is an entrepreneur, inventor, lecturer, board member and AI scientist with a focus on discovering AI technology to accelerate performance, energy efficiency and sustainability. Currently, she is an Operating Partner, Digital Gravity Infrastructure Partners. She is an Energy Fellow, Stanford University, a co-founder & BOD, InfraPrime, net zero startup based in Switzerland, and a Data Center Advisor on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Programme. Previously, Kass was COO, eBay International, GM APAC Data Center Operation at HP, VP, Global Data Center Business Operation at Sun Microsystems, Head of Innovation at NextEra Energy and EVP, Sustainability Operations, Baselayr. 2024 World's Top 10 Women Distinction, 2023 DCD Lifetime Achievement Contributor Award, ranks 1st as Top 10 Sustainability Award for the Global World of Data Center, Top 10 Women in Data Centers, Elite Achievers' Club by CIO Women Magazine, Most Influential Women to Follow by Inc. Magazine, Topmost 50 Climate Change leaders for 5 consecutive years, Top 100 Outstanding Women in Tech and Mothers by Women Most Admired, Top 10 Data Center Influencers to Follow by LinkedIn.

WHAT FIRST ATTRACTED YOU TO THE TELECOMS/BROADBAND INDUSTRY AND HOW DID YOU GET INTO THIS BUSINESS?

I'm a computer scientist, familiar with a fast-paced computing realm. I was first attracted into the IT business as a computer science graduate, fascinated as I was with data computations, and how we can seek new intelligence by reliably performing the computation of massive volumes of data generated by business units across geographical locations, all with the aim of providing key insights for business leaders to make concise decisions.

WHAT, IF ANY, MENTORS HELPED YOU ALONG THE WAY?

I'm so grateful for mentors as my life coaches to work hard, develop the strength to overcome daily obstacles as well as the grit to keep going and resilience to bounce back from setbacks. I place strong emphasis on good science, practicing good science with my fellow researchers and seeking new knowledge from my professors; discovery guides my thinking in seeking new solutions.

I am so thankful to my clients whose often rigorous constraints impose critical thinking – it's actually helped me develop customer-centric technological innovations. I'm also grateful to my two daughters who inspire me every day with joyfulness. They inspire me to continue making a positive impact on humanity and our environment for future generations.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED ALONG THE WAY AS A WOMAN IN A MALE-DOMINATED ENVIRONMENT?

For me, it's the importance of female leaders embracing the process of acquiring and effectively using their power. I acknowledge the sort of traditional patterns where female leaders might avoid seeking power or struggle to wield it, but increasingly I feel a functional society requires great leaders, especially female ones, who can utilise power effectively for the benefit of communities.

There are certain qualities I have learned along the way that might be perceived as lacking in emerging female leaders today:

- **Levelling Value of Potential to Fuel Own Success:** Acknowledging the importance of being a reliable professional, female leaders know they need to go beyond just getting things done. Recognising one's own full potential and harnessing the skills, knowledge and experience to effectively lead and become the go-to person in times of crisis is crucial for sustained success.
- **Communicate Your Unique Value:** Female leaders must proactively communicate the unique value they add. This goes beyond wishful thinking and requires overcoming shyness and modesty, compared to male colleagues who tend not to struggle in the same way with this. Articulating achievements, taking the initiative to make valuable contributions is essential for the impact for others and seek recognition.
- **Changing the Rules of the Game:** Instead of merely following rules to deliver results, female leaders must

possess the skills to innovate, lead in uncertainty and create their own rules. Becoming a unicorn in their trade involves making a profound impact on human lives, scaling organisational growth and lifting the industry forward.

As a woman I recognise the innate feelings of guilt and hesitation associated with having two X chromosomes. I encourage emerging female leaders to overcome this inner voice, actively seek power, and understand how to make an impact effectively. Contrasting this with some male colleagues who may use power for dominance and self-interest; by contrast I advocate for a shift. Instead of using power to achieve goals, use your power to serve others beyond personal ego.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF IN YOUR WORK?

