

Charlotte Colhoun on encouraging young people to reach new heights in the aviation industry

As the start to the academic year approaches, with many internships, apprenticeships and graduate programmes also starting, we must not only celebrate the role that young people can play in shaping future economies but take a moment to reflect on what more can be done to encourage more young talent into the workplace and consider different industries. In the UK, the statistics are stark.

Temps de lecture : minute

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The unemployment rate for those aged from 16 to 24 years has been consistently higher than that for older age groups since comparable records began in 1992 and youth unemployment continues to be 2.5x times higher than the general population figure.

The onus is on leaders to equip young people with the right skills for employment and then continue to nurture and develop those skills in the workplace.

Encouraging young talent's passions and pushing them to go further should also be top of our minds as leaders. The process requires a perceptive blend of communication, transparency, inspiration, and expectation. It also requires a competitive spirit from all parties.

I studied Law and Accounting at The University of Exeter, shortly followed

by obtaining my professional qualification as a Chartered Accountant, while securing foundational experience through the prestigious PwC graduate scheme.

It was through that role I was able to travel the world, visit different countries and soak up a variety of cultures. I was constantly learning and thriving under pressure in a fast-paced environment. Graduate schemes are invaluable because of their predetermined structure and focus on development, enabling graduates to squeeze in an array of training, while being exposed to senior leaders early on and therefore progressing much faster.

It was the dynamism that I'd enjoyed so much at PwC, the need for adeptness in navigating complex financial landscapes and expeditious environments, that attracted me to Vista.

I moved from one sector where I'd grown a breadth of experience during my tenure at PwC to another, aviation -- where I had zero experience, which can be daunting.

However, it's also exciting, and I have embraced the challenge of a new environment. I have been able to apply my foundational experience and intellectual curiosity to develop and progress at Vista.

It's crucial that young people don't feel deterred by having limited experience and remember to treat every opportunity as a launch pad. But equally, it's important for employers to create opportunities to provide young people with those initial door openings.

Young people and employers alike should also be confident of the skills and perspectives young people can bring to drive business objectives. That could be to appeal to wider audiences or establish a greater digital footprint.

And with this year marking Vista's 20th anniversary, there's definitely a sense of appreciation for what we've achieved and a sense of anticipation for what's next.

One thing that is certainly on the agenda, is continuing to push and promote new talent within the company, supporting young people through graduate programmes, internships and apprenticeships across the Group. This means providing opportunities for all walks of life, levels of experience and interest areas.

Having achieved Group CFO in less than six years, I've worked my way up to a position where I can pioneer change. That means calling out a lack of inclusion when I see it and ensuring that young people feel confident pursuing their dream careers.

If you're looking to enter the industry, finding an organisation that has that breadth of experience, experts, and opportunity to learn is crucial. While no one expects you to have all the answers when you're starting out, a zest to learn and improve is key to ensuring your career takes off.

Ultimately, if industries don't embrace young people, they remain grounded and overlook the bounds of talent the younger generation can bring to their business, to reach new heights.

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