

Owning your future: top tips

CIH London proudly presented the first of many 'Owning your future' events on 25 July 2018. We asked five sector leaders to come and share their career stories in 10 minutes each. For those of you that missed the event here's some top tips on how you can start owning your future.

Katie Bond, development director, Notting Hill Genesis on 'How I became a director of a G15 organisation in my twenties'

- You need to be supportive
- Let people have responsibility but also let them make mistakes and work with them to find solution so they learn from it
- Plan everything and be results focussed:
 - Having a clear vision is not enough. Have a clear strategy too and set clear objectives and follow through on them to achieve results
 - Take time out to plan and reflect
- Find a mentor - whether it is informal or formal - there are lots of people out there who you can learn from
- Take a chance and believe in yourself
 - Don't be afraid to fail but do seek support when you need it
 - Trust in people who have confidence in you - it is because they have seen something in you that you may not have seen yourself
- Seek and encourage different perspectives - you won't have all the answers so try to create an environment for people to contribute
- Be on the look out for opportunities that will raise your profile
- Be prepared to put the work in
- Have an opinion, speak up, give your views and ideas. Be challenging but not provocative for the sake of it
- Be mindful, take time to look after yourself and your team
- Be authentic, know what your values are and what you are prepared to do and what you are not. Don't be afraid to say no to things if they aren't in line with your values.

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Sahil Khan, head of community investment, Southern Housing Group and Faisal Butt, lead commission housing, Barnet Council (founders of the UK Housing Fast) on 'How we started a nationwide food poverty campaign'

- Don't be scared to try something new and different, this is often the only way to gain new experience. The UK Housing Fast is now a nationwide food poverty social media campaign ran annually, despite both Sahil and Faisal having no previous experience
- Projects like this one give you transferable skills for your day role and future career
- Get as many people involved as possible, always be open
- The most important benefit of work like this - networks
 - Through the UK Housing Fast both Sahil and Faisal have vastly expanded their networks, now being invited to sector leading meetings, conferences etc. that all help raise profiles and gain invaluable experience. This is learning!

Gudrun Burnet, co-founder, Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) and Peabody on 'How I established my own subsidiary, championing a vital cause'

Guddy has always been passionate about domestic abuse and saw housing as a key part of the solution. Having started off working in a domestic abuse call centre, Guddy worked her way up securing a role at Peabody and eventually going on to co-found the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance. She recently even met with the Prime Minister to discuss the role of housing in this vital issue. Here are her snapshots:

- "I never thought I could've achieved what I have done, find your fire, find your passion and use it!"
- There's always people that will try and push you down, stand up for yourself and stand up for others
- You need to be in an environment where they care about you
- If you're in a position of 'power' then you should be championing people.

Klara Buzas, head of repairs and maintenance, City of London Corporation on 'How I broke into management'

- Despite English not being her first language and being a woman, Klara never let anything or anyone hold her back in her career. Be determined, have a plan and know what you want to achieve and when
- Be patient - things don't always happen as quickly as you want, so sometimes you need to be patient and work out the best route for you
- Learn about your organisation and who works there - who are the 'movers and shakers', where is your influence going to come from?
- Manage your manager - managers have a lot on, learn how to approach them, when is the best time, what do they want and do your best to achieve that for them. Sometimes we need to direct them to help you
- Never be afraid to step out from your comfort zone.

Sheila Belgrave, head of housing, Gateway Housing Association on 'How I never let anyone tell me 'you can't'

- Mentoring is so important - always surround yourself with positive people, we all need that sounding board
- Fight back through professionalism and education, keep learning
- Believe in yourself
- Persevere
- Unpick things brick by brick you can't always be a bulldozer!

One quote Sheila left us with to end the night perfectly was "I love the person I've become because I've fought for it". Only you can control what happens in your career so start owning your future today. Look out for the next in the #Owningyourfuture series - there's loads more to come!