

Directors of Tomorrow blogs

Lucy Merrien – The Ladies' College

The “Directors of Tomorrow” IOD career summit was an excellent opportunity to have a clear insight into the world of work and the vast range of opportunities which are available to us as students in Guernsey. One key takeaway that I learnt from the careers summit was that in Guernsey, we as students are exposed to such a broad variety of industries which offer excellent internships and work experience opportunities for students in Guernsey. These are opportunities that students in similar positions to us in the UK could only dream of. Despite being a small island, Guernsey plays such a large role in shaping many major industries. The panellists at the summit work in several different industries and different companies but were all able to shape and make a difference in their sector of work. This emphasises the point that you do not have to work in a major city to have an impact as people here in Guernsey are exposed to such a broad variety of opportunities locally.

The panellist speakers provided an excellent insight into industries such as accountancy, IT, law and architecture, all of which Guernsey is famous for. I was particularly surprised about how each of them studied in Guernsey and took such different paths, which all lead to successful careers in positions of leadership within their companies. It was insightful to learn about different people’s perspectives of the world of work in Guernsey and what steps each of them took to achieve success. I was especially interested in Emilie Vermeulen who is an Audit Associate Director at KPMG, as she was able to become fully qualified in accountancy at the age of 21, without the need to go to university. This made me appreciate the unique opportunities that students have in Guernsey to start work straight from A-levels, and the support and encouragement that a company such as KPMG can provide you with. Although each panellist took a different path after finishing school in Guernsey, each of them was able to progress quickly to positions of responsibility by working hard and developing strong contacts.

The importance of networking and taking every opportunity available to you was emphasised by each speaker throughout the evening. Alex Galviz, “Authentic Alex”, expressed how she was able to advance through her career by networking with people she had worked with and applying for internships whilst studying at university. However, her underlying message to us was the importance of authenticity in the workplace. Linda Johnson, head of advisory at KPMG stated that, “*People will buy people who come across as real and believable*”. Whilst professionalism is crucial in the workplace, Alex emphasised how important it is to be real and authentic as this will enable you to have higher satisfaction and enjoyment in life. Having a passion and a purpose is an incredible motivator, particularly when starting a business. Founder of Olio, Tessa Clack, emphasised how she was driven to help tackle the issue of food waste. Food waste is a major contributor of climate change, she outlined that “*half of all food waste takes place in the home*”. Her food sharing platform Olio enables people in the same community to share food that would otherwise go to waste. By being passionate about an issue such as food waste, Tessa is motivated to work hard as her work is helping to tackle major issues and is changing lives. This message particularly resonated with me as being authentic, passionate,

and motivated to achieve my goals will enable me to be successful in my career and to have an impact in the world of work.

Isabella Taylor – Blanchelande College

On the 15th of December I was given the opportunity to attend the Directors of Tomorrow summit hosted by the IOD. We heard from many very inspirational speakers such as Tessa Clarke and Alexandra Galaviz aka authentic Alex. We learnt about how they achieved their successful careers through a series of talks, and they gave us some valuable tips for the future of work.

Tessa Clarke was our first key speaker, she started up her own business called Olio. Olio is an app that tackles food waste, as 1/3 of all food is thrown away and half of all food waste happens at home. Olio allows users to share the food they do not want with other users on the app for free. This is a huge invention that helps tackle the problems of food waste in a modern way. Tessa grew up in Yorkshire, she attended university and became a strategy consultant for 3 years. Tessa later moved into a digital role where she got the opportunity to run retail week. Her career ended her up at Dyson where she worked on design. However even with her extraordinarily successful career she later quit her job and decided to run her own business around a subject that was close to her heart-this was food waste. In creating her own business, so she could set her own rules and follow her passion. Although Tessa faced many challenges, such as money. Starting up a business is awfully expensive so Tessa would need to think of an efficient way to gather market research at little costs. She came up with a brilliant idea to make a WhatsApp group and manage it just as her app would later work. This meant she could easily get opinions from people trialling the app and use them as ambassadors. This shows how Tessa accomplished her project even with many challenges and obstacles in her way. I loved hearing what Tessa had to say about her app Olio that now has over 2.5 million users which is an incredible amount for a business that started with limited funds. Tessa is constantly changing her app and adding new features such as the 'made' section on the app which allows users to sell their own creations which has been extremely successful while people have been in lockdown. Through her talk Tessa has really demonstrated her skills and how she cares about the environment and the future of her app. Her aspiration is to have one billion users by 2030. Tessa was exceptionally inspirational to anyone who wants to change the world and to any business that are struggling.

