

# Women in quality

On Sunday 8 March, many countries will be celebrating International Women's Day, to raise awareness of gender equality and the importance of bringing diversity into societies and organisations around the world. As the day approaches, Daniel Moore speaks with several women who have been instrumental in championing quality and driving positive change for the foreseeable future

Over the last century, International Women's Day (IWD) has become a globally recognised event, which commemorates the success of women from all different walks of life. This year's theme is #EachforEqual ([internationalwomensday.com](http://internationalwomensday.com)), which focuses on gender parity by encouraging people to 'collectively' have conversations and take action to challenge stereotypes, fight bias, and celebrate women's achievements.

The campaign will run for a full year, to help motivate more people to get involved and work towards the end goal of gender equal workplaces.

According to the *Women in business report: building a blueprint for action*, published by global business adviser Grant Thornton (March 2019), one in three managers in the EU are female, with under a third (28 per cent) of them holding senior roles, compared to their male counterparts. The findings also highlighted that 31 per cent of women held senior management positions in North America, while the highest figure of 32 per cent was recorded in Eastern Europe. Conversely, the *Gender Equity Insights 2019: Breaking through the Glass Ceiling (March 2019)* report, from the Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre (BCEC), reveals that women account for almost half of Australia's workforce (50 per cent), and says: "If the current growth patterns continue, we can expect to see equal representation of women and men in full-time Key Management Personnel roles by 2030".

Although other countries have pledged to increase the number of women working in higher positions, it is clear from the reports that further actions and initiatives are required to increase those figures, and ultimately bring a gender balance into the workplace. Looking ahead, QW talks to some key women who have achieved great things and are helping to raise the profile of women in the quality profession. ▶

## Akorfa Wuttor

Assistant Lecturer

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Sector: Education

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“More women in the quality profession means more advocacy for quality initiatives” – Akorfa Wuttor

### Quality World: How did you start out your career in quality auditing?

**Akorfa Wuttor:** My interest in quality auditing began seven years ago, when I started a Masters' in Business Administration in Total Quality Management (TQM). Lionel Abbey, CQP FCQI, one of the visiting Lecturers, sparked the curiosity in me and I've never looked back. After graduation, he took me on as his Graduate Teaching Assistant until I was fully qualified by the University of Professional Studies, Accra (UPSA), as an Assistant Lecturer.

We both co-teach quality management systems and excellence models. This course focuses on the ISO 9001, 9004, 14001, 45001 and 10005 standards, as well as the quality awards and excellence models, including: the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) framework; RADAR Logic, and the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA) criteria for Performance Excellence.

### QW: Why did you choose to work in the quality profession?

**AW:** Most of the problems in my community appear to be quality-related, and the prospects of seeing rapid results and changes engineered through quality audits gives me an immense sense of achievement. Moreover, I like the challenges that it comes with, making high-pressured decisions in relation to risks assessment and non-compliance.

The auditing profession always reminds you to be of high repute, fair, honest, and objective. Quality audits put everyone on their toes to work with a disciplined, committed, and consistent mindset.

### QW: What is the biggest achievement in your career so far?

**AW:** Successfully organising World Quality Day (WQD) celebrations for 2018 and 2019, respectively. Last year, we decided to take the celebration to the doorsteps of 13 organisations in Ghana's capital, Accra. This included businesses in the healthcare, food, and beverage industries.

The WQD celebrations and practical external audits formed part of the students' formative assessments, and contributed towards 40 per cent of their semester scores. UPSA has been at the forefront of WQD and I am the project lead for it.

### QW: Why does Ghana need more women working in quality roles?

**AW:** In Ghana, quality practices are prominent in highly regulated industries. Some people don't know what careers are available in quality and I often find myself explaining my career to them. More women in the quality profession means more advocacy for quality initiatives. After studying the manual, *Regional Code of Hygienic Practice for Street-Vended Foods in Asia* by the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), I thought, "We need enforcement like this in Ghana". There are thousands of street food vendors in my country, most of whom are run by women. My students and I are ready and willing to train these vendors – all we need is the mandate. Just

under two years ago, a colleague and I embarked on a community project training the food vendors in the UPSA catchment area on food safety and hygienic practices, which turned out to be very successful.

### QW: Where do you see yourself in the next five years?

**AW:** There is a popular saying that "every policeman aspires to be an Inspector General of Police (IGP)". I hope to complete my doctoral degree in Quality Systems Management at the National Graduate School (NGS) of Quality Management in Boston, US, this year.

My next big project is to commit to the design of a Bachelor of Science (BSc) degree in TQM at UPSA, which I have been working on with other colleagues for many months now. When this programme is fully launched in 2022, it could accelerate my progression up the academic ladder alongside scholarly publications in ranked journals.

A BSc in TQM will popularise quality management education in Ghana and create the curiosity and interest in young adults to fully explore the many career paths that are available to them in quality management.

