



EMPOWERING WOMEN: BREAKING THE BIAS

This discussion explores the varying stereotypes and inequalities for women veterans and women in leadership, highlighting the progress made around the world and how businesses can do more to attract women leaders and women veterans.

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INTRODUCTION

Our Ex-Military Careers social enterprise came together for our first networking initiative of 2022, 'Empowering Women: Breaking the Bias', hosted by the lovely Lucy Neal.

We shone a spotlight on four inspirational female leaders, looking at their varying journeys from civilian life and leadership to being women veterans. This discussion looked to amplify the voices of women veterans and leaders around the world.

Discussion points include:

1. The military still operates in a man's world
2. Catering to the differences
3. Women in leadership
4. A pay gap beyond remuneration
5. Women as their own roadblocks
6. Stepping out of your comfort zone
7. The reality of menopause
8. Propelling women forward
9. The future of women in leadership





THE PANEL



LUCY NEAL

Host



Lucy Neal is Group Marketing Manager and Head of DEI Thought Leadership at Ex-Military Careers, part of Trinnovo Group. Lucy is also Co-Founder of Women-in-DevOps at Trinnovo Group, a women's empowerment platform designed to tackle the gender gap in DevOps and empower the female DevOps leaders of the future.

KATHARINA DALKA

Chief Executive Officer



Katharina Dalka is the CEO of StellarOne, a strategy and investment advisory in tech. She is also the Chairwoman and Co-Founder of a Fintech organisation called DYDON, based in Switzerland. Katharina is passionate about female empowerment, and highlights that the support of male allies is particularly important in empowering more women at work.





SAM SMITH

Vice President & Managing Director in EMEA

Kelly OCG

Sam Smith leads KellyOCG as Vice President and Managing Director in EMEA with boundless energy and a unique style. Sam is a highly supportive leader who believes in empowering her team, she embraces failure and experimentation and consistently breaks boundaries to support the creation of next-generation talent solutions.

MELISSA WASHINGTON

Chief Executive Officer



Melissa Washington is an award-winning advocate, speaker, author, entrepreneur, CEO, publisher, and proud Navy veteran. Her diverse pursuits are all underpinned by a mission of service and a passion to empower her fellow women. Melissa currently serves as CEO at the Women's Veterans Alliance, which she founded in 2015.



SARAH CHRISTMAN

Non-Executive Director



Sarah Christman is a Non-Executive Director with the Institute of Risk Management (IRM) and Chair of the Institute's Audit and Risk Committee. Sarah is also the Head of Operational Risk and Resilience for Lowell, one of Europe's largest credit management companies, with a mission to make credit work better for all.



Discussion Highlights

1. Military still operates in a man's world

We kicked off the event noting that more than three quarters of female military personnel describe the uniform and body armour as inappropriate or ill-fitting. Melissa opened the conversation, stating that there is still a way to go when it comes to ensuring women have appropriate uniform and equipment to fulfil their jobs in a safe way. Sam added to this, expressing that as a shorter woman she always had to roll-up her clothes to fit better, and also had difficulty in finding appropriate footwear. She found that in choosing a type of shoe, it came down to whether a woman wanted ill-fitting safety boots or to sacrifice the safety aspect.

Sam also highlighted that it goes further than the military, with various organisations, particularly in construction and civil engineering that still aren't proactively thinking about women's PPE being fit for purpose and fitting correctly. She shone a light on her experience in the military and being on guard duty where she felt uncomfortable in uniform that would not fit properly. This conversation highlighted a call to action for organisations to push for change and make uniform and PPE more accommodating for women of varying shapes and sizes.

2. Catering to the differences

When discussing differing biological needs for women compared to men in the military, we started to unpack the need to understand that women are built differently and therefore have different needs.



Sarah commented that on her first shipment she was the first woman on board and so the shop had started stocking female sanitary items to accommodate to her needs. She highlighted that the reality is that while women should be and can be treated equitably in these roles, it is still important to realise and deliver for women's needs.

Melissa mentioned that the healthcare system needs an adjustment when it comes to women in and out of the military, with military women more likely to be diagnosed with breast cancer compared to those outside of the military. There should be a duty to ensure care for these women because they are exposed to external factors not experienced in civilian life. Sam added to this, noting that it is important not to keep your service a secret and that it is worth letting your GP know that you are a veteran as you may be sped through the process since you are at risk of exposure.

