



Diane Bourne at the tramway pilot line project in Preston

Building in career is women's work too

This week saw International Women in Engineering Day, an international awareness campaign to raise the profile of women in engineering and to encourage girls to take up career opportunities

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iane Bourne knew that she didn't want to go to work in an office after completing her A-levels.

A physics teacher suggested that she would make a good engineer and after thorough research Diane decided on The University of Bradford, which appealed to her practical nature.

She said: "It was the best decision I ever made."

Just eight of the 64 students were female and a placement as a Chain Lad reinforced the gender imbalance.

But Diane's ability impressed the firm, and she was offered a permanent role with Kilroe who funded her final year through university.

Despite the scarcity of women in the company Diane was "shown courtesy and respect by the men" and

she fell in love with the camaraderie and team ethos of the industry.

Diane's success is built on nurturing a sharing-caring culture in the work place, defying a comment that she would never amount to anything if she didn't stick up for herself.

Eric Wright Group head-hunted Diane and initiated her ascent through the ranks while simultaneously supporting her family by offering a company crèche to the children of its employees and providing excellent maternity and paternity leave periods.

According to Diane, fairness and equality are core elements in creating success and in stimulating productivity. These values enabled her to become a Director of Eric Wright in 2012 and she was tasked with bringing the infrastructure and water teams together.

As a result, she oversaw a 70 per cent increase in turnover despite challenges in this market.

Now she oversees major projects such as the £25m Preston Trampower Guild Line scheme to bring trams back to the city for the first



time since 1935. The the 3.5-mile tramway, will start with a 1,250m long pilot line in the Deepdale area.

Improving employee satisfaction has always driven Diane and she oversees the Health and Safety and Quality and Environment teams, using empathy to run a positive intervention based behavioural change programme.

Diane said: "There are

only 10 per cent of female engineers although women make up over 50 per cent of the population.

She believes that civil engineering needs to approach children at the 'dream phase' tackling the question 'what do I want to be when I grow up?' in order to address the gender imbalance.

She said: "Engineers are proud to wear their uniforms and the team spirit is

always buoyant!"

As chairman of the Eric Wright Learning Foundation, Diane is helping inspiring young people to consider engineering.

"The Head of Quality and Environment used to be a bricklayer; the Head of Construction used to be a joiner," she said, demonstrating excellent career prospects for practical and hardworking individuals."

Funding

Doors firm backed



Bibby Financial Services has provided a £1.8m Invoice Discounting facility to Lancashire firm Sliders UK, the specialist manufacturer of doors.

The facility allows the business to access funds earlier by releasing cash tied up in invoices.

Based in a state-of-the-art 70,000 square foot factory at Walton Summit, the business supplies more than 300 inline sliding doors, 70 bi-folds and more than 200 composite doors each week.

Founded in 2002, it moved into its state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in 2008. Over the last year, Sliders has seen significant growth in demand, with sales increasing by 20 per cent over past year.

As a result, the business needed a larger facility to serve its growing customer base, while also continuing to invest in growth. BFS's Corporate Team was able to provide Sliders with a larger facility than its previous funder, strengthening cashflow and providing the working capital it needs to support its growth plans.

Jonathan Foxcroft, Finance Director at Sliders, said: "Our business has gone from strength to strength in recent years but, as a result of our success, we outgrew our pre-existing funding agreement with our previous funder. Bibby Financial Services offered us a larger facility that has the capacity to grow alongside our business.

"This extra working capital and the flexibility of the facility provided by BFS means that we no longer need to worry about cashflow."