

# Press release

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## Celebrating International Women's Day: An Interview with Rachel Boxall

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At [GEZE UK](#), we know that celebrating [International Women's Day](#) is an important opportunity to **shine a spotlight on the achievements of women** in our workplace and around the world. As a company, we are proud to honour this global movement, recognising its importance not only today but every day, as we strive to create **an equitable and inclusive workplace** for all.

Therefore, GEZE UK's Marketing Manager, Lewis Tandy, recently sat down to talk with Rachel Boxall, Finance Director at GEZE UK, to discuss her journey, challenges, and the importance of gender diversity in the workplace.

**Lewis Tandy (LT):** Hi Rachel, thanks for sitting down with me today. Can you just start off by sharing a little bit about yourself, your background and how you came to hold the position of Finance Director at GEZE UK?

**Rachel Boxall (RB):** Thanks Lewis. As you say I am the FD here at GEZE UK. I am a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Management Accounts (CIMA) and qualified in 2000. I didn't know I wanted to be an accountant till post university so completed my accountancy exams whilst working in my first job on the graduate scheme for engineering company IMI. Over the last 25 years I have worked in both manufacturing and retail.

Back in 2017, I had been with my previous company over 15 years and was ready for a change and new challenge. GEZE UK seemed to fit the bill. I applied and went on to be successful at interview and having got a good vibe when meeting with Kaz and the Board at the time I took on the role. Nearly 8 years later, I am still here and still enjoying it.



**LT:** What are some of the biggest challenges you've faced as a woman in a senior leadership role, and how did you overcome them?



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**RB:** I must be honest, I think many of the challenges would be the same regardless of gender. The biggest challenge I have faced in my work life was at a previous role when the company had very aggressive new American owners who did not understand UK legislation. Their business practices were unethical and I would challenge them. The time difference meant I was working very late and it was very stressful. Ultimately, I did not agree with what they were doing and so overcame this challenge by actually leaving the Company. If I had stayed I would have made myself ill as they were not willing to change. I had to make a decision that was the best for both myself and my family. 2 | 4

**LT: Who were some of your biggest influences or role models throughout your career, and how did they inspire you?**

**RB:** Early on in my career, previous managers have inspired me. When I had my first Financial Controller position, the Group FD used to be very challenging and although at the time I may have resented it, it definitely did me good and made me stand up for myself.

A previous MD I worked for rose to the position from FD which is always inspiring and demonstrates a different career path. I also liked the way he treated people. He was always very fair and decent which has influenced the way I manage now.

**LT: What are some strategies you use to balance work and personal life, especially in such a demanding role?**

**RB:** I am a big believer in work smarter not harder. I always get the job done and yes there may be some out of hours working but I always endeavour to do what I can during the working day and then switch off on evenings/weekends which is why I mainly work in the office to keep that separation.

My husband, Justin and I have always shared the workload when it comes to children and having a cleaner helps!!

**LT: How has being a woman shaped your leadership style and decision-making approach?**

**RB:** I am not sure being a woman has shaped my style more than my personality type and values have. I think being a woman means I do naturally welcome opinions and seek advice before deciding. However, I am also a very logical person and may do that anyway.

**LT: What are you most proud of in your career and your contributions to the company?**

**RB:** I am proud of how I stepped up in my previous company and stuck to my values.

At GEZE UK, I am proud of the contributions I have made to the improved company performance over the last 5 years, We kept the business running through Covid, furloughing employees but then bringing them all back to work. Improved the profitability of the business and we are now operating more efficiently than we have ever done.

**LT: How do you handle moments of self-doubt, and what keeps you motivated during tough times?**

**RB:** I talk to Justin and friends. I actually had some personal coaching last year as I do tend to focus on the negative. I learnt that I should reflect on my achievements more, I wouldn't have this job without being good at what I do and so I should not be so hard on myself. I am also changing the language I use, 'I will' rather than 'I will try', 'I can' rather than 'I think I can' and so on.



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**LT: What's one piece of advice you would give to young women aspiring to reach leadership roles in finance or any other field?**

**RB:** Don't be afraid to speak out and ask questions regardless of who is in the room. You are probably asking what everyone else is thinking. Also, if you don't ask you don't get, have a conversation with your manager - ask for support, pay rise, new challenge. What's the worst that can happen, someone says No and then you move on. 3 | 4

**LT: What are your hopes for the future of gender equality in the workplace, and what steps do you think companies should take to drive progress?**

**RB:** Women do tend to take the career breaks or work part time to bring up Children resulting in reduced earning potential compared with male counter parts. There are not many part time FD jobs for instance.

Even at GEZE, although employees doing the same job are paid the same wage regardless of gender, we have a large gender pay gap as the majority of our female staff are in administrative roles. We need to be encouraging women into those typical male orientated roles especially in construction whether that be through flexible family friendly working policies, tackling gender bias from an early age encouraging young girls to study STEM subjects. We also need a change in perception of the industry – the GEZE GmbH Management Board is 50% female and there are a third of senior Managers who are female at GEZE UK, this should be shouted about.

Women also have to deal with menopause in later life and those hormone changes can have a big influence. I personally know women who have moved to less stressful jobs as they cannot cope with both the job and menopause. Workplaces need to be open to communication on the subject and ensure women can express how they are feeling and not feel ashamed or embarrassed to discuss such matters.

**LT: Finally, what's next for you in your career? Are there any new challenges or goals you're excited about pursuing?**

**RB:** This year at GEZE will be challenging but rewarding as we introduce new reporting to improve the analysis of Company performance informing better decision making. This excites me as will ultimately lead to further improvement. On a personal note I still want to grow, continue to learn and develop my role strategically for both my own benefit and the company's.

For any general enquires, please contact us via our website or email:

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**Note to editors:**

Founded in Germany in 1863, GEZE is one of the world's leading manufacturers of door and window control systems. Investing millions in research, development and manufacture of innovative solutions, GEZE sets the global standard for advanced door and

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window technology. GEZE UK is the official company name and it originates from a German abbreviation, so should always be spelt in capital letters. The background: In 1901 Master locksmith Victor Gretsch joined the company and the business was renamed Gretsch & Co. GmbH. GRETSCHCO was abbreviated to **GE** for the German pronunciation of the letter G and **ZE** for the letter C.



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