



Cavendish

SHAPING BUSINESS

*Women of
Influence:
Impact Beyond
the P&L*

An International Women's
Day edition spotlighting
founders who build
- and give back.

March 2026

Photograph - International Women's Day

CAVENDISH WOMEN OF INFLUENCE PROGRAMME

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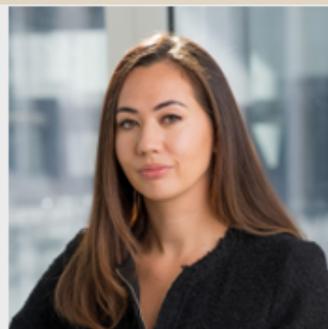
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About Cavendish

Cavendish is a UK-based investment bank that works closely with ambitious businesses and their leaders to help shape what's next - whether that's raising capital, expanding internationally, or preparing for a sale.

We combine deep sector expertise with decades of dealmaking experience, supporting both private and public companies through every stage of growth. With teams in London, Edinburgh, Manchester and Birmingham - and a global reach through Oaklins, one of the world's leading mid-market advisory groups - we offer trusted advice across M&A, equity capital markets, debt, and private growth capital.

Women of Influence is our initiative for female founders, C-suite leaders and decision-makers across the UK. Through events, insight and connection, we support women navigating critical business decisions - sharing ideas, experience and expert guidance along the way.

Women of Influence exists to support business leaders who are preparing, not rushing. For those shaping what's next with intent.

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International Women's Day

March 8



Together we can forge
gender equality.

Collectively we can all

#GiveToGain.



SHAPING BUSINESS: International Women's Day Edition

Welcome to a special International Women's Day edition of Shaping Business, part of our Women of Influence Programme.

This issue celebrates women founders and leaders who are redefining success - balancing commercial ambition with a commitment to social good.

Inside, you'll find inspiring stories of entrepreneurs using their platforms to drive positive change, from flexible work in tech to clean water, creative enterprise, child welfare, and boardroom diversity. Each profile is a testament to purposeful leadership.

We share these stories because business can be a force for good, shaping the future for everyone.

We hope they inspire us all to lead with intent and connect with our communities as we celebrate International Women's Day.

CHAMPIONING WOMEN IN TECH AND AUTISM ADVOCACY

“I have learned to think of autism not as a medical problem but as a different way of being.”

DAME STEPHANIE SHIRLEY



Dame Stephanie Shirley founded Freelance Programmers in 1962, building a software company at a time when the technology sector was overwhelmingly male and rigid in its structures. Her model was both practical and forward-looking: she predominantly employed women working from home, creating professional pathways for those with caring responsibilities who were excluded from traditional office environments.

The company secured major contracts and grew steadily, later becoming Xansa and developing into a substantial international technology group. What began as a founder-led operation evolved into one of the UK's notable technology businesses, built on technical capability and commercial discipline.

Following her commercial success, Shirley turned her focus toward philanthropy. Through The Shirley Foundation, established in 1986, she has donated nearly £70 million to autism-related causes, including Autism at Kingwood, Prior's Court Foundation and Autistica. Her commitment is deeply personal, shaped by her experience as the mother of an autistic son. Today, her legacy spans both pioneering leadership in technology and sustained support for autism research and specialist education.

A woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing a black turtleneck and a gold chain necklace, smiles warmly at the camera. She is holding two clear plastic bottles of Belu water. The bottle in her right hand is held up, showing the label with the word 'BELU' in blue. The bottle in her left hand is held lower, also showing the 'BELU' label. The background is a dark, out-of-focus indoor setting with some light sources.

REDEFINING PURPOSE THROUGH ENTERPRISE

“We invest 100% of our net profits in pursuit of our purpose to change the way the world sees water.”

NATALIE CAMPBELL, MBE

Natalie Campbell is Co-CEO of Belu Water, an ethical drinks business supplying mineral water and filtration systems to hospitality venues and workplaces across the UK. Operating within a competitive commercial market, Belu has positioned itself around sustainability, reducing single-use plastic and encouraging responsible consumption.

What distinguishes the company is its financial commitment: 100% of net profits are donated to WaterAid. As Belu grows, those profits are transferred to support WaterAid's global work improving access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene. The link between commercial performance and charitable funding is direct.

Campbell's leadership sits at the centre of that balance. The business must remain operationally strong in order to generate meaningful contributions. Her wider career in social innovation reflects a consistent interest in aligning enterprise with measurable impact.



