



In our latest instalment of Career Insights, GlobalLogic's Josephine Lindley shares her experiences going from being a Sports Therapist & Pilates Teacher to a Consultant/Junior Software Developer in just one year!

<https://youtu.be/3wIGf-ZV2dk>

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# MENTORHER: MENTEE'S REFLECTIONS #1 WITH BEKKI WALKER

October 3, 2023

*In this series, we're asking the women in our MentorHER community for their reflections on the programme.*

*Here's the third instalment, and the first from a Mentee, from IMS's Bekki Walker.*

**"From the moment I joined, I felt a renewed sense of hope and determination to break down barriers and make my mark in the tech industry."**

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## **Empowering Growth and Breaking Barriers: My MentorHer Journey in the Tech Industry**

As a mentee in this incredible initiative, I'd like to share my positive and inspiring experience so far that has **not only transformed my career but also my perspective on the limitless possibilities within the tech world.**

The tech industry has long been dominated by a gender imbalance, with women often underrepresented in key roles. However, the MentorHer program aims to change this narrative by pairing women mentees with experienced mentors who guide, inspire, and empower them to shatter the glass ceiling. **From the moment I joined, I felt a renewed sense of hope and determination to break down barriers and make my mark in the tech industry.**

One of the most striking aspects of my MentorHer experience so far is the calibre of my mentor. She is a seasoned professional with an impressive track record in the tech world. **Our initial conversations were filled with wisdom, advice,**

**and a genuine passion for helping me succeed.** She encouraged me to dream big, set ambitious goals, and gave me the tools to achieve them. Her guidance wasn't just about technical skills but also about building a strong network, honing my leadership abilities, and gaining confidence in my abilities.

One of the standout features of the MentorHer program is the customisation it offers. My mentor doesn't just provide generic advice but tailored her guidance to my specific career aspirations. I wanted a really well-structured approach, and she went away and put so much thought into this. She helps me to identify my strengths, weaknesses, and areas for growth. **This personalised approach makes me feel valued and empowered to take ownership of my future.**

Confidence is often a challenge for women in the tech industry, especially when they find themselves in male-dominated environments. My mentor plays a pivotal role in helping me build the self-assurance I need to navigate these spaces with grace and assertiveness. She shares stories of her own challenges and triumphs, reminding me that success is attainable through hard work and resilience. **With her unwavering support, I can begin to see my potential in a whole new light.**

So far, I think one of the biggest things I can take from this is wanting to **pay this forward!** As my mentor shares her time, knowledge, and experiences with me, I feel an increasing urge to pay it forward. **The MentorHer program instilled in me a sense of responsibility to support and mentor future generations of women in tech.** I am now actively involved in initiatives that promote diversity and inclusion in the industry, inspired by the positive change I've experienced first-hand.

As I continue this incredible journey that has so far empowered me to **dream bigger, work harder, and break through barriers I once thought were insurmountable**, I am deeply grateful for the unwavering support and guidance of my mentor. It is her mentorship that has been the driving force behind my transformation within the tech industry.

*Written by Bekki Walker*

**MentorHER Cohort One is sponsored by Auto Trader UK**

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# MENTORHER: MENTOR'S REFLECTIONS #2 WITH ELAINE MULLAN

September 6, 2023

*In this series, we're asking the women in our MentorHER community for their reflections on the programme.*

*Here's the second instalment, from Corlytics' Elaine Mullan.*

**"MentorHER brings together a vibrant community of mentors and mentees, fostering camaraderie and an open exchange of knowledge and challenges."**

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## **Empowering Growth and Learning Through Mentorship: My MentorHER journey**

Reflecting on my journey with MentorHER, I am reminded of a fundamental truth: **sometimes, our own growth becomes most evident when we extend a guiding hand to others.** My path within MentorHER, a programme for mentoring women in the tech industry, has been one of personal empowerment and enlightenment. It's a journey that serves a dual purpose: to 'give back'; and to embrace the opportunity for personal growth.

The MentorHER programme, designed and orchestrated by Manchester Digital, has been instrumental in facilitating this interesting and fun experience. With the unwavering support of Heather Leonard and Kirsten Peters Roebuck, **MentorHER brings together a vibrant community of mentors and mentees, fostering camaraderie and an open exchange of knowledge and challenges.** I am fortunate to work at Corlytics, a pioneering firm in regulatory technology, who see the value in personal growth and supporting women in the wider tech

community.

MentorHER stands as a testament to the remarkable power that lies in seasoned professionals sharing their wisdom with those in search of guidance. It is a symbiotic relationship where mentors share their insights while gaining fresh perspectives from mentees—a process that requires lots of active listening and genuine engagement! I stepped into a role where my experiences, my challenges, and my triumphs could profoundly impact another person's journey; It is a humbling and exhilarating realisation. Indeed, one of my key learnings during my time as a mentor has been recognising the importance of valuing my own skills and experiences.

Like many women, I had often underestimated my own knowledge, achievements, and potential impact. **Guiding my mentee through her challenges and aspirations has, I guess, unveiled the power of my own narrative and the insights I possess to assist her on her path.**

Before each session, I consider how our session could be structured particularly as my mentee requested quite a structured approach and what materials could be useful. I'm always a mix of excited and nervous starting our monthly session as I want our time to be dynamic and impactful. It will be interesting to see if this slight giddiness changes as our mentoring relationship grows and we come to understand each other a bit better. So far, our sessions have been online but we plan to try for in person meetings at a later date.

I was surprised when the mentorship process really ignited my competitive spirit. Witnessing my mentee's pursuit of success has been inspiring, but I have to remember that this is not a race to be won (I'm probably still working on combatting my desire to win and to have the best overall mentor/mentee experience!). **It is a collaborative endeavour that fuels our collective progress and underscores the mutual benefits of mentorship.**

The programme's ability to forge meaningful connections, its emphasis on the value of shared experiences, and its transformative effects on individuals underscore the significance of such opportunities, especially in today's male-dominated tech landscape. We definitely need more of these types of opportunities.

As I continue on this path, I stand ready to embrace the forthcoming challenges and victories, knowing that **each step brings us closer to a brighter, more equitable future in the tech industry.**

*Written by Elaine Mullan*

## **MentorHER Cohort One is sponsored by Auto Trader UK**

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**Recently we caught up with Zoriana Dykunska, who works as a Quality Assurance Engineer at GlobalLogic. We asked Zoriana about her journey into digital and tech, the challenges within the industry and how we can all help create change.**

**Tell me about your journey into working in the digital and tech industry?**

At the end of my master's study in Electronic Multimedia Editions, I completed GlobalLogic Manual Basecamp in Ukraine. I successfully passed the final test and interviews for the Manual QA position for the media project and 10 months later I passed an interview for GlobalLogic in the UK & I region. Now I am planning to



explore the Automation part of testing to take up a position on existing and upcoming GL projects.

### **What are the biggest barriers for young women entering the industry?**

As the IT market grows annually, the number of specialists also increases, as does the demand for vacancies. You should have a lot of patience and perseverance to keep trying to reach your goal no matter how many rejections you get before. It's all your experience.

### **Did you have a mentor, and if so, how did they help & encourage you?**

I had a mentor at GL Basecamp and for 3 months when I started working as a trainee QA engineer. They helped me to understand all requirements that I will work on. But before that, I didn't have a mentor. I prepared myself through online courses, YouTube, and local courses. The most productive studies were courses, IT companies provide. The information was taught by current employees of the company who shared their own experience. Before the courses, you had to pass tests on logic, test bases, and the English language level.

### **What is your favourite thing about being part of the industry?**

I am happy to work on a project that involves technical and testing skills, and interacting with people, colleagues in the team, and the customer. This work helps to develop creativity in the approach to tasks and good time management skills. I am happy to get to know like-minded people and learn more and more about our sphere.

### **What could the industry do better to encourage and support women to join the sector and stay within the sector?**

I wish the industry could inspire and support the aspirations of those who want to build a career in technology. Among the many activities and programs are regular conferences, informal meetings, networking, and experience-sharing events, career development training, mentoring, and many others. This makes it easier to enter the IT field and further develop.

**Our Her Voice series highlights women in the Digital Her community, their journeys & their experiences in the tech sector.**

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**Ayesha Waseem is a Data Consultant at BAE Systems. We chatted to her about her journey into tech, and her experiences in the sector.**

**Tell me about your journey into working in the digital and tech industry.**

My journey into the digital and tech industry began in 2006 when I graduated from a Pakistani university with a strong foundation in computer science. In 2007, I moved to the United Kingdom and became a homemaker, dedicating myself to raising my family. However, I was eager to continue pursuing my passion for technology and enrolled in an MSC program in Advanced Software Engineering as soon as my children joined school in 2014. This allowed me to

update my skills and stay current with the latest industry trends, preparing me for a career in the digital and tech industry.

My MSC degree landed me my first tech job as a Junior Web Developer. However, I took a break in my career to welcome my youngest child into the family. Once I was ready to resume my passion for technology, I enrolled in the Mindweaver program and joined BAE Systems as a Data Engineer Consultant. This program provided me with the opportunity to upskill and update my knowledge and gave me the confidence to pursue a career in the digital and tech industry. I am now excited to be part of a team at BAE Systems, contributing my skills and expertise to meaningful and impactful projects.

