



Retail Business Services

Celebrating Women's Equality Day at RBS

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VP of IT Data and Analytics



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To commemorate Women's Equality Day on Aug. 26, we talked with three RBS associates – each at different stages of their careers – about what it means to be a female in the traditionally male-heavy grocery-retail industry. While each set of responses was unique, there was a common thread: be your authentic self and open doors for yourself and others.

**Odile Ducatez, VP of IT Data and Analytics
Quincy, Mass.**

How did you get into your role?

I joined the Ahold Delhaize organization as part of a co-op with the Infrastructure team in Belgium, and since then I've been seeking opportunities to learn and to contribute to the success of the local brands. That led me to take more responsibility within the infrastructure and IT organization, as well as getting the chance to take an international assignment in the U.S. My appetite for expanding my skillset and breadth of experience led me to work in most areas in IT. I'm now leading our IT Data and Analytics team – a role I find extremely rewarding.

What's it like being a female in your industry? What about at RBS?

Though a majority of the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) graduates are female, there is still a lack of women in the IT world. So it's even more important for me to bring my authentic self at work and be a role model for other women who aspire to become a leader in the organization and our industry. RBS does a great job focusing on diversity – especially gender parity – and it shows in the numbers of incredibly talented women who have been promoted or joined the organization.

What does Women's Equality Day mean to you?

It is both a celebration of how far we've come on rights and equality, but also a reminder that we are not at a place yet where everyone has the same rights and representation. While so many suffragettes had to fight to get women the right to vote, we are still having to fight every day to ensure women's autonomy. And it's a reminder that we must continue to create awareness of and visibility to the remaining gaps in equality.

What advice do you have for women entering the corporate workplace?

Focus on building a diverse network of colleagues who can help you adjust to your role while also supporting your career. Find a mentor who can help you develop your skills and pay it forward by mentoring others as soon as possible.

Lauren Linsenbach, Manager of Investigations and Analytics, Asset Protection Carlisle, Pa.

How did you get into your role?

I received my bachelor's degree at Mansfield University in general psychology and a minor in criminal justice. My initial intentions and passion were with law enforcement. I learned about loss prevention and asset protection after I graduated, and I became intrigued. My first role was Asset Protection Analyst. From there, I was introduced to the industry and the various levels of potential my career could take on.

What's it like being a female in your industry? What about at RBS?

When I first started in Asset Protection, I worked with predominantly women analysts. But as I became more familiar with different field positions and other job titles across the industry, it was evident that the more senior roles were male dominated. I've never taken a them-vs-me approach, but as a competitive and confident person, I always thought, "Why can't I be in that role and be equally successful?" I relate my career to sports. It's about the experience and dynamic of a group of individuals who want to win together. Over the course of 13 years, I've met several strong women in leadership roles who have influenced and encouraged more women – including me – to go for that next promotion or opportunity. At RBS, I have the pleasure of leading two diverse teams that support investigations and analytics for the five grocery brands within Ahold Delhaize USA. When I decided to take this job, there was a female in the VP role, and that was an amazing first impression of RBS' culture and dynamic of opportunities for women.

What does Women's Equality Day mean to you?

A day to be proud and thankful for our country. Designated and celebrated historical moments like Women's Equality Day really make you pause and appreciate where we were as a country and where we stand today.

What advice do you have for women entering the corporate workplace?

Be true to who you are and be your own No. 1 fan. Also, don't be afraid to apply for the job or promotion even if you don't check off all the boxes that are "required/recommended." The interviewer may see the potential you see within yourself and give you the opportunity. And believe in yourself and encourage others around you – it's contagious!

Justine Ferrante, Safety Specialist Nanuet N.Y.

How did you get into your role?

I got into my role five years ago as part of a special project. At the end of my eight-month assignment, the organization made a decision to keep the positions, and I am so glad they did!

What's it like being a female in your industry? What about at RBS?

Growing up in the grocery-retail industry, it was different 20 years ago, and at times I felt I was not ready to take on a leadership role. But that has since changed, and RBS does an amazing job recognizing women in the industry.

What does Women's Equality Day mean to you?

Women's equality is not just about exercising our right to vote. To me, it means the celebration of women and commemorating their rights equally.

What advice do you have for women entering the corporate workplace?

Never change who you are; stick to your values and embrace opportunities. Network, take chances, and be the best version of yourself everyday professionally and personally.