

International Women's Day

Interview with Customer Engineering Coordination Manager,
Kelly Mukhida

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)?

"At 14, I was hellbent determined that I was going to be a Youth & Young Adult Social Worker and focussed my GCSEs on that career path until I did some voluntary work with my local council and quickly realised that good intentions and wanting better for everyone was no match for a lack of funding in Social Care.

However, it did help shape my career into Customer Experience as an alternative to helping and supporting people facing challenges. Plus, I really enjoy the instant gratification of people's thanks when you solve their issues!"



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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.

"An old school friend's Social Worker named Jenny – she was so caring and focused on using all the resources she could to help her cases. She inspired me to really get to **know the full extent of my reach and resources** within any role to utilise all of them to the benefit of the customer."





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

"I'm the Customer Engineering Coordination Manager and I'm very fortunate to oversee a wonderfully talented and dedicated Coordination team. We can make or break a customer journey and often rely on the support of other teams to help facilitate the best resolution for customers. Whether that's restoring their Loss of Service to keep their medical equipment running or installing their premium service to ensure the fastest coverage throughout their home. As one of the largest Customer interacting teams in the company, it's so important for us to have good information from Customer Experience, Tier 1 and Complaints to help us understand and manage customer expectations and then deliver on those with exceptional service when in the customer's home."



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

"Not having worked in telecomms before, I was intrigued by the notion that finding a good Internet Service

Provider (ISP) is now as mandatory and essential as Gas, Water and Electricity, especially given the working from home opportunities that the UK industry now provides.

This role allows me and my team to put the **human touch into the community aspect of Community Fibre (in an otherwise male-orientated industry,** from a "working with my hands and my tools" perspective). Customers love the hands-on nature of our Engineers but they also appreciate the support and understanding that I lead my team to have towards the customer's requirements. "



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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?

Personally, it means spin class before coming to the office, dance class after the office, getting the washing done when working from home so **my weekends are more about wellbeing than housework!**

It also means **asking for help** in work when I don't have the technical understanding and knowing that the answers are always available in an easily digestible way so that I can **keep learning and sharing.**



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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?

"Many years ago, working as a (young 18 year old) Service Receptionist at a Ford garage... I was constantly questioned and dismissed as "what does some girly-kid know about cars". But I was 18, so **I had an attitude, as well as a passion for cars. It meant that I learnt fast.** I studied the Mechanic's Apprenticeship manuals and would tinker with overnight vehicles after hours with the help and guidance of the Workshop Manager. After six months I'd learnt how to strip and recondition an engine head gasket better than a senior mechanic who'd been working at the garage longer than I (then) had been alive! **It was frustrating as hell, always dealing with people like that (both men and women),** but I took so much satisfaction strolling through the workshop and showing off what I could do! It also helped me explain any works to customers so that they fully understood the repair works that were needed."



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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?



"For telecomms, I think **we could do more to promote female Engineers as a viable career option.** We have shift patterns that work well with parental duties and customers often feel more reassured about having a female in their home as it's perceived to be less threatening. I think **we would do well to help build the community aspect as well by having more female Door to Door Sales reps** for the same reasons. Our company should reflect the communities that we serve. Women often have greater emotional intelligence that would really help tap into what customers want and then equipping them with the skills and tools means that we can really give that end-to-end service that frequently demonstrates our community values."

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

"Don't let being a woman stop you from achieving what you want in life. I was told many years ago that many people will assume that I need to achieve key milestones in life (move out, buy a home, get married, have children), but those assumptions shouldn't define me. Only I can decide and define what I want to do with my career and my life, and they can go side by side harmoniously if I want them to."



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



"**Be determined and resilient!** There is less of a battle now to "prove yourself" as a woman compared to when I started out but **being a trailblazer is fun, immensely satisfying** and a hard slog so be ready to keep putting the effort in, even when you think you can't/won't succeed. If you don't succeed then, doesn't mean that you won't later down the line so keep at it..... and have a good outlet for when you get frustrated! It's a great coping mechanism!"

Happy International Women's Day

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



"Just have fun!"



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