### **What challenges have you found along the way? And how have you overcome them?**

My path wasn't completely conventional, but bridging the learning gap was one of my most important challenges. Participating in programs like Mindweaver helped me fill that gap by learning about new tools and technologies.

### **Did you have a mentor, and if so, how did they help & encourage you?**

I never had a formal mentor, but I was fortunate enough to receive support from my wonderful colleagues, and I am truly grateful for their assistance.

### **What is your favourite thing about being part of the industry?**

One of the most exciting things about being part of the tech industry is the opportunity to learn new things every day. The industry is constantly evolving, and there are always new technologies and innovative solutions to explore. It is also a rewarding industry, as technology has the power to solve complex problems and make a positive impact on society. Additionally, the tech industry provides endless opportunities for continuous learning and growth, whether through upskilling, attending conferences and events, or working on new and challenging projects. This allows professionals in the tech industry to stay engaged and passionate about their work, and to make meaningful contributions to the world around them.

## **Why is it important for programmes such as Digital Her to inspire young people to join the industry?**

It is crucial to launch programs like Digital Her to support future generations because it promotes diversity and inclusivity in the tech industry. Women and other underrepresented groups have historically been excluded from the field, which has resulted in a lack of diversity and a shortage of skilled professionals. By encouraging and supporting young women to pursue careers in tech through initiatives like Digital Her, we can address this imbalance and tap into a wider pool of talent. Additionally, promoting diversity in the tech industry can lead to more innovative solutions and better outcomes for society as a whole. It is also essential to support the next generation in developing the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in a rapidly changing industry, and programs like Digital Her can help to bridge the skills gap and prepare young people for the jobs of the future. Overall, launching programs like Digital Her is vital for creating a more inclusive and sustainable tech industry, benefiting both individuals and society as a whole.

## **Why do you think it's important that we're reaching out to those younger ages?**

Reaching out to young people is super important because it helps them see what's out there in the tech industry and creates a pool of talented folks. A lot of young people might not even know about the opportunities in tech or might not have the resources to pursue a career in it. But by showing them what's possible, we can inspire and prepare the next generation of tech innovators, problem solvers, and all-around tech folks. It's especially important for groups that haven't traditionally been represented in tech, like women and minorities, who might not have had access to the same opportunities and resources as others. Basically, by getting young people psyched about tech and giving them the tools to succeed, we can create a more diverse, inclusive, and innovative tech industry for everyone.

**Our Her Voice series highlights women in the Digital Her community, their journeys & their experiences in the tech sector.**

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**Alicia Barczak is Software Developer Delivery Consultant at GlobalLogic. We chatted to Alicia about her journey into tech and her experiences in the sector.**

**Tell me about your journey into working in the digital and tech industry?**

I began my professional career in law having studied law at Lancaster University. I quickly developed a keen interest in how technology can innovate and modernise the way legal services are delivered to clients. After two years of practising law, I decided to make a career switch into the tech industry with a

focus on software development. Since then, I completed a coding bootcamp and I currently work as Delivery Consultant at GlobalLogic within the UK&I region.

## **What challenges have you found along the way? And how have you overcome them?**

Moving away from a familiar industry into an unknown highly technical field was a big challenge. There is a lot to learn, and the tech sector is so vast it can be difficult to know where to start or what to focus on. I tackled this by taking every opportunity I can to learn about the industry and opportunities within it; be that through networking and speaking to people, podcasts, and my own research. I learnt that software development and consulting is a good fit for my skills and as I embark my career in tech, I am very fortunate to be part of GlobalLogic where I am provided with constant guidance on the best tools and technologies to focus my learning on.

## **Did you have a mentor, and if so, how did they help & encourage you?**

At the time of my career switch, I did not have a formal mentor, however I am very lucky to be based in Manchester and have amazing tech communities like Manchester Digital at my disposal, which allowed me to network and seek advice from people already working in the industry. The amount of genuine support and community spirit within the Manchester tech sector is incredible and has been invaluable in guiding me on the right path during my career switch.

Since joining GlobalLogic, I have been mentored by a senior female engineer. I found this mentorship extremely helpful in steering me in the right direction during the early stages of my career at the company.

## **What is your favourite thing about being part of the industry?**

The tech industry is full of endless exciting opportunities which is by far my favourite thing about being part of the industry. No matter what your interests are (be that environment, finance, law) you will be able to find opportunities to work with tech within these areas and most likely drive innovation within them. Because of this, a career in tech is unique and can be very fulfilling as you can find yourself making a real tangible difference to causes you feel passionately about.



## **Why is it important for programmes such as Digital Her to inspire young people to join the industry?**

The tech industry offers a wide range of exciting and rewarding career opportunities and encouraging young people to explore these opportunities will open new possibilities for their future. Most importantly, however, the tech industry is changing the world; tech has a significant impact on all aspects of our lives, so inspiring a diverse pool of young talent to enter the industry is the only way to ensure that the perspectives and experiences of everyone are represented in the development of new technologies which shape our world.

## **What could the industry do better to encourage and support women to join the sector and stay within the sector?**

I think peer-to-peer mentoring between women can go a long way for providing a platform to discuss the challenges that come with being part of the minority, the solutions to these challenges as well as celebrating the amazing achievement of female colleagues. For example, at GlobalLogic we have set up a group of female colleagues which aims to have monthly catchups which in turn serves as an opportunity to do just that over lunch, coffee, and cake!

I think it is also important to recognise that whilst being a woman in tech is a challenge, it is also an opportunity which at times, is something that is not emphasised enough.

**Our Her Voice series highlights the women in the Digital Her community, their journeys & their experiences in the tech sector.**

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## Why Should You Join Our Next Cohort?

Are you in the first two years of your career in tech or digital? Are you looking for guidance, inspiration, and someone to help you navigate the next stage of your journey? Or maybe you're a woman working in tech with experience to share and a desire to support the next generation?

Applications are now open for Cohort 3 of MentorHER, our purposeful peer mentoring programme created by Manchester Digital through our award-winning Digital Her initiative, and we want to hear from you.

Backed once again by our brilliant programme sponsor AutoTrader, MentorHER is about building confidence, creating long-lasting networks, and keeping women in the industry. Whether you're looking for a mentor, or ready to step into that role yourself, now's the time to get involved.

## The Why

We know that getting more women into tech is only part of the solution. Retention and progression are just as crucial, and the stats don't lie.

- Women are twice as likely to leave the tech industry compared to men.
- Only 21% of senior roles in tech are held by women.
- 80% of women say they're dissatisfied with career progression.

This is where **MentorHER** comes in.

MentorHER was launched in 2022 to help shift these numbers in the right direction, starting with early career support. By connecting women in the first stages of their tech journeys with experienced women in the industry, we're building a pipeline of strong, supported, and ambitious talent. Since launch, the

programme has already delivered over 150 hours of mentoring and engaged 32 businesses across Greater Manchester.

But the real magic is in the relationships. Mentorship is more than advice; it's community, connection, and the confidence that comes from having someone truly in your corner.

## **What to Expect**

MentorHER is designed to be structured, supportive and sustainable. Here's what being part of the programme looks like:

- A bespoke matching process to ensure meaningful pairings.
- In-person kick-off and training sessions in Manchester to get you set up for success.
- 6 months of mentoring, shaped by you and your mentor/mentee, with optional online and in-person touchpoints.
- Regular support from the Digital Her team and our sponsor, AutoTrader including informative Connect sessions, one-to-one guidance, and community moments.
- A graduation celebration to mark your journey, share your stories, and hopefully, inspire you to mentor the next wave.
- MentorHER is not about technical skills, we focus on navigating those early years in your tech career as a woman in tech, with soft skills, confidence, and advocacy embedded within the content.

Full training is provided for everyone.

## **Who Can Apply?**

### **Mentees**

- Women (inclusive of cis and trans women)
- In the **first 2 years** of your career in tech or digital
- Able to travel to Manchester for the in-person sessions

## Mentors

- Women (inclusive of cis and trans women)
- No minimum service length – if you have experience, you can share it
- Also able to travel to Manchester for the sessions

You must be available for the following in-person sessions at AutoTraders Manchester city centre office:

- **Wednesday 18th June 2025** – All participants
- **Monday 23rd June 2025** – Mentees only
- **Tuesday 24th June 2025** – Mentors only

## What Past Participants Say

“I hope I’ve helped my mentee see that she is more than capable in her role... that she can impact its direction. I believe she’s seen the power that she has to hold the pen and be the writer of her own tech future.”

— **Lee Emery, Mentor, Nexer Digital**

“This relationship has taught me so much about myself. It’s reinforced the fact that I don’t see my career as ‘me me me’.”

— **Mercy Fulani, Mentor, noticed.**

## Ready to Join?

We'd love to hear from you - whether you're ready to be mentored, or you're ready to give back.

□ [Apply for MentorHER Cohort 3](#)

Please feel free to **share internally** with your networks and colleagues who might be a good fit.

