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PARTNERS

Emma Philpott
CEO,
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SUCCESSFUL LEADERS

IN THE TIC INDUSTRY

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In the dynamic world of TIC, few individuals embody the spirit of innovation and resilience like Emma Philpott. With a rich background in Natural Sciences and a pivotal role in cyber security, Emma has become a leading figure in the TIC sector. Her journey, marked by adaptability and passion, offers insights into the ever-evolving landscape of cyber security.

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND AND HOW YOU GOT STARTED IN THE TIC SECTOR?

My journey into the TIC sector was a blend of opportunity and necessity. I started off with a degree in Natural Sciences and went on to work in Materials technology. My husband and I went to work in Singapore and Italy for a while but when we arrived back in the UK it was the height of the financial depression and there were no jobs in Materials. Everyone I met in the place we were living, Malvern, seemed to work in cyber security and so, as something to do, I started an informal meet-up for cyber security companies. Through that, I met a couple of academics who had developed a cyber security assessment and certification scheme for small companies. They asked me to join them to help on the business side and that was the start of IASME in 2012. IASME has grown into a major cyber security test and certification company but it was really chance that I became involved in it.



MY JOURNEY INTO THE TIC SECTOR WAS A BLEND OF OPPORTUNITY AND NECESSITY. NAVIGATING THROUGH THE UK'S FINANCIAL DEPRESSION LED ME TO CYBER SECURITY, OPENING A NEW CHAPTER AT IASME.

CAN YOU SHARE WITH US A SPECIFIC PROJECT OR ACCOMPLISHMENT THAT YOU ARE PARTICULARLY PROUD OF AND WHY?

In 2018 IASME initiated a free cyber security training programme for unemployed neurodivergent adults. We then employed the whole first cohort of 14 people and welcomed them into the company. We continued to run these training courses, even though we get no funding for this now. 90% of the trainees have moved to employment and many of the best people in IASME came via this course.

I am particularly proud of this project because it makes so much difference to people's lives. Many people on the training course are long term unemployed and some have faced a lot of issues such as homelessness. To succeed in training and then getting employment, especially in a specialised and high paying industry such as cyber security, makes a massive difference to individual's.

However, it also makes a big difference to IASME. Having such a diverse team within the company, makes IASME succeed against many competitors and be among the best in the industry. We are all very proud of our diverse team and know it makes sense financially too.



THE SUCCESS OF OUR CYBER SECURITY TRAINING FOR NEURODIVERGENT ADULTS GOES BEYOND NUMBERS; IT'S ABOUT TRANSFORMING LIVES AND FOSTERING DIVERSITY, WHICH MAKES IASME STAND OUT IN THE INDUSTRY.

WHAT IS YOUR APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP AND TEAM MANAGEMENT?

I get very excited about the new projects we work on and the possibilities for the future so I try and communicate this excitement and passion to my management team and the whole of IASME. I am much less good at the day to day mechanics of running the company and so I have to rely heavily on my management team to cover all those aspects.

I am well aware that they are essential to the successful running of the company.

We are proud of the diversity of our team and sometimes this diversity of thought can make management challenging. However, it is also what makes us innovative and successful so we work hard at it.

CAN YOU SPEAK TO THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES YOU HAVE FACED IN YOUR CAREER AND HOW YOU OVERCAME THEM?

I have often found it difficult to work for large organisations in the past because I love change and new projects. Large organisations are often not able to allow the flexibility to try new ideas and so I found this difficult and they probably found me difficult! The way I solved this eventually was to work for a very small flexible company and then to set up my own company where I can follow my new ideas as much as I want. My love of constant change does make it hard for the IASME team and becomes increasingly difficult as the company gets bigger. We try and organise IASME to incorporate the flexibility to do new things as well as deliver the primary day to day business.



WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE BIGGEST FACTOR AFFECTING THE TIC INDUSTRY AT THE MOMENT?

I cannot comment on the wider TIC industry but, certainly in cyber security test and certification, the biggest factor is the increasing sophistication of common threats. People anywhere in the world with minimal technical knowledge can now access tools to deliver mass cyber-attacks on business. This means that the minimum level of cyber security required for any business is increasing. However, a large percentage of businesses are not yet even on the journey to implement cyber security. Using mandatory cyber security certification as a tool to raise the importance of cyber security to companies and give them useful and practical feedback on improving security is a key objective.



ESTABLISHING MY OWN COMPANY WAS ABOUT EMBRACING CHANGE AND INNOVATION. IT'S WHERE NEW IDEAS AREN'T JUST WELCOMED, THEY'RE THE NORM. THIS PHILOSOPHY HAS BEEN INTEGRAL TO IASME'S GROWTH AND DYNAMISM.

IN THREE WORDS ONLY, WHAT IS THE SECRET TO YOUR SUCCESS?

OPTIMISM, ENTHUSIASM, AND STUBBORNNESS

HOW DO YOU PRIORITIZE AND MANAGE YOUR WORKLOAD TO ENSURE SUCCESS?

I am not good at prioritising things and I often think of time as elastic. I assume that I will have time to do everything that needs to be done and sometimes I over work without meaning to. I am very lucky to have a great team around me that do prioritise tasks and projects for the organisation and help me to manage this.

**HOW DO YOU SPEND TIME OUTSIDE OF WORK?**

I always feel bad when I am asked this question because my work is my hobby and that sounds really lame. When I am not working I like to read or going walking with my dogs. We live in Malvern which is beautiful and a walk on the hills always makes me feel good.



AWAY FROM THE COMPLEXITIES OF CYBER SECURITY, I FIND SOLACE IN THE SIMPLE PLEASURES OF READING AND WALKING WITH MY DOGS. IT'S THESE MOMENTS OF TRANQUILITY IN THE MALVERN HILLS THAT REJUVENATE MY SPIRIT.