



Joyce Safo – HR Operations Manager, UK



Don't resent starting at the bottom and working hard, always keep your end goal in mind.



You've recently joined PageGroup from the Tech industry. What was it about us that made you join?

I joined PageGroup last August as HR Operations Manager. I was already aware of the company's reputation as one of the Times 100 best companies to work for. I was also encouraged by the fact that the company was named as one of the Times Top 50 Employers' for Women last year. Initiatives such as 'Women@Page' highlighted the company's commitment to workplace gender equality and that resonated with me.

If you were to give your '12 year old self' three pieces of advice what would they be?

Thinking back to the 12 year old me, I was very confident, even then. But I do remember a couple of things that made me worry and if I could go back I'd say this:

- It's ok that you don't know what you want to be yet – focus on nurturing your strengths

- It's fine that you're the only one in your group of friends who doesn't have a boyfriend – you have so much time for that, sweet girl
- Don't ever stop smiling, your smile will be your secret weapon and can disarm anyone!

What do you feel are the biggest challenges for BAME women?

One in eight of the working-age population is from a BAME background yet they occupy only one in sixteen of top management positions. When it comes to the ethno-cultural diversity of the FTSE 100 - we have not yet seen an improvement at board level, the number of non-white CEO's is still a very low 4%; and people from a BAME background are the least likely group to hold executive or non-executive directorship. Chilling statistics, you'll agree. Yet BAME women face the double barrier of the gender glass ceiling and racial under-representation in organisations. The significant lack of racial diversity at the top of organisations is obvious and I believe the under representation of women from BAME backgrounds in positions of seniority is one of the biggest challenges we face. It is essential for BAME women to see people like themselves, role models, who have progressed within an organisation to positions of seniority.

What woman inspires you and why?

I am inspired by remarkable women, women who against all odds have risen to overcome adversity. Outstanding women who make their own rules but are also graceful and compassionate. Marguerite Annie Johnson, known as Maya Angelou, is one such woman. With her indomitable spirit she defied all odds to become a much-celebrated, literary force. She navigated this world with confidence, fierce grace and abounding love.

One of my favourite quotes of Maya Angelou is: "...people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel".

What is your top piece of advice for anyone following in your footsteps?

One of the best pieces of advice I received was 'do not despise humble beginnings' and it's the same advice I would give to anyone following in my footsteps. Don't resent starting at the bottom and working hard, always keep your end goal in mind.

2008

Landed first role in HR; achieved first HR qualification – CIPD Level 3

2010

CIPD Level 5

2013

Had my son, Theodore

2014

Achieved Level 7 (MSc) Human Resources Management; had my daughter, Sinéad

2015

Promoted to HR Manager

2018

Joined PageGroup