### **Want to Support Our Mission?**

If you're a **community-minded tech company** that resonates with our mission, you can have a real and direct impact by **sponsoring a future cohort** of MentorHER. Get in touch to chat about how to get involved:

**roxy@manchesterdigital.com**

Let's make meaningful mentorship the norm, and build a stronger, more supportive future for women in tech.

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Haylna Ostroumova is a Delivery Consultant for GlobalLogic, working within the Engineering Centre in Manchester.

### **Tell us about your journey into working in the digital and tech industry**

I was born in Odessa, Ukraine, with a non-technical background in Ukrainian language and literature. Over the past 20 years, I've worked in various fields, including international logistics, real estate, and IT sales management, driven by a passion for helping others and a desire for continuous learning.

Though I was often encouraged to remain in managerial roles due to my soft skills and lack of a technical degree, I had always been fascinated by coding and developer career opportunities. The war in Ukraine became a pivotal moment for me. As the crisis unfolded, I felt an urgent need to learn coding, both to support my family and to make a meaningful contribution to my country.

I relocated to the UK, where a generous sponsor family helped me enrol in a government-sponsored coding bootcamp at Northcoders. It was one of the most challenging experiences of my life—but also the most rewarding. Today, I am a software developer at GlobalLogic, building a better future for myself and others.

### **What challenges have you found along the way? And how have you overcome them?**

One of the biggest challenges for me was learning coding theory and practice in English, which is not my first language. However, since coding is primarily done in English, this has turned out to be an advantage in the long run. Coding itself can be mentally exhausting, requiring intense focus and consistency, especially when tackling problems I had never encountered before. For me, coding feels like a combination of maths and puzzle-solving—experimenting with different approaches until finding the right solution.

Another challenge was building the courage to pursue a field where I didn't see many women, as development isn't traditionally viewed as a female role. Staying motivated required setting clear goals to help me push through tough times. By focusing on what I wanted to achieve, I was able to persevere despite the obstacles.

### **What is your favourite thing about being part of the industry?**

One of my favourite things about working in IT is the constant opportunity for learning and self-improvement. This aligns perfectly with my personality, as I love continuous growth and development. I also enjoy being at the forefront of new technological breakthroughs—using cutting-edge innovations in daily work and being part of something that shapes the future. It feels incredible to know you're contributing to the next big thing.

### **Why do you think it's important, especially within the digital and tech industries, that programs such as Digital Her support the next generation?**

Programs like Digital Her play a vital role in inspiring the next generation, especially girls. By providing visibility and support, these initiatives show young women that a career in coding and tech is achievable. When girls see successful women in the field, they start believing in the possibility of pursuing these careers. Digital Her offers guidance, encouragement, and resources that help

young women take those first steps. Sometimes, all it takes is having a role model or a safe space to ask technical questions without fear of judgement to inspire young women to dream big and succeed.

### **What could the industry do better to encourage and support women to join and stay in the sector?**

To encourage and support more women in tech, the industry should focus on two key areas: early career encouragement and long-term retention. Promoting technical careers to girls at a young age, providing role models, and clearly communicating the benefits of careers in STEM can make these fields more appealing. When young girls see the potential and opportunities available, they're more likely to consider tech as a viable path.

It's equally important to support women who wish to transition into tech later in life. Many women are looking for second chances in their careers, and programs like bootcamps, combined with inclusive hiring practices, can create a diverse and welcoming environment.

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*Digital Her is an award winning movement inspiring girls to strive and supporting women to thrive in the digital and tech industry in Greater Manchester and beyond.*

## **A Day in the Life - Liv Bradbury, Deloitte**

Liv is a second-year analyst on the Deloitte Technology and Transformation Graduate Programme. She currently works as a Business Analyst on a team that builds apps for a government department. In this blog, she walks through a day in her life, sharing tips on how to make the most of being an early careers digital consultant.

### **9:00-9:30: Stand-Up**

My first meeting of the day is a stand-up call with my project team. We are responsible for building and delivering Android and iOS apps, as well as the back end and platform work needed to support them. We work in two-week time blocks, called sprints. In this call, the developers run through the work they're

doing this sprint, let the team know if there are any blockers, or if they need any support.

### **9:30-10:00: New Feature Kick-Off Call**

In this call, the product team presents a new feature they would like added to the app. They may show designs, run through how it could change the user flow, and explain why it should be added. The technical team then discusses feasibility and potential challenges. As a BA, it's my job to capture this information and create tickets that developers will pick up and work on in future sprints.

*Tip: Ask all the questions! As a relatively new team member, there are bound to be technical details I haven't encountered before. The best approach is to ask any questions (even if they seem small or silly) to ensure I understand what will be built.*

### **10:00-11:00: Focus Time**

Once I have all the information I need, I set aside some time to focus on writing the tickets. As our app is public-facing, it's essential to focus on the impact on the end user and make this clear for developers. This may lead to further questions, which I can take back to the product team or technical lead for clarity.

### **11:00-11:15: Coffee Break**

I'm in the office today, so I take a coffee break in the kitchen, a great spot to meet and connect with people outside my team. If I'm working from home, I might set up a coffee chat with a senior colleague to learn more about their role or career journey.

### **11:15-12:30: User Research**

Although I'm not on the user research team, I've asked to join a session to learn more about the process. In this call, a user is shown the app with proposed features or designs, and we observe how they interact with it, particularly noting if there are any issues with the proposed changes.

*Tip: Take any opportunity to observe different teams. It's a valuable way to learn about other roles and improve team interactions.*

### **12:30-1:30: Lunch**

Working from screens all day can be tiring, so I always try to have a break and take a short walk at lunchtime—weather permitting here in Manchester!

### **1:30-2:30: Amigos**

The ‘three amigos’ are the business analyst, developers, and testers on the team. In this call, we review the tickets I’ve written for a new feature, ensuring they contain enough technical detail to be completed independently. The tester confirms they understand what the final outcome should look like, and we assess the time or effort needed.

*Tip: Treat calls like this as a learning opportunity. Embrace any feedback, and don’t take it personally—there are many ways to approach technical challenges.*

### **2:30-3:30: Social Planning**

Alongside project work, I get to work on ‘side of desk’ initiatives, such as helping build internal communities, delivering training, or taking part in external training. This involvement has allowed me to contribute to our DigitalHer partnership, including volunteering on Industry Insight Days and writing this blog! I’m also part of a culture and community team that plans socials and coffee clubs—a great way to meet people and make an impact.

*Tip: Time management is key! Don’t say yes to things you can’t commit to, but offering help on things that interest you is a fantastic way to meet people, get seen by senior leaders, and make a positive impact.*

### **3:30-4:00: 1-1 with Manager**

I have regular one-to-one catch-ups with my manager. We use this time to discuss what I’ve accomplished and what I plan to work on next.

*Tip: Be open and honest in these conversations; it’s the best way to learn and make the most of the opportunities available.*

### **4:00-5:00: Retro**

At the end of each sprint, the team meets for a 'retrospective' to review the past two weeks. We discuss what went well, what could be improved, and how to move forward more effectively. We also check in on team well-being to ensure support where needed.

My schedule varies day-to-day, but every day I learn more, meet new people, and tackle interesting technical challenges. My top tips for any day are:

- Embrace what you don't know, and ask plenty of questions.
- Don't underestimate the value of your network.
- Plan ahead, but stay flexible—you never know what opportunities might arise!

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Manchester Digital's Digital Her programme is delighted to announce the launch of our new EnableHER: Leaning into Leadership Programme and its sponsor, 6point6 | Part of Accenture.

Digital Her's mission is about inspiring girls to strive and supporting women to thrive.

So far we've reached nearly 7,000 girls and women in the region, and built a 400 strong Digital Her Real Role Model Community.

Today, we're thinking about an ethical and sustainable future for our sector - and inevitably this has led our talks and discussions to consider diversity and inclusion, and who is making decisions.

- Only 29% of the UK tech workforce are women or non-binary
- Only 21% of senior tech roles in the UK are held by women
- Only 5% of leadership roles in the tech sector are held by women

Research shows that companies with women in leadership perform 10 times better than those with fewer females at the organisation's helm.

These stats must change. So...

We're delighted to announce the launch of our EnableHER: Leaning into Leadership Programme - Part of Digital Her.

And with the commitment of our new sponsor for this programme, 6point6 | Part of Accenture, we'll enable fully funded training opportunities for women across

Greater Manchester who are in emerging and mid-level leadership roles to really thrive as leaders in tech, not just survive.

By empowering women leaders, we create a more inclusive, equitable and dynamic industry that drives groundbreaking advancements and equitable opportunities for all.

A huge thanks to 6point6 | Part of Accenture, for joining the mission. We're looking forward to working with the team to support the wider community.

If you'd like to register your interest in taking part, you can do that here. The programme will commence in the Autumn.

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# ANNOUNCING OUR SPEAKERS FOR INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2024!

