

# IWD 2024: "Always be authentic to yourself," says Zurich's Jacqui Kelly



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**For International Women's Day, Insurance Age spoke with Jacqui Kelly, Zurich's head of sales and distribution to see what the industry can do to help promote women up into more senior roles.**

Kelly stepped into the role of head of sales and distribution on an interim basis in July last year, before [taking the role full time](#) in October.

## Mentoring

She believes that having a truly inclusive environment and mindset across a whole business is "fundamentally important".



"Coaching and mentoring are so important within our industry. That's something that if we all collaborate and are truly inclusive on [across the insurance sector] we will bring through the diversity that we need," noted Kelly.

The industry must recognise the talent it has and be conscious that sometimes women might not put themselves forward for a role, she added.

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**The whole premise of this is to talk through the key topics of building confidence, enabling career development and sharing experiences and opportunities.**

"Things like job shares are a fantastic tool because they can give people experience in different areas and so they can see what they do. But don't assume somebody doesn't want [a job] because [they have not applied for it] - it is about understanding the talent you've got."

## **Women in business programme**

Zurich partnered with an external partner to hold a series of workshops for women in business including both internal and external participants who were both new to insurance or established in their career. The brokers that took part in the programme were nominated by their firms.

Kelly said: "The whole premise of this is to talk through the key topics of building confidence, enabling career development and sharing experiences and opportunities.

"And then flipping that into what do we actually need to do to make changes to support someone and their career."

Kelly is very much focused on the actions that came at the end of the programme.

"We can share experiences but the big question is: What are we going to do to make a difference to really support someone? And how can we help brokers support their teams and the individuals within their businesses too."

## Leadership

Kelly wouldn't single out one female role model but said she would rather pull out certain aspects of leaderships styles: "Authenticity; developing or working with your team; pushing your team to be out there a bit more in terms of their own development; and treating them how you would want to be treated. Some of those are the real core basics of leadership but that is what I take from inspirational people across our industry."

## Club Blue

[Zurich Club Blue](#) was launched in May 2023 with Kelly at the helm. The proposition has three key pillars ease of trading, professional development, and future proofing.

Kelly stated: "One of the key highlights for me under the professional development segment is that we've got the rising broker network. That's been absolutely fantastic. We launched it at the back end of last year.

"To get a room of like-minded professional individuals, at the early stages of their career and ask them to not only talk about key topics, but also build a network of like-minded individuals as well."

Kelly explained that she doesn't have a set number of brokers she would like to be part of Club Blue.

"It's having that partnership with the right broker and their commitments to us – as well as our commitments to them – and the mutual succession and development of the relationship."

This year Kelly said there would be more webinars held through Club Blue as well as trading forums.

"Having that broker council arrangement in place, we can really hear from them about how we need to continue to evolve and support them in their journeys."

### **Insurer service**

Kelly claimed one of the main challenge brokers are facing is insurer service.

"I am not seeing any change in the sentiments coming from our broker markets and the forums that I sit in today.

"That's why I'm so proud that we've spent so long investing in the tech and the ability of our teams to turn things around as quickly as they can," Kelly said.

She added: "We talked to them about how quickly we're servicing them on all their responses so they can see our commitment to them and the market."

### **Opportunity**

Kelly sees opportunities across SME mid-market and high net worth and stated that's where Zurich will drive its growth.

"Mid-market for me is exceptionally exciting right now because we've just launched our [new] proposition. The service that we're able to give to our brokers is one we've never been able to give to them before."

She said: "We've got some fantastic high net worth specialist market salespeople out on the road, who will continue to develop those opportunities."

Kelly added: "Our proposition is the strongest it's ever been is developing even more so with our regional footprint."

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