

Emma is the Head of Marketing UK at Adyen, a successful international Fintech. Emma has been promoting diversity within her team so it was great to hear her thoughts around how female underrepresentation within the Tech space can be addressed, which she believes starts from exposing and inspiring individuals at an early age.

How did you start your career within FinTech?

Emma was introduced to Fintech in her first marketing role. As an SEO executive, she managed a portfolio of Fintech products, writing content for them and immersing herself in the industry. As well as giving her an initial understanding on the space, she recognised it to be a fast-paced and upcoming market. She moved on to several growth roles within the Tech space and loved the opportunity to make a real impact on business success.

An environment which encourages authenticity is particularly important to her, so when she was introduced to Adyen, it felt like a perfect fit. With culture being such an important factor to her, Adyen's impressive retention of staff really appealed to her as it demonstrated a people-first focus and a huge opportunity for personal progression. During the interview process she felt an instant pull to the company and was excited and inspired by the success that the brand had in the market.

She describes how a scale-up environment is unique and suited to certain type of person. For somebody that needs process and structure, it can be incredibly overwhelming as it is surprising just how much autonomy you are given to shape your role. There is a test and fail approach within such organisations and she believes this is the culture that fosters success and the stark difference to that in a corporate. Touching on her earlier point around a culture of authenticity, she feels that women thrive in a scale-up as they do not need to act or be seen in a particular light to earn recognition or promotion –and challenges the stereotype of female leaders acting stern or hard-nosed to gain authority.

What is your experience of being a leader?

Emma's experience as a leader has been hugely positive so far and she is extremely grateful for the support system around her within Adyen. She is empowered to work autonomously, to drive her own ideas and challenge the status quo.

When Emma was presented with the opportunity to step up into the Head of position to manage the existing team of eight, her initial feelings were that of 'imposter syndrome' and she worried that the transition from peer to manager could be a potentially uncomfortable one. However, again, accrediting the people and culture at Adyen, she was met with huge amounts of encouragement, and she quickly learnt that you didn't have to be an expert in every field or every role to be an effective leader. The key is setting a clear goal and ensuring that every member of the team understands their role in achieving that goal while coaching and supporting to get the very best out of everyone. Setting this vision gives the team a sense of responsibility and purpose and is the make-up of a high-performing team.

Emma believes that seeing your success through your team speaks volumes to you as a leader. Her own experience is shaped by her team and she firmly believes that building their profile up is an important role of a manager. This becomes even more important when your team consists of females, who typically, shy away from promoting their success. Having seven females on her team, Emma has taken on an active role in raising the team's profile through initiatives such as 'The Marketing Showcase' a session launched to introduce the marketing department to all teams within Adyen and demonstrate how they contribute to the companies' overall growth, promoting their overachievements on their 2022 targets.

What's been the biggest success in your career to date?

Emma and her team have had a hugely successful year and she describes this overall success as her proudest achievement to date. The lack of targets previously across their department not only hindered the sense of togetherness and purpose within the team but meant an absence of a metric to measure their success and future capability. By implementing this commercial framework, the team can acknowledge that they have exceeded all 2022 targets and has built huge amounts of internal credibility. Most importantly, it has developed high morale within the team, who are now all extremely engaged and motivated within their roles. Emma's approach to her team has always been a personal one, understanding each individual's circumstance and motivations - not everybody is interested in progressing linear opportunities or the 'next big thing'. This understanding has allowed her to tailor her management style and meet each employees' expectation to ensure a happy workforce and ensure their longevity at Ayden.

What would be your advice to the next generation of female leaders?

Emma's advice to new leaders would be:

- Don't be afraid to ask for what you want. Your male counterparts will be doing this easily, so it is important to ask for that opportunity, pay rise or promotion
- Involve yourself in new projects, develop skills outside your direct role and learn from your peers as this will create new opportunities for yourself
- Be authentic and find an environment with a culture that matches your values and motivations as this is when you will thrive
- Be a good colleague, remember to appreciate the success of team members and create a positive team morale. This will leave a lasting impression to those around you

What initiatives have been used to promote D&I within Adyen?

Internationally, Adyen recognises the importance of D&I and they have launched successful initiatives to improve issues such as gender underrepresentation. Recognising the statistics around the percentage of women who only apply to a job when are confident that they tick all boxes, Emma believes that more needs to be done at an earlier age to both inspire and educate individuals. Adyen take a proactive approach to this through several successful initiatives, one being a 'Women in Tech' panel, where female leaders across the business discuss their experiences.

Adyen launched a fantastic education workshop programme that invited 60 children from diverse backgrounds into the office to introduce them to the world of fintech and demonstrate the breadth of roles in such a business. They encouraged the children to get involved in code breaking exercises to introduce them to unfamiliar skillsets and expose them to individuals who pursue such careers.

Adyen runs a successful apprenticeship programme that helps improve the social mobility gap by creating opportunities for individuals from a range of backgrounds, particularly those who have not been to university. These individuals have full exposure across the business in a range of role rotations across the likes of sales, marketing and operations which equip them with a breadth of transferable skills for internal success as well as providing a strong foundation of experience and a strong brand on their CV for future employment.

A hiring success for Adyen has been an increase in female recruits across their tech teams. Recognising that traditionally their teams were very male dominated, they decided to approach recruitment in a different way and instead of hunting for talent within the competitive landscape with equal underrepresentation and talent shortage, they consciously expanded their reach to a broader talent pool to identify individuals outside of the 'typical mould' that had a range of transferable skills. This has been hugely successful, and they have since hired 6 female developers who have progressed to be top performers this year.

Adyen have been making some impactful changes to their recruitment process, demonstrating how organisations can start challenging the systemic problems with D&I and address the shortage in talent entering the market.