CHAMPION FOR CREATIVE SMALL BUSINESSES



“Small businesses have the power to drive change, and I want to encourage them to adopt practices that benefit both people and the planet.”

HOLLY TUCKER, MBE

Holly Tucker co-founded notonthehighstreet.com, creating an online marketplace that gave independent makers and small creative businesses national visibility. The platform enabled thousands of entrepreneurs to reach customers at scale while maintaining creative independence.

She later founded Holly & Co, a mentoring and advocacy platform dedicated to supporting small businesses. Through workshops, storytelling and community-building, Holly & Co has become a recognised voice for micro-enterprise in the UK.

As UK Ambassador for Creative Small Businesses, Tucker champions the sector at a national level, highlighting the contribution of independent founders to the wider economy. Her work centres on resilience, authenticity and long-term sustainability.



A close-up portrait of Emma Sinclair, MBE, a woman with long dark hair, wearing a white button-down shirt with dark buttons. She is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a solid dark blue-grey color.

ENTERPRISE AND GLOBAL CHILD WELFARE

“I wanted to find a way to bring my tribe of entrepreneurs, innovators and business people together to invest in, and support, a particularly at risk next generation of thinkers and innovators.”

EMMA SINCLAIR, MBE



Emma Sinclair became the youngest woman in the UK to take a company public and now leads EnterpriseAlumni, a cloud-based platform enabling large organisations to manage and engage former employees.

Alongside her commercial career, she serves as a UNICEF's first Business Ambassador. In this role, she mobilises corporate leaders and entrepreneurial networks to support global child protection and education initiatives.

Her work connects business communities with structured international programmes focused on safety, learning and opportunity for vulnerable children. Sinclair's advocacy reflects her belief that business networks can be powerful vehicles for positive change.

INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION IN STEM

“Stemettes is about exposing girls to women (working in the field) ... so that they can see what a career in STEM is like... and see that there is something for them to take hold of ... and it’s something that is going to help them be influential and have a seat at the table in the future.”

ANNE-MARIE IMAFIDON, MBE



Anne-Marie Imafidon MBE is a mathematician, computer scientist and social entrepreneur whose career has combined technical expertise with a focus on expanding access to the technology sector. She studied mathematics and computer science at the University of Oxford, becoming one of the youngest graduates in the university’s history. After graduating, she worked in technology and financial services roles at organisations including Goldman Sachs, Hewlett-Packard and Deutsche Bank.

In 2013, Imafidon co-founded Stemettes, an organisation created to inspire more girls and young women to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Stemettes operates as a social enterprise delivering free programmes, workshops, mentoring and hackathons, connecting participants with professionals and hands-on experiences in the sector.

Since its launch, Stemettes has reached tens of thousands of young people across the UK and Europe. Imafidon was awarded an MBE for services to young women and STEM, and continues to champion opportunities for girls and young women to engage with science and technology and consider future careers in the field.



CONNECTING BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY

“It’s good for businesses to be involved in society, it’s good for businesses to be connected to communities.”

DAME JULIA CLEVERDON

Dame Julia Cleverdon served as Chief Executive of Business in the Community (BITC), working to embed corporate responsibility within UK boardrooms and encourage meaningful engagement between business and society.

She has advised the then Prince of Wales and played a significant role in education and community initiatives. Under her leadership, BITC mobilised thousands of businesses to address youth unemployment, environmental sustainability and social inclusion.

Her work has consistently focused on strengthening the connection between commercial success and community impact.



A portrait of Baroness Helena Morrissey, a woman with shoulder-length brown hair, smiling. She is wearing a bright green sweater with a white daisy pattern along the neckline and hem. The background is dark and out of focus.

“I came up with the 30% Club
– a goal to have women make
up a third of UK company
boards over the following five
years through voluntary,
business-led change.”

BARONESS HELENA MORRISSEY

ADVANCING
GENDER
BALANCE IN
LEADERSHIP

Helena Morrissey led Newton Investment Management during a period of sustained growth, establishing herself as a respected leader in financial services.

She founded the 30% Club with the goal of achieving one-third female representation on UK company boards through voluntary, business-led change. The initiative has since expanded internationally, influencing boardrooms across multiple sectors.

Through collaboration with investors and senior leaders, Morrissey has helped reshape discussions around governance, representation and long-term business performance.



FRAGRANCE, RESILIENCE AND MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY

A portrait of Jo Malone, CBE, a woman with short blonde hair, wearing a dark blazer, set against a red background. The image is semi-transparent, allowing text to be overlaid.

“We are committed to supporting mental health and the restorative effect that nature has for those living with painful personal challenges – raising awareness, providing support and stamping out stigmas, one step at a time.”

