



# International Women's Day

In Conversation with RBK

**RBK**

#InternationalWomensDay2023



# International Women's Day

## 2023 Campaign Theme: #EmbraceEquity

- Equity isn't just a nice-to-have, it's a must-have.
- A focus on gender equity needs to be part of every society's DNA.
- It's critical to understand the difference between equity & equality.

### The difference between Equality and Equity

- Equality means giving the same resources or opportunities to an individual or a group of people.
- Equity acknowledges that each person or group of people has different circumstances and assigns the resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome.



## Foreword

Welcome to **'In Conversation with RBK'**, our International Women's Day Celebration, which showcases a selection of our 125 female voices in RBK.

For me, this year's theme #EmbraceEquity resonates with RBK's strategy of putting people first. It is also about acknowledging everyone's individuality and nurturing and developing each member of the team to achieve their potential whatever their unique circumstances are.

The importance of family, free time and work life balance is highlighted in many of the responses. At RBK, our understanding and personal approach, together with our flexible working arrangements, help make the juggle as a working person more manageable - whether that is caring for a small child or indeed a sick parent.

I have really enjoyed hearing your contributions and was touched by how many mentioned a parent as the person they admired most. As a very proud mother of four, that is the gold standard that I am working towards in my most important and rewarding role. I am privileged to be able to combine being a parent with a challenging and rewarding career in RBK. In what was traditionally a male-dominated profession, I am proud to be one of four female partners and to see the continued strengthening of female participation across all management levels in RBK.

Finally, thank you in particular to Deirdre, Sinead and Louise for your continued efforts in celebrating IWD and for championing this project, which I am delighted to endorse and be part of.

Together we can all help forge an equal world.

Let's all embrace equity today, and always.

**Jackie Masterson**  
Head of Tax



*Name:* Jennifer Brennan  
*Title:* Director  
*Department:* Corporate Finance  
*Office:* Athlone



***What is the most helpful career advice anyone has ever given you?***

Work to live and don't live to work. Strive for a work-life balance, prioritise family and your mental health. The grass isn't always greener so don't make decisions based purely on money.

***What is the biggest risk you have taken?***

Changing careers in my late 20's - I had no accountancy experience or background at all (not even for my leaving cert) so took a risk moving from law to accountancy.

***Who do you most admire and why?***

Although she has passed, the person I have admired most in my life is my mother. She was the most caring and selfless person I have known and 20 years on from her death I still have people tell me how amazing she was and how fondly she is remembered.

***This year's International Women's Day theme is #EmbraceEquity. What does this mean to you?***

Embracing equity is about cultivating and changing mindsets, but in men and women. We need to get to a point where women are actually treated equally but also feel they are treated equal in the workplace, at home, in sports etc. to their male counterparts. It is also about changing behaviors and calling out obvious gender bias but also inherent day-to-day practices that are overlooked or written off as 'boys being boys' or 'they're old school so it's ok'.

I think this starts at home and in school so it is necessary to start at home and also for our schools to create an affirming, inclusive and equitable educational system.

*Name:* Mary Ellen Halligan  
*Title:* Accountant Trainee  
*Department:* Audit & Accounting  
*Office:* Roscommon



***What is the most helpful career advice anyone has ever given you?***

Attach yourself to a purpose, not a job. Hard work beats talent, when talent doesn't work hard.

***What would you say to yourself at 18 that you didn't know until now?***

Never underestimate the power of consistency. Success is the sum of small efforts repeated, day in and day out.

***Who do you most admire and why?***

My mother - her work ethic and never give up attitude in every aspect of life.



*Name:* Alisha Viyoral Barboza  
*Title:* Trainee Accountant  
*Department:* SME  
*Office:* Dublin



***What is the most helpful career advice anyone has ever given you?***

Back when I was in my bachelor's, one of my professors showed me his business card and said, "In your business card, next to your name, you cannot add how much money you earn, but you surely can add all your degrees and qualifications. Learning is never a waste". This motivated me to become a chartered accountant knowing that it won't be easy, but it will be worth it.

***Who do you most admire and why?***

There is this Indian actor - Shah Rukh Khan who I admire the most and, I'm his die-hard fan. Coming from a small and humble background to becoming the king of Bollywood, he still is considered down to earth and kind. They say that 'never meet your heroes', but I wish I do.

***This year's International Women's Day theme is #EmbraceEquity. What does this mean to you?***

A group of people may be given an equal number of resources for their well-being. But those resources don't really make everyone 'Equal'. In today's business environment, where there is a group working culture, equity plays an important part in individual development and the development of a team.