Another key speaker we heard from was Chriss Gnapp, who was representing leapfrog and spoke about the future of work. He stated that Covid-19 has accelerated change in the workplace more than anything else in history. He reassured the audience by saying "Offices will not become obsolete". He shared some figures with us that showed 12% of employees never wanted to go back to the office and that 73% wanted a combination of home and office work. This shows the impact of Covid-19 and how fast the workplace is changing. He told the audience some valuable advice such as to 'never stop learning'.

Furthermore, we got the opportunity to listen to Alexandra Galaviz aka authentic Alex. Alexandra fell into social media accidentally. She was highly successful in the early stages of her career, at age 20 she was head-hunted into foreign exchange and at age 24 she was a leader of foreign exchange. In 2019 she quit her job and went backpacking and set up her own LinkedIn account. On her account she created content to help students and

professionals. She states that authenticity should always come first, and it helps people to get to know you better. As her audience at the event were mostly students, she told us about how important internships are and how they have helped her gain lots of experiences in the world of work. Alexandra also suggested that students should set up a LinkedIn account as soon as possible to develop our personal brand. This encouraged me to set up my own account which I have now done filled with my own personal achievements. Finally, we heard from a group of Guernsey panellists and learnt about the career they developed while living in Guernsey. This demonstrated to the audience how incredible the options in Guernsey are and how we should all take the opportunities that get thrown at us as they could lead to a future career. Attending the Directors of Tomorrow Summit was an amazing experience that I am glad I got to attend. I learnt many valuable experiences I will take with me when I enter the world of work, I am very grateful that the IoD made this event possible.

Elsie Lister – The Ladies' College

My experience of the IoD Directors of Tomorrow Career Inspiration Summit was a greatly beneficial one. Those who attended were given the brilliant opportunity to hear from various people in several job sectors in Guernsey. It was exciting to be able to hear not only from some inspiring people involved in law and accountancy-based professions, but also from those involved in professions, such as IT and architecture, which are often skipped over or forgotten about when Guernsey career choices are mentioned.

The panellist section of the evening was hugely informative and to hear about each person's experience regarding their career was of course, extremely enlightening. I found the speakers to be engaging and genuine about their personal experience involving careers, something which I think is absolutely crucial to inform a person's choices for the future rather than persuade them to take a specific path.

Most notably, hearing from speakers such as Tessa Clarke, the founder of OLIO and Authentic Alex was an amazing opportunity. While Tessa Clarke spoke about the experience she faced when setting up her business, combined with her own aims of helping people through the means of OLIO, Authentic Alex focused on the path of the individual. Particular emphasis was placed on the importance of creating a 'personal brand,' for instance, through the medium of LinkedIn. Authentic Alex's own unique experience only served to show the sheer importance of putting oneself out there as soon as possible. Additionally, Alex spoke about her early aspirations to lead and manage a massive company, something which she did, in fact, achieve at a young age. However, upon reaching the very top of her career goals, she realised her definition of success had been flawed. Much the case for many others, her definition of success was largely based on money and status. Reaching her former definition of success, she realised that she had overlooked the consequences which came with this wealth and status, namely in the form of stress.

While massive emphasis has been placed on career opportunities involving law and accountancy in Guernsey, the career summit provided those listening with greater understanding of other, less-mentioned areas of work, for instance, the aforementioned IT

and architecture-involved sectors. By bringing in speakers to represent these different jobs, it served as a reminder to those attending that there is, in fact, a broader range of careers that can be found in Guernsey than one might first believe.