JO MALONE, CBE

A photograph of four children in a field of tall, golden-brown grass. They are all looking upwards and holding paper airplanes, as if they have just launched them. The children are dressed in casual clothing: a yellow shirt, a blue patterned dress, and a light blue shirt. The background is a soft, hazy sky, suggesting a bright, sunny day. The overall mood is joyful and carefree.

Jo Malone built Jo Malone London from a small London enterprise into a globally recognised fragrance brand before selling to Estée Lauder. She later founded Jo Loves, continuing her creative work in perfumery.

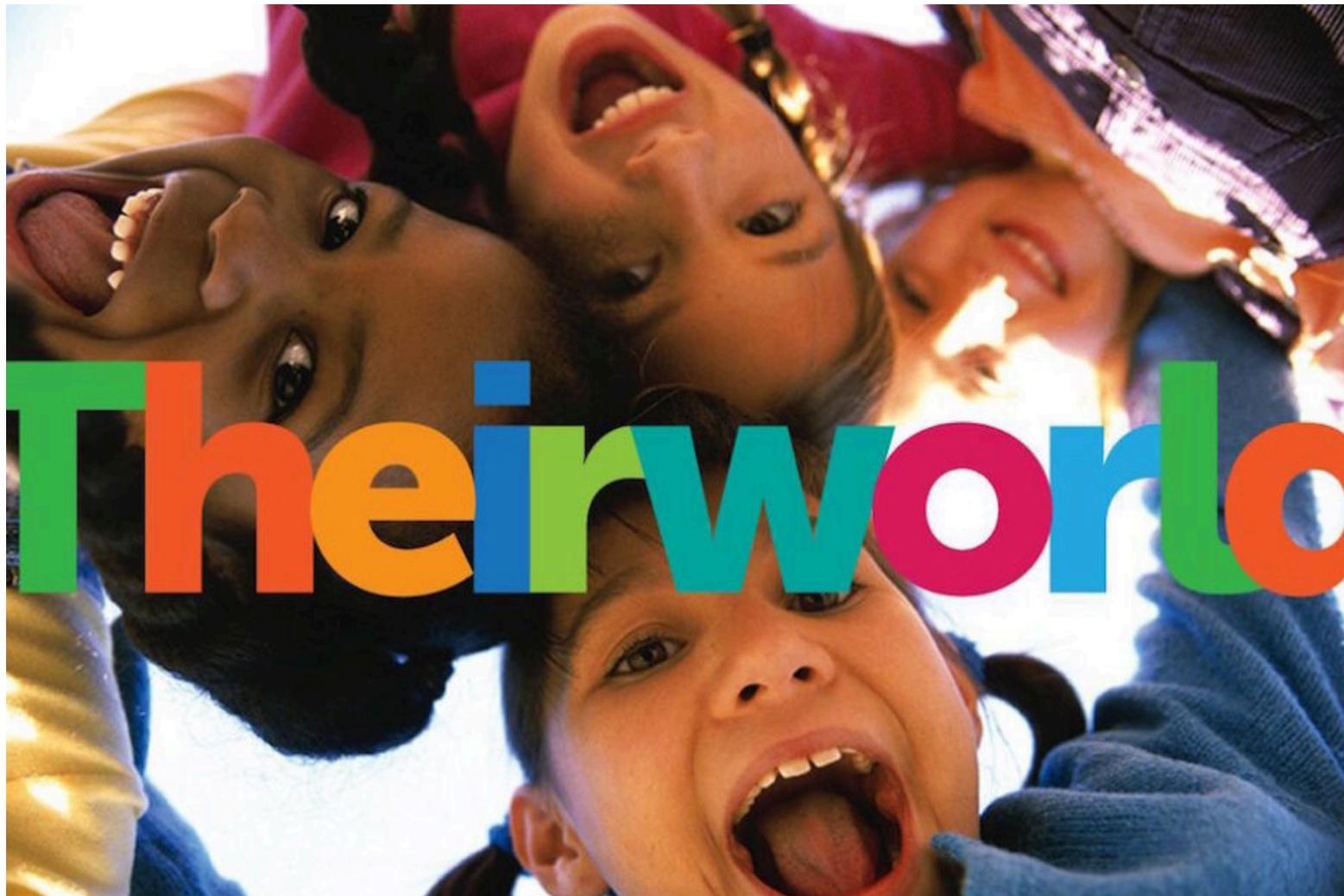
Through the Jo Malone London and the “Shining A Light On Mental Health” initiative, she supports youth opportunity and mental health charities, raising awareness and funding programmes focused on wellbeing and recovery.

