

SUBMISSION FROM LYNN MCLACHLAN

I have worked in RBS from 1998. I am currently working with and leading a team of 16 Business managers looking after 5k Small Medium Enterprise Businesses in Glasgow and surrounding area. These customers range from start ups to established businesses with turnover up to £2m. We provide various services and expertise to these businesses through a variety of channels including face to face local relationship banking, sector specialism and nurturing new fledgling businesses to grow and develop. We strive to help our customers get ahead in business by trying to keep it simple for them, delivering business expertise and sharing their ambitions.

During my time in RBS I have covered many roles in different Divisions and areas of the organisation. I started on a 2 year fast track from teller to Area Manager by 2000. I then moved to Business Banking in 2006 where I sat on the Board as one of only 2 women Directors and 18 men. Today the split of the teams within Business Banking range from my own team with 4/16 females to one of my male colleagues who has 11/12 female.

I am one of the original founders of the Women in Business Ambassador programme within RBS which started in 2007. This is a group that helps, supports and promotes networking within the SME space for business women. We now boast an externally accredited WIB Ambassador in every Region in the UK. I also belong to the Focused Women Network which is an internal network of support for RBS female staff building confidence and coaching for career progression. I am a strong supporter of diversity within the workplace and have seen this agenda within the organisation change positively over my 15 years in the Bank. The speed of change has been slower than I would have liked as it has only gained significant momentum over the past 5 years. However at a recent RBS Conference I was pleasantly surprised to have to queue in the ladies toilet - this would have been unheard of a few years ago.

RBS have really improved over the past few years with various initiatives to support and encourage women in the workplace and through Equal Opportunities. This is championed at the highest level by CEO of Corporate Banking Division who is a keen and active supporter of the diversity agenda. There are various plans to improve female talent retention and encourage women to have the confidence to apply for senior roles in the organisation and the most recent appointment of a Managing Director for Diversity, who is female, is testament to the commitment of the Bank in this key area.

I have worked for RBS for 15 years and throughout my time in the organisation the amount of support with family life and career opportunities has varied depending on role and also who managed me at the time. As an organisation RBS policy on time off to care for family, flexible working and job sharing are some of the best I am aware of and the Bank continues to adapt and improve as required by the diversity in the workforce.

My previous employers were Halifax Building Society as Branch Manager for one the largest outlets in Scotland when I was 22 years old and South Lanarkshire Council as a special needs assistant .These employers were supportive of flexible working for women however did not fully embrace equal opportunities as I was asked to downgrade my position when I requested a job share hence the reason I started my own business. This allowed me flexibility to look after my family and did not limit my ability to further my career as my previous 2 employers had. When speaking to women in a similar situation even now this still appears to be the case and although it is encouraging that women wish to become self employed and entrepreneurs I believe there should be more options within the workplace. Employment Law and legislation has helped with some of the issues that I experienced however there is still, I believe, a jobs for the boys mentality in some parts of the industry.

As a woman in the workplace I find this improving cultural landscape very pleasing however still feel there is lots more to do around this agenda. Had this degree of focus from Government and employers been in place many years ago – I wonder where I would be now - because the road has not always been an easy one.

My view on positive discrimination is a mixed one and perhaps it is a necessary evil in order to redress the balance of power in the workplace and create a fair and honest representation of the whole population. My concern is that we undermine the qualities and contribution of women by being seen to be promoting them just to fill a quota. Interestingly I do not see this in RBS who in my opinion are very much Equal Opportunities employers.

In closing I would like to make comment that as with most things if you have a positive role model, a mentor and people to support and help you whether male or female this will make the biggest difference in how you are viewed and progress in the workplace. I feel that female potential is still being limited by poor organisations and managers within them and unfortunately by women themselves. I have been very well supported by some of my managers, although not all, and it is this that needs to be addressed in my opinion.

I have been happily married for 33years and have 2 children and 2 grandchildren.

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