So for me, #EmbraceEquity would mean providing the right person with the right resource/opportunity.

*Name:* Donna Carey  
*Title:* Senior Manager  
*Department:* Corporate Compliance  
*Office:* Athlone



***What is the most helpful career advice anyone has ever given you?***

To do the right thing.

***Who do you most admire and why?***

My Father because he is the most positive person I have ever met and I am his favorite child.

***What is your proudest achievement whilst working at RBK?***

Receiving my Associateship with CGI.



**We will celebrate  
women's  
achievements**

**#EmbraceEquity**

*Name:* Nessa Griffin  
*Title:* Senior  
*Department:* Tax  
*Office:* Dublin



*If you could have any other job in the world what would it be?*

I would be a sports journalist.

*Who do you most admire and why?*

Vicky Phelan – for her exemplary courage and integrity, her ability to put her personal experiences aside as she tirelessly campaigned for better healthcare for women in Ireland and for her fearlessness and determination in her quest for change and accountability.

*What is your proudest achievement whilst working at RBK?*

Passing my Final Admitting Examinations with the Chartered Accountants Ireland.



*Name:* Michelle O'Donoghue  
*Title:* Partner  
*Department:* Governance, Risk & Assurance  
*Office:* Athlone



*What is the most helpful career advice anyone has ever given you?*

It has to be a former employer who said to me that its important in life to find something that you enjoy doing. If you find something that you enjoy doing, work is easy. Therefore I think that everyone should concentrate on finding their own niche in life – figure out what you enjoy doing and work at that. There is no point staying in a job that you don't enjoy – find something you enjoy doing and go for it!

*If you were to do anything differently in your career to date, what would it be?*

I think that I would have looked for a mentor earlier in my career. Everyone needs to have a person to support them throughout their career and who will help them to be the best person they can. A mentor can be invaluable to challenge your way of thinking, provide a sounding board for ideas in a supportive manner, get you out of your comfort zone and challenge you to be the best you can. For those reading this, if you haven't got a mentor yet go and get one!

*Who do you most admire and why?*

I think Michele Mouton is fabulous. She is a French rally driver who is the most successful female rally driver in the world and holds the title to this day. Her father was her biggest advocate and purchased her first car for her. She had a raw talent for speed and the sport of rally driving and won 4 rally championships over the course of her career. She is a great inspiration for what can be achieved when you believe in yourself and your talents. She is incredibly modest in that she keeps all her trophies in a cardboard box in her garden shed!

*Name:* Doreen Patten  
*Title:* Manager  
*Department:* Audit  
*Office:* Athlone



***What is the most helpful career advice anyone has ever given you?***

If you've stopped learning in your role do something about it. (I have changed it slightly to be suitable for work!)

***If you could have any other job in the world what would it be?***

I have always said I would like to be a college lecturer.

***What is your proudest achievement whilst working at RBK?***

I don't have any one moment but the proudest I have always felt in work is when someone, who I helped train during their trainee contract, qualifies & knowing I had some small part in them achieving that.



*Name:* Yvonne Clarke  
*Title:* Manager  
*Department:* HR Solutions  
*Office:* Athlone



***If you were to do anything differently in your career to date, what would it be?***

I wanted to be a Psychologist when I left school and studied Psychoanalysis instead. I would have liked to focus more on Organisational Psychology and what makes people "tick" - I still might!

***What would you say to yourself at 18 that you didn't know until now?***

Enjoy every minute of college and the freedom that it brings, travel, see the world, meet different people and experience different cultures.

***Who do you most admire and why?***

Non-famous - my 11 year old daughter - I just love her outlook on life and she has an amazing natural spirit, yet she is kind and considerate with it - long may it last!

Famous - I really admire Phoebe Waller-Bridge, Actor and Screen Writer - she is a brilliantly funny actor but also an extremely talents writer; the breadth and depth of her talent is astonishing from Fleabag to Killing Eve to James Bond.

***This year's International Women's Day theme is #EmbraceEquity. What does this mean to you?***

Working in HR, embracing diversity and promoting inclusiveness is second nature (or at least it should be!) Understanding and empathy when dealing with people as everyone has a unique background and set of experiences that must be respected and valued.

*Name:* Suzanne Moran  
*Title:* Administrator  
*Department:* Administration  
*Office:* Roscommon



***What is the most helpful career advice anyone has ever given you?***

Hard work pays off, have a positive attitude and be a team player.

***What would you say to yourself at 18 that you didn't know until now.***

Don't get hung up on what others think, do what makes you happy.

