

## **Female role models: Meet Elisabet Fernández**



Elisabet Fernández is the director of the Technology Area of COMSA Corporación. She joined the company in 2004 as a services technician, in the position of Business Analyst. In 2008 she was promoted to head of the Business Analysts Unit and, two years later, she became head of the Information Systems Department, taking on the main challenge of integrating the applications of all the companies recently incorporated into the group. Finally, at the end of 2014, she took up her current position as director of the Technology Area, driving the company's digitalisation process and establishing a process of continuous improvement in the quality of the services offered.

Elisabet states that she has been very lucky to always have had bosses who have placed their trust in her, who have given her their support and freedom to make decisions. Moreover, she acknowledges she has always had a great vocation to serve and to be able to help others. For her, the greatest satisfaction is to see how their work makes life easier for their colleagues, how they can help them to be more efficient using technology and how they can provide them with solutions that help them in their day-to-day work. "The main learning is that for things to go well, it is essential to have a fully committed and cohesive team like the one I am lucky enough to lead. Without their involvement, professionalism and teamwork, it would be impossible to provide a good service and meet the needs of the business and the more than 3,000 users we support every day" says Elisabet.

She highlights her parents as her role models, whom she has always had very present throughout her professional career, whom have been able to pass on values such as the culture of hard work, honesty, humility and companionship.

Thus, she states that during her professional development as a woman, the challenge has been twofold, as she works in an area such as Information Technologies, traditionally occupied by men, and in a sector with little female presence. Despite this, she assures that when it comes to incorporating people into her team, “I always try to be as objective as possible and assess the person based on their experience, knowledge, skills and fit with the team”. She considers that what is important for a team is that there should be a diversity of profiles, men, women, younger people, older people, different cultures, nationalities, etc.

Elisabet concludes claiming that “as women, we are the first ones who must eliminate these sectorial barriers and if there is something we are passionate about, then go for it, whatever it takes”.

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### **Female role models: Meet Ana Idáñez**



Ana Idáñez is responsible for catenary in the catenary maintenance project for the Alicante tramway.

She has been with the company for 5 months but has been working in this sector since she was 18 and is happy to take on this new challenge in her professional career. She says that she has grown up "surrounded by electricity" thanks to the

profession of her father, one of her references and for whom, for her, "electricity is like being at home".

Although she says that most of the time, she has felt very well treated, one of the most important challenges she has faced in this sector has been having to prove many things because she is a woman and has had to work harder than many of her colleagues. However, this fact has never been an obstacle for her, as she is proud to be a pioneer in this profession and to have opened a door for other female colleagues, so that "they can see that in this sector there is also a place for us, and that we are capable of anything".

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### **Female role models: Meet Marga Bello**



Marga Bello is the director of Administration and Control of the Infrastructures, Engineering, Services and Concessions businesses. She joined the company in 1997 as head of administration in the Galicia delegation. Subsequently, in 2006, she became administrative manager of the civil works, railway and the first concessions of the group, extending its geographical scope to Asturias and Cantabria and, in 2010, Castilla y León, Madrid, Aragón and Andalucía. Years later, in 2013, she became head of Economic Control of National and International Engineering and Systems, moving to Madrid. In 2015, she was appointed head of Control and Administration until 2019, when she became head of Administration and Control of National and International Engineering and Infrastructures. Finally, since 2021, she has held her current position.

Over the more than 25 years that Marga has worked in the company, she highlights her greatest learning experience as teamwork, accompanying, training and managing both multidisciplinary and multicultural teams. "I like to see the birth and growth of a project, and I especially like each and every one of the people who make up our company, our greatest asset", she says. She is proud to recognise that she is surrounded by great professionals with a high level of commitment, who feel part of a common goal and who, in addition to being good at management, are also good at day-to-day collaboration. For this reason, she says she has been very fortunate to have received the trust of her superiors, their support and valuable advice, and this has helped her to promote herself. However, her greatest achievement will be to be able to continue to pass on the same spirit.

Marga says that one of the challenges she has faced as a woman in the company has been to create a team without gender distinctions. "When I arrived at this company, women made up no more than 8% of the workforce, and today we are more than 20%. I am proud to be part of this growth of women in the world of construction, although I am aware that there is still a long way to go", she explains. She recalls an anecdote in Colombia where the department consisted entirely of women. "If we take into account that we are always looking to hire the best professionals, seeing that we were all women speaks of the parameters within which this company operates", she says.

As Marga says: "Challenges are still opportunities for growth, both professionally and personally. Every day, in this changing and globalised world, we face new challenges, but also new opportunities; that is where we must find our strength". She concludes: "We have broken the glass ceiling in this mostly male sector, but only in central departments. We still have a way to go to break through the concrete ceiling of the construction site".

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## **International Women's Day: Meet Marta Vélez**



Marta Vélez is responsible for COMSA's Railway Department in the north-east direction, which includes the regions of Catalonia, Aragon and the Balearic Islands. She joined the group in 2001 as production manager on the track renewal project between Granollers and Maçanet and then worked as site manager on various works for Adif and the Port of Barcelona. In 2017 she moved to his current position, from where he manages a total of 130, both operating personnel and site managers, with an average turnover of 35 million euros per year.

From her more than 20 years at COMSA, Marta highlights the learning process in the management of people and clients and recognises the importance of a good team, with enthusiasm and involvement. She also explains that the construction sector has changed a lot since she started working, with the role of women now being completely normalised. In her early days, she admits that she learned to ignore some jokes and even to handle them with humour.

Marta Vélez encourages women to consider their professional development in the infrastructure sector: 'Construction work is dynamic, varied and intense, qualities that are independent of gender'.

'Although male engineers are still in the majority, women are on the rise, and there is no different treatment today because they are women,' she says. Therefore, 'I would encourage any woman who is motivated by the fact of managing works and people to join the production department of a construction company', she concludes.