

# Inspirational Woman: Charlotte Lamp Davies | Vice President, Travel & Hospitality, DataArt

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*A multi linguist, Charlotte's career has spanned sales, marketing and event management for eighteen years. She has worked across several industries, including international media, oil and petrochemicals, before moving to the travel sector, where she launched the online travel brand Travolution for Reed Business Information, and later worked as new business director at Conrad Advertising, a full service advertising agency with a sole focus on travel clients.*

*Charlotte joined DataArt UK in late 2012 as a Vice President of Travel & Hospitality for Europe, in charge of sales for the travel practice. She has since secured key clients in UK and organized multiple events, bringing the travel and hospitality community together while strengthening the DataArt brand in the vertical. Having worked with a number of brand name clients, including Expedia, lastminute.com, Thomas Cook, Google, Microsoft and Yahoo, enables Charlotte to engage with senior industry figures and stay at the forefront of developments across the sector. She is a speaker at industry events and a passionate proponent of innovative travel technologies.*

*Charlotte is a professionally trained opera singer, and enjoys cooking, reading, traveling, skiing, hiking and above all spending time with her family and friends.*

*Charlotte is a regular media commentator on travel technology and has been quoted in National Geographic Traveller, Buying Business Travel, Tnooz, Hotel Business magazine, Travolution, and numerous other news outlets.*

## **Tell us a bit about yourself, background and your current role**

I moved to London from Denmark 24 years ago and ended up working in advertising. I'm originally an opera singer by trade but left this path behind for the bright lights of London. I am currently VP, Travel & Hospitality at DataArt's London office. The firm is a technology consultancy headquartered in New York, which operates from 17 global locations and has over 2,200 employees.

In my current role I lead on EMEA strategy within my division. We are well established in the UK and German markets, with expansion plans in the Benelux and DACH regions. Our clients in my division include Skyscanner, Hoteltonight, Blacklane, JAC travel, TrustYou, Miki Travel and Apple Leisure Group.

Much of my role is understanding the synergy between existing markets and new ones, while comprehending the idiosyncrasies of each country.

## **Did you ever sit down and plan your career?**

Yes, quite consciously when I was younger. I was ambitious and had a great need to develop my skill set in any way I could. I had a relatively clear idea of what I hoped to achieve until I turned 35.

After that, opportunities came more readily to me and I always seriously considered all of them. My current job “found me”. I would not have looked for it but it felt right from the minute the opportunity arose. Plans are incredibly useful and can help you achieve your goals but when it comes down to it, if the right opportunity presents itself, even if it was something you never considered before, go for it!

## **Have you faced any challenges along the way and, if so, how did you deal with them?**

I have often found in my career that success comes from not viewing tasks as challenges, but as targets to be met, delivered on and completed. That said I have had to often fight, though luckily not so much anymore, for equal pay to men in parallel positions.

It is still true to say, sadly, that women in business tend to be less assertive. It took me a while to address this. That is to say to just stick to the facts and know the value of what I do for my employers.

## **On a typical workday, how does you start your day and how does it end?**

After waking my children and breakfast, I am, typically, straight on Twitter. I’m a huge fan of this platform, not just as entertainment but also as a source of news and views from across the world.

On my train journey to work I check emails. Once I arrive I am typically in back-to-back internal and external meetings, conference preparations, team briefings, client pitches etc. No day is truly ever the same, new projects come along all the time, all requiring attention. No customer is the same and no two projects alike, it’s a very diverse job, which I love.

On route home I read through my emails again, personal as well. DataArt operates across multiple time zones and I have friends across the world as well, so things really can come in at any hour. Once I’m home it is time to cook, cuddle with my children and spend time with my family, go for a bike ride (and maybe answer one or two more emails...)

## **Tell us a little bit about your role and how did that come about?**

I was approached by the Global Head of Travel & Hospitality, Greg Abbott, whom I’d met at a conference. He was expanding his EMEA team and thought of me.

I had never considered going into consultancy or software technology but it has been the most amazing experience for me. A very steep learning curve, but that’s often one of the best aspects of my job, there is a constant focus on growth and improvement.

I work with some immensely talented colleagues, each of whom brings something different to the table. My colleagues inspire and drive me to do better. With their skill sets in engineering, software development and technology, so different from mine, we all compliment each other and push each other to create a unique partnership. I think this is what attracts clients most to us. Our teams work as one to deliver on projects, but each presents something distinct to each client as an individual. This adds real value and drives us all forward.

## **Have you ever had a mentor or a sponsor or anyone who has helped your career?**

In this aspect I have been luckier than most, I think. Throughout my career I have had mentors and engaging managers who understood me and knew how to get the best from me. Two examples stand out the most.

Early on in my career James Blazeby Managing Director at Reed Business Information, kept me separate from the sale of a publication. Instead he offered me my first major senior management role, where I moved from managing £1 million a year to over £20 million a year and took over a 30 man strong sales team globally. It was daunting at first. This was not an incremental promotion, but a jump from running a sales team of three to being responsible to multiple sales teams, across the world. However, James said something that has always stayed with me: “It doesn’t matter whether you are responsible for £40 or £40 million. What matters is if your skill set brings value.”

He trusted me, advised me not to change and to set about applying my skills to the new challenge. In doing so he helped me crystallise my thinking and trusted me to get the job done. I worked every day to repay that trust.

A few years later a publisher I worked with, Jim Muttram, advised me to move my entire skill set online, to digitalise everything I did.

“This is the way of the future. It is your choice to go over to digital but if you don’t make the move soon you will be stuck.”

Like James before him, Jim took an interest in me and applied his experience and knowledge to help me succeed. But above all both trusted me to succeed and this gave me confidence and a focus to progress in my career.

In turn I try to mentor others. I have led many teams and I think I have an instinct for spotting someone’s ability even if they at first do not and I love to nurture this and see people grow. I value commitment, dedication and loyalty above many other skill sets.

### **If you could change one thing for women in the workplace, what would it be?**

Be more assertive. It can be done without you having to wear a suit and a tie.

### **How would you encourage more women into STEM/ the digital industry?**

Be more open-minded. Look beyond what naturally interests you in technology. Work out where your skill set lies.

All too often, women make their passionate hobbies the focus on their career. While for some this may work, for me the path to success is to find a career that you are passionate about above and beyond your personal life. I love cooking but I never considered becoming a chef. I am however, professionally passionate about the technology solutions I help develop, sell and implement. I would encourage women to take a similar approach if they want to build a career in digital industries.

Just because something is a male dominated industry doesn’t mean you can’t break into it and make a name for yourself. Just because it is not what you want to do in your spare time does not mean that you cannot be passionate about what you do at work and make a success of it.

I would say to all women, you are equal around that table. You should not be embarrassed for having ideas, ability and talent. To quote Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg “Lean in.”

Plus if nothing else motivates you, just think how cool your kids will think you are when you demonstrate that you know as much about technology as they do.

### **If you were to look back over the past five years, what would you see in terms of your achievements?**

Only a few short years ago I made a total career change. I never thought that I would move into tech consultancy but here I am. While some may have doubted that I would succeed in this role many, not least our Global Head of travel, Greg Abbott, believed I would. For every doubter there is someone who wants you to succeed, work with them and ignore the rest.

### **Tell us about your plans for the future?**

I have much yet to achieve in this job. We are a rapid growing and moving organisation which offers constant challenges. So I am firmly focused on my personal goals with DataArt. I have landed in a very exciting post and industry and I foresee I’ll stay in this sector for years to come.

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