

Celebrating Women's Leadership: Insights and Advice

In honour of International Women's Day, we spoke to four extraordinary women leaders in our business. They each bring a unique perspective and valuable insights into leadership, success, and inclusion in the workplace.

What advice do you have for young women aspiring to succeed in the financial or technology industry?

Elena Aljun: Be yourself. For me, it's all about authenticity. Female leaders have a unique opportunity to bring compassion and kindness into executive meetings and boardrooms. When we lead with empathy, we create a more inclusive and supportive environment for everyone.

Carolyn Walker: Knowledge is important – if you need to study don't think of it as a burden, it's valuable requirement to establish and progress your career. However, what is critical is spending time on understanding yourself and the impact you have on others. Building quality relationships and fostering teamwork are crucial for success. Secondly, don't limit yourself. Seize every opportunity and focus on delivering results. You don't have to



know everything about everything. Concentrate on your strengths and what you can bring to the table.

Rachel Lohoar: Network – get to know some inspiring, supportive women. Stay up to date with new technology. Seek out new challenges. Play to your strengths and don't forget that soft/transferrable skills (communication, leadership etc.) are highly valued, and allows you to be flexible and adaptive in your role.

Jackie Katsianas: Learn and connect. Learn whatever you can, and continuously. Subscribe to newsletters, follow knowledgeable people and groups on social media, and keep reading. Wherever you are employed, learn the company's

products and market well, and get to know the current issues and the regulatory and technical context. Soft skills such as communication, resilience, and empathy are just as crucial as technical expertise. It's the combination of these skills that truly sets you apart in this field.

This year's IWD theme is inspiring inclusion, can you share any examples of strategies that have made you feel more included at work?

Rachel Lohoar: In my experience, inclusive workplace policies and a culture of recognition have made a significant difference. Additionally, I've found success in flat, matrix organisational structures that

encourage collaboration and shared decision-making. Being acknowledged and valued for my contributions has been instrumental in fostering a sense of inclusion and belonging.

Jackie Katsianas: Some years ago when I had younger children, my manager asked me to nominate the flexibility I wanted and she would help make it happen. It gave me the opportunity to design a solution that worked for me, knowing that I would be supported and could still contribute and progress my career. I thought that was amazing. At Praemium I really appreciate our inclusive and flexible workplace and the culture of appreciation and recognition.

Elena Algun: Inclusion is really about listening – I've been fortunate to work with both male and female leaders who provided me with an opportunity to speak up and be taken seriously. This helped me to build confidence, be prepared and stick to my convictions.

Carolyn Walker: Having trust from my manager and being empowered to deliver. As a leader I try to create a close-knit team that are both supportive of one another and other areas of the business, are productive and have the customer at the centre of everything we do. I have the courage to ask questions which I hope will inspire others to become more involved in our business and industry.

“ Building and managing relationships, is so important, a good network can really help your career. Curiosity and a willingness to learn, combined with effective communication can really set you apart.”

What do you think could encourage more women to enter the financial services/technology industry?

Jackie Katsianas: Having women in tech and finance visible in networks and social media, running businesses and courses is hugely influential. Women bring a different perspective and the more perspectives we have the more knowledge and capability we gain.

Elena Algun: Diversity of thought is important and I think we need to start early to promote these industries at school and university. Role modelling and mentorships are important too.

Rachel Lohoar: Representation in leadership matters. When women see other women succeed it serves as inspiration. Inclusive working environments with flexible working arrangements and parental leave also help with retention of talent.

Carolyn Walker: Being inspired by business leaders with vision and genuine care for customers and their employees. Women can bring a different perspective and show that the industry can provide a fulfilling career pathway.

What advice would you give your younger selves?

Jackie Katsianas: Looking back, I would tell my younger self to have more confidence. Don't underestimate your abilities just because you're young or new to the industry. Your ideas and perspectives are valuable, and you have the potential to make a significant impact. The young people in our industry blow my mind, they are so smart and have great ideas.

Carolyn Walker: I would advise my younger self to stay true to who I am and focus on what I can control. Success comes from delivering results in my own unique way. Don't compare yourself to others or get caught up in the pursuit of perfection.

Rachel Lohoar: Always say yes to new opportunities and new challenges. Take risks and never stop learning.

Elena Algun: Reflecting on my journey, I would remind my younger self that it's okay to embrace uncertainty and imperfection. You're on your own path, and comparison only hinders your progress. Focus on self-improvement and building confidence in your abilities.

As we celebrate International Women's Day, let's take inspiration from the experiences and wisdom shared by these remarkable women. Together, let's continue to champion diversity, inclusion, and empowerment in our workplaces and communities. ■



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