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**WOMEN AND THE WORKPLACE  
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**CAREER PROFILES**

*Emer Timmons is president of BT Global Services UK. Dina Medland asked her: How has being a woman made a difference to your career?*



Being a woman has made a difference to my career and I noticed very early on that I was different when surrounded by my male colleagues. But I had to stand out to be noticed as

being good as well. I had to be very confident, and I knew that I needed to recognise my strengths but also those areas I needed to develop. A lot of people don't do that and it is very important – to leverage and capitalise on your strengths.

If you want to make a difference you have to take a negative – being in a minority – and turn it into a positive. As women we need to create a network that men already have. It's very important to be confident. I am naturally very competitive, but I had to make sure that if I had to deliver a number it was the biggest number, and I was the fastest to deliver it. If you constantly deliver, then people begin to listen – you shout out in the room and make yourself known.

Women need to challenge themselves. Every time I moved up in my career I asked how I was going to add value and be different.

There are a lot more opportunities now for women than when I started out. I am very fortunate also that I work in the technology business, which has been very good for women, for communication and for social cohesion.

*Avril Martindale is a partner at Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer. Dina Medland asked her: How has being a woman made a difference to your career?*



I would have answered that question differently if posed before – rather than after – my children. But one of the biggest differences over the years has been that as a lawyer, as often as not I was the only woman in the room. That tends to mean they remember you. I

used to feel incredibly self-conscious but I do think it was an advantage, with the benefit of hindsight – even if it did not feel like it at the time.

If you were able to get through it, you did well. I qualified in the 1980s, the days of big management buy-outs and the work pressure was the same whether male or female.

That has changed, with more women entering the profession, and there are other ways now when being a woman makes a difference. I am often involved in deals that put huge personal pressure on a client, and sometimes they might have been willing to sit down and talk to me because I was a woman with a sympathetic face. Women tend to be a little more empathetic, and to go about things differently, to seek consensus.

But I didn't have children until I was a partner, and it has really made me think about the pressures on women to be a mother while having a successful career.

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