

## Elisabeth Young, France



*“...to know how to highlight one’s competences, be able to build visibility and network. Communication and self-confidence are key factors for professional development.”*

### Elisabeth Young’s professional background

- Elisabeth Young is Vice President Global Accounts at Dekra. Dekra is specialized in safety, working on periodical vehicle inspections, industrial inspections and claims & expertise.
- President of WoMen and Vehicles in Europe (WAVE), a French association that aims to promote equal employment in the auto and mobility sector. Created in 2008, the association targets all employees (men and women) of the automobile and mobility sector.

### Elisabeth Young’s story

A graduate of Business School EM Lyon, Elisabeth Young entered the mobility sector 30 years ago, fulfilling her desire to seize a job opportunity abroad. She started her career at MG Rover as the Administrative and Financial Director of the French subsidiary. She then became General Director of the spare-parts activity for Northern Europe.

In 2012, she was appointed as the Director of a Parisian branch of the Renault Retail Group before joining the subsidiary Automotive Solutions of Dekra, as Vice-President Global Accounts.

Especially at the beginning of her career, Mrs. Young encountered multiple barriers to her professional development. For a woman, it is especially hard to progress in an organization in the automobile sector: *“all the positions are taken...men don’t want to leave their roles. The progression is hindered and there are less opportunities for women. They stay longer in a role*

*and therefore cannot progress like their counterparts.”*

***“Don’t hesitate to showcase your success!”***

As reported by Elisabeth Young, the majority of management positions is indeed occupied by men in this sector. Professional development is furthermore hindered by a hostile working environment, says Mrs. Young. Comments on appearance and disrespectful remarks coupled with discrimination linked to maternity status were common occurrences in Mrs. Young’s career. Such a masculine environment is also reflected in the internal informal gathering of colleagues. Integration in internal networks is often limited, as informal networks are mainly masculine.

Mrs. Young highlights that such a culture of masculine dominance, coupled with the professional and personal life balance, are the most important challenges she has had to face in her career.

The experiences and challenges encountered throughout her career pushed Elisabeth Young to create WAVE, an association and network of men and women working in the automobile and mobility sector, working to address gender inequalities at play in the sector, and promote equal conditions from men and women. WAVE was born also due to the lack of programs inside and outside companies, able to address such disparities. From her personal experience, the creation of a professional network and the participation in some mentoring and leadership programs has helped her advance in her career. However, inside the various companies she worked for, very few actions were taken besides the implementation of a diversity charter and a legal agreement on wage equality.

Key to her success was the ability to seize opportunities when they appeared. Based on her experience, Mrs. Young's advice is to know how to highlight one's competences, be able to build visibility and network. Communication and self-confidence are key factors for professional development: *"don't hesitate to showcase your success"*!



As for her propositions and suggested measures to address these challenges, Elisabeth Young underlines the importance of legal measures to implement regulations on wage gaps, despite financial constraints for enterprises, including start-up ecosystem. Communication and dissemination are furthermore essential in her opinion, allowing companies to refer to tools and standards to evaluate their own work and organization. To really change how the sector works, communication is also key to inform women of the opportunities available to them in the transport sector, which offers a wide variety of jobs and positions.

Finally, Mrs. Young emphasizes the role of women in key management and design positions: without them, transportation will continue to be thought for and designed for men.



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