

International Women's Day

Interview with Head of IT Strategy and Business Partnering,
Lorraine Kusetta

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 had no real idea what my destination was going to be when I started out in my career, but **I knew my journey was always about making a difference.** Whether that was a customer, colleague, friend, family, or a stranger, it didn't matter – I knew that was my passion.

I started in retail and moved into finance operations doing various roles. I have spent some time in HR and now I work in IT which I absolutely love. I have also been a youth work, and last year I did some adult teaching. I also volunteer as a call listener for the Samaritans. (Cont.)"

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"(Cont.) I have always tried to improve myself and have continued my studies. I completed my CIPD Level 5 in HR Management about 10 years ago and I am halfway through studying to be a counsellor.

While it might not be initially obvious, the link with all these roles are people and relationships. Whether it is keeping someone connected by delivering new telecom technologies or listening to someone who needs to talk, it all makes a difference.

So, while I didn't consciously decide on my destination, I think it was always where I was meant to end up and meets my core values. And **its ok to not always have a plan, just stay true to yourself.**"



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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 wouldn't say I try to emulate any one individual; however, I definitely learn from those I have worked with. There have been some amazing people over the years, far too many to mention, and I have taken something from them all. But **we all make mistakes, and I believe you can learn from your and other peoples mistakes too.**"



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



"I am Head of IT Strategy and Business Partnering at Community Fibre. My role is the bridge the gap between IT and the broader business. My skill set is building relationships to connect the dots between the business and IT and technology suppliers. I also keep myself a breadth of the market and new and emerging technologies to help build our IT strategy and roadmap."

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

"When I started in telecoms around 15 years ago, it all felt new and exciting, and I can honestly say that it still does. Things are always changing, new ideas and new technologies emerging, and it's exciting to be part of that.

Community Fibre also had the ethos I was looking for, in wanted to give something back. We are making a difference in London to communities, especially those that are sometimes left behind from the IT revolution. If the pandemic showed us anything it was the importance of being connected and we are bringing a reliable affordable fibre network to some of the poorest areas of London. Our community projects provide opportunities for education, training, employment, and social inclusion and I a proud to work for a company that is doing this."



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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?

"It means that we recognise the value of difference and diversity in the workplace and that you can have a good and fulfilling work-life balance."



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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?

"There have been a few barriers over the years. I have worked part time and unsocial hours when my children were younger. This meant that peers overtook me on the career ladder. I was also once told **I wasn't considered for a role which had travel as I had small children** – I thought that should have been my decision not theirs!

I also had a lot of guilt as a working mum. I felt guilty for being at work and not being with my children and then guilty for spending time with my children and not working. Mostly that was my own internal battle, and I wish I had worried..
(Cont.)"



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"(Cont.)... less and stood my ground more and not missed those assemblies and sports days. But there have been some bosses that made being a working mum much harder than it needed to be, and sadly these are often other women.

But I am really pleased to see **attitudes changing now, and international women's day helps highlight the benefits of a diverse workforce.**"



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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 there is always room for more visibility and resources, but I think the biggest part we can play is to **encourage each other to keep pushing these boundaries.** A lot comes down to confidence and it's our job as women to build each other up."

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

"**Fake it until you make it.** This comes from having imposter syndrome and is about believing in yourself until you feel confident in what you are doing.

Also, **be kind to everyone;** there is never an excuse to treat anyone badly, regardless of your or their position."

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

"You can achieve anything you want to; you just need to believe in yourself! And **you have just as much right to be there as anyone else in the room**, so don't let anyone including yourself make you feel any differently."



Happy International Women's Day

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



"Be you!"



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