***If there was one more hour in the day, what would you spend it on?***

With my family, the years are flying by and it can be tough to master work / life balance.



*Name:* Yasmin Biriáh  
*Title:* HR Graduate  
*Department:* HR  
*Office:* Athlone



***What is the most helpful career advice anyone has ever given you?***

A positive mind-set is your most powerful tool. Think positive and you really can do anything. The smallest of problems can feel like mountains to climb if you think negatively. Maybe you don't like your job, or you've just failed an exam - keep a smile on your face and keep looking forward. Every day is a fresh start and another chance to reach your final goal.

***What is the biggest risk you have taken?***

I worked in Primark for 6 years, with a huge team and a good HR function. I wanted to learn more about HR but I couldn't in my job, I felt very restricted. Although it was a safe, comfortable job and the pandemic had just begun, I wanted to explore other options so I decided to leave. I worked in accounts first, before moving into HR. Then I joined RBK. If I hadn't left my old job and taken a risk, I wouldn't have this chance to work with such a great HR team.

***This year's International Women's Day theme is #EmbraceEquity. What does this mean to you?***

Embracing Equity is building a culture of inclusivity. Some communities face more problems than others, to do the exact same things, Eg. women or people of colour. We need to educate ourselves, our families and friends on equity, so we can help in removing the barriers that get in the way of so many people's ability to succeed - in work, in sport or in society. Every individual should have the chance to do well and be happy.

*Name:* Kellyanne Bohan  
*Title:* Audit Semi Senior  
*Department:* Audit  
*Office:* Athlone



***What would you say to yourself at 18 that you didn't know until now.***

I would tell myself not to stress or worry over the little things and that everything always works itself out in the end.

***Who do you most admire and why?***

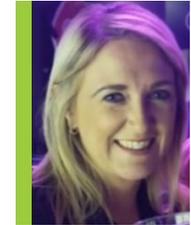
The woman I most admire is my Mam. She always gives me the best advice and is so supportive of any decisions I make in my life.

***What is your proudest achievement whilst working at RBK?***

Passing my first ACCA exam. This has given me the confidence and motivation going forward to pass the remaining exams and become a qualified accountant.



*Name:* Aine Campbell  
*Title:* Manager  
*Department:* Audit & Accounting  
*Office:* Roscommon



***What is the most helpful career advice anyone has ever given you?***

Set aside time for yourself to avoid burnout.

***What would you say to yourself at 18 that you didn't know until now.***

Don't worry about what other people think of you. Try and listen to constructive criticism and surround yourself with the right people.

***If there was one more hour in the day, what would you spend it on?***

I would spend more time with my family as they grow up way too fast.



*Name:* Catherine Sweeney  
*Title:* Consultancy Manager  
*Department:* Corporate Compliance  
*Office:* Athlone



***What is the most helpful career advice anyone has ever given you?***

Take your time to find what you enjoy doing, you can always change your mind about your career choice.

***What would you say to yourself at 18 that you didn't know until now.***

It doesn't matter if you don't know what you want to do or if you don't get your preferred college course, take your time and there are always options open to you to get where you want to be.

***What is your proudest achievement whilst working at RBK?***

I decided to go study for my professional qualifications while working with RBK at the time I had two children under the age of three. Passing my exams was one of my proudest achievements, it took two years and it was a lot of hard work trying to keep a work life balance while studying but I saw it through and I have my qualifications now.

***This year's International Women's Day theme is #EmbraceEquity. What does this mean to you?***

For me it is about having a choice, having equal access to education, healthcare and work opportunities means that we can choose what we want. I want my children to have a choice when their time comes, I want them to have the tools and knowledge to be able to choose what they want in life without gender playing a role. I hope that in the future gender will become irrelevant but for the moment I want to make sure that I can show my children that it is important for everyone to have the opportunity to choose what is right for them.

*Name:* Aine McDonnell  
*Title:* Senior Manager  
*Department:* Audit & Accounting  
*Office:* Roscommon



***What is the most helpful career advice anyone has ever given you?***

Be on time, or early as planning is key to a successful outcome. You will never know everything so don't expect yourself to. Accept human error and take it as something learned. If you need help it is not a weakness to ask for it and remember... tomorrow is another day.

***What would you say to yourself at 18 that you didn't know until now.***

Ask as many work questions as possible in a day and then some more! Life will not always go as planned and what might seem like a major problem today will be irrelevant in the future. Start using your diary!!