It would have to be the Pillars of Clean Energy Strategy and exemplified 3.8Gigawatt of Clean Energy projects that I have created for my clients across 17 countries, over the past 33 years. The approach to becoming a clean energy strategist is grounded in three fundamental pillars:

- **Purpose and Passion:** My role as a clean energy strategist aligns with my passion and sense of purpose. By connecting with individuals in AI, cloud computing, data centres, and renewable energy, I can forge meaningful relationships that fuel innovative solutions. My overarching goal is to contribute to a socially responsible AI era and facilitate the transition to a clean energy future, driven by a commitment to positive global impact.
- **Fulfillment and Impact:** The fulfillment I get from my role stems from reusing emissions and regenerating waste through the adoption of clean energy. Leading global teams in the construction of over 3.8-gigawatt renewable energy data centre projects, I reduce and reuse emissions. InfraPrime's innovative approach, transforming waste into value through the Clean Infrastructure Fund, not only generates profits from carbon removal projects but also benefits urban communities in the realm of AI-accelerated edge computing.
- **Equanimity:** I want to reinforce the importance of maintaining inner

balance, resilience, and equanimity in the face of challenges and setbacks. Embracing the daily rigour of learning from rejections and failures, it's important for me to remain connected to my inner calling and committed to sustainability and human dignity. I draw my inspiration from the younger generation, particularly my two daughters Bronte and Mirelle, who exemplify qualities of joy, kindness, dedication, courage and hope in their careers in Foreign Service Diplomacy and Neuroscience research for children.

As clean energy strategists, scientists, and entrepreneurs, I must express gratitude to Mother Nature for her healing power and advocate for a sustainable and minimalistic lifestyle. It reflects not only a commitment to environmental stewardship but also a deep understanding of the interconnectedness between purpose, impact, and equanimity in shaping a cleaner and more sustainable future.

WHAT DO YOU SEE THE FUTURE LOOKING LIKE FOR WOMEN IN THIS SECTOR IN 10 YEARS' TIME?

I am confident that womens' roles in our sector in 10 years' time will be exemplified by key achievements for our communities! I am committed to the role we play in order to pave the way for future generations; chair for the BroadGroup Talent In Tech Initiative, volunteer to mentor 900 STEM youths.

WHERE WILL WE SEE YOU IN 5 YEARS' TIME?

Through my journey as a data centre innovator, I have fought for what I believe in and what the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Environmental Program stands for with regard to a carbon-free future within our generation, which is of paramount importance. My future lies in Absolute Zero design for the Future of Data Centres. Absolute Zero is the most ambitious target set for the data centre industry to date. While net zero in the data centre often relies on the use of offsets and/or use of on-premise clean energy generation with storage (the grid is not 24/7 green), the actual emissions from fossil fuel used continues to emit into the environment. Absolute Zero is achieved by eliminating carbon emissions from data centre operations and physically removing the greenhouse gases (GHGs) from the atmosphere. With Absolute Zero, no release of GHG emissions

to the atmosphere can be physically verified. (Absolute Zero is a necessary term; there are no scenarios where there are no unavoidable emissions, hence "Zero" cannot be used.) Data centres can remove emissions through carbon removal processes during operation and in the supply chain to become carbon neutral; when the data centre removes more carbon emissions than it emits, it is called carbon negative.

Therefore I encourage a 'now-casting' approach accelerated by AI, integrating those four essential pillars—energy, emissions, water, and waste—on a global scale. The objective is to uphold a commitment to Carbon Neutrality for every Generative AI and cloud request. This approach signifies a climate-driven transformation journey that starts right now, addressing the evolving landscape of data centres in the face of emerging technologies and environmental considerations.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE A NEW FEMALE ENTRANT TO THE INDUSTRY?

Develop a purpose and follow your own passion.

Female leaders might avoid seeking power or struggle to wield it, but increasingly I feel a functional society requires great leaders, especially female ones, who can utilise power effectively for the benefit of communities.



**ANNE-MARIE VINE-LOTT,
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH,
VODAFONE BUSINESS UK**

Anne-Marie heads up the new Health division within VBUK, created in April 2023, leading Vodafone's work in delivering connectivity and technology solutions to the health and care sector, particularly through supporting innovation in the NHS. She joined Vodafone in October 2022 from Oracle, where she was Public Sector Sales Director and previously Director of UK Healthcare, as well as Strategic Innovation. Anne-Marie also has extensive experience in the NHS and civil service, having been Director of Finance at Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, following periods in financial management at HM Treasury and the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office. Earlier Anne-Marie was Head of Business Operations at GE Healthcare. Anne-Marie is passionate about technology in Health & Social Care - particularly since COVID - and how we can support the whole 'system' in being more coherent and accessible to patients and users to improve outcomes. She is a graduate of the NHS Leadership Academy's Nye Bevan Programme, named after the NHS' founder, designed for NHS Leaders.

WHAT FIRST ATTRACTED YOU TO THE TELECOMS INDUSTRY AND HOW DID YOU GET INTO THE BUSINESS?

