



## A portrait of Tanya Corsie

Tanya Corsie is Chief Operating Officer at the software company Iken Business Ltd. She has been with the Bristol based business for over 12 years

THE GLASS LIFT

Tanya's project and change management background, alongside an enthusiasm to learn and after subsequent experience, enabled her to take on leadership responsibilities following the sudden death of the CEO.

'Having gained what I viewed as an accidental Directorship, I worked hard to try to model myself on what I thought a leader should be – but many of the leadership networking and training opportunities I took didn't seem to get to the heart of the problem. There were usually lots of egos in the room and **no space for vulnerability** or saying that you didn't know the answer.'

Tanya Corsie is Chief Operating Officer at Iken Business Ltd, she joined the company in 2004 as PA to the Directors and Office Manager. She was enjoying working on complex client facing projects until 2013 when the CEO and co-founder died after a short and sudden illness. The family company was reeling – and Tanya recognised that her help was more important than it had ever been. After working as a general manager for about a year whilst the company came to terms with what had happened, she could see that **she needed to be on the Board in order to be involved at a strategic level** and bring vital and complementary skills to the technically minded senior management team.

**And so the 'accidental' Directorship began.** With her own lively style, Tanya is an energetic addition to the team. Meeting The Glass Lift founders at an Inspiring Women networking event, she was hungry to find out more about the programme, as nothing she'd been to before had quite chimed with her desire to bring new ideas into the business, and support and develop other members of staff to do the same.

Her initial thought during the first session of the ELEVATE programme, was 'Oh dear God, what have I done?' The programme kicks off with **challenging self-reflection** – inviting participants to put the business 'mask' down. This was initially uncomfortable but quickly became a rare and valued opportunity to be authentic and to relax with and learn from the other participants, in a way that Tanya had not experienced in other courses or events. The vulnerability

involved was a powerful aid to examine fears – such as the fear of public speaking – and address them in a positive and constructive way.

The biggest benefit that Tanya has identified is that it has strengthened her belief that the **best employees are those who are curious**. In going outside the organisation to the programme and coming back with ideas, Tanya has given herself and others permission to say they don't know solutions to problems straight away and that the answers might not be inside the company building. She's noticed that **people are showing more initiative**, and thinking about their own career progress and development more than they used to.

Tanya is very aware of needing to manage and prioritise her own energy too. The programme has helped empower her to do so, and she has recently taken her first two week holiday for six years, trusting that others will benefit from the space to try things out and fix any problems that arise. The programme has **let her be the leader she is rather than the leader she thought she ought to be** and, as a role model, this is inspiring others in the company.

As Tanya reflects, 'It's not enough for people to work hard – they need to put thought into it and in my experience, that springs from curiosity and collaboration. It makes the work more interesting and brings new ideas and energy into the business. What's good for the business is good for individuals too. **The ELEVATE programme has definitely benefited me and the business alike.**'

## Contact us

Find out how our expertise could benefit you or your organisation.

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