February 23, 2024

We're delighted to introduce our Digital Her Inspiration Breakfast speakers for International Women's Day 2024:

[Charlène C. Ambe](#)

[Galina Ostroumova](#)

[Kirsty Tidmarsh](#)

[Seda K.](#)

[Lydia Hawthorn](#)

These Digital Her Role Models submitted great ideas for lightning talks around the International Women's Day 2024 theme of [#InspireInclusion](#), each approaching the idea in their own unique way.

On 8th March they'll take to the stage to share their big ideas & insights with our Digital Her community who will explore their questions together.

Inspiration Breakfasts are packed with inspiring ideas and meaningful connections. We bring the Digital Her community together around thought-provoking and personal talks from our members, and create space for the rich conversations they inspire.

Read more about each speaker & their talk below:

Speaker announcement

**+her**  
**D/GITAL.**  
INSPIRE & EMPOWER

**How establishing a sisterhood at work helped me build my career**  
with Charlène C. Ambe  
Insurance Claim Handler, Booking.com

#inspireinclusion

## About Charlène's talk

A diverse and inclusive work environment is crucial for career fulfilment. This fosters a more efficient use of energy, allowing individuals to focus on their work, make confident decisions, and feel secure enough to step out of their comfort zones. I want to share my experience on how establishing a sisterhood at work helped me build my career.

## About Charlène

Charlène currently works as Customer Relations advisor for Insurance claims at Booking.com.

She is a proud graduate of a Masters degree in Geopolitics, allowing her to pursue a career in Humanitarian Aid programming for almost 10 years.

Now working in the travel industry, Charlène advocates for Sustainable Tourism in Haiti, as well as Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in the workspace.

She also loves sports and competes for Trafford Handball Club in her spare time.





Speaker announcement

**+her**  
**D/GITAL.**  
INSPIRE & EMPOWER



**Keep moving forwards**  
with Halyna Ostroumova  
Full Stack Software Developer, GlobalLogic  
UK&I

**#inspireinclusion**

## About Halyna's talk:

If you're new to the tech field, whether you're past your student years or just starting to explore your options, contemplating the future in the world of technology can be daunting. The tech industry often appears dominated by brilliant minds like Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg, making the idea of coding or pursuing a tech career seem intimidating.

Questions like "Can I really do this?" and "What does it entail?" may cross your mind, along with concerns about feasibility and the availability of friends and mentors in the field. These questions are relevant for everyone, but they weigh particularly heavy on women considering the tech industry as a pathway to a better life. When navigating the steps necessary for this journey, guidance becomes essential.

Embarking on this path may initially challenge your mind, but over time, you'll

discover a deeper understanding, uncovering the beauty and sense of belonging within the tech realm.

Drawing from personal experience being a foreigner without technical education, it's essential to acknowledge that frustration and struggles may arise, yet they shouldn't deter you from pursuing something that has the potential to positively transform your life.

## About Halyna:

Full Stack Software Developer at GlobalLogic UK&I. I graduated from the industry-recognized Northcoders Full-stack JavaScript Bootcamp, having transitioned from being a Sales Manager at a cutting-edge IoT company. I moved to the UK as a refugee in April 2022 and was able to retrain and embark on a new career path in the country. I love utilizing the latest technologies to solve problems in innovative ways, such as data analytics and GenAI, and I dream big.



Speaker announcement

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**D/GITAL.**  
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**What I Learnt as the Only  
Woman in a Room**  
with **Kirsty Tidmarsh**  
**Engineering Manager, Booking.com**  
**#inspireinclusion**

## About Kirsty's talk:

I'm excited to share a glimpse into my journey as a female software engineer, where I've often found myself as the lone woman in a room full of male counterparts. Being the only woman in a room full of male engineers has its challenges, but it's also an opportunity to break stereotypes and pave the way for others. I talk about the challenges I've faced, the allies that have supported me and creating safe spaces for others to follow.

## About Kirsty:

Kirsty Tidmarsh is an Engineering Manager at Booking.com and an award winning software engineer. She graduated from Liverpool Hope University with a Degree in Business and IT. From there she forged a career in software engineering that has seen her work in insurance, finance, security and travel industries.

Kirsty is passionate about supporting initiatives encouraging people into careers in tech through her role as a STEM ambassador and advocating for people returning to tech after an extended break.

Speaker announcement



+her  
**D/GITAL.**  
INSPIRE & EMPOWER

**It's okay to not aspire for  
leadership**

with Seda Kunda  
Software Engineer, Zuhlke

**#inspireinclusion**

## About Seda's talk:

How it's okay to not aspire for leadership. I will explore how the inclusivity of different personalities and life experiences will encourage different career goals and thus encourage career authenticity.

## About Seda:

Seda discovered her passion for code during father-daughter pairing sessions as a teenager. Currently working as a Software Engineer at Zühlke, she specialises in mobile and backend development. Beyond the screen, she is also passionate about mental health, women in tech and accessibility in tech. When she's not immersed in lines of code, you'll likely find her riding her bike or swimming.

Speaker announcement



+her  
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INSPIRE & EMPOWER

### How to become your own role model

with Lydia Hawthorn  
Principal Consultant, Cprime

#inspireinclusion

## About Lydia's talk:

How to become your own role model. Examining in 5 minutes how dynamic we

can become in our careers by asking ourself “how can I impress myself?”

## About Lydia:

Lydia has worked in Product Delivery and Transformation for 8 years and currently consults with business large and small to help them improve flow and create high performing teams. She speaks regularly at events advocating for Women in Tech as well as her experiences of Agile transformation and change. Lydia mentors others in the industry to encourage better levels of diversity in the tech sector as well as being an ambassador for InnovateHer.

**Thank you so much to everyone who submitted ideas for this Inspiration Breakfast, and we look forward to seeing you on International Women's Day!**

[Read More](#)

**Category:** [Uncategorized](#)

GlobalLogic brings together visionary individuals from all corners of the world to create extraordinary products and services. We work in the heart of innovation, offering our clients the best of both worlds. With a remarkable track record in the industry, we have an office in Manchester, we are thrilled to partner with DigitalHer.

Through our collaboration, we aim to foster a more inclusive and diverse workforce that transcends barriers and fuels innovation in the tech industry. Together, we envision a future where every woman can contribute her unique talents and shape a thriving, successful tech landscape. - GlobalLogic

December 13, 2023

DIGITAL<sup>Her</sup>  
INSPIRE & EMPOWER

We're thrilled that GlobalLogic are renewing their sponsorship of Digital Her for 2024! Over their time as a Sponsor of this important work, GlobalLogic have made a huge impact and we're so grateful for their ongoing support.

Sam Baillie and the whole team at GlobalLogic have been fantastic champions for the Digital Her mission. Their dedication to ending gender inequality in tech is showcased through their sponsorship of the Accelerating Your Career in Tech event in partnership with hackajob back in June, where they connected with 80 women right at the start of their tech careers to help them feel inspired, empowered and informed about their futures in tech. They've also run online webinars about careers at GlobalLogic for bootcamps, written articles, created videos and gone into colleges. Role Models from GlobalLogic have taken part in Meet the Role Models sessions across the whole year.

We couldn't be more grateful for their ongoing support - thank you GlobalLogic!

Here's what they had to say about their decision to renew:

— “ —

GlobalLogic brings together visionary individuals from all corners of the world to create extraordinary products and services. We take immense pride in our unwavering commitment to support and sponsor DigitalHer, a remarkable initiative. As a multinational organisation with an office in Manchester, we are thrilled to partner with DigitalHer.

Through this collaboration, we aim to foster a more inclusive and diverse workforce that transcends barriers and fuels innovation in the tech industry. Together, we envision a future where every woman can contribute her unique talents and shape a thriving, successful tech landscape.- GlobalLogic

— ” —

+her  
D/GITAL.  
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We're looking forward to what 2024 has in store!

[Read More](#)

**Category:** [Uncategorized](#)

**Tag:** [globallogic](#), [manchester tech community](#), [philanthropy](#), [sponsorship](#), [women in tech](#), [women in tech manchester](#)

We are delighted to renew our sponsorship of Digital Her for another year and are looking forward to all the activities and events that we will continue to support...

**DELOITTE INCREASE THEIR SUPPORT OF DIGITAL HER!**

We chose to increase of level of sponsorship this year to get an even deeper involvement with the vision of Digital Her to end gender inequality in tech. – Deloitte

December 8, 2023

D/GITAL. +her

We're thrilled to share that Digital Her Sponsor [Deloitte](#) will be continuing their support for the coming year, and stepping up their donation and involvement in our work towards ending gender inequality in tech!

Deloitte are a fantastic partner in Digital Her's mission. Over the past year their work has been invaluable; hosting Industry Insights Days, running inspiring and insightful workshops at our events, helping to promote opportunities for women in tech via online platforms, acting as Role Models within our community and more!

In this new cycle of support, they will be stepping up their involvement to EmpowerHER which will include co-running a series of community event for Digital Her and creating more opportunities for women in tech to come together, build meaningful connections and support each other to thrive.

We're so grateful to Deloitte for their sponsorship of Digital Her. **Thank you, Deloitte!** 🙏

Here's what Deloitte had to say about their ongoing and increased support of Digital Her:



— “ —

We are delighted to renew our sponsorship of Digital Her for another year and are looking forward to all the activities and events that we will continue to support and create together. The impact of Digital Her is invaluable to the community of women in Manchester that are part of its cohort, and we are thrilled to be able to interact with these women at such a meaningful level.

