

Teresa is a successful financial services leader with over 20 years creating high performing sales teams. She is the Chief Commercial Officer for Dividebuy, an award-winning Northern Fintech, and currently the only woman on the senior management team. She is extremely passionate about advocating for gender diversity within the tech and scale-up space.

How did you start your career within FinTech?

Teresa's longstanding career within the Financial Services began by working with traditional banks and lenders. Following the recession, she took a hiatus from the market and joined TYCO in the security space. There, she became involved first-hand with innovation as their business deployed the latest IPAD technology to businesses, enhancing productivity and sales efficiencies with an integrated payment solution. This was unheard of at the time, and this experience fuelled her interest in payments, technology and the Fintech space. She went on to have a hugely successful leadership career across global payments brands before joining Dividebuy, utilising her knowledge on payments and retailers to lead their mission to transform the point of sale finance industry through innovation and technology.

What is your experience of being a leader?

Teresa made a very open and stark statement about her experience of a leader, describing how she has been the only female around the board table in all businesses. This is something she is extremely passionate about addressing and is keen to determine the root cause as to why. She wants to understand how the sector can attract more female talent, and is actively advocating for change in such underrepresentation.

In her experience, moving to a start-up like Dividebuy has been instrumental to her as an individual and has been the best environment for her as a leader. She believes the fast-paced nature of a start-up plays perfectly to women's natural multi-tasking abilities. The flexibility allows the opportunity to strike the perfect blend between home life and work life, focussing on a family-first approach that creates equal opportunities for both parents. The diverse and open culture of a start-up allows a woman's superpowers to thrive, including their ability to show empathy, to be nurturing and passionate. She firmly believes that many females would find entrepreneurship more attractive than a traditional career path – and wants to encourage others to follow suit.

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

Teresa found it difficult to pinpoint one success, describing how every role comes with highs and lows, successes and failures. Notably, the teams that she has built have always been synonymous with her success. In her 25 years as a leader, she is most proud of retaining her staff and creating 'A Players' who have always over-achieved on their targets. Teresa's leadership style has become a crucial part of her personal brand.

When probed around the make-up of a great hire, she characterises an individual who is a self-starter that wants to get the job done and somebody with a solution mindset who presents ideas. An individual with optimism is the key for a Fintech and start-up, someone who can ride the highs and lows with the team, who truly believes that the mistakes and failures are what make you learn and ultimately succeed.

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

The messaging that Teresa wants to promote to all women is that 'you can do it'. Her advice would be:

- Don't be afraid. Learning when to speak up and not being afraid to share opinions will be critical to your success
- Be confident and take risks.
- Follow your dream and find your passion.
- Be as visible as possible and showcase your knowledge. People value authenticity, strategic thinking, and expertise (regardless of gender, race or age).

What initiatives have been used to promote D&I within Dividebuy or previous organisations?

Teresa is proud of the culture they are building at Dividebuy. Although they have a largely diverse and inclusive workforce and support agile working, females are still underrepresented. Teresa is going to be hosting an event in the New Year that will explore this topic, inviting key players in the space to an open discussion around the lack of gender diversity within start-ups and ways to tackle the problem. Solutions may be to address persistent challenges, such as the wider benefit package, childcare needs and remote work options to demonstrate commitment to recruiting, retaining, and supporting women. It may be continued support through sponsorship, mentorship and networking opportunities for women at all levels but ultimately, it is about starting the conversations to drive change.

Having women in the C-suite matters, and this level of representation in leadership can be inspiring to others. Dividebuy have been actively promoting Teresa through LinkedIn, articles and other channels as a key example of a female entrepreneur to demonstrate that there is no glass ceiling for women, and that you can do whatever you want, successfully.