

AUTOMOTIVE

McLaren Automotive's Helen Melling: Luxury Woman to Watch 2022

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Helen Melling

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

Luxury Daily annually honors smart women executives who show the potential to make a difference next year in the luxury business. This year's list features 26 honorees who have set ambitious goals to achieve in a luxury market that, while growing, is also challenged by rapid changes in consumer behavior and technology.

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Here is one honoree:

Helen Melling

Head of talent development

McLaren Automotive

West Byfleet, England

"The imposed travel restrictions, coupled with Brexit, have greatly affected the free movement of talent, meaning that it has been harder to fill skills gaps in the workplace, particularly in niche or emerging areas"

What do you most like about your job?

My favorite and most rewarding part of my role as head of talent development for McLaren Automotive is helping nurture people's early careers. Whether that's connecting and developing internal talent to reach their career aspirations, identifying future skills gaps and aligning them with future product strategy, or working with schools and educational bodies to encourage young participation in STEM [science, technology, engineering and mathematics] subjects and careers.

It's truly inspiring to see young people thrive and enjoy themselves in the workplace and I take pride in knowing that I'm helping them to do so.

What is the biggest challenge in your work?

Like most businesses, the pandemic has presented challenges.

The imposed travel restrictions, coupled with Brexit, have greatly affected the free movement of talent, meaning that it has been harder to fill skills gaps in the workplace, particularly in niche or emerging areas.

Having said that, it has presented an excellent opportunity for us at McLaren Automotive to develop and invest more in our own internal training programs to up-skill and re-skill existing talent to fill skills gaps and future-proof our workforce.

What is your work priority for 2022?

For me 2022 is two-fold.

Talent sits at the heart of our People 2030 approach, which underpins our business plan, Horizon 2030, for the next decade.

We need to continue gearing up to electrification. This includes building pipelines of talent, identifying and addressing skills needs, and setting up training structures to help overcome and solve any gaps.

My other key focus will be expanding our early-years and degree-apprenticeship schemes. These are aimed at young people aged 16-plus and provide all the relevant training, education and work experience to really help them succeed in their chosen field, whether that be engineering or corporate.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

For me, it's so amazing to see young McLaren employees be recognized for their incredible talent and hard work and know that I have helped them on their way to achieving that.

For example, our own Ella Podmore, materials scientist, recently won the Young Woman Engineer of the Year 2020 award.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2022?

I see luxury evolving in a few different ways.

There is definitely an emphasis on sustainability and conscious consumerism.

People want to buy from brands they trust and who are seen as a force for good. We are working towards this with our shift into hybridized vehicles, having recently announced the the new high-performance hybrid McLaren Artura and a new global partnership with children's charity Plan International to support, empower and inspire the next generation to reach their full potential.

[Please click here to see the entire Luxury Women to Watch 2022 list](#)