

Q&A

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Q *What, if any, hurdles did you have to face in an industry that has traditionally been male-dominated?*

A I think most professional industries (and probably life in general), are male-dominated. So, I am sure as woman, regardless of the industry, we have all encountered some hurdles along the way, some more severe than others. The common hurdle that I and many other women have faced, is being overlooked and underestimated because of archaic patriarchal beliefs. Although such beliefs have at least progressed from “a woman’s place is in the kitchen, barefoot and pregnant” to “she will be good with admin”, we are still a far way off from a workplace free from gender bias. But for me, it has just motivated me to work harder and increase my knowledge and skills so that, one way or another, regardless of my gender and race, “they” would be forced to take note and pay attention!

Q *What are three words you would use to describe yourself?*

A **Hardworking** – to quote Thomas Edison, “There is no substitute for hard work”. If you lack any skills or expertise, or if there are any inequalities within the workplace, hardwork, determination and a good work ethic will bridge that gap. No matter how brilliant you are, if you cannot put in the work, your success will be limited or short lived. Besides, I wasn’t born into wealth or have a trust fund to fall back on and decided to (fortunately) marry for love! So, I have no other option but to work hard!

Resilient – if this career has taught me anything, it is to be resilient. Resilience

may often be mistaken for simply having a “thick skin” and yes that may be a small portion of it, but it is more than that. It’s the ability to push through the doubt that not only you place on yourself but the doubt from others too. The ability to keep peeling away at the layers of the box you were placed in, without your consent. The ability to navigate (gracefully and quietly – because that’s my nature) the ugliness of a male-dominated industry which will have you running for the door. I’m going to refer to another quote which has resonated with me throughout my career: “Resilience is silent and deep, like roots. It doesn’t announce itself. It doesn’t explode outward. It doesn’t fall. It doesn’t break. It simply always is. And you are”.

A somewhat trained extrovert - don’t Google it, I came up with that phrase. It describes a woman who is a complete introvert in a professional setting, including social workplace events, but needs to “get out there” and engage more because hard work and competence is not enough, in this industry. I’m an introvert by nature but an aspiring “professional” extrovert! (If I could insert LOL, I would).

Q *What would you say to another woman who was thinking of changing fields because the industry is so male-dominated?*

A Yes, we are in the year 2022! And yes, we still have a long way to go to fully eradicate gender bias and inequalities, but we have made some significant progress over the last few years worth celebrating and worth continuing to fight against it. We must, as a collective, continue fighting against

those barriers placed before us and those limitations imposed on us without reason. Whilst it may not be completely broken down during our generation’s lifetime, these barriers will certainly be a small bump in the road for the women of the future.

Don’t let anyone (especially your male counterparts) force you to change a career or industry you have a passion for. A lot can be taken away from you, but guard against your passion being taken away from you. So often people choose a specific career or industry without having any passion for it – and it’s very easy to pick up when there is no passion.

Always remember (and as cliché as it sounds), difficult times builds character and persevering through those difficult times builds resilience – sprinkle over some hardwork, passion and competence, and you have a perfect deadly combination!

Q *What is your favourite quote?*

A I love quotes (as you can tell from my previous answers), but I think this extract of a poem by Maya Angelou is appropriate:

“You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I’ll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
‘Cause I walk like I’ve got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I’ll rise.”