



Taking it up a gear: Deloitte launches its Women at the Wheel networking series

The excitement was clear to see as over 40 women from 11 automotive organisations came together at The Landmark Hotel in Marylebone for the first in Deloitte's Women at the Wheel series of events. Some women had even travelled from as far as the Midlands to attend; testament to the keen interest in such a group.

As soon as people entered the room there was a buzz; it was clear people were all there for the same reason: to network, learn and enjoy. Everyone was keen to share their experiences of what it is like to be a woman in the industry, how that has changed and might change in future. There were lots of funny stories told about working in a male dominated environment – but none we can repeat here!



The variety was impressive: a wide range of companies that included OEMs, supply chain and fleet (and a utility, too!) representing an array of grades from CEO, Director and Manager, across functions such as engineering, finance, and marketing. It was great to see strong female representation across these key business functions in the automotive industry.

Penny Mallory, the first woman world champion rally car driver, was the keynote speaker. She gave a talk that was different to other coaching seminars. She started with her own experiences-- including a difficult childhood where she became homeless, to then succeeding in being the first female to win the Rally Championship (with a female co-driver to boot)— and then went on to weave in audience examples and demonstrate how world class thinking leads to world class behaviour.



- Everything changes when you change your thinking
- Make the talk in your head positive
- Passion can breed performance
- Don't focus your energy on what you don't need
- Learn from everyone around you to make you better



She concluded by challenging the audience to get out of their comfort zones and think positively about the impact they can make.



It certainly gave some food for thought! Talking to people afterwards, everyone had different takeaways from the session. “Inspiring and engaging session led by Penny”, “extremely thought-provoking” and “interesting to hear how a risk-taking approach can have significant impact on how you see yourself and achieve your end goal,” were some of the comments received.

After Penny there was a certain uplift in the room, as people stayed to mingle and carry on the conversations—despite the long commutes some people had! One of them, Anna Lee from CAT captured the mood when she wrote, “On behalf of myself and my Caterpillar colleagues I'd like to pass on my thanks for such a great evening. Firstly it was fantastic to network with other such interesting and vibrant women and secondly, Penny was very inspiring and really got us all thinking!!”

The launch has spurred a lot of posts on LinkedIn and created great anticipation for the next event, on 23 November, where we will explore how to identify and build your own brand.

A big thanks to Sarah Noble and everyone (including the four brave men who attended!) who helped make this event such a success. Well done, everyone!

