

A photograph of three construction professionals—two men and one woman—wearing white hard hats and orange safety vests. They are gathered around a set of blueprints, with one man pointing towards the left. The background shows a blurred construction site with a white truck. The image has a blue overlay.

Becoming a successful future leader

Helen Moore, Group Director of Orbit Homes



Congratulations!

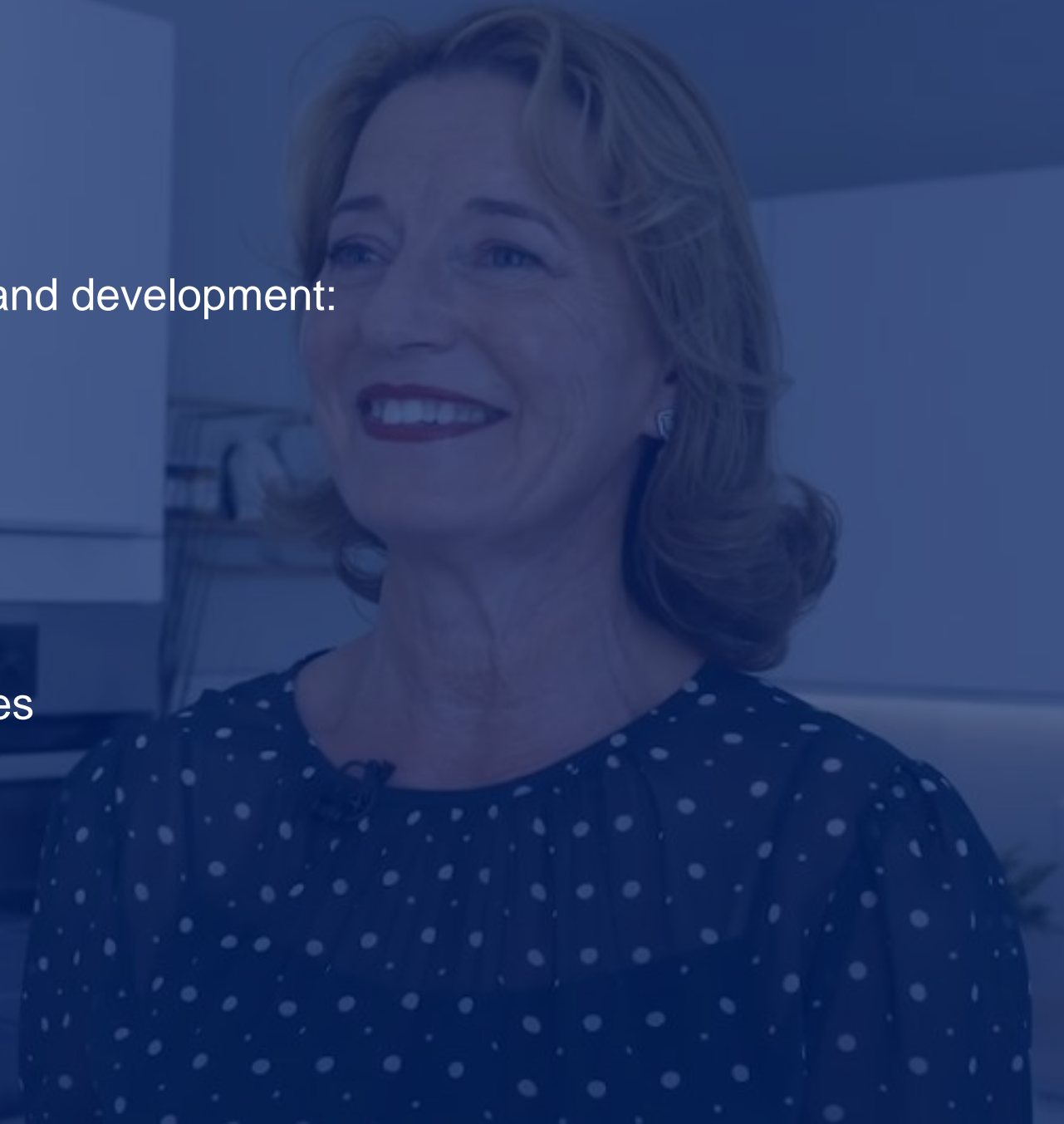
Introduction



- Find Your Passion
- What makes a great leader?
- Recognising this is still a male dominated, undiverse sector
- Why should you care?
- How can you navigate the challenges personally?
- What to consider as a future leader?

Find Your Passion

- 30 years in private sector housebuilding and development:
 - Sales & Marketing Director – 12 years
 - Sales & Marketing Consultancy – 2 years
 - Managing Director – 10 years
- 2019 became Group Director, Orbit Homes
 - A new passion – social purpose
 - A strategic role
 - A transformational change programme



What makes a great leader?