### QW: How is UPSA planning to incorporate the IWD theme this year?

**AW:** UPSA's female heads of department and administrators – in conjunction with the Graduate School Women's Commissioner – will support me by organising a focus group discussion with all-female graduate and final year undergraduate students on the theme #EachforEqual. Discussions will focus on the stereotypes against women in our community, as well as increasing awareness of unconscious bias, and how to fight it in our society.

Other proposed activities include: launching an online campaign in line with #EachforEqual, where we are looking to acquire over 1,000 signatures across Ghana to pledge their commitment to #SupportMoreWomenSucceed at all levels in our community. Another initiative we are exploring is for men working in key positions and in heavily regulated industries, who would be engaged via video interviews, to pledge their support to women in the quality profession.

## Beatriz Bottner

Former Senior Vice President, Global Head of Risk, Compliance and Corporate Social Responsibility

Company: Diaverum

Sector: Healthcare (Renal)

Location: Munich, Germany

LinkedIn: [bit.ly/38tL8Bv](https://bit.ly/38tL8Bv)

### Quality World: Why did you choose to work in the quality profession?

**Beatriz Bottner:** I started working in the quality profession after graduating from Fachhochschule Heilbronn university. My first job was Quality Consultant Quality Manager (QM) at Salzer and Prantner GmbH in Germany.

Within this role, in 1994, I undertook professional training in ISO 9000. Twenty-six years later, quality has still remained a big passion of mine.

### QW: What were your main responsibilities at Diaverum?

**BB:** Reporting to the CEO and as member of the Executive Leadership Team, I was responsible for the development and alignment of the global quality and environmental management system policies' framework.

This involved coordinating and cascading processes to all 21 operating countries within the Diaverum Group.

I was the Lead in building a locally based quality manager network and providing training globally to enhance competency and awareness. We also launched Diaverum's Global Integrated Audit Process programme.

My role in the company was extended. Continuing as the Global Head of Quality and Compliance, I took over with a brilliant corporate and local team and also as the Lead for the newly enhanced Enterprise Risk Management at Diaverum.

I am also responsible for the development, implementation and monitoring of the Compliance Management System.

### QW: What are your biggest achievements in your quality career?

**BB:** Starting in my junior role after university as a Quality Consultant QM at Salzer and Prantner GmbH in Germany; moving into Quality Auditor education and training with the Institute of Quality Assurance [as the CQI was then known] in 1996-1998, and taking on the position of General Manager

and European Head in an international notified certification body, overseeing the international ISO certification schemes under accreditation. It has been quite the journey, covering various roles within the quality world.

### QW: What do you think needs to be done to bring more gender diversity into the workplace?

**BB:** I prefer to invest in the equality of everyone by having young talent in my team and building strong competencies.

I believe we need to focus beyond technicalities and more in creating leadership skills in young women and teach them complementarity. Diversity is about including all perspectives.

### QW: What advice would you give to other women working in quality who are looking to progress into more senior roles?

**BB:** Quality is not a standalone profession. The trend is to apply an integrated approach, embracing it with risk, corporate social responsibility and compliance matters. As women, we need to think outside of the box, be firm, self-aware and deliver!

Most importantly though, I believe that we should never try to copy or imitate behaviours and attitudes of male leaders. Women are and should always be different, adding value by complementarity.



“As women, we need to think outside of the box and be firm, self-aware and deliver!”  
– Beatriz Bottner

Photo: Elisa Di Marco

**Angelique Macrez, CQP MCQI**

Group Performance Improvement Manager

Company: Osborne  
Sector: Construction  
Location: Reigate, UK  
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Photo: Harry Grout

**Quality World: Why did you choose to work in the quality profession?**

**Angelique Macrez:** I think it's always been a part of my DNA. When I studied at the Université des Sciences et Technologies de Lille in France, I met a professor there called Jean-Marie Châtelet, who inspired me to study a MSc of Science in Quality and Environment. After graduating, I began working in quality and have done so continuously since, as I have a strong passion for it.

**QW: What has been the biggest achievement in your career so far?**

**AM:** Winning 'Quality Professional of the Year' at The 2019 International Quality Awards (IQA). Being a woman, non-native English speaker, and working in the construction sector, which traditionally does not adapt easily to new quality approaches and is very male-dominated, was such a big achievement for me.

The quality culture and processes that I have embedded in Osborne, does not only impact the organisation itself, but it can also positively influence the construction sector and quality profession as a whole. For example, in early 2019, we launched our supply chain quality engagement programme, which generated some open and honest conversations.

We developed this initiative to help us improve the quality of our buildings that we deliver for customers and respective businesses. We are still monitoring our progress and have planned our next workshop.