3. Women in leadership

Katharina shone a light on her journey to leadership as a woman in investment, noting that it was a challenge but in a positive way in that she took it on and succeeded. She found that there remains a lot of misogyny, particularly when she spent part of her career in France. Katharina highlighted the importance of normalising conversations about gender disparity and how in verbalising these issues we can do more to drive change.

She reiterated our differences and the importance of recognising it, as well as ensuring that we take it beyond just verbally standing up for women but paving the way for women of the future to ensure more women follow in her footsteps.

4. A pay gap beyond remuneration

We explored how the gender pay gap goes beyond remuneration, but that the delivery of the role should be catered to, according to ability and not gender. Sam highlighted an interesting point, noting that women will not apply to a role if they don't believe they are 100% fit for it, whereas men will if they are only 15% fit for it. Women will talk themselves down in these situations, leaving a huge opportunity for men to be part of the solutions without meaningful challenges or acknowledging the complexities of the opportunity.

Katharina added to this, discussing the importance of training women to improve their negotiation skills. As women tend to undervalue themselves, it can often be seen as a 'favour' to offer a woman a role, even if the salary isn't adequate. Melissa also suggested that businesses should leverage their HR teams, with HR being a female-dominated field these women should be

advocating for negotiation and putting a stop to devaluing women, but rather help them negotiate.

5. Women as their own roadblocks

Sarah added her insight, highlighting that women often get in their own way when it comes to reaching a place of seniority. Women tend to sell themselves short and not believe that they can do it or perhaps that they do not deserve it. Due to this, women tend to therefore reach the level they should have been at later in their careers because they are slower in recognising their own ability and value.

6. Stepping out of your comfort zone

When discussing how businesses can do more to help women reach leadership and be more representative, Katharina identified that there is a representation problem in that people tend to hire their familiars in general. There is a need for organisations and individualsto step out of their comfort zones and hire people outside of their own image, since it is proven that diversity directly benefits businesses and drives better financial performance.

Katharina spoke from her own experience, acknowledging that there is only one other woman that she could name, doing what she is doing at her level and at her age, emphasising this lack of representation for women in leadership.

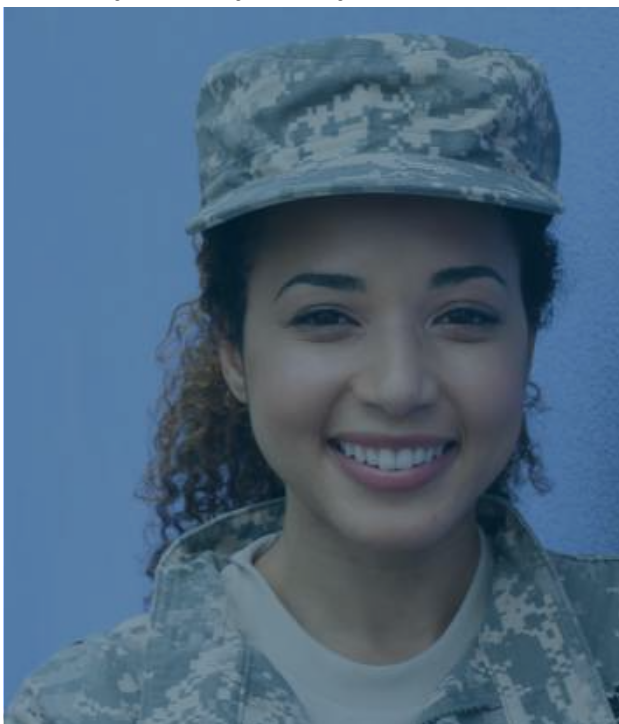


7. The reality of menopause

Earlier in the discussion when covering the biological differences that women face, we touched on menopause as something that needs further normalisation in the workplace. Sarah highlighted the reality of menopause, that we cannot simply fight chemistry and that women will experience “brain fog”. Sam added that we need to do more in terms of wellness, such as menopause leave and additional support being put in place. We concluded that as businesses are doing more for wellbeing and general company benefits, menopause support as well as training to support and educate colleagues on the symptoms and impact is imperative in making the workplace more inclusive.

8. Propelling women forward

Sam highlighted that in creating a more open dialogue, we will be able to create a sense of confidence in talking about it for the women that follow behind us. As a supportive leader in her role at KellyOCG, she is dedicated to ensuring she pushes women forward for the future.



