

International Women's Day

Interview with Project Manager, Kim Toothill

Can you tell us a little about the beginnings of your career path (what job did you aspire to do when you were young, and how this may – or may not – have changed throughout the years)?

"I wanted to be a marine biologist when I was younger, and studied this at university. I almost joined the navy after university, but instead took a job in Dubai and then Mauritius which is where my career in project management started. I came back to the UK, where I increased my focus on process automation."



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Is there anyone who inspired you throughout your career? If so, please tell us a bit about them and what effect they had on you.

"I'm lucky to have several strong female role models in my life who are all very successful at what they do and have mostly worked in male dominated industries similar to myself. They showed me **you can be successful, strong and compassionate.**"





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Let us know your role at Community Fibre and how it interacts with the broader company.



"I'm a project manager for the Automation team (previously RPA team), our goal is to automate repetitive, manual tasks, to allow people throughout the business to focus on higher value work that requires human judgement. This increases morale, productivity, accuracy and reliability, to name a few of the benefits."

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Why did you choose to take up this role, and what drew you towards a role in telecoms?

"I have worked on streamlining internal processes through the use of automation for several years. I saw this role as an opportunity to utilise my experience in a complex industry for a company whose values mirrored my own."

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What do some of the International Women's Day slogans, like #BalanceForBetter or #EmbraceEquity, mean for you in your work life?



"For me, it means that through increasing diversity we can achieve a more balanced work place. This in turn is better for everyone, whether they are impacted directly or indirectly. I believe that **diversity of thought is one of the most powerful tools in the workplace**, especially when we need to find creative solutions to complex problems, and this can only be achieved if there is diverse, equitable representation throughout the company at all levels."

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Have you faced any barriers in your career or in performing a role due to being a woman? If so, how did you overcome them?



"I wouldn't say I've faced barriers, but I've often been treated differently to men which can make you question your right to be there.

For example, having feedback that said, '**For a woman, you did really well at...**'; or being talked over in meetings/presentations; being called pet names; etc.

I think you need to remind yourself you have earned your place and have every right to be there."

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Do you think there is currently enough visibility and resources to ensure that more women can take advantage of career opportunities commonly underrepresented by women? If not, how can we all do our part to improve this?



"I think this is a broader societal issue. Perhaps we should **start by reflecting on and challenging our own prejudices and unconscious biases.**"



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What is the most important advice you have been given throughout your career?

"To keep challenging myself."



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What advice would you give to women pursuing specialist careers, entrepreneurship or senior leadership roles.

"Keep moving forward, keep challenging yourself and don't let the self-doubt creep in. **Take advantage of networking opportunities** as you never know where they may lead."



Happy International Women's Day

What final message would you
like to send out, Kim?



"Be yourself."



You can check out more experiences from Community Fibre's female talent [here](#).