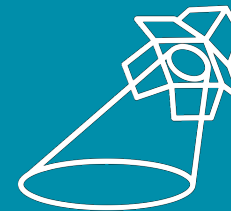


# International Women's Day Spotlight

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PKF hotelexperts



## So, Gabi, what does International Women's Day mean to you?

I personally relate IWD to a quote that catches my attention and that I try to integrate into my day-to-day philosophy.

Simone De Beauvoir once said: "Change your life today. Don't gamble on the future, act now, without delay." One can argue, that this quote does not necessarily only relate to women and really applies to all of us, but I still think it is a fantastic message for such an important day.

An article I read stated that 25 years ago world leaders signed a landmark declaration promising equality for all women and girls, yet 25 years on, no country has achieved gender equality, which really seems disastrous to me, considering we live in the 21st century ([read more on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#)).

It's apparent that we are still just at the beginning of a movement to change. Thus, to me, International Women's Day is about a necessary change in paradigms. We need to move away from maintaining women and men in their traditional roles, not just in words but actions. Whether this means equal pay, allowing for a more flexible working environment and time management structures for families and mothers in order to combine work and family life, giving more responsibilities overall to women, etc.

It's about changes in social mindsets, where women support women, working beside one another and empowering each other. I also think it is important to think about how women were perceived twenty years ago in society and how we are continuing to reinvent

ourselves. Nowadays, we trust more in our capabilities and empower one another, and this somehow gives me hope for the future.

## What are some of the initiatives you've been working on recently regarding inclusivity in our industry - however big or small?

To me diversity and inclusion is all about the genuine acceptance and celebration of all ways of life. It is all about being aware of the processes still necessary in order to fully achieve the integration of diversity into corporate structures.

To empower those around us and integrate our colleagues, who sometimes are less included or those who are perhaps more in the background in our daily work activities and to give them the confidence and opportunities to succeed - writing an article together, where people can express themselves is a great example.

Furthermore, I try to establish relationships and networks to create networking opportunities regardless of level, e.g., supporting female lead initiatives. In Spain we have a platform called "[WIRES - Women in Real Estate Spain](#)" and it's an Association to support the development of Women Directors and Board Members as an instrument of promotion.

Women are still the minority of attendees when it comes to conferences, such as IHIF (International Hotel Investment Forum), which is still highly dominated by men. Despite increasing efforts in terms of inclusion, it's obvious that we have a long way ahead of us.

## So, what inspired you down your path in hospitality real estate and what do you think makes PKF hotelexperts stand out?

I have always been passionate about the hotel industry. Each entity of our industry comes with a

different mindset and the challenge in our daily life as hotel consultants is to bring all those entities together and create value to all parties. It's a very creative workplace to be around and it allows me to develop myself using a holistic approach, with the aim of fostering a culture of wellbeing and open engagement with all employees.

I think at PKF we are a great group of creative minds. I enjoy working with my colleagues, who have very diversified professional backgrounds. What I like about PKF is that we are all very individual and independent thinkers, an idea that has been instilled by our CEO Michael Widmann. We can bring in our individual thoughts, blend in ideas from a junior to a senior level and this empowers us to think outside the box.

*"Own your career – don't wait for someone to tap you on the shoulder and present an opportunity to you"*

## What advice do you have for anyone currently experiencing obstacles in their career or for new or soon to be graduates?

You should always believe in yourself and think about the things you've done right rather than concentrating on the things you've done wrong. Then, once you know what you're doing well, you can work out what you may be missing.

Another great quote is: "Own your career – don't wait for someone to tap you on the shoulder and present an opportunity to you". I believe there is a lot of truth in that quote.

So, I guess my advice is:

- Put yourself in the shoes of the other person
- Go out and meet people. Build your network because this network will be the foundation of your career
- Accept long working hours
- Be innovative and surprise your colleagues
- Make mistakes
- Don't be too shy to ask questions
- And most importantly – have fun when you're at work.

## These are some inspiring quotes. Who has been a great icon, leader, or inspiration for your career?

I have been lucky to have a great leader and mentor throughout my career, who has accompanied me since I started in Spain in 2007. That person once told me: "Gabi, you are much stronger than you think" and this advice not only helped me to find my career path but inspired me personally.

His attitude towards many aspects of our industry encouraged me and his guidance was: hard work, always be kind, inspire people, find a daily routine that works well for you, and most importantly keep on smiling.

## So, if you were not in this industry doing this job, what would you be doing?

I would probably be a farmer, breeding horses, planting my own food, being more self-sufficient with my own natural resources.

## And finally, if you were going to retire to a ten room B&B, where would it be?

Plettenberg Bay in South Africa – on top of a mountain – overlooking the sea.

Interview with Jack Wallsworth  
Junior Consultant  
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