

DATE	4 th March 2015
USERS	7, 894

Rail Professional

Opinion

Who inspires you?

Jodie Savage celebrates International Women's Day by discussing the women in rail who inspire her

The 8th of March 2015 sees the celebration of International Women's Day, an event which started just after the turn of the last century, in 1911 to be precise. I was surprised to learn that it began such a long time ago, as I had wrongly assumed it was a relatively new event.

It's interesting to find that, although there have been huge improvements for women's rights and gender equality in the last 100 years we are still very much campaigning for further improvement.

On the first International Women's Day in 1911 more than one million men and women attended rallies campaigning for women's right to work, vote, be trained, hold public office and to end discrimination. Now, International Women's Day is a time to celebrate the achievements of women while calling for greater diversity. Many organisations celebrate the day in a variety of ways such as running events and

Women in Rail

campaigns to raise awareness for gender equality, raising money for women's charities or running webinars.

I'm going to celebrate International Women's Day 2015 by choosing the women in the rail industry who I find inspiring and sharing this with you. So, in no particular order, here are the women who inspire me and the reasons why:



Hayley Spark

Hayley Spark, HR manager at Wabtec Rail

Hayley began her career at Wabtec as HR admin assistant, reporting to the HR manager, five years ago. After just over a year in this role, due to personnel changes, Hayley took on more responsibility in the HR department. Hayley was officially appointed as HR manager two years ago



Jodie Savage



at the age of 26 and now, along with her administrator, she manages HR for the business which employs more than 1,100 people. I really admire Hayley's passion for the job she does and her hard-working attitude. She's always busy; but always has time to talk to you. Hayley has achieved such a lot for her age – it's one thing to be appointed to a senior management role but another to really excel in the role; and Hayley has absolutely done that.

Mary Kenny, CEO at Eversholt Rail Group

I met Mary around six years ago when I first started managing the Eversholt account. I saw her in our reception and introduced myself.



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Despite having never met me before, after introductions, she was thoroughly engaging. Mary asked me, quite candidly, what I thought about their tendering process, did I think they could make any improvements, did it work *etc.* Mary is an inspirational role model for obvious reasons given her senior position in the rail industry, but what I find inspiring about her is the way she really engages when she talks to someone. You always feel like you have 100 per cent of her attention and focus – a rare and endearing quality. Many senior people seem to lose this skill as their responsibilities grow, which can leave you feeling like they have stopped listening to you after a few moments!

Maggie Simpson, executive director at Rail Freight Group

Maggie holds a very senior role in the male dominated rail freight industry. I first met her at a conference where she spoke with no notes and very few slides, yet she gave the best presentation of the day. I spoke with her after the event about Women in Rail and she instantly pledged her support; indeed, she wrote a piece about us in her next newsletter. I have been to a couple of meetings and events with Maggie and she is always vocal – she makes her opinions, thoughts and ideas known and isn't afraid



Maggie Simpson

to disagree with a whole room full of people.

Taking the time to think about who my inspirational role-models are and pinpointing exactly what it is about them that I find inspiring has been a great exercise. I will go and speak to Hayley and tell her just what a great job she is doing, I will make sure that I fully engage with people when they come to talk to me; as I know how it feels to be on the receiving end. I will have the confidence to put my opinion and ideas across even if it means

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disagreeing with others, standing up for what I believe in.

So now I challenge you to take a moment to think about who your role models are. Who you find inspiring and why? They don't have to be women, but it would be nice if some of them were. And just remember – you are probably someone else's inspiration.

Jodie Savage is sales account manager at Wabtec Rail and a board member of Women in Rail
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