***If there was one more hour in the day, what would you spend it on?***

Farming or playing Badminton ....! I have a keen interest in the outdoors and Farming in particular, completing my Green Cert during the pandemic. Any spare time I have is spent out and about so it seems fitting that if I had another spare hour I would spend it doing so.



*Name:* Suzanne Duffy  
*Title:* Manager  
*Department:* Accounts & SME  
*Office:* Athlone



***What is the most helpful career advice anyone has ever given you?***

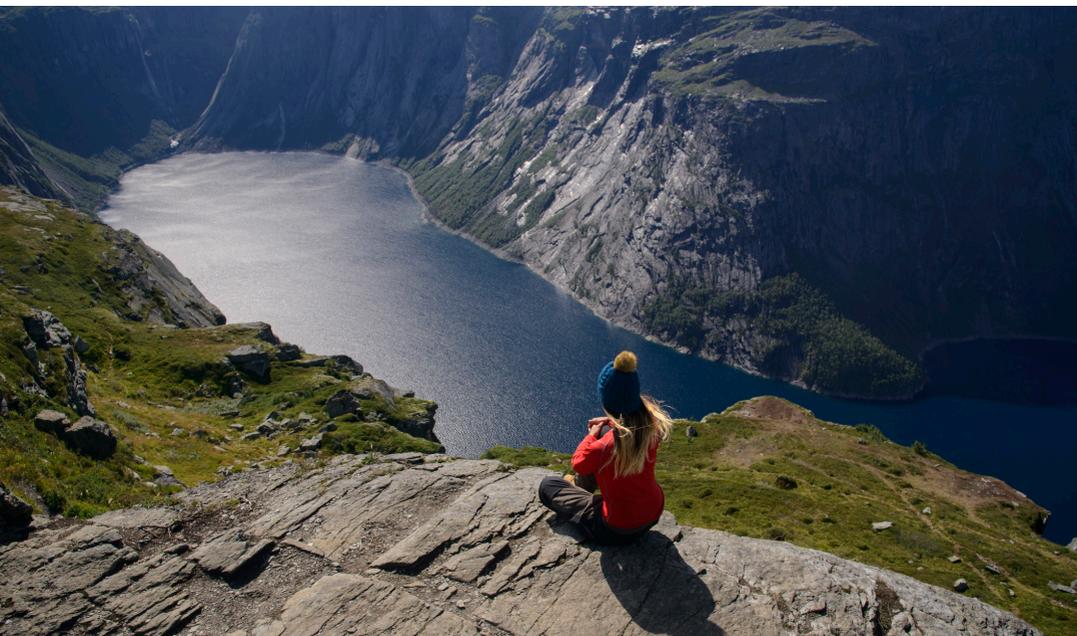
If you're not willing to do more than you're being paid for, you'll never be paid for more than you're doing.

***What would you say to yourself at 18 that you didn't know until now.***

Don't be afraid, try new things, back yourself, take a few risks, put yourself out there for opportunities. If they don't work out, ask yourself what can be learned, what can you do better and 'plough on'!

***If there was one more hour in the day, what would you spend it on?***

I would spend it outside with family.



*Name:* Rebecca Dunne  
*Title:* Administrator  
*Department:* Risk & Compliance  
*Office:* Athlone



***What is the most helpful career advice anyone has ever given you?***

It sounds like a cliché, but find something you enjoy doing and do that. This is sometimes easier said than done, but I do always feel more fulfilled when I am doing something I enjoy.

Also, I tend to get stressed out about meeting deadlines or not getting things done perfectly. I remember a manager saying to me once that we are not heart surgeons, it's not a matter of life and death if we miss a deadline or make a mistake, that really helped me put things in perspective.

***If you were to do anything differently in your career to date, what would it be?***

Nothing. Not to say my career trajectory to date has been ideal, it has been varied and fairly random at times. I think having the opportunity to work in various roles and sectors has provided me an unusual set of skills and experiences which have informed my current role and taught me how to be adaptable.

***What would you say to yourself at 18 that you didn't know until now?***

What you think you know at 18 and what you actually know are very different things. Keep an open mind, never stop learning and the world will always surprise you.

*Name:* Mary Byrne  
*Title:* Manager  
*Department:* Payroll  
*Office:* Athlone



***If there was one more hour in the day, what would you spend it on?***

I would spend it on time with my 2 boys – time has gone by so quickly with them and now they are teenage boys about to sit their leaving cert and go off and start college/further education with busy lives of their own. The shift in society towards a better work life balance makes a huge difference in giving people more time for what’s important.

