

Churchill Group and Penguin FM Lead With Cross-Company Mentoring Programme

4 years ago



Churchill Group and Penguin FM are teaming up on a collaborative mentoring and coaching programme which is designed to develop their teams for further success in 2022 and beyond.

The project sees Louisa Clarke, Managing Director of Operations at Churchill Group, share her experiences and expertise through coaching Penguin FM Apprentice Catherine Garside, who recently celebrated her 12-month anniversary in her role.

Louisa's career in facilities management began over 15 years ago, when she entered the industry after a successful 10-year career in the RAF. Louisa is a natural leader who is passionate about developing herself and others; she is studying for a degree in coaching and as the first female Operations Director at Churchill Group and an active member of Women in Facilities Management believes that "The best way forward for all FM leaders, not just women, is to work together collaboratively and support each other's goals and ongoing development."

The project came about after Louisa met Penguin FM's Managing Director Edward Wick, via the Emerging Workplace Leaders Award. Both agreed how beneficial some inter-company mentoring would be for Penguin's youngest colleague Catherine, from someone as experienced and supportive as Louisa and an introduction soon followed.

Louisa said, "When I met Catherine, I was bowled over by her enthusiasm and passion for the industry and I just knew we'd both gain a lot from the mentoring and coaching process. Whether you're a mentor or a mentee, there are a wealth of benefits and it's essential for personal development, whatever level you're at. As someone so new to the industry and working for a relatively young and growing company like

Penguin, Catherine has the benefit of looking at things with a very fresh pair of eyes. This combined with my experience of growing and developing teams over the years and overcoming the various challenges that naturally occur during one's career gives her a unique perspective. There are so many inclusive opportunities available in the facilities management industry and these are massively enhanced through collaboration."

The pair meet virtually every four weeks, talking through current challenges and opportunities and sharing their experiences and expertise. Homework tasks are also set, ensuring that ideas and suggestions turn into tangible actions, something which both agree are vital to the process.

Catherine comments, "I get lots of support from my team at Penguin, but it's also great to take time out of the day-to-day to think about things with someone outside of the business. No matter what situation or challenge I have, Louisa will either provide helpful advice, or she will coach me to approach it with my own ideas and plans. Louisa has also been instrumental in helping me think about my future career in the facilities management industry and it's great to know that another person is rooting for me to smash my goals and achieve success."

Louisa wants to see more FM leaders following suit and has some tips for anyone wanting to embark on a mentoring or coaching programme:

1. Know the difference between mentoring or coaching – mentoring is often about giving advice and guidance, while coaching is more about empowering people to achieve their goals in a more self-driven way. It's therefore important to understand what you want to achieve from either or both.
2. Don't be afraid to ask for support! No matter how senior your role, you're always developing and if you feel like you'd benefit from mentoring or coaching, get out there on LinkedIn, ask within your company and aim for someone who you feel will challenge and inspire you. Get out there and attend industry events where possible
3. Make the time – if you feel you're too busy to fit in some personal development time, schedule it over an early breakfast session or at lunchtime. It's always a worthwhile investment of time.

Photo Credit : Penguin FM