

Article

Mar 2023

IWD Leanne Cullen

Leanne is Waterstons' Operations Director and sits on the company board of directors.



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As part of International Women's Day 2023, we're sharing insights from our team about their experiences, their role models and their goals for inspiring others as, or about, women in tech and business.

How did you become a woman in tech?

From doing IT as a GCSE and A Level, I decided to choose a Computer Science degree partly because my dad worked in the industry and my parents encouraged me, because it sounded interesting, but also because it was unusual for a woman back then to choose a degree like that (in 1996/97).

I ended up being one of 10 women on the course of approximately 130 people. I didn't really plan a career in the area, but I have meandered through life, taking and making opportunities for myself along the way.

What advice would you give to the next generation of women starting their careers?

Don't over-obsess and read too much into things, making assumptions that it is because you are a woman but challenge it directly if it is clear that it is.

It's the best way to hold people accountable.

Don't change how you are to try and compete with others; focus on yourself and what you want to achieve, be tenacious and make things happen for yourself.

Don't be a victim - point out issues along the way and call out discrimination if you see it in a proactive, firm - but fair - way.

If you've faced challenges, what were they and how have you overcome them?

I don't feel I've faced anything I would class as a challenge. Maybe I have never really applied a feminist lens to things, or maybe I just call it out and address it when I see it.

But I do feel more of a responsibility these days as the only female Executive Director to ensure that I look deeper at things and ensure that anything that could be seen as a problem is addressed.

[Find out more about Leanne here.](#)

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