

## Inspiring a younger generation into STEM and the Aviation Industry

**Our goal:** Inspiring young people to explore careers in STEM and aviation, to support and encourage their future career choices.

**How can you help?** By sharing your story

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Name & job role:  | Vicky Saunders<br>IT Project Manager   |
| What did you enjoy doing when you were younger?                                 | When I wasn't outside playing with friends, I would enjoy learning how to use the computer and playing old school PC games such as Lemmings.   |
| What were your favourite subjects in school? Why?                               | IT, Home Economics and Child Development. I enjoyed the practical and creative sides of these subjects.  |
| What or who inspired you to study these?  | Home Economics was probably my Nan as I would spend time with her in the school holidays baking. The other two subjects I don't think anyone inspired me these were just two areas I was interested in outside of school.  |
| Did you do work experience? Where and did it help in choosing your career path? | I did my work experience at American Express in their Finance Department. I didn't know what I wanted to do when I left school but was more interested in finding a job than continuing with studying. I enjoyed my work experience that I was planning to join the American Express Apprenticeship scheme. I was interviewed and they suggested that I went to colleague for a year before joining. I looked at various courses including hair dressing and beauty therapy, but I decided to do a GNVQ in Business at Haywards Heath College which was a year course. I passed this with distinctions but still had no idea of what I wanted to do as a career. |
| What was your first job?  | After I left college, I still wanted to do an apprenticeship but decided not to do this with American Express. I signed up with a few training companies and was offered my first full time job as an Office Junior for a building maintenance company. I completed Level 2 and Level 3 NVQ's in Administrations, Customer Service and Key Skills (IT, Communication, Application of Number, Personal skills in working with others and improving own learning). After a year as Office Junior I was promoted to a Service Co-ordinator where I was responsible managing the support   |



|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | <p>contracts for Tesco, RBS and KPMG. Basically, when something at one of these sites broke I arranged the engineers to attend to fix the issue, order parts, log support calls.</p>   |
| <p>How did you arrive where you are in your career?</p>               | <p>The building maintenance company which was a small office and our head office was based in Bristol, I was nominated as our IT contact for anything that went wrong and would spend time on the phone to the IT Department. After working there for 5 years I decided I wanted to move on somewhere new. Still not knowing what I wanted to do so I looked at what I enjoyed doing and IT was top of my list. I signed up for a home learning course in Microsoft Office and applied for a job as a PA for a local company that looked like it might be a good place to work. I didn't get the PA role, but they said they would keep my details on file. Not expecting to hear from them again a few months later I got a phone call that they were setting up an IT Helpdesk and thought I would be suitable. This was perfect for me. I went for the interview and got the job. I progressed from being a one-person logging IT queries and passing them on to and IT Support Analyst learning with the help of my colleagues but also my ambition to learn more about IT Support to progress in this field. After 4 and a half years the company was taken over and unfortunately, we were all made redundant. After going somewhere else for a year an ex-colleague contacted me, they had started working at the CAA. The CAA had just brought their IT Support in house and were looking for IT Service Desk Analysts. I started at the CAA, moved to IT Service Desk Team Leader and after 10 years of working and managing the Service Desk I was promoted to IT Project Manager.</p> |
| <p>What do you love about your current job?</p>                       | <p>I love working in IT and still learning all the time. The area of IT I work in now is more Infrastructure focused which I have had very little exposure to previously, so I feel I am developing myself and getting out of the comfort zone that I had in my previous role.</p>   |
| <p>What were the biggest challenges/barriers you had to overcome?</p> | <p>Although I am used to dealing with priorities, managing several deadlines at the same time and work under pressure I find my current role very different to my IT Support background. I am used to be quite hands on from previous roles and am now coordinating others that are doing the practical tasks to deliver the projects.</p> <p>With the support and guidance of my manager, Infrastructure Colleagues and Project Managers in</p>   |

|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | Portfolio Delivery I have been able to find my feet in the role and although I am still learning every day I feel like I am a step further in managing projects well and in a controlled manner.  |
| Who have you looked up to and why?        | My friend who wanted to be a Psychologist, she never gave up on her dream even after being studying at university and being told she didn't have the experience she for the role she kept going with work placements and studying and after 8 years she fully qualified as a doctorate and got the job she always wanted. |
| What is your ambition?                    | To always enjoy the job that I do to get job satisfaction. As Project Manager I would like to think more strategically and delivery projects to a high standard.  |
| What is the best advice you were given?   | Don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone.   |
| What advice would you give a younger you? | Believe in yourself. If you have the drive to do something don't give up. Each path you take may not see the right one at the time but will get you closer to where you want to be.   |

Any additional comments:



Thank you for sharing your journey.