This question made me laugh! I could not say that I was specifically drawn to the telecoms industry, they (specifically Vodafone) came to find me. My background is as a Finance Director across a range of sectors and industries, but I have moved into Business Development and Sales in recent years with a focus on the public sector and, at the moment, the Health sector having worked in both the NHS and for GE Healthcare. I am passionate about innovation, and I believe, as do many, that technology plays a huge part in some of how we can address health and social care challenges. However, in order to support these technologies, we are hugely reliant upon connectivity and our networks to reduce the barriers to access in building digital health services ...and so a move to the telecoms sector brings with it huge benefits in being a key enabler of change.

WHAT, IF ANY, MENTORS HELPED YOU ALONG THE WAY?

I think we all need a range of mentors, formal and informal, personal and professional to support us. Dr Felicity Harvey has previously been a mentor and always encouraged me to 'think bigger' and outside of what could be achieved outside of my pure finance role at the time. I have also stayed in touch with a few previous bosses because they know your strengths and weakness and can be great sounding boards in new roles when you move forward. Having moved x-functionally I know the words of a close friend of mine have stayed with me at times; I moved from being a Finance Director to a Business Development

Director and was finding things very tough at one stage in not 'fitting the mould'. My friend's response was to state the obvious really, she pointed out that if the company had wanted more of the same, they would not have hired me. It's an observation that has stayed with me whenever I get most struck with 'imposter syndrome'.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED ALONG THE WAY AS A WOMAN IN A MALE-DOMINATED ENVIRONMENT?

Interestingly, telecoms has not been the most male-dominated environment I have worked in but then I am not on the 'frontline' - and that is not to say there's not room for improvement! I have learned to be the woman I want to be in a male-dominated environment - what I mean is that I have seen many women adjust in order to fit in, whether that's becoming 'one of the boys' or in becoming more aggressive in style. I want to be able to be a feminine woman, but still be strong in a male environment and that is important to me in being an authentic leader as much as it is ensuring that feminine traits are recognised for bringing diversity of approach and style and, in doing so, create innovation.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN CHALLENGES FOR WOMEN IN THE TELECOMS INDUSTRY?

I'm not sure that there are challenges for women that are specific to the industry as such. We absolutely need more women in the workforce but that is the case in the technology sector as a whole and I can see it improving as more women come into the 'STEM' environment through Vodafone's graduate programme et al. It's hard to fix everything at every level at this single point in time, but I am encouraged by the progression I can see happening.

WHAT WOULD IMPROVE OPPORTUNITIES AND PROSPECTS FOR WOMEN LOOKING FOR A CAREER IN TELECOMS?

I would give the same advice irrespective of sector – find some role models, proactively seek them out as mentors if you can. Learn as much as you can about the sector and ensure that what you seek to learn is relevant, adaptable and as wide ranging as possible in the context of the sector you wish to be in. The intern and graduate programmes across companies are now excellent. Be proud of being a woman, it's not a disadvantage!

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF IN YOUR WORK?

This is a hard question depending on whether it applies to 'right now' or generally over my career. I will answer for the now ... I would like to think that I inspire others to think outside of what is in front of them. In any busy job this is much harder than it sounds! I am passionate about what we can achieve to drive better outcomes and social value working x-sector to solve big, nationwide challenges through technology and the role that the telecoms sector has in

enabling that. I am also always proud of my team and the energy they bring when they believe in what they're doing; if I have been just one small part in creating that then I am super proud!

WHAT DO YOU SEE THE FUTURE LOOKING LIKE FOR WOMEN IN THIS SECTOR IN 10 YEARS' TIME?

I think that the flexibility of working that COVID has helped to augment, along with increasing diversity in STEM roles, means that the whole sector will be far more balanced at all levels in 10 years' time – which is fab! I am very positive about the outlook.

WHERE WILL WE SEE YOU IN 5 YEARS' TIME?

I have absolutely no idea, which is exciting! I have a lot to do in the world; I love learning; I enjoy taking on different challenges and I like to make a difference in people's lives. Watch this space.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE A NEW FEMALE ENTRANT TO THE INDUSTRY?

Be yourself! Never see being female as a disadvantage. Be brave.

I want to be able to be a feminine woman, but still be strong in a male environment. That is important to me in being an authentic leader, as much as it is ensuring that feminine traits are recognised for bringing diversity of approach and style.

Empowering Futures: TOP TAKE AWAYS

1. Be a lifelong learner
2. Take chances when you're young
3. What scares you could be the best decision you ever made
4. Build your network
5. Go and find people to help you
6. Have a plan
7. Trust your instincts
8. Face up to those tough conversations
9. Ask your colleagues what they are being paid
10. Develop a purpose
11. Follow your own passion
12. Be brave