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## **Women in Transport - Episode 1**

### **Becky Hadley, Hadstrong & Anne-Marie Penny, National Highways**

**Becky:** Hello and welcome to this interview to mark International Women's Day in the world of transport.

I'm Becky Hadley and I work with some fantastic organisations in transport and road safety.

One of those is Driving for Better Business. It helps companies reduce the risk their employees face when using the roads for work.

Another great organisation is Women in Transport. This is a not-for-profit member's group that offers professional development and support and now has nearly 1000 members.

And the good news is that Driving for Better Business has teamed up with Women in Transport to celebrate International Women's Day.

Driving for Better Business is led by Anne-Marie Penny.

Anne-Marie, tell me a little bit about your role, and how did you get into transport and road safety

**Annemarie:** Hi Becky. Thank-you. I've been in road safety for nearly 2 decades. I was on the other side of road safety for many years as an avid motorcyclist and everything changed when I had a bike crash. I realised I had responsibilities as well and that changed my thinking. 20 years ago, a job came up in road safety and I thought I could talk about that. Here I am years later, and I feel passionate about saving peoples lives on the road. I joined National Highways 5 years ago and my main role is looking at Driving for Better Business and helping employers to meet their duty of care to make sure their drivers are acting as they should on the road. It also has great benefits to business as well, if we're doing everything right in the management of our drivers, so it's really important to get things right and I love my job.

**Becky:** And how is DfBB getting involved in International Women's Day this year?

**Annemarie:** We're marking International Women's Day with the launch of a year of videos, podcasts, and features, looking at influential, and successful women in and around the transport sector. There are many women doing things extremely well. They're a part of our workforce we're really proud of. Sometimes the choices for women as they come into the workplace are not always in the transport sector. We hope to inspire people to think about the transport sector – as a woman you could make a real difference in that sector.

**Becky:** So what's the idea of the campaign?

**Annemarie:** Women make up about 47 per cent of the UK workforce yet they are underrepresented in the transport sector, it's about 20 per cent I think of the workforce are women.

There's a great opportunity to raise awareness of the thousands of women who work in and make a difference in this sector, from the youngest and newest employees on apprenticeships right the way through to successful CEOs of large multinational corporates, small business, large business, private and public sectors – but there's really a lot we can highlight here. We want to put the spotlight to inspire people to think about their choices and how they can make a difference.

**Becky:** So what will this campaign look like? Who will Driving for Better Business be interviewing?

**Annie:** We're running through 2022 and we've got a whole list of women we've approached to take part – we've been overwhelmed by the positive response. So, we're going to have podcasts like this one, interviews and 'days in the life of' just showing the type of work that women do in the sector and just highlighting the influence that women can have, and the good practice. We often look at the transport sector as a male dominated environment but making it more diverse means it can be more successful, and women can contribute to that success.

**Becky:** You mentioned women right at the very top of organisation. To what extent is leadership part of managing road safety?

**Annemarie:** Driving for Better Business is all about good leadership and good practice – we work with employers to influence them to make the best choices. Women are leading as fleet managers, as CEOs – that's a really important role to play and we've got great examples in the podcasts and articles coming up that show women in leadership roles being the exemplar in managing risk on the road, to reduce injury, to reduce all the horrible stuff that comes with road crashes and casualties. So leadership from women in the transport sector and road safety – absolutely important.

**Becky:** So, tell me a few more of the women you have lined up for about the interviews you've got coming up

**Annemarie** -So we'll be at the Health and Safety Event at the NEC 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> April. Driving for Better Business will be hosting the Driver Safety Zone. We will have Nina Day from the HSE, Alison Moriarty from Drive who is a risk management specialist in fleets, and Dr Gemma Briggs who again is a specialist in driver distraction so we've got 3 really key people to begin with. On the Thursday we will be hosting a panel discussion on risk management and 2 of our panel are women – really good women in action

**Becky:** Driving for Better Business is part of National Highways. How do NH support women in their careers?

**Annemarie:** – It's a great organisation to work at in terms of their flexibility and their support for women, Many women are part timers when they come back after a career break to have children so it's great to know they support you. We have our own Leading Women Group within the organisation so there are people you can turn to for advice and guidance at all levels.

**Becky:** Does National Highways have any women as patrol officers?

**Annemarie:** Yes, we do – I can't tell you how many, but we do have women in those roles. We have women in our regional control centres – women are throughout the National Highways organisation – lots of different roles and right up to the top as Executive Directors

**Becky:** Where can people find these podcasts and articles?

**Annemarie:** You mentioned we are teaming up with Women in Transport – they'll be signposted on their website, and they'll be on the DfBB website – [drivingforbetterbusiness.com](http://drivingforbetterbusiness.com) – and we will have the features and articles readily available

**Becky:** That's wonderful news - finally, what would be your advice to any woman thinking of coming into a career in the transport sector, which is heavily male dominated?

**Annemarie:** Sometimes that can be quite scary. Maybe you don't always feel confident in that environment but the transport sector is a great environment - the different roles are so varied. Women should feel that actually, there are role models who can show them how they worked through challenges, to achieve success. It's about thinking about career choices and how they come into this sector bringing their knowledge and experience – different and new ideas. It doesn't matter if you're new to the sector or been here for a long time. There's a place for you here.

**Becky:** And, of course, any woman can join Women in Transport – there's plenty of opportunities for mentoring, learning, support groups and it's a great chance to meet likeminded individuals in the sector. Come and join us – Happy International Women's Day for all women around in transport.