



# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

2021



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## What are you individually, as a business and as an industry doing to challenge some preconceptions?

Working in a male dominated field I think the main thing we can do is show up, work hard, don't be afraid to speak up and make your voice heard. You cannot control what others think of you but you can show them what you're capable of. Thankfully the construction industry is changing and its more common to see women in the field, so the best thing you can do is let your work speak for you.

**MELISSA ARAQUE - Project Engineer, North America**

## What 'Choose to Challenge' mean to you?

'Challenge' to me means being comfortable with being uncomfortable and using this mindset to throw yourself into situations that you are unfamiliar with. The biggest challenge that I am still overcoming in my career so far is that I have a non-cognate degree and don't have even an inkling of a construction background. At first, I found this really daunting and overwhelming, but over time I've taught myself to be excited about the learning opportunities I have every day!

**NIKITA BADESHA - Assistant Project Manager, United Kingdom**



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## What 'Choose to Challenge' mean to you?

The best leaders 'choose' to lead by example, take responsibility, listen, are truthful and authentic. Let's collectively uphold these virtues, feel safe to be ourselves within a truly diverse and inclusive world and from that we can ALL truly fulfil our potential.

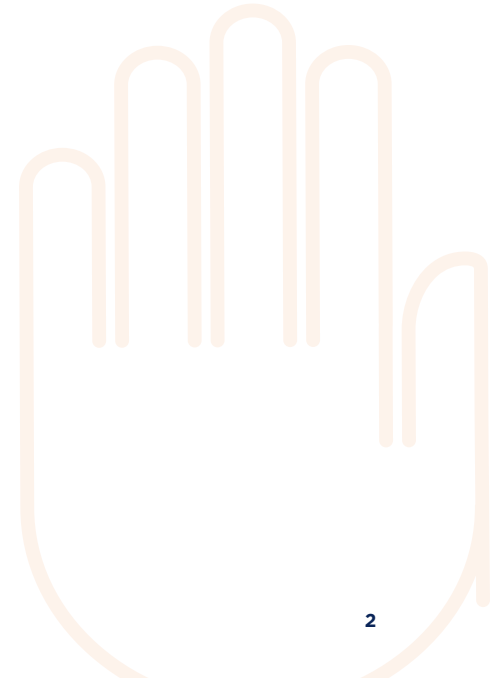
**LISA BARNES** - Partner, United Kingdom



## What 'Choose to Challenge' mean to you?

To me, 'Choose to Challenge' means facing my inner fear, leaving the comfort zone, embracing the possibility of failure but still stepping forward humbly for a better me.

**TIFFANY CHAN** - Director, Hong Kong



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## Greatest challenge you have overcome in your career that could be celebrated?

On a very personal level the biggest challenge for me was to 'come out' to my work colleagues. I thought I would be judged and it would affect my career progression. I got to a point in my career I felt it would be okay to open up, and when I told my colleagues it wasn't a bombshell - it was just accepted. We get too caught up in worrying about what other people think...be yourself every day and be the best you can. At RLB you will be respected and supported.



## **FIONA DOHERTY** - Director, Australia



## What are you individually, as a business and as an industry doing to challenge some preconceptions?

As a minority woman, I believe we have opportunities as the region evolves to grow and accept other BIPOC (black, indigenous, people of color) individuals onto our team. Representation matters! As an industry, we should focus more on STEM fields when speaking with the future our country. The more we can push for interest in these fields the higher the likelihood the industry will diversify.

## **SANAA HUSSAIN** - Senior Cost Manager, North America

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## What are you individually, as a business and as an industry doing to challenge some preconceptions?

Equality in the workplace is really important to me and RLB. We are playing our part to overcome the gender bias recognised throughout the construction industry by encouraging more women into construction, implementing policies which encourage women (and men) to stay in the industry, developing female leaders, and implementing succession programmes. We are encouraging women to speak on panels and they have played a vital part in our schools programme to broaden the awareness of jobs in the construction industry.

