

Fiona's on the pace



Words by Fiona Pace, Women in Road Transport Governance Group member

In the second in our series on WIRT Governance Group members, Regal Haulage's Fiona Pace describes her career in road transport and the passion she has for attracting new people to the industry.

If I was looking for a change of career that was as different from retail management as you could get, I couldn't have chosen better than deciding to apply for a receptionist job at Regal Haulage NZ Ltd. While the product for sale was vastly different and I felt like a different language was being spoken for the first few months, at the heart of this company was its customers and the service they delivered to them – that was a language I could speak.

During my time at Regal, I've undertaken a wide variety of roles, from the front desk to a position in sales – which saw me out on the road meeting with and strengthening our customer base – to the back office in support of operations and administration. I have also been lucky enough to lead the despatch team, which really gave me an insight into the dedication and professionalism of our drivers.

My current role as HR and wellbeing manager sees me back looking after people again, which has remained a passion of mine since my retail days. Looking after the people in our business and working towards providing our

internal customers (our team) with the best working environment and opportunities they need to be their best selves is what floats my boat – or spins my wheels to put a transport slant on it.

Moving into the HR and wellbeing space provides me with my own office and I always make sure there's a supply of M&M's on the corner of my desk. This ensures that I have many visitors and gives our staff a great place to vent, celebrate, brainstorm, or simply ask a question. This keeps my day busy and varied. I am thoroughly enjoying the new challenge and the chance to upskill and continue my own professional learning in an area that I love.

What I also continue to learn in this industry is that no two days are the same and you must continually solve some pretty significant challenges to keep the wheels turning, the trucks on the road and our customers satisfied. Seasonal demand fluctuations, driver shortages, increases in fixed costs, and

the impact of an uncertain economy all add stresses to the business and require a real team effort to overcome.

At Regal, we pride ourselves on being innovative and current in our systems and processes. This, I believe, is critical to meeting one of the biggest challenges that faces our industry – the sustainability of our workforce. It's important that drivers, despatch staff, and everyone behind the scenes know that the best possible effort is being made to support them with good IT infrastructure and internal management processes. I know from experience that there's nothing more frustrating for people than having to deal with antiquated systems that don't meet the requirements of the job.

As a member of the Women in Road Transport Governance Group, I'm passionate about being part of the thought-change process that's currently going on in our industry. Being a part of WIRT gives me the platform to work with

“Being a part of WIRT gives me the platform to work with other passionate women who are focused on leading that change”



other passionate women who are focused on leading that change.

The truth is that to attract more women, youth, and those seeking a career change to our industry, we all need to adopt a new way of thinking. It isn't good enough to merely say that our transport businesses are more inclusive; we must walk that talk with action. The fact is the world has changed and the power balance between employers and employees has shifted and we must shift with it.

There are so many choices out there for those looking to start their careers and we need to make sure they are looking at road transport as an option. No matter where they are located, road transport operators are competing in a careers arena with a myriad of other industries and opportunities. We must be prepared to go that extra mile and provide the professional development and career prospects that match or better what women and young people can find elsewhere. I understand that this takes significant investment and is not something that can necessarily happen overnight, but it's a long-term investment worth making if it can provide our road transport businesses with a vibrant, attractive, diverse, and sustainable workforce to take us into the future.

Please follow Women in Road Transport NZ on Facebook and if you wish to contact us directly, you can e-mail WIRTnz@gmail.co.nz. ■