Her advocacy seeks to reduce stigma and encourage early support, extending her influence beyond the world of luxury fragrance into broader conversations around mental health.

GLOBAL EDUCATION ADVOCATE

“Education is at the heart of young people’s future, their communities and their countries.”

SARAH BROWN



Sarah Brown is Chair (and former President) of Theirworld, a global charity dedicated to ending the global education crisis and improving early childhood development, safe schooling and access to skills training.

Drawing on her background in communications and as co-founder of Brunswick Arts, Brown has mobilised partnerships between governments, businesses and civil society to address barriers to education including poverty and conflict.

Theirworld delivers programmes supporting teachers, improving school infrastructure and advocating for policy reform, with Brown playing a visible role in international engagement and funding advocacy.

A close-up portrait of Dame Inga Beale, a woman with short, curly brown hair and blue eyes. She is wearing a green textured blazer and large, teardrop-shaped earrings. The background is a plain, light grey color.

“Being diverse and inclusive brings business benefits like greater creativity and problem-solving strengths, as well as a workforce which reflects your stakeholders.”

DAME INGA BEALE

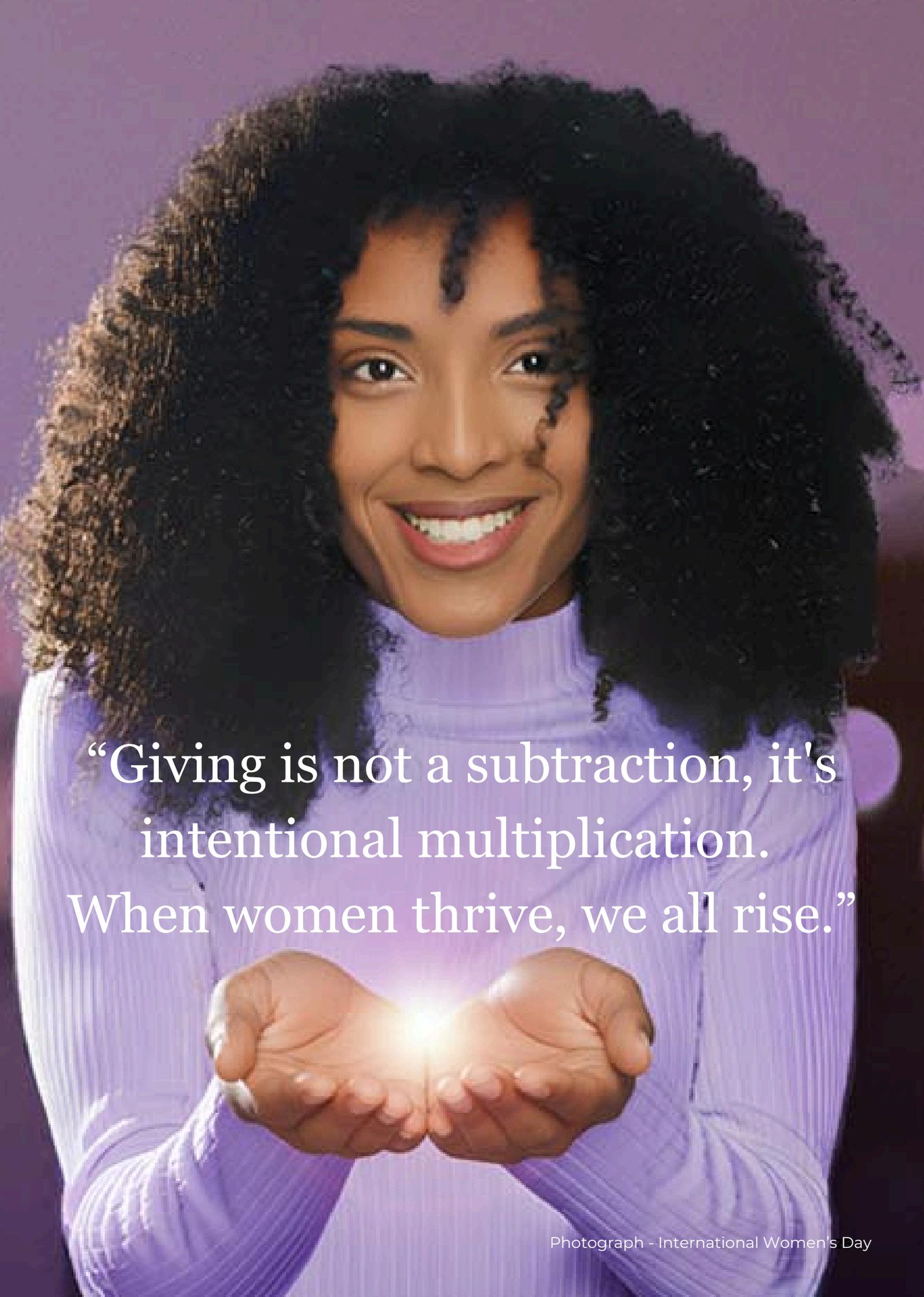
TRAILBLAZER FOR DIVERSITY IN GLOBAL INSURANCE