She noted the importance of normalising female-positive language, menopause, and breastfeeding, as well as the power that men have to help make that change as allies.

Following this, Sarah described it as a duty for every one of us to look back and help bring other women forward with us and that if everyone helps someone, it will help a lot. This concept of paying it forward and working together to ensure the women after us can access the opportunities they deserve was paramount in our discussion.

9. The future of women in leadership

Our panel rounded off with their final hopes for the future, depicting a desire to see more women achieving what each of the panel have achieved in their respective fields. Melissa stressed that it is lovely to see the first examples being set, but that she is excited for the day that this becomes unremarkable and it is just another woman doing something that many other women can do.

Sarah stated that she hopes that people will have the courage to build teams that aren't like them but that are different and diverse, as well as the importance of holding yourself accountable for ensuring diversity in your teams.

Sam and Katharina both mentioned their desire to see more women working in senior positions within their industries, with more women leading in corporate finance and tech and a tighter gap between services and civilian life, particularly for women. Sam also hopes for organisations to gain a better understanding of the military offering to their businesses and more respect given to the transition.

LIVE RESEARCH RESULTS

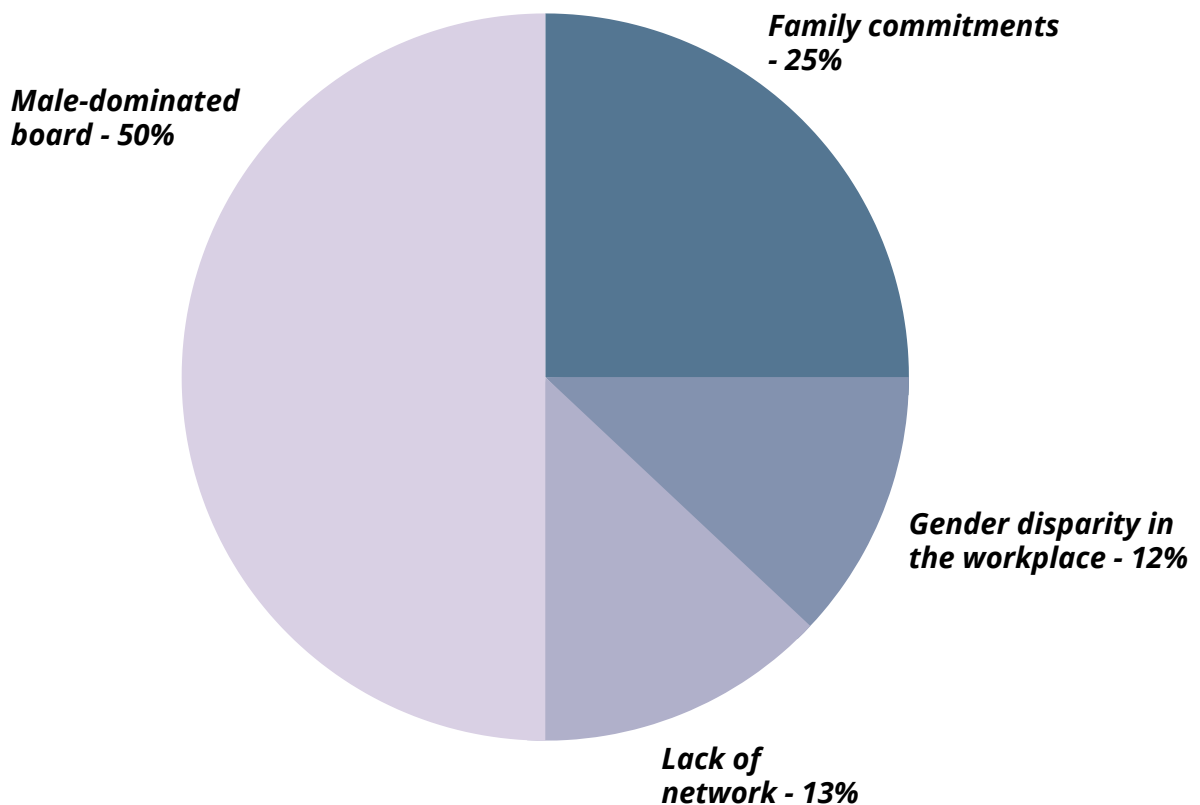
Poll 1. What do you think is the biggest roadblock in getting women into leadership roles?