***What is your proudest achievement whilst working at RBK?***

My proudest achievement while working in RBK is starting here 15 years ago with no payroll experience, developing my skills and progressing my career to now being a manager of the payroll department with an amazing payroll team around me. I had to step outside my comfort zone to get to where I am but I am so glad I did.

***This year’s International Women’s Day theme is #EmbraceEquity. What does this mean to you?***

To me it means ensuring everyone has fair treatment, access and equal opportunity in advancing and participating in all aspects of life. It’s about being aware and accountable in everyday life to ensure you are doing all you can to embrace equity.

*Name:* Tracy Doyle  
*Title:* Administrator  
*Department:* Corporate Compliance  
*Office:* Athlone



***Who do you most admire and why?***

Queen Elizabeth II, she was a global icon who was devoted to her family & to her country.

***If there was one more hour in the day, what would you spend it on?***

It is easy to get distracted by daily routines so I would like to think that I would take that hour to sit down and relax!

***What is your proudest achievement whilst working in RBK?***

I have stepped out of my comfort zone and I am making my way towards the growth zone, setting goals along the way.



*Name:* Clare Browne  
*Title:* Administrator  
*Department:* Payroll  
*Office:* Athlone



***What is the most helpful career advice anyone has ever given you?***

To make sure that you enjoy what you are working at – from my dad!

***What is the biggest risk that you have taken?***

The biggest risk that I have taken is returning to college full-time and completing my degree in Business and Accounting at 35 with two young children while working part-time. The outcome is that I have a job that I enjoy in RBK which I wouldn't have achieved without returning to college.

***This year's International Women's Day theme is #EmbraceEquity. What does this mean to you?***

This means to me that everyone should be treated the same regardless of their gender, nationality, sexuality, colour and so on! I believe that everyone is equal and no person should be treated differently whether it be a promotion at work, part of the team in a sports game or a new friend – let's do it together and be successful together! #EmbraceEquity

*Name:* Nwanneka Ogbanufe  
*Title:* Manager  
*Department:* SME  
*Office:* Athlone



***What is the most helpful career advice anyone has ever given you?***

Above all else dare. Do not let fear get in the way of your success or your choices.

***What would you say to yourself at 18 that you didn't know until now?***

Have a clear vision and stay true to yourself. Always put your best foot forward

***What is the biggest risk you have ever taken?***

Moving to Ireland alone without any member of my family at the darkest moment of my life.



*Name:* Sarah Byrne Browne  
*Title:* Senior  
*Department:* SME & Accounting  
*Office:* Athlone



***If you were to do anything differently in your career to date, what would it be?***

Get a better balance on work and life sooner.

***What would you say to yourself at 18 that you didn't know until now?***

I would say that many people are going to have expectations and hopes of what you should do with your life, but remember this is your life and that your peace and happiness are worth way more to you than anything.

***This year's International Women's Day theme is #EmbraceEquity. What does this mean to you?***

Equity to me signifies that not everyone needs the same things to achieve the same thing, we should be more aware of the people around us and understand that what they need to succeed is not necessarily what everyone needs. I think for me when people are heard and listened to we can help them achieve things.



*Name:* Linda O'Brien  
*Title:* Assistant Manager  
*Department:* Accounting Solutions  
*Office:* Athlone



***What is the most helpful career advice anyone has ever given you?***

Do the best you can. No one can do more than that. The key is not to prioritize what is on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities. You can't have everything and do everything at the same time.

***What would you say to yourself at 18 that you didn't know until now?***

Work to live, do not live to work.

***Who do you most admire and why?***

My mum. For many reasons, but to name a few - her work ethic, her outlook on life, her dedication to her family and loved ones. If I can be a fraction of the person she is, I will be happy with the person I have grown into.

***If there was one hour more in the day, what would you spend it on?***

Family time. Preferably outdoors and away from screens.



*Name:* Chloe Egan  
*Title:* Senior  
*Department:* Tax  
*Office:* Athlone



*What would you say to yourself at 18 that you didn't know until now?*

Everything happens for a reason – what's for you won't pass you. Don't be afraid to put yourself out of your comfort zone and just take a risk. Don't spend time worrying about the small things and make sure to look after yourself as you can't pour from an empty cup. You can't stop learning, as the moment you stop learning, you stop progressing. Also, consistency is key.

*If there was one hour more in the day, what would you spend it on?*

I would spend it with my family as life is short and time goes by far too fast.

*What is your proudest achievement whilst working at RBK?*

My proudest achievement would be passing my FAE's with Chartered Accountants Ireland.





March 8

# International Women's Day

#EmbraceEquity



[internationalwomensday.com](http://internationalwomensday.com)

