



Women in Rail Trustee Story Spotlight – Angie Doll

Chief Executive Officer - GTR



Beyond the Brew

Making things happen

When I'm asked how I got to where I am today, my answer is always the same, hard work and perseverance. Not because it sounds neat or rehearsed, but because it's the truth. Alongside that, I've always had a strong sense of personal belief. I'm naturally curious, I like to question and explore, and I'm comfortable being out of my comfort zone. In fact, that's usually where I do my best work.

I live by a simple mantra, you either make things happen, or you wait for things to happen.

I've never been very good at waiting. I prefer to make things happen.

As a young girl, I was focused and determined. I didn't necessarily know exactly where I wanted to end up, but I believed in myself and never took no as the answer. I knew I wanted to travel, and I did. I worked overseas for many years, experiencing a different culture, different working styles, a different language, all these opportunities allowed me to develop my skillset, and particularly about learning how to deal with people from all walks of life. I discovered early on that I liked being busy, I liked responsibility, and I liked making things work.

I've done every kind of job along the way, and no matter what role I was in, my work ethos has never changed, work hard and hold truth to power. Make your own destiny. No role is beneath you, and everything you do teaches you something if you are willing to learn.

Like many people, I didn't set out to work in rail, I fell into it back in 1999. I started as a station manager down in Brighton, and I loved it straight away. Looking after customers, understanding their needs, and being part of something that mattered to people's everyday lives really resonated with me. That customer focus has stayed with me throughout my career and still underpins how I approach my role today.

When I first started, I didn't feel held back because I was a woman. What people focused on was the fact that I didn't have rail experience. If only I had a pound for every time I still hear, "How many years have you done?" Well, now I have over 25 years' experience, and I like to think I know rail pretty well. And more than that, I still say transferable skills, the right mindset and can-do attitude are the essentials in my book. I value all experience. I know what hard work looks like, and I also know that capability comes in many forms.

And the Railway isn't just for men, Women play a vital role, and have done so for years, I recently gave a talk about how important women were to Rail during the war, we laid track, we drove trains, we carried out maintenance on the vehicles, importantly we kept the railway running, so being a women in rail isn't new, and yes women really are a valuable piece of the network and I for one want to see more women joining and importantly staying in this fabulous industry.

I am so very excited about what's to come in Rail going forward. We know change is coming and I am very clear this will bring opportunities for us all, so who wouldn't want to be part of that potential and that potential is for every person, full stop.

Why rail matters

Rail has a real purpose. It connects communities, enables opportunity, supports the economy, and genuinely changes lives. It's green, it sits at the heart of our communities, and it has a strong future ahead. With nearly 200 years of rich heritage, rail is also a successful UK export and an industry full of meaning and an industry full of potential. The Customer is at the very heart of our service, this excites me and keeps me questioning myself, what more can we do and how do we continually adapt, so this industry really is here for the future.

Rail didn't just become my career, it seduced me. What really drew me in was its scale, its people, and its impact. I've worked across operational, commercial, and frontline roles, I've put in the hard graft, I've questioned myself, my peers and my leaders, but I have done this holding truth to power.

Along the way, I discovered that my real strength is leadership, vision and making things happen. I really do enjoy every day and every challenge, and I feel passionately about showcasing just why Rail should be a career of choice and has endless possibilities.

Leadership, ambition, and progression

I've worked my way through the ranks, and I'm proud of that, but progression doesn't just happen. You have to make things happen yourself. Some of the best jobs I've had were roles I didn't even know I wanted at the time, yet I loved them. Today, I can honestly say I'm in the best job, even if I couldn't have described it clearly when I was several levels away.

When you are early in your career, it can be hard to understand what senior roles really involve. My advice is always the same irrespective of what level you want to get to, think about your end point, but take it step by step. Manage your pathway. Ask yourself:

- What do I need to learn next?
- How will I get that experience?
- What's the right move from here?

Sometimes that move is lateral, and that's fine. It's still part of the plan.

Have ambition and don't be afraid to say it out loud. Coaching and mentoring are critical. Learning never stops and it's something we all should embrace.,

Did I ever think I would be a CEO? No, Am I happy? Absolutely. And am I doing a good job? Yes, that's not me being overconfident, but it's about having confidence to recognise your impact and own your success. And always appreciate your team, that thank you, that acknowledgment, a simple hello and how are you are so important, we are all people, and it's the people in this industry that make a difference.

Strength of character is something I value deeply. I've never been afraid to say no. If you ask me to make you a brew because you're a customer, I'll do it gladly and even grab you a biscuit. But if you expect I'll do it simply because I'm a woman, don't even think about it.

Being a woman in rail

Women in Rail matters because representation matters, Rail is not a "blue job", it's not a "pink job", it offers jobs for all. But, if we want to attract new people into the industry and importantly help these people stay in the industry, women particularly need to see other women doing the job. Women don't need permission, they need confidence, visibility, and someone to say, "You can do this." and I believe Women in Rail really does provide support and resources to deliver that confidence.

Why I became a trustee

I wanted to become a trustee for Women in Rail to give back, to share my experience, and to support women on their own journeys, especially those who might be stopping themselves from achieving what they are capable of. The importance of individuality is that not everyone has the same strength, the same character, the same resilience, so networks like Women in Rail are a support pillar, providing the resource and opportunity for support, encouragement and development. When I look at the sheer scope of services we offer to our members and also where we want to progress to, I feel personally proud and invigorated.

As a trustee, I support our corporate members work, corporate members are so important to us, not only through their membership contribution, but the learning, the experience, the knowledge and the challenge they bring. We want to reach as many members as possible and provide a valued service, therefore if I can help to bring my network and my experience to the table then I am happy to do so and happy to use my voice and positional power to ensure that equity is championed and opportunities are there for all.

Rail has given me the space to grow, to lead, and to stay true to who I am, while never standing still. Leadership, like rail, is about momentum, adaptability, and purpose.

I believe in backing yourself, in asking the questions, and in stepping forward even when the path isn't completely clear. At Women in Rail, I want to help others see what's possible, build confidence, and make things happen for themselves. And as for my next big project, well that's about finishing my house renovation, it's just another reminder that progress doesn't always happen overnight, but with persistence, belief, and a clear vision, you always get there in the end.

I hope even a little bit of me and my journey inspires others, and I say with all sincerity if you feel something is holding you back, come and speak to us at Women in Rail, we can, and will help.

Remember, do you want to make things happen or are you going to wait for things to happen? And many thanks for reading my Story, Angie

For more information on Women in Rail, please visit: www.womeninrail.org or contact wr@womeninrail.org