

Inspiring a younger generation into STEM and the Aviation Industry

Our goal: Inspiring young people to explore careers in STEM and aviation, to support and encourage their future career choices.

How can you help? By sharing your story

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| Name & job role: | Sophie Jones Head of Operations and Training International Group |
| What did you enjoy doing when you were younger? | I used to love doing complicated jigsaw puzzles with my grandad, playing netball, roller skating and camping trips with the family building fires and surfing in the Cornish sea. |
| What were your favourite subjects in school? Why? | Maths, English literature and Geography (although not so much on the rivers!) |
| What or who inspired you to study these? | My dad was really good at maths and we'd often have long discussions / debates / arguments about algebra and items of fruit! Geography was my own choice as I've always loved travelling. |
| Did you do work experience? Where and did it help in choosing your career path? | Yes, my work experience was due to be in a travel company but fell through, so I spent 2 weeks in my dad's office helping them get their ISO (Quality Management) accreditation. I now lead the ISO quality management accreditation for the international group, so without knowing it yes it did! |
| What was your first job? | First job whilst at school was working in a café. First proper job after studying was as a Business Travel Consultant for American Express at BAE Systems in Lancashire. I loved seeing the Eurofighter particularly although the office rumbled every time it took off. |
| How did you arrive where you are in your career? | Whilst at American Express, I moved into a training role and got into fares and ticketing systems training which I enjoyed. I relocated to the South in a training role which enabled me to travel to Europe and the Middle East to deliver training. I stayed in the training arena for about 3 years and moved to Virgin Holidays to help implement a travel system on a temporary contract. 13 years later and 7 roles including operations, crisis management, airport services operations, project management, change management and |

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| | business improvement I joined the CAA in 2016 in a Change Management role. I moved into my current role in 2018 and took on additional responsibility of our training portfolio in May this year. |
| What do you love about your current job? | I love the variety and all the different people I get to work with across the CAA. I love the purpose of our organisation and I love the fact that I was able to be a part of setting up CAAi as a Social Enterprise 3 years ago. |
| What were the biggest challenges/barriers you had to overcome? | More challenges in previous organisations when progressing through roles, particularly at a more senior level. Sometimes I am my own barrier having the confidence to believe in my own abilities and capabilities. |
| Who have you looked up to and why? | I look up to those who lead, empower and allow others to shine and give credit where it's due. I look up to those who have strong values like my own and don't put ambition or career before people and the impact of others. |
| What is your ambition? | To continue to be part of an organisation that I can influence and make a difference. To be a good leader and to motivate others. |
| What is the best advice you were given? | Don't wait for an opportunity to come to you, go and get it and don't limit yourself. |
| What advice would you give a younger you? | Careers are not a straight path, there will be many bumps in the road along the way. Continue learning and challenge yourself and don't be afraid to try new things and get things wrong. |

Any additional comments:



Thank you for sharing your journey.