We chose to increase of level of sponsorship this year to get an even deeper involvement with the vision of Digital Her to end gender inequality in tech. - Deloitte

— ” —

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**Category:** [Uncategorized](#)

**Tag:** [deloitte](#), [women in stem](#), [women in tech](#)



# CAREER INSIGHTS: MONALISA MATHUR OF GLOBALLOGIC

Consultant

December 7, 2023

**In the latest instalment of Career Insights, GlobalLogic's Monalisa Mathur shares her thoughts on and experiences of the tech sector.**

[Read More](#)

**Category:** [Uncategorized](#)



# WINNERS AT THE TALKTALK WOMEN IN TECH AWARDS

November 17, 2023

We're thrilled to share that Manchester Digital (the team behind Digital Her) took home two Awards at the Women in Tech Awards!

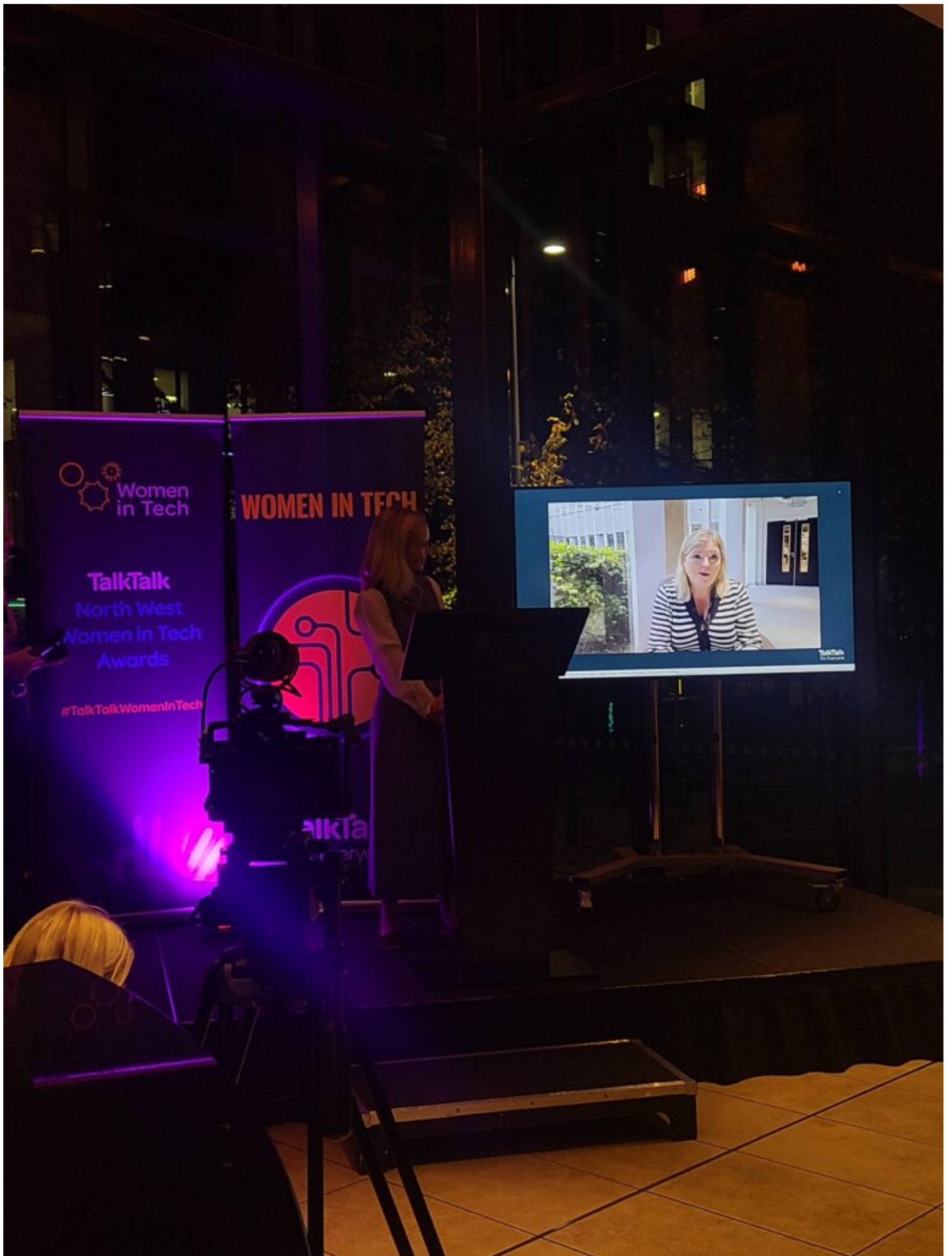
We won Team of the Year for our collective work championing women in tech, and our fantastic Managing Director Katie Gallagher won the Outstanding Achievement Award for her work developing the tech sector in the North West.

It was great to hear the judges' reflections on the impact our work is having on the sector, and we loved hearing about the incredible things the other winners have achieved. We're surrounded by amazing women in our industry & it was fantastic to hear their stories.

A huge congratulations to everyone nominated and to all the other winners. Thank you to TalkTalk for a brilliant evening, and to the Judges for selecting us!

If she can see it, she can be it.















[Read More](#)

**Category:** [Uncategorized](#)



## GUEST FEATURE: REFLECTING ON ADA LOVELACE DAY INSPIRATION BREAKFAST

October 31, 2023

*Melissa Hale of OnePoint Consulting Ltd joined us as a guest at our Ada Lovelace Day Inspiration Breakfast on 10th October. She enjoyed the event so much, she wrote a blog about it, and she's generously allowed us to share it here too! Thanks Melissa.*

*Read on to see what she thought...*

In the fast-paced world of technology, it's often easy to forget the incredible accomplishments of women in the industry. Digital Her, a programme run by Manchester Digital, is changing that narrative by showcasing the achievements of women in tech and facilitating their entry into the field. On the 10th of October 2023, I had the privilege of attending their Inspiration Breakfast, an event that left me inspired, motivated, and connected with fellow professionals in the tech sector.

The fact that this event was held on “Ada Lovelace Day” was an extra bonus, Ada Lovelace, born in 1815, was a visionary mathematician and writer known for her pioneering work in the early days of computing. She is often regarded as the world's first computer programmer. So having the event for women in tech on this day was just the cherry on top.

The event kicked off with a room full of brilliant women from all corners of the tech sector, all gathered to hear from remarkable keynote speakers. Each speaker shared their personal stories and influences, offering valuable insights that resonated deeply with the audience. It truly was an inspiring inspirational breakfast.



- The first talk was by **Zoe Gould** of **Deloitte Digital**. It was an excellent way to kick off the event with a nod to the hit Barbie film (existential crisis Barbie that is) and how we could all relate to feeling that way at one point or another. Pressing further as we enjoyed our croissants and coffees to say that it's okay to make mistakes and we should give ourselves more grace and embrace the learning opportunities they present. It sparked some very interesting conversations about how we all could be kinder to ourselves in those moments and how that would impact positively in the workplace for ourselves and for others.
- The second talk was by **Nadia Johnson** of **Quoria**. It was lovely to see a software engineering director speaking so fondly of their time rising through the ranks from apprentice to engineering director. I especially enjoyed her emphasis on networking not for "profit" as such but to genuinely form connections with like-minded and wonderful people. These experiences exist for us to connect as people and learn and grow with one another. The idea that we should foster a community within the tech sector for our own

wellbeing and the wellbeing of those around us was something I have taken away from this event.

- The third talk was by **Missy Muñoz** of **GFT UK**. After a lovely break to refill our coffee cups we were invited to write a personal accomplishment upon the inspiration wall (which was a genius idea and looking at all those different sticky notes from all these wonderful women was honestly a highlight of the event for me) we got to hear about how tough love and resilience made this talented and successful woman who she is today. It was a very personal talk and it resonated with me as someone who had changed careers not too long ago and was raised with a similar ethos of accomplishments being a currency for “being worthy”. Missy invited us to discuss how we would approach a younger relative, would we use tough love or not and why? It prompted some interesting answers. I personally enjoyed the idea of a fellow table-mate who suggested there was a middle ground between cheerleading and tough love, more akin to a coach who pushes you but also gets you an ice cream when you’ve succeeded. I liked that idea.
- The fourth talk was by **Lisa Wood** of **Naimuri**. Lisa had the honor of rounding off the talks for the event and she did it wonderfully. She also referenced the Barbie movie in her talk, which just goes to show how influential it was with its narrative. The idea that we should be our authentic selves and cherish the things about us that make us unique. We all have individual strengths, and we should use them to come together and celebrate what we can do, rather than trying to fit ourselves into boxes “because we should”. Her unapologetic authenticity was inspiring in itself, and she painted a very positive image of how teams can be structured and supportive of one another. She asked us to consider how we can be more authentic in the workplace and that was a very good topic to round the morning off with.

