

SPOTLIGHT

ON MARZENA STACHOWICZ



Angela Wilkins shines a light on our very own Shawston squad via the Spotlight series, a series of informal chats with key members of staff talking candidly about their roles within the Shawston group and how they have developed. It's simple really, aim the light and watch them shine.

Hooray! I get to chat with Marzena today. This is great news, firstly because she is a very busy woman controlling the company's finances, and secondly because she is one of our female highflyers, which is a big deal within the industry in which we work.

It's always exciting to shine a light on a person with a highly successful career path and a determination which sets an example to others irrespective of

gender, creed or race and these attributes suit Marzena down to the ground. So, here I am, ready to talk, woman to woman.

Background

I've met Marzena a couple of times through work, but we've never really had the opportunity to get to know each other properly. Marked as a go-getter from early on in her Shawston career, Marzena didn't disappoint and has successfully climbed the

I studied and worked in accountancy whilst I lived in Poland.

G
R
O
W
T
H



Shawston ladder to her current role of Management Accountant. Not bad from someone who couldn't speak a word of English when she arrived in the UK back in 2006.

From the checkout of a local supermarket to the Management Accountant in an employee owned business, Marzena has agreed to talk me through how she stayed true to her vision and became an essential cog in the Shawston wheel of success. Oh, and a superb role model for ladies in business.

Marzena on Shawston

I had always wanted to go back into accountancy. I studied and worked in accountancy whilst I lived in Poland, but it was difficult for me to get an accountancy role in the UK because of my limited knowledge of English. So I decided to go to night school to learn how to speak English, it was there that my tutor encouraged me to study accountancy again to get me up to speed with all the English terminology, she said that I would definitely need this to apply for a future job and she was of course correct. As soon as I became more confident in my English-speaking ability I started to search and apply for accountancy jobs. I saw a job advert for Shawston, and I went for it. They obviously saw something in me, and that's when I started my role in the Credit Control team.

Always looking for a new challenge I jumped at the chance of moving into the Purchase Ledger team after only 3 months in Credit Control. It was at that point, when I started putting forward improvements for the more efficient running of Purchase Ledger, that I think I truly began my Shawston journey.

By the end of September 2013, I was the Head of

Purchase Ledger. I had made a massive impact within the department; I had aligned the team to make us more efficient and the whole process became a lot smoother. This was a very proud moment for me. Soon after, I started to be given extra work to focus on outside of the remit of Purchase Ledger. James Collins asked me to help him pull together the management accounts, I formalised the spreadsheet and James did the analysis, this is when I first got the chance to think about where I wanted to go next in the business and I soon became the Assistant Accountant.

I was so excited to become a co-owner and I like owning part of the business.

In February 2019 I became responsible for all of the management accounts for the entire Shawston Group. Shawston have always noticed my ability but I have always said where I want to go within the company. I see it as a two-way street. I love learning, acquiring more knowledge, challenging, and constantly improving myself, I think self-development is key if I want to succeed and grow. I'm also still on hand to supervise the Purchase Ledger team too. I think people see me as capable and I don't let them down. The way I see it is that I will always try to do the best job I can, which is easy with such a great team.

Marzena on Share Ownership

I was so excited to become a co-owner and I like owning part of the business. You can see people trying to save money, streamlining their methods, and really thinking about the impact of their decisions, especially in the current climate of Covid-19. Many

businesses have really struggled throughout this last year, but the Shawston family have pulled together to make the business run and effectively stay open.

Owning shares definitely changes you, it's amazing! If you invest in something you don't want to lose your money, you want it to grow and make a profit. So, you not only invest financially you also make a personal investment when you purchase shares, it's down to you and your other co-owners to make the business better. Sustainability is key here, we want our business to stay the test of time, so we will make sure it does.

With regards to my work ethic that has stayed the same. Before owning shares, I worked hard, that's not changed. But I have seen other people work

harder to keep the business moving. Everyone is thinking the same – let's make this business a success, so everyone mucks in, it's for the greater good of the business, and that's great to see.

Background

I've been lucky at Shawston that people have seen something in me, especially James Collins. Whatever James has given me to do he has believed I can do it and I've always proved him right. James embraces all the tasks he is given, and he isn't scared to do them. I am the same. James is a good example for me.

I have also been given some great advice by Mark Dyer, he would always say "You can do it Marzena" he had faith in me and my abilities and always



believed in me. I am grateful to Mark; he knew I had potential and in-turn kept pushing me to do my best and develop me within the business.

On a more personal note it wouldn't be fair of me to mention James and Mark without also mentioning my husband Robert. He has always stood behind me in the decisions I have made. I was scared to come to the UK, it was a new country, a new language and a new beginning, but he was so positive and a great emotional support to me both at home whilst I was finding it tough to get to grips with the new language, and also at work. He encouraged me to keep moving forward and for that I feel I'm very lucky to have him in my corner, helping me grow and develop as a person both professionally and personally.

No Barriers

I really love that I can perform my job freely, at Shawston we are empowered to make day-to-day decisions that have a direct impact on the business. I know that I can always look for advice if necessary, but I want to solve the problems myself, I won't bother anyone unless I'm completely stuck!

Marzena on the future

Well, I celebrated my 10-year work anniversary in September, so I'll really proud of that and how far I've come. I'm hoping the future holds more focus on management and budgeting and I'm aiming for the role of Financial Controller at some point in the future. Watch this space! ♦



Shawston has so many more amazing examples of meritocracy – sponsorship of MBA's, graduate development schemes, and a strong record for internal promotion to name just a few. And the common theme is that all these people made a choice – the choice to improve, to be better, to progress, and to shine. And that's the essence of Employee Ownership. We encourage a freedom of expression rarely seen in business, we push people to be better versions of themselves, and we give them the space to make choices.

So, if you're interested in a career with Shawston, make the choice to email us your cv and a covering letter to hr@shawston.co.uk or [visit our website](#) to read more about choosing to hop on board to a new career.