Inga Beale became the first woman to serve as CEO of Lloyd's of London, leading the historic insurance market through a period of modernisation and cultural change.

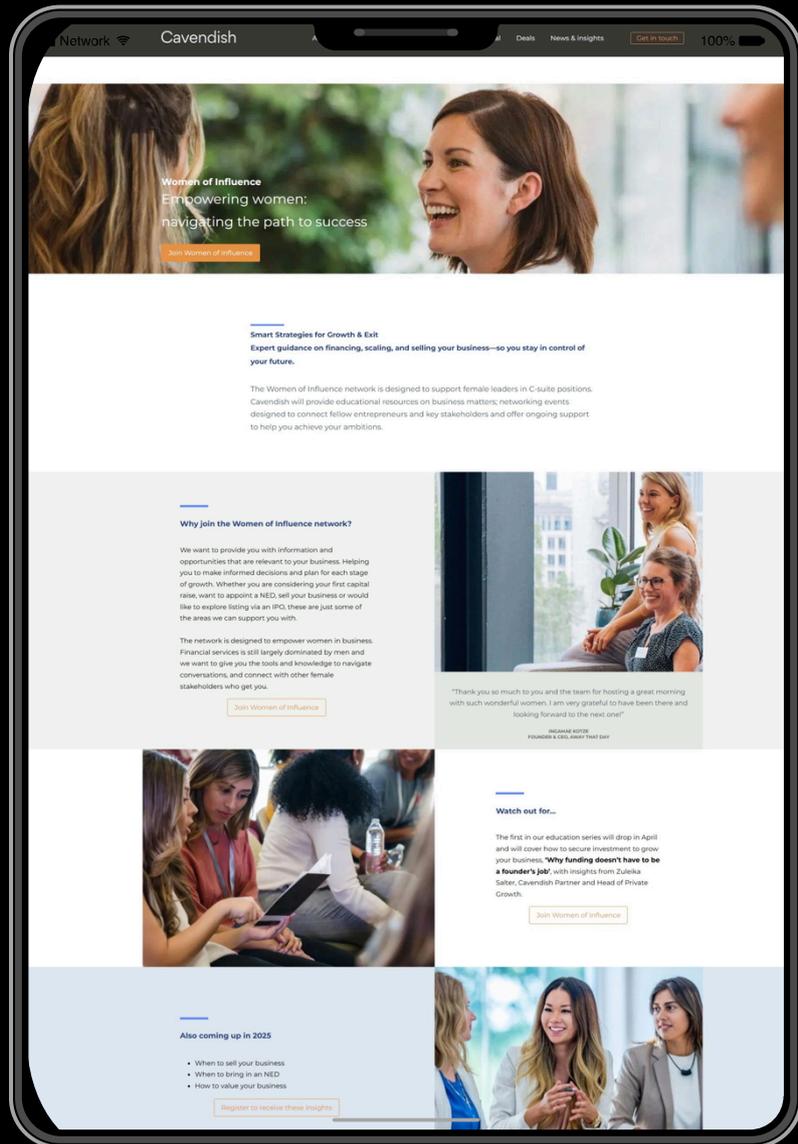
During her tenure, she helped establish and championed Inclusion@Lloyd's, a market-wide initiative promoting diversity and inclusion across the insurance sector. The programme provides training, networking opportunities and measurable frameworks to support underrepresented groups.

Beale has consistently argued that diversity strengthens creativity and problem-solving within organisations. Inclusion@Lloyd's continues to influence representation and workplace culture across the global insurance community.

A woman with voluminous, dark curly hair is smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a light purple, long-sleeved turtleneck sweater. Her hands are held together in front of her, palms up, holding a bright, glowing orb of light. The background is a soft, out-of-focus purple and pink gradient.

“Giving is not a subtraction, it's intentional multiplication. When women thrive, we all rise.”

Join our Women of Influence Programme



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