In conclusion, attending Digital Her's Inspiration Breakfast was a remarkable experience that left me feeling motivated and inspired. The event showcased the incredible accomplishments of women in the tech sector, emphasizing the importance of resilience, self-compassion, and the pursuit of excellence without fear of imperfection. Moreover, the unexpected references to the Barbie movie added a touch of creativity and relatability to the talks.

For professionals in the tech industry, especially those in the Manchester area, I highly recommend keeping an eye out for Digital Her events in the future. They offer not only valuable insights but also a supportive community where you can

connect, learn, and grow alongside other talented women in tech. So, if you ever get the chance to attend a Digital Her event, don't hesitate. It might just be the dose of inspiration and networking opportunities you've been looking for in your tech career journey. After all, together, we can break barriers, shatter glass ceilings, and pave the way for a brighter future in the world of technology.

[Melissa Hale, Onepoint Consulting Ltd](#)



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**Category:** [News](#), [Uncategorized](#)

**Tag:** [digitalher](#), [techcommunity](#), [womenintech](#)



10th October 2023 marks Ada Lovelace Day, an international celebration of the achievements of women in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM). Ada Lovelace is considered the world's first computer programmer, and a trailblazer for innovative women everywhere.

This year, we'll be celebrating Ada Lovelace Day by focussing on the theme of **'Inspiration'**. Inspiration is central to Digital Her and showcasing women in tech is at the heart of what we do.

Join us on 10th October for two very special events designed to inspire.

In the morning we throw the doors open to all the women in our Digital Her community; women currently working or aspiring to work in tech. You'll join us for our Inspiration Breakfast, where four members of the community will take the stage for 6-minute lightning talks, each connected to the theme of Inspiration. Each talk will leave us with a key question to spark a 10 minute discussion in small groups as we connect over coffee, pastries & fresh fruit.

In the afternoon, we turn our attention to women who are students, graduates and career changers.

The Inspiration Afternoon is an event tailor-made for those at the beginnings of their careers in tech, or exploring what options might be out there. You'll hear from inspiring speakers, spend time connecting with our Role Models, take part in interactive workshops designed to help you reflect on and harness your strengths and more.

This day will be packed full of insights, thought-provoking ideas and meaningful connection with women who are on similar journeys.

Tickets are free and can be booked by clicking on the images below.

# DIGITAL HER INSPIRATION BREAKFAST

Celebrate Ada Lovelace Day with the Digital Her community over inspiring talks, conversation & breakfast 🍳☕

Free to  
attend

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bruntwood  
SciTech



# DIGITAL HER INSPIRATION AFTERNOON

An event for students, graduates & career changers into tech to celebrate Ada Lovelace Day. Get inspired by fellow women in tech & gain insights to help launch your digital career.

Free to  
attend

+her  
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**Category:** [News](#), [Uncategorized](#)

**Tag:** [ada lovelace](#), [ada lovelace day](#), [tech careers](#), [women in tech](#)



We're thrilled that today's the day we share The Digital Her Podcast! ☐

Over the past few months we've been working on this exciting new project, bringing together Digital Her Role Models, sponsors and our broader community for a series of inspiring conversations. All of the women who feature on the podcast share a passion for supporting more women and girls into rewarding careers in tech & digital, and we've had the pleasure of connecting with each of them to learn more about their stories, insights and advice.

The purpose of the podcast is to help shine a light on the wealth of opportunities available in tech, and to help women and girls feel confident that they can take on those challenges by hearing directly from women who have done it before them.

Episode One focusses on **Careers in Fintech** (or Financial Technology) and features the wonderful Zahraa Murtaza from [GFT](#) and Sian English & Jo Gibson from [BankiFi](#). We explore how they each ended up working with fintech, dispel myths about the industry, hear their advice on how to build a rewarding career and much more!





*Kirsten Peters Roebuck (Digital Her Lead), Jo Gibson (BankiFi), Zahraa Murtaza (GFT) and Sian English (GFT) in the recording studio for Episode One: Careers in Fintech*

We'll be dropping new episodes of series one weekly from 20th September for the next five weeks. You can listen & subscribe to The Digital Her Podcast wherever you get your podcasts.

[Listen to The Digital Her Podcast on Spotify](#)

[Listen to The Digital Her Podcast on Apple Music](#)

[Browse the Directory to listen on your favourite podcast platform](#)

**Listen to the Trailer:**

**Listen to Episode One:**

**A huge thank you to all the women who have taken part in Series One of The Digital Her Podcast, and their businesses. You'll be hearing much more about each of them as the episodes are released!**

[Read More](#)

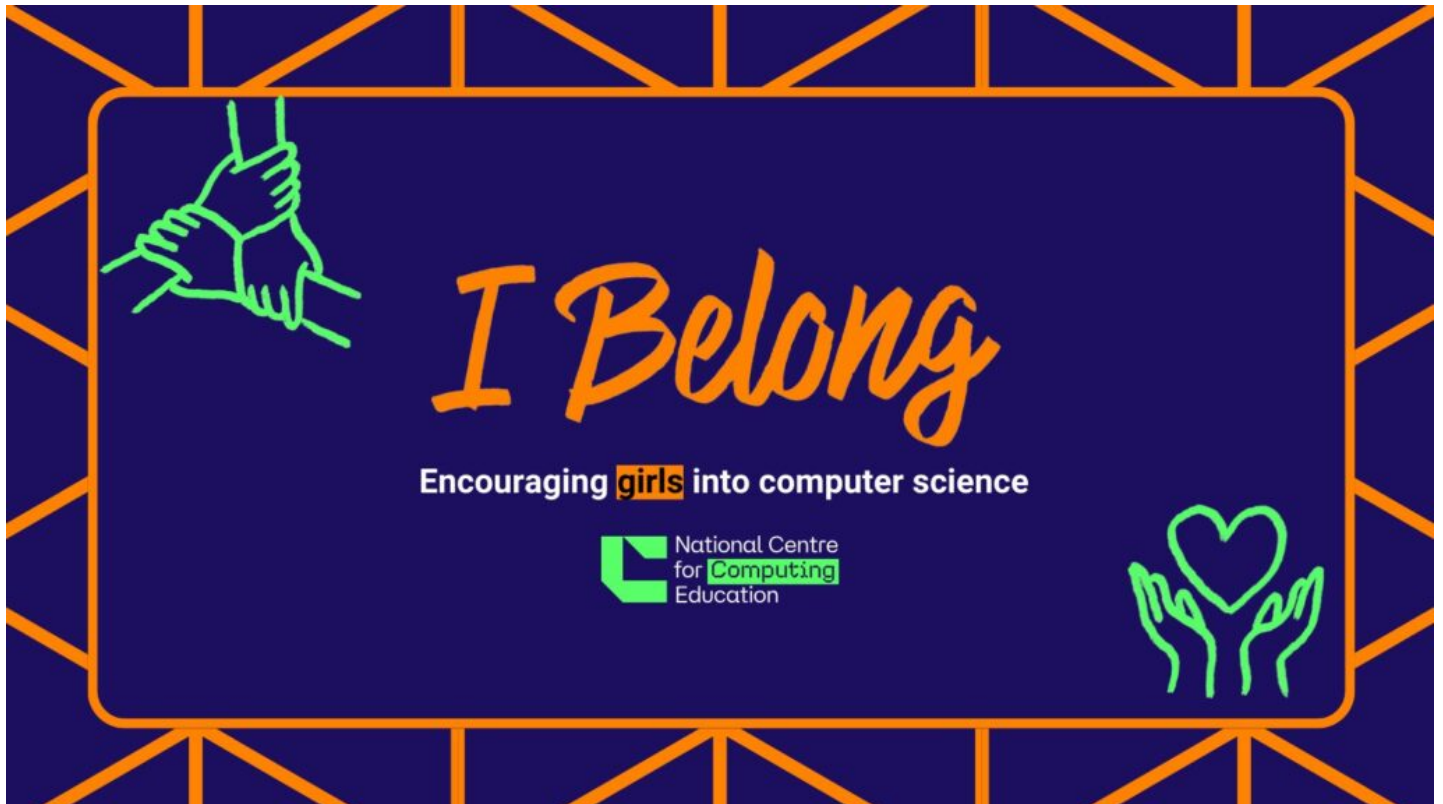
**Category:** [Uncategorized](#)

**Tag:** [career advice](#), [career change](#), [careers](#), [fintech](#), [podcast](#), [tech careers](#), [women in tech](#)



Our friends at the National Centre for Computing Education (NCCE) have just launched their brilliant new initiative, I Belong.

They're looking for educators aspiring to narrow the gender gap in computing education to become I Belong Champions. If that could be you, read on and head to their website to get involved!



Here's an introduction to the programme:

*"We offer a curated package of training, resources and implementation support for teachers and school leaders to raise understanding of the barriers to girls' participation in computer science."*

*Although computer science is growing in popularity amongst students, girls are consistently outnumbered by their male counterparts. In 2022, only one in five GCSE Computer Science and 15.2% of all A level Computer Science entries, were from female students in England. Our evidence-informed programme aims to support more girls into computer science qualifications and careers by providing teachers with the tools to guide and support them."*

***We're looking for teachers who are paving the way for girls in computer science to join our mission by becoming I Belong Champions. Once you've completed our 'Encouraging girls into GCSE computer science' course, you can claim your digital badge to become a champion."***

This sounds like a fantastic initiative that's working towards the same aims as Digital Her. If you're thinking of getting involved - go for it!