We discussed the differing roadblocks for women in reaching senior positions and leadership within the corporate environment. We saw 50% of our attendees felt that having a male-dominated board is the biggest roadblock. This shone through in our conversation through Katharina and Sarah's points that it takes courage to hire professionals that are different to you. In order to improve overall business performance, diversity is needed across the board.

A further 25% noted that family commitments acted as a roadblock for them, reiterating the

often-stereotyped care-giver role women are expected to take on. 10% of women in the military have children, compared to 90% of men, presenting this challenge for women to split themselves between their career and family life.

We found that only 13% believed that the biggest roadblock for women is a lack of network and gender disparity within the workplace, evidencing that there is still a way to go when it comes to ensuring representation in the workplace, as well as the importance of creating networks for leading women and women veterans.



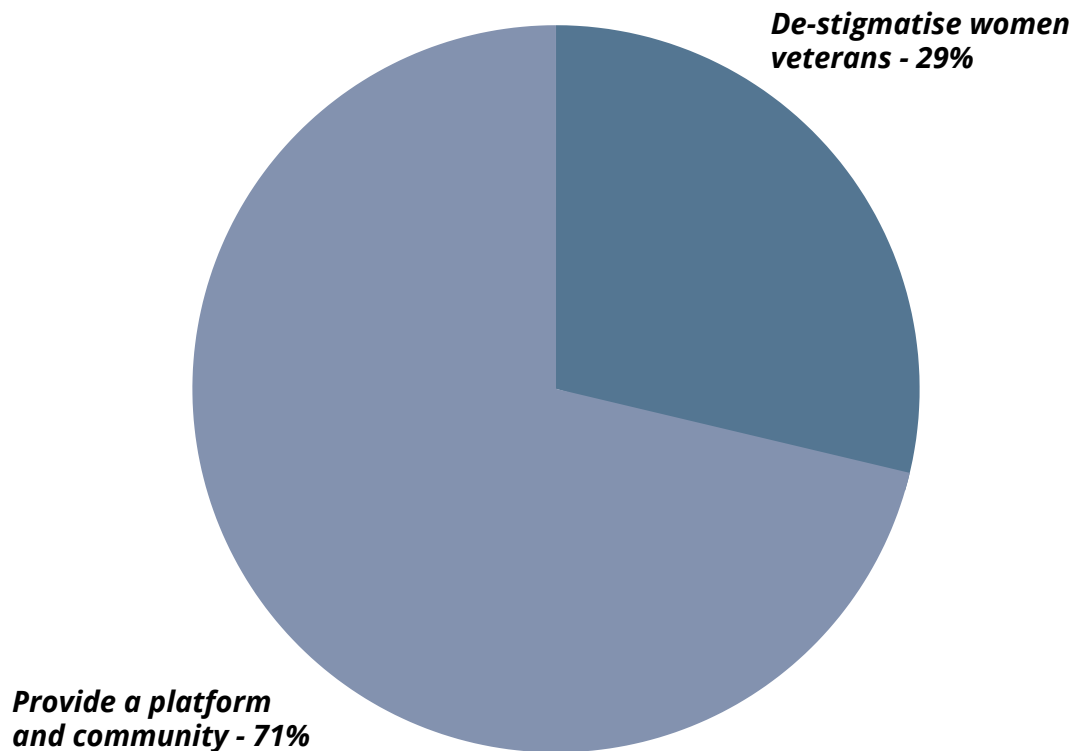
LIVE RESEARCH RESULTS

Poll 2. What can we do to empower women veterans?

Upon asking our panel what we as individuals as well as what business can do to empower women veterans, we extended the question to the audience to explore the most impactful strategies for women empowerment. The majority of our attendees believed that providing a platform and community for women veterans would do more for their empowerment, perhaps creating a sense of togetherness in recognising their veteran status and supporting their transition period post-service.

The rest of our audience suggested that in order to empower women veterans in our

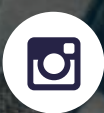
community, we should start with the de-stigmatisation of women veterans, with 29% selecting this option. This coincides with encouraging women to take pride in their veteran status, this highlighted the continued lack in confidence that women leaving the forces have in expressing themselves and their challenges in transitioning. Since many women veterans keep their service a secret, they are often left to find their way into civilian careers on their own with a lack of necessary support. We discussed the importance of encouraging male allyship in ensuring women are recognised in the same way when it comes to their service, regardless of time spent and role in the forces.






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