



8 March 2021

Strong role models are key to the advancement of women

‘Be yourself. Seek out other role models who will inspire and advise you and remember that if you are good at your job, you will progress.’

On International Women’s Day, women in the cleaning industry advocate the benefits of strong role models and sharing of experience. But at the end of the day, they say, success comes from hard work and excellence at work.

While women are increasingly visible at the helm of some of our largest organisations, they are still under-represented in skilled trade and professional occupations; in fact, in every area other than elementary occupations and administrative roles.¹

Jade Collazo and Carla Vieira have recently joined the board of directors at Cleanology. Collazo started 12 years ago as an administrative temp; she has just been promoted to HR Director. She said: “When I started out, I never imagined I would become a director. I think it’s really important for women, and other under-represented groups, to be seen in managerial roles. I was lucky to have a really strong female role model in my line manager, but Cleanology is also unusual in having a young, BAME CEO, who has been really easy to talk to about challenges.”

Lynn Webster, Director at Lynn Webster Consultants Ltd and Chair of the Women’s group at Cleaning and Support Services Association (CSSA) agreed that visible success is encouraging for other women trying to break through a perceived glass ceiling. She added: “Women who achieve seniority have got there through hard work and competence. We are

seeing more and more females at the top, from heads of cleaning at internationally-recognised businesses, through to the vice president of ISSA. Many of us are working to support women in career development, with role models they can aspire to.”

The new Deputy Operations Director at Cleanology, Carla Vieira comes from a hospitality background, so the principles of service are second nature. She applies them to her role in cleaning, dealing with clients and with Cleanology’s cleaning operatives.

Vieira advised women to be themselves. She said: “In many companies, the operational managers tend to be male, maybe because there is an idea that men make the best leaders. I’ve been lucky that at Cleanology we have men and women in the same roles. But, for women who want to reach a higher position, don’t lose focus. Find the way forward and look for the people who will recognise that you are doing a good job.”

Cleanology CEO Dominic Ponniah said: “HR Director Jade Collazo and Deputy Operations Director Carla Vieira have earned their success, through determination, hard work and commitment. They are both extremely valuable members of the team and we cannot express how pleased we are to welcome them onto our board.

“Over the years, Carla has helped her team and clients through any emergency that crops up, day or night. Her work ethic, enthusiasm, and sense of humour are infectious and inspiring. Jade’s impressive career progression is down to sheer hard work, determination to succeed and willingness to push herself out of her comfort zone.”

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From left: Jade Collazo and Carla Vieira, Cleanology

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Notes for editors:

Established over 20 years ago, Cleanology provides professional office and commercial cleaning services, property maintenance and a wide range of support services across London and Manchester.

Our clients include blue-chip corporates, Royal palaces and some of the world's most famous brands.

As a multi award-winning family business, we are now one of the most established companies in the industry, employing over 700 people.

With a constant focus on technology, innovation, quality, sustainability and social responsibility, we are proud to be Living Wage Foundation accredited service providers, ISO:9001 accredited for quality and ISO:14001 accredited for environmental management as well as members of the prominent Green Organisation promoting environmental innovation and best practice.