**QW: Is there anyone who has inspired or influenced your career path?**

**AM:** As part of my postgraduate diploma in Global Quality Management at the International Institute of Management in Paris, I had the great opportunity to work closely with Fabrice Bonnifet, Sustainable Development and Quality Group Director at Bouygues – a French construction firm – on Bouygues' self-assessment software: Autoevaluation et Benchmarking du groupe BouYgues (ABBY).

Fabrice certainly influenced my career path by instilling trust, helping me learn new skills, and not least passing his passion [for quality] onto me. Through his mentoring, I learned the importance of honesty in business and why is it even more important in the quality profession.

**QW: Where do you see yourself in five years' time?**

**AM:** I joined Osborne over two years ago as a Group Performance Improvement Manager, with a clear direction of where I wanted the business to be in the future.

I am hoping that with my infectious drive and enthusiasm, I will carry on taking more people on our quality journey and leading our business to enter the 2020 IQA 'Quality Organisation of the Year' category.

**Increasing gender diversity in construction**

UK-based construction firm, Osborne, discusses its ongoing projects and plans to attract more women into the sector and upcoming celebrations for International Women's Day, this month

Osborne has been spearheading various activities to bring gender diversity into the construction sector. From early engagement in school years through to trade apprenticeships, these initiatives have played a vital role in helping the company recruit more women, and its female workforce with their internal career progression.

According to the Office of National Statistics, 13 per cent of the UK's construction workforce are women, however, Osborne reports that it has almost doubled this figure to 24 per cent, through its ongoing projects.

Some of the company's activities include: a flexible working initiative to support employees in caring for their children, the elderly, and dependant family members, and significant improvements to its maternity support programme. The firm has also set up a training programme for its hiring managers, which has been designed to eliminate unconscious bias and recognise the importance of a balanced and fair selection process, when recruiting potential employees.

A statement from the firm, said: "We are seeing significant movement in career progression for our female employees. Through our gender pay data and reporting, we have seen the proportion of female employees in the top and upper middle pay bands increase. In the lower middle and lower pay bands, the proportion of female employees has reduced as our female colleagues develop their skills and competencies to progress in their careers."

Osborne also has a women's networking group, comprising of women at all levels across the organisation up to Executive Director. The construction firm says that the group will lead the company's plans and preparations for International Women's Day this year, which will be announced closer to the time. As part of the celebrations, Osborne will be posting and sharing learning materials through its learning management system platform, while running a programme of external communications via its digital and social media channels.

**Alex Carrillo**

Regional Director Quality Operations

Company: Teleflex  
Industry: Medical devices  
Location: San Diego, US  
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**Quality World: What are your principal duties at Teleflex?**

**Alex Carrillo:** I'm responsible for our regional quality system, quality process, and overseeing the quality operations for the sites under my region (which is currently Mexico). Under those responsibilities, there are certain business and regulatory requirements that need to be maintained.

My team and I assess the quality of our products at every step of the production life-cycle, looking at the cost of quality for those products, and ways in which we can improve our processes and quality systems, so that we continue delivering medical devices that are both safe and effective. If patients don't receive their products, I need to make sure I'm reactive and respond to this quickly, effectively, and in line with current regulations.

**QW: What has been one of your key achievements so far?**

**AC:** I've been fortunate enough to be able to help people develop into more senior management positions, engineering roles and even more specific ones such as sterility assurance.

It's a great achievement for me knowing that I've played an important role in someone's career development. Some of the people I've trained in the

past are now senior managers or have very specific technical roles within their organisations, so that is quite rewarding.

**QW: Where do you see yourself in five years' time?**

**AC:** Continuing to support the medical devices sector. I get a lot of satisfaction knowing that by delivering products that are safe and effective, we're improving the quality of life of a person and their loved ones.

Further down the line, it would be great to secure a higher executive and global role within Teleflex.

**QW: Do you have role model who has been instrumental in your quality career?**

**AC:** My boss at my previous company, Elekta. Under her management, I learned the ability to look at the bigger picture; the business as a whole, and being able to manage an entire region, with her advice and guidance.

**QW: Why do you think we need more women working in medical devices?**

**AC:** Achieving quality in medical devices is a combination of two main elements. The first one is having the experience and understanding of the regulatory and business landscape, while the second element is having the ability to lead or lead others, and being able to create a network within your organisation to meet the requirements of the company.

I believe women in leadership, especially in quality, bring those two concepts together very well. There's opportunities for more women to lead teams, work with others in senior management, and make quality teams shine.

**QW: What advice would you give to women who are looking to progress into a senior leadership position?**

**AC:** The sky's the limit. Don't stop learning, and make sure you're challenging yourself as a quality leader, ensuring that the concept of improvement is always there, not only for your self development, but also for improving the processes and the people around you. This idea needs to be embedded into any leader's DNA, not just women.

You have to continuously improve, and make it a part of your professional and private life, so that you can understand quality better.



To read more success stories from women in quality, visit: [bit.ly/2tPM6JW](https://bit.ly/2tPM6JW)