Construction isn't all about hard hats, there are so many different opportunities to make a difference to the built environment through sustainability and other exciting initiatives.

As a business we have introduced agile working and core hours enable employees to maintain the empowerment they have had over the last year helping them to balance work and family lives whilst providing a best in class service to our clients. With businesses becoming more humanised over the last year, it is key that we ensure that people can continue to bring whole selves to work once we start to return to offices.

**SARAH DRAPER** - Head of People and Culture, United Kingdom

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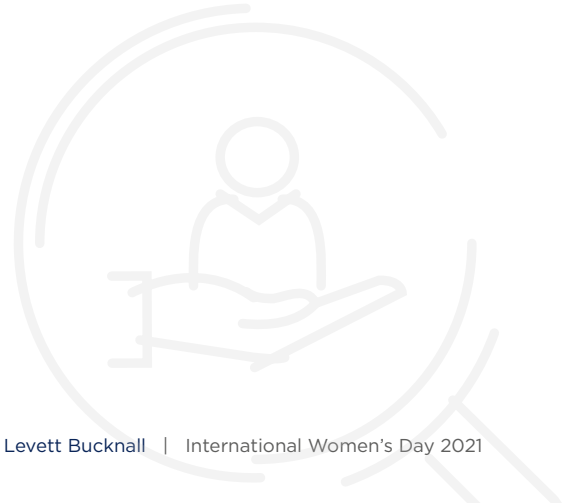
## What are you individually, as a business and as an industry doing to challenge some preconceptions?

Diversity is important and balance can be achieved. I am currently in my third trimester, pregnant with twins and have had the opportunity to continue work. RLB SA has provided me with work flexibility and the opportunity to work from home a few days a week. This flexibility saves time on my commute to and from work and I am able to redirect this time on the preparation of the birth of my children.

My work output is the same, if not better as those extra hours has enabled me to be more focused and retain my overall wellness, mental and physical state through finding the right balance. I still come into the office for meetings and I feel connected with my team and feel my work is valued.

Sometimes we just need to do things a little different to achieve better or the same outcomes.

**GABRIELA PIOTTO - Quantity Surveyor, Australia**



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## What 'Choose to Challenge' mean to you?

To me, 'Choose to Challenge' means making decisive actions to ensure equality across all genders. Women shouldn't need to prove that they belong in any job or industry, purely because of their gender. However, as this is the world we are living in, proving that women do belong, celebrating their achievements, and standing up for those that we see receiving unequal treatment, may just get us to a place where both women and men can choose a career that suits them, without feeling like they don't belong or that they won't succeed, based on their gender.

**DANNI PLATT - Quantity Surveyor, New Zealand**

## What 'Choose to Challenge' mean to you?

This means I choose, without regret, to leave the comfort zone; to take up new opportunities; to receive and evaluate the comments from people with different views, including preconceptions; to face 'mission impossible'; to make decisions from dilemma; and most important, to take action.

**KATHERINE SHUM - Director, Hong Kong**



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## What 'Choose to Challenge' mean to you?

'Choose to Challenge' to me means rising out of my comfort zone, stretching the limits and having the boldness to share especially being a female in a supposing male dominant environment/industry.

**EUNICE TAN** - Associate, Singapore



## What 'Choose to Challenge' mean to you?

2021 continues to be another challenging year. I am taking up the role of General Director to lead RLB Vietnam practice. As a woman in a male dominated industry and in an emerging country, this will be a strong challenge and will require courage, determination and hard work to be successful in this role.

On the International Women's Day, I am mindful of the challenges faced by women and am determined to set the standards that inspire all of us.

**SERENE WONG** - General Director, Vietnam



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## **Greatest challenge you have overcome in your career that could be celebrated?**

The ability to do public speeches!

People around me might find it hard to believe that I used to be a super shy person who relies on others to make the voice. Later the competitive character in my bones and the opportunities provided by female advisors forged me to stand up on the stage and now I've become the trainer of RLB internal sessions and the faculty member of the International WELL Building Institute in recent years.

**MOLLY WU - Associate, China**



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