[Visit NCCE's website](#)

[Read More](#)

**Category:** [Uncategorized](#)



**We chatted with Abi Ridley, Delivery Manager at Deloitte, to learn more about her journey into tech which began with a scholarship from the Royal Geographical Society.**

**Tell me about your journey into working in the digital and tech industry.**

Before university, I received a scholarship from the Royal Geographical Society to undertake a 'challenging expedition or research project which furthers knowledge of the planet, its cultures, peoples and environments.' I used this grant to spend time in a women's empowerment centre in Delhi and it was there that I developed a passion for societal impact and technology. The women were

selling handmade items at local markets, and we began to sell them online using social networking and increased their revenue which in turn had a positive impact on the centre.

Receiving my scholarship came with the caveat that I studied Geography at University upon my return. After university, I was adamant I wanted to join a graduate scheme and received places on the food buying graduate programmes at M&S and Tesco's. I'd applied to the Accenture - Client Delivery graduate programme at the same time, out of curiosity more than anything as it spoke to my passion for tech and a passion for being able to positively impact society.

I'm grateful to now work in digital, in the public sector. This allows me to continue my passion for using tech to create a positive impact on society.

### **What challenges have you found along the way? And how have you overcome them?**

It's difficult to be the only female at the table, from a non-tech background (having studied Geography not code!). It took me years to overcome the 'not techie' complex I was carrying. With lots of learning, courses and taking opportunities to ask questions and listen, I've realised that I may not be a developer, but I can understand what is going on and be part of the conversation. I had to build my confidence to do this.

### **What is your favourite thing about being part of the industry?**

I love being able to see the impact of the work I am delivering. I am currently working on a project that will be used by millions across the UK. I love that I am part of something that can be used by my friends and family and can improve the way people do things in the UK.

### **Why do you think it's important, especially within the digital and tech industries that programmes such as Digital Her support the future generation?**

It is important to showcase all the opportunities within tech and encourage females to apply for roles, even if they don't feel like they hit every tick box on

the job requirements, but to push themselves for opportunities and give it a go anyway.

## **What could the industry do better to encourage and support women to join the sector and stay within the sector?**

Shouting about role models within the digital sector is so important. Those who are mums, those who work flexibly, those who have joined the sector from 'non-tech' backgrounds and many more examples. It's important to shine a light on the vast range of roles within tech and all the different ways you can make them work for you whilst still prioritising other areas of your life.

**Our Her Voice series highlights women in the Digital Her community, their journeys & their experiences in the tech sector.**

[Read More](#)

**Category:** [Uncategorized](#)



In our latest instalment of Career Insights, GlobalLogic's Josephine Lindley shares her experiences going from being a Sports Therapist & Pilates Teacher to a Consultant/Junior Software Developer in just one year!

<https://youtu.be/3wIGf-ZV2dk>

[Read More](#)

**Category:** [Careers](#), [Uncategorized](#), [Workshops](#)

**Tag:** [career change](#), [software developer](#), [sports therapist](#), [women in tech](#)





# BRUNTWOOD SCITECH LAUNCH MANCHESTER'S FEMALE FOUNDERS INCUBATOR

July 11, 2023

**Our friends at Bruntwood SciTech have launched a fantastic new programme to support early stage female entrepreneurs in Manchester. Read on for more information & to get involved...**



## From Bruntwood SciTech:

INTRODUCING: Manchester's Female Founders Incubator programme - built to provide female entrepreneurs in Greater Manchester with the support they need to grow and scale.

It's up to all of us to support the next generation of female founders. That's why we've created a dedicated six month programme to support early stage female entrepreneurs from the region, in partnership with Bruntwood SciTech.

Do you know someone with a startup who could benefit from:

- 1:1 mentoring with successful CEOs
- Access to professional services experts across marketing, legal, accounting, funding support and IP
- Peer-2-peer sessions
- 6 months FREE desk space, plus 50% off for the following 6 months

And more!

[Click here for more information and to enter.](#)

## Want to apply?

Applications will close on Monday 31st July 2023, with virtual interviews taking place in August and a launch event and induction on the afternoon of Wednesday 27th September 2023 - which we ask you are available to attend in person.

Key Dates:

- Manchester: Virtual interviews will take place on Monday 7th August and Friday 11th August. An in-person launch event and induction on the afternoon of Thursday 28th September.
- Leeds: Virtual interviews will take place on Monday 14th August and Friday 18th August. An in-person launch event and induction on the afternoon of Wednesday 27th September

Terms and conditions can be found [here](#).

[Read More](#)

**Category:** [News](#), [Uncategorized](#)

**Tag:** [entrepreneur](#), [female entrepreneur](#), [female founders](#), [manchester](#), [women in tech](#)



**NeuroUnity is a joint research investigation conducted by Atkins, in partnership with NeuroCyber, that centred on uncovering the barriers and enablers that neurodivergent professionals faced throughout the employee lifecycle model.**

In April, the summary findings from the research investigation were presented at CyberUK on the spotlight stage – a great platform for a variety of speakers to discuss current ideas and challenges within the cyber sector. But in case you didn't make it to CyberUK, we've summarised the talk below for you to catch up on.

## **Background to NeuroUnity**

The cyber sector is, and has always been, in need of different ways of thinking and diversity of thought. Knowledge and desire to realise the benefits of neurodivergent talent in the sector is increasing, yet persistent barriers have led to continued inequality and stagnation of opportunity that profoundly affects neurodivergent professionals. To understand this further, we asked participants in our survey what barriers and enablers they had faced as a result of organisations either responding to, or not responding to, needs for each stage of the employment lifecycle model.

## **Summary Results**

When looking to the barriers reported by our participants, there were a series of themes that were persistently cited.

One of these is the perceived neurotypical ideal which is embedded within working practices and processes. For example, during the development and progression stage participants reported a lack of progression as a result of embedded misconceptions within the organisation, and a disproportionate over-reliance on self-advocacy in driving progression.

Alongside this, participants reported barriers associated with the demands of workplace socialisation, for example during the onboarding process. Organisations can run the risk of exerting pressure on new employees to assimilate into the organisation's majority status surrounding values, norms, and culture, this can detrimentally impact neurodivergent professionals, and is heightened by the endorsement of social and networking activities.

When looking to enablers, the environment created and enabled by organisations was an important factor to our participants, through the creation of welcoming, supportive and flexible environments. This extended to the important role that colleagues played within their working lives, particularly when ensuring such an environment was non-judgemental, accepting, and welcoming of all individuals.

## **Recommendations**

*Strength based competency framework*

Neurodivergent professionals in employment can be at a greater risk of experiencing a lack of progression due to rigid competency frameworks. In a move towards redefining what good looks like, we propose that a new strengths-based competency framework should be developed, one which values individual differences, embraces a flexible and adaptive approach, and is committed to understanding and supporting the needs of the individual.

### *Neurodivergence support advisor*

Given that safe channels for disclosure of neurodivergence may not always be accessible or immediately obvious, we recommend that to alleviate the onus away from the employee in choosing whether to disclose through forced self-advocacy, a neurodivergent support and advisory role should be integrated into organisations. This role should be a dedicated function within the organisation, assigned at the employee level and scaled dependent upon need.

### *Auditable Standard*

As it stands, neurodivergent professionals seeking employment or in employment have no common or verified way in which to gain the objective assurance of an organisation's neuro-inclusive credentials, claims, and culture. We recommended that a standard be developed that can be applied by all organisations no matter the size, sector, or location. The standard should centre on the provision of requirements, corresponding guidance, and defined controls associated with the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of focused neurodivergent ED&I programmes.

The NeuroUnity Summary report represents a step towards achieving equity; however, achieving equity also requires support and backing from academia, government, and industry. Therefore, it is hoped that NeuroUnity's findings and recommendations, based on the lived and current experiences of neurodivergent professionals across numerous sectors, will incite action to create lasting change.

**Atkins are a Sponsor of Digital Her.**

[Read More](#)

**Category:** [News](#), [Uncategorized](#)

**Tag:** [atkins](#), [diversity](#), [neurodiversity](#), [technology](#)



**Recently we caught up with Zoriana Dykunska, who works as a Quality Assurance Engineer at GlobalLogic. We asked Zoriana about her journey into digital and tech, the challenges within the industry and how we can all help create change.**

**Tell me about your journey into working in the digital and tech industry?**

At the end of my master's study in Electronic Multimedia Editions, I completed GlobalLogic Manual Basecamp in Ukraine. I successfully passed the final test and interviews for the Manual QA position for the media project and 10 months later I passed an interview for GlobalLogic in the UK & I region. Now I am planning to

explore the Automation part of testing to take up a position on existing and upcoming GL projects.

