

WOMEN IN HIFI

Lynn Scott Partner, Definitive Audio & Living Voice 20 years in the Hifi Industry



I am a partner in Definitive Audio & Living Voice. I joined the industry in 1997 when I met (and shortly afterwards married) Kevin Scott. Kevin had set up Definitive Audio in the late 1980's and then set about establishing his Living Voice brand a couple of years later. When we met, Definitive Audio was at a turning point, and he was busy developing new products and expanding the brand. He needed some hands-on assistance with the day to day running of the business and so I stepped in to provide him with some support. We soon found new premises in a magnificently refurbished Victorian Lace Mill between Derby and Nottