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IWD - Michael Stirrup

Michael is our CEO.

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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.

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

This advice probably isn't that much different to the advice I'd give to anyone, but the only thing that can hold you back is yourself.

You're only as good as you think you are – be humbly confident (not arrogant), let your talents shine through and others will notice it.

If you're struggling with confidence, then be brave and talk to somebody about it and get them to help and push you out of your comfort zone.

There should be nothing holding you back at Waterstons, we all have a voice. Waterstons' side of the bargain is to make sure there's an environment where everyone has an equal chance to succeed and help you gain confidence; your side is to push yourself to achieve everything you're capable of.

Is there a woman who has inspired you throughout your career?

There have been so many over the years!

During my first few years at Waterstons, Kim Evans taught me a lot about finance. Prior to that I'd been surrounded by people who had learnt everything in books, but what Kim passed on was her wisdom and experience.

Sally has obviously been a huge inspiration from the early days of my career here and that continues. Susan, my predecessor, played a big part in helping me get to where I am today too.

One of my favourite people that I've ever worked with was a woman called Marie-Pierre in my old company – she was amazing at her job and had a special talent of being super serious when she needed to, but coupled that with the most wicked sense of humour; she taught me that you can do your job professionally but have a laugh at the same time.

What have you learned from the women you have worked with in your career so far?

95% of my career has been with female line managers, and it wasn't until recently that I realised that. I guess that's been a good thing because, rightly or wrongly, it's subconsciously taught me not to think of anybody differently.

There is a danger with this though in that I don't fully appreciate the challenges that many women will face; this is why I want to make sure that at Waterstons everybody can succeed.

Find out more about Michael [here](#), or [here](#)

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