

Meet Charlotte Heard, HR Business Partner at Gumtree



Women in Leadership



Why do we need to talk about Women in Leadership?

We have interviewed seven of Aspire's extraordinary women who share their personal experiences, challenges, and breakthroughs as they have become the role models they are today.

By giving us their best advice on how to approach a leadership role, things to consider when managing others, and other golden nuggets of advice, we want to help you feel empowered to aim high, and just go for it.

Whether you've toyed with the idea of becoming a manager, looking to claim your position as a business director (or similar), or simply want to get noticed for going the extra mile, these women, and Aspire, are right behind you! We hope this answers your concerns and helps reduce inequalities between genders.

If you would like to get in touch with our female leaders, don't hesitate to drop us a message and we will put your greatness in touch with theirs! Email marketingteamaspire@weareaspire.com.

These personal, informational accounts will advise other women who aspire to take similar paths. The individual interviews will be published in small booklets that people can download from our website. Each week, beginning with International Women's Day, on 8th March, we will release another booklet, showing our support and raising awareness for IWD for a total of seven weeks.



Women in power

First, let's meet: Charlotte!

I've been at We Are Aspire as an outsourced HR Business Partner for two years now but have worked in HR for over five years. I've worked within the e-commerce space since starting in HR. I've worked in both SMEs and multinational corporations over my career giving a real vibrancy to the experience that has shaped my professional outlook.

The different experiences I gained through my varied early working life and then finding my passion for Human Resources really propelled my career. As long as you are passionate about your work and are confident in your area of expertise the only thing holding you back is you. I have a strict rule, if I am not developing, feeling challenged, or achieving what I want after three years in a role or company I know it's time to move on.

When I was first promoted into a management role I was surprised by how little things changed. The company I worked for at the time had the rule "be before you are". I had taken on a lot of responsibility and expectation that wasn't recognised or appreciated for a long time - until I finally spoke up.

In my current role, I love feeling challenged with new issues, watching people grow and develop and improve things for the better, whether that is creating and rolling out a new initiative, or training employees or people managers.

As long as you are confident you are doing the right thing for the right reasons, no matter what you are facing - it will be ok.

Leadership advice





Claiming your confidence



I always felt like I was judged, had something to prove, and had to work harder because I was a young mother. I was determined to not let that define my career, instead, I let it drive me.

For the first half of my career, I didn't know what I wanted to do, all I knew was that I wanted to make a career for myself and I wanted to be a role model to my daughters. I tried out different roles and industries trying to find my niche and passion, this gave me a wealth of experience I might not have had if I had stayed in one area for my career.

I certainly feel like I put a lot of power into how others perceived me in my early career and so I have learned not to let others judge me for taking time to find my chosen career, everything I did before is still an experience that I have learned and grown from. Don't be afraid to challenge the status quo and ask for more.

Don't let others define you, you are in charge of your destiny and only you can choose to put up with something you are unhappy with.



Managing a team

I don't think I am a natural-born leader, but the one thing that leads all the discussions and decisions I make as a manager is to treat others the way you want to be treated.

In my role, difficult conversations are part for the course. However, understanding the type of conversation you need to have is key in taking the right approach. No matter the type of conversation you are having, active listening and clear communication is key. If it's a performance or behavioural conversation preparation is crucial to feeling confident.

Taking time to reflect, reassess and refocus is where we see the biggest growth and progression from the people managers we support in HR.

In management roles you will definitely have different personalities within your team. However, not letting personal frustrations or opinions guide conversations or decisions is paramount. Respecting others' opinions and thoughts is imperative even if you do not agree. Your team should feel comfortable to be themselves and should feel they are in a safe space.

Culture is such an important part of having a successful and happy team. Culture is not just driven by business leaders and objectives, but also the values of the stakeholders. Don't be afraid to ask your team what the culture is like for them and what the values of the business mean to them. If they are not sure then it might be time to ask for feedback and re-evaluate.



Balancing work and home

This is something that I struggled with when I was undertaking my studies whilst working full time, but I found it was all about planning.

Structure is key. My diary is planned in advance and I allow time for things to go awry and also plan in the time to catch up with admin. Having an understanding manager is incredibly helpful, and where I am lucky that if I need to attend a personal appointment my manager knows I will make the time back and that everything will still be done in the timeframe needed.

Something that I really neglected until recently was looking after myself, but, I noticed that after starting to try and improve my health by making time for me, I became a more patient, attentive and confident person.

It's a cliché but you really can't pour from an empty cup, so take that time to go for a walk, curl up with a book, meet friends or just sit in silence, even ten minutes makes a difference. Don't forget to look in the rear-view mirror and appreciate all that you have achieved so far and let that show you what potential the future holds.



My advice for: Becoming a HR Business Partner

For those looking to get into HR, the critical thing is educating yourself on what is currently going on in the industry, researching case law and upcoming statute. Becoming CIPD qualified will also support your development exponentially, not only giving you the recognisable qualification as a HR professional but the confidence to face into complex and challenging situations with the added support of the CIPD network you can reach out to for help and support.

Letting your manager know about your interest for HR will help. There is a lot of requirement for development in this field so support from your employer is undeniably helpful and they may be able to put you in touch with others that can support or mentor you within the business.

In terms of thinking about the future, I know I want to keep growing and feeling challenged. I am currently deciding between undertaking the next level qualification or doing a skill assessment. I try and stay ahead of future challenges, future proof the business and ensure our employees are happy and engaged. Listening to a variety of podcasts also gives a real balanced outlook on employment.

There is always somewhere to progress, it may not be a traditional trajectory for your chosen career or area of expertise, it may be branching out into another area or industry to refresh the challenges. Plus, there is always the option to become your own boss and use your wealth of knowledge and expertise to do what you are passionate about the way you think it should be done. There are so many webinars on the internet for managers or an aspiring manager with a wealth of expertise and a range of different topics to help you grow your confidence and knowledge.



About Aspire

Established in 1992, Aspire is a recruitment consultancy with offices located in the UK, APAC, and the US specialising in supplying talent for a variety of sectors and disciplines such as Content, Data, Digital Media and Marketing, Events, Research and Insight, Intellectual Property, Technology, and Sales.

Aspire is fully committed to Diversity and Inclusion and the fair and equal treatment of our employees and candidates.

We hope this content empowers females to break through barriers and continue to progress into managerial and leadership roles, while enlightening business leaders of the capabilities of such females who can help take their business higher, leaving discrimination behind.

You can find out more about our Diversity and Inclusion policy at: www.weareaspire.com/about-us/diversity-and-inclusion



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