

Lowering the Ladder to Learn and Grow

Welcome to the Lowering the Ladder Series - a selection of interviews designed to inspire, empower, and encourage each other in the health and safety profession. Those times when we lower the ladder to help someone up, or are encouraged to climb the ladder ourselves, can be turning points in our lives, supporting us as individuals, and the profession as a whole.



Name: Robyn Bennett

Position: President New Zealand Institute of Safety Management (NZISM)

Tell us a bit about your current role

I currently hold the role of President at NZISM. I am the representative of the members of NZISM, and it is primarily a championing and ambassadorial role to ensure that our members have a voice in all relevant decision making.

What got you started in Health and Safety?

I was an annoying employee, always looking for something to do, and I had an inspirational manager who reintroduced me to learning. This led eventually to study in health and safety, and I have continued from there.

Who has helped you get where you are and how?

Many, many people along the way, some who may never know their contribution. A word here, a suggestion there - it all has influenced where I am today. What this means for me, is that I especially appreciate the time that people gave to me when I was starting out, and I ensure as much as possible that I give my time to others where I can.

Were there any pivotal moments in your career, that were difficult at the time, but you look back on and understand the value of the experience? What did you learn and how has that helped you?

There was a manager's role that I was qualified for but felt I couldn't do it. An esteemed colleague said: "Fake it until you make it" and it's given me the courage to have a go at things that I wouldn't have tried in the past. There is no sense in waiting until you are 100% ready – it will never come.

How do you encourage others to learn and grow?

I often spend time chatting with other professionals on a range of topics. It seems like a simple thing, yet we often work in isolation and do not have ready access to others with which to bounce ideas. Developing a network of friends and colleagues that you can work through concepts, problems, and solutions around with is a sure-fire way to develop and enhance your skills.

Share one thing with us that you have learned in your career

Actually - two things: don't take other people's time for granted and remember to let others help when they offer.

When did you last lower the ladder?

If you have an inspirational story to share, the WISE NZ Group would love to hear from you. Please get in touch via LinkedIn.