### **What are the biggest barriers for young women entering the industry?**

As the IT market grows annually, the number of specialists also increases, as does the demand for vacancies. You should have a lot of patience and perseverance to keep trying to reach your goal no matter how many rejections you get before. It's all your experience.

### **Did you have a mentor, and if so, how did they help & encourage you?**

I had a mentor at GL Basecamp and for 3 months when I started working as a trainee QA engineer. They helped me to understand all requirements that I will work on. But before that, I didn't have a mentor. I prepared myself through online courses, YouTube, and local courses. The most productive studies were courses, IT companies provide. The information was taught by current employees of the company who shared their own experience. Before the courses, you had to pass tests on logic, test bases, and the English language level.

### **What is your favourite thing about being part of the industry?**

I am happy to work on a project that involves technical and testing skills, and interacting with people, colleagues in the team, and the customer. This work helps to develop creativity in the approach to tasks and good time management skills. I am happy to get to know like-minded people and learn more and more about our sphere.

### **What could the industry do better to encourage and support women to join the sector and stay within the sector?**

I wish the industry could inspire and support the aspirations of those who want to build a career in technology. Among the many activities and programs are regular conferences, informal meetings, networking, and experience-sharing events, career development training, mentoring, and many others. This makes it easier to enter the IT field and further develop.



**Our Her Voice series highlights women in the Digital Her community, their journeys & their experiences in the tech sector.**

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MentorHER has been a long time in the making. A mentoring programme for women in tech in Greater Manchester, with a focus on community & meaningful support for all participants.

And now it's here!

Our very first cohort, sponsored by the fantastic [Auto Trader](#), gathered together in June for our Kick-Off event. 19 Mentor-Mentee pairs, 38 brilliant women, all committed to supporting one another and working towards gender equity in our

sector.

This first cohort is focussed on women in the first 1-2 years of their tech career, and we anticipate Cohort Two will specifically target career changers.

This week, Cohort One Mentees came together on Wednesday, and Mentors on Thursday, for half-day training sessions with Auto Trader's Heather Leonard. We focussed on what it means to be a Mentor/Mentee, how to effectively set up a new mentoring partnership, tools & techniques from coaching and more.

Both Mentors & Mentees will also have monthly Connect sessions; an optional hour each month to join Heather & Kirsten for additional training and/or support on a specific area of their mentoring journey.

Cohort One are already bonding as a community, with LinkedIn groups springing up and ideas being floated for socials.

Watch this space for more updates from our wonderful cohort & future opportunities to get involved with MentorHER!

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**Ayesha Waseem is a Data Consultant at BAE Systems. We chatted to her about her journey into tech, and her experiences in the sector.**

**Tell me about your journey into working in the digital and tech industry.**

My journey into the digital and tech industry began in 2006 when I graduated from a Pakistani university with a strong foundation in computer science. In 2007, I moved to the United Kingdom and became a homemaker, dedicating myself to raising my family. However, I was eager to continue pursuing my passion for technology and enrolled in an MSC program in Advanced Software Engineering as soon as my children joined school in 2014. This allowed me to

update my skills and stay current with the latest industry trends, preparing me for a career in the digital and tech industry.

My MSC degree landed me my first tech job as a Junior Web Developer. However, I took a break in my career to welcome my youngest child into the family. Once I was ready to resume my passion for technology, I enrolled in the Mindweaver program and joined BAE Systems as a Data Engineer Consultant. This program provided me with the opportunity to upskill and update my knowledge and gave me the confidence to pursue a career in the digital and tech industry. I am now excited to be part of a team at BAE Systems, contributing my skills and expertise to meaningful and impactful projects.

### **What challenges have you found along the way? And how have you overcome them?**

My path wasn't completely conventional, but bridging the learning gap was one of my most important challenges. Participating in programs like Mindweaver helped me fill that gap by learning about new tools and technologies.

### **Did you have a mentor, and if so, how did they help & encourage you?**

I never had a formal mentor, but I was fortunate enough to receive support from my wonderful colleagues, and I am truly grateful for their assistance.

### **What is your favourite thing about being part of the industry?**

One of the most exciting things about being part of the tech industry is the opportunity to learn new things every day. The industry is constantly evolving, and there are always new technologies and innovative solutions to explore. It is also a rewarding industry, as technology has the power to solve complex problems and make a positive impact on society. Additionally, the tech industry provides endless opportunities for continuous learning and growth, whether through upskilling, attending conferences and events, or working on new and challenging projects. This allows professionals in the tech industry to stay engaged and passionate about their work, and to make meaningful contributions to the world around them.

## **Why is it important for programmes such as Digital Her to inspire young people to join the industry?**

It is crucial to launch programs like Digital Her to support future generations because it promotes diversity and inclusivity in the tech industry. Women and other underrepresented groups have historically been excluded from the field, which has resulted in a lack of diversity and a shortage of skilled professionals. By encouraging and supporting young women to pursue careers in tech through initiatives like Digital Her, we can address this imbalance and tap into a wider pool of talent. Additionally, promoting diversity in the tech industry can lead to more innovative solutions and better outcomes for society as a whole. It is also essential to support the next generation in developing the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in a rapidly changing industry, and programs like Digital Her can help to bridge the skills gap and prepare young people for the jobs of the future. Overall, launching programs like Digital Her is vital for creating a more inclusive and sustainable tech industry, benefiting both individuals and society as a whole.

## **Why do you think it's important that we're reaching out to those younger ages?**

Reaching out to young people is super important because it helps them see what's out there in the tech industry and creates a pool of talented folks. A lot of young people might not even know about the opportunities in tech or might not have the resources to pursue a career in it. But by showing them what's possible, we can inspire and prepare the next generation of tech innovators, problem solvers, and all-around tech folks. It's especially important for groups that haven't traditionally been represented in tech, like women and minorities, who might not have had access to the same opportunities and resources as others. Basically, by getting young people psyched about tech and giving them the tools to succeed, we can create a more diverse, inclusive, and innovative tech industry for everyone.

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**Alicia Barczak is Software Developer Delivery Consultant at GlobalLogic. We chatted to Alicia about her journey into tech and her experiences in the sector.**

**Tell me about your journey into working in the digital and tech industry?**

I began my professional career in law having studied law at Lancaster University. I quickly developed a keen interest in how technology can innovate and modernise the way legal services are delivered to clients. After two years of practising law, I decided to make a career switch into the tech industry with a



focus on software development. Since then, I completed a coding bootcamp and I currently work as Delivery Consultant at GlobalLogic within the UK&I region.

## **What challenges have you found along the way? And how have you overcome them?**

Moving away from a familiar industry into an unknown highly technical field was a big challenge. There is a lot to learn, and the tech sector is so vast it can be difficult to know where to start or what to focus on. I tackled this by taking every opportunity I can to learn about the industry and opportunities within it; be that through networking and speaking to people, podcasts, and my own research. I learnt that software development and consulting is a good fit for my skills and as I embark my career in tech, I am very fortunate to be part of GlobalLogic where I am provided with constant guidance on the best tools and technologies to focus my learning on.

## **Did you have a mentor, and if so, how did they help & encourage you?**

At the time of my career switch, I did not have a formal mentor, however I am very lucky to be based in Manchester and have amazing tech communities like Manchester Digital at my disposal, which allowed me to network and seek advice from people already working in the industry. The amount of genuine support and community spirit within the Manchester tech sector is incredible and has been invaluable in guiding me on the right path during my career switch.

Since joining GlobalLogic, I have been mentored by a senior female engineer. I found this mentorship extremely helpful in steering me in the right direction during the early stages of my career at the company.

## **What is your favourite thing about being part of the industry?**

The tech industry is full of endless exciting opportunities which is by far my favourite thing about being part of the industry. No matter what your interests are (be that environment, finance, law) you will be able to find opportunities to work with tech within these areas and most likely drive innovation within them. Because of this, a career in tech is unique and can be very fulfilling as you can find yourself making a real tangible difference to causes you feel passionately about.

## **Why is it important for programmes such as Digital Her to inspire young people to join the industry?**

The tech industry offers a wide range of exciting and rewarding career opportunities and encouraging young people to explore these opportunities will open new possibilities for their future. Most importantly, however, the tech industry is changing the world; tech has a significant impact on all aspects of our lives, so inspiring a diverse pool of young talent to enter the industry is the only way to ensure that the perspectives and experiences of everyone are represented in the development of new technologies which shape our world.

## **What could the industry do better to encourage and support women to join the sector and stay within the sector?**

I think peer-to-peer mentoring between women can go a long way for providing a platform to discuss the challenges that come with being part of the minority, the solutions to these challenges as well as celebrating the amazing achievement of female colleagues. For example, at GlobalLogic we have set up a group of female colleagues which aims to have monthly catchups which in turn serves as an opportunity to do just that over lunch, coffee, and cake!

I think it is also important to recognise that whilst being a woman in tech is a challenge, it is also an opportunity which at times, is something that is not emphasised enough.

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In our latest instalment of Career Insights, GlobalLogic's Josephine Lindley shares her experiences going from being a Sports Therapist & Pilates Teacher to a Consultant/Junior Software Developer in just one year!

<https://youtu.be/3wIGf-ZV2dk>

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