- Use your passion to become an inspirational leader
- Key attributes of a great leader include, the ability to:
 - Create a vision people can relate to and are passionate about delivering
 - Build, develop, motivate and retain an excellent team
 - Deliver excellent financial results
 - Make the organisation an aspirational place to work
- Your success as a leader is **intrinsically linked** to your own team
- Since 2019, over 223,000 domestic workers have quit the sector and many foreign nationals have left
- **Yet still we remain a fundamentally undiverse sector.....**

The Gender Context - 2018

- Just **4%** of senior roles occupied by women in top 20 UK listed construction firms
- Construction joint **second lowest** representation of women in senior roles across FTSE350
- **35%** of the construction firms analysed had no female executives
- Men occupy **95%** of all of the most senior roles across the UK economy and **92%** of all executive positions on FTSE 350 Boards

The Gender Context - 2021

- Just **13%** of workforce are women in the construction industry – **no change for 20 years** (ONS 2021)
- **16.2%** of Directors and senior managers are women – up by just **0.1% in 10 years**
- Only **1%** of skilled trades professionals are women – **up 0.7% in 10 years**
- Women earn on average **38% less than men** in the construction industry
- **37%** of new entrants into the UK construction industry from Higher Education are women



The Ethnicity Context

- Only 6% BAME employees in construction compared to 14% in the latest census
- Studies have reported that ethnic minority graduates are **less successful** in gaining employment
- 50 applicants per ethnic minority hire vs 16:1 for white applicants



Why should you care?

- **Diversity brings understanding** - your customers, your team and your key stakeholders
- **Wasted talent** – when there is a skills shortage
- **5% greater profit** for companies that have at least 25% women on their Executive Committee
- 2019 **McKinsey** analysis - companies in the top quartile for gender diversity on executive teams were **25% percent more likely** to have above-average profitability than companies in the fourth quartile

The male dominated, undiverse workplace

Challenges:

- Stereotyping: Male = Leader
- Working harder to achieve the same
- Having your opinion questioned/your appearance judged
- Getting your voice heard
- Being left out
- Leadership Double Bind
- Finding a mentor
- Family
- **It can be exhausting!**



The male dominated, undiverse workplace

Opportunities

- Stand out factor
- Your difference is valuable
- Sense of achievement
- Role model
- Mentoring
- **It is exciting, rewarding and fun!**



Understanding the Leadership Double Bind – or Walking the Tightrope!

♂ He is:

- Direct
- Strategizes
- Shows leadership
- Passionate
- Takes control
- Assertive
- Honest, straightforward

♀ She is:

- Abrasive
- Manipulates
- Controlling
- Emotional
- Bossy
- Aggressive
- Judgmental, harsh

- **75%** of performance reviews for women include negative personality criticism
- Women are **2.5 times** more likely to receive feedback about aggressive speaking styles

Ideas to navigate this as a woman

- Aim to simultaneously communicate warmth and authority
- Be true to your authentic self
- Use your emotions to motivate and excite your team
- Try to be succinct in highly charged situations
- Actively choose what to challenge and what to let go
- Run through scenarios with your mentor/manager, in advance



Ideas to minimise the impact as a future leader

- Ensure everyone gets a share of voice in meetings and highlight if good points are made
- Resist from criticising female colleagues for being over or under confident – keep feedback about performance
- Refuse to accept outdated views and unconscious bias playing itself out in your teams
- Use blind CVs to create a level playing field for all applicants
- Appoint female reverse mentors to male managers, so they can explain how their behaviours can hold women back



When to have a baby?

- Most ambitious women will have wrestled with this dilemma
- Most men are just applauded for being a family man!
- The reality is that for most women having a family is **still** a bad career move.....



The sobering statistics

That Works for Me, **Careers After Babies 2023** report finds:

- **85%** of mothers leave the full-time workforce within 3 years of having their first child.
19% leave the workforce altogether
- **74%** of women are earning less or the same as before they had children
- **32%** fewer women in mid-management roles and **44%** increase in admin/entry level
- **10 years** to get back to same level of seniority or higher after children



What to consider for you...

- Strive for progression in the early years of your career, before children
- Be realistic with your priorities
- Be considered in your choice of employer
- Find a mentor who knows your value
- And a partner who will share the load...!



What to consider as a future leader

- Don't penalise young women's progression by assuming they will have a family which will affect their career – men leave organisations all the time!
- Don't assume new mothers won't want to come back to their previous challenging role
- Encourage fathers to take shared parental leave
- Recruit returners to the workforce and support them to thrive



Top Tips for becoming a successful future leader



Be proud to be
your authentic self



Set your own goals
and take control of
your career



Seek out opportunities
for development and
mentoring



Work very hard early
on and build strong
relationships



Use your voice and
authority to assist others
to find theirs



Know when to move
on or to pivot



Hold the door open
for others to follow

Great reads.....

The Authority Gap

Mary Ann Sieghart

For women, men and parents.....

Brave, Not Perfect – Fear Less, Fail

More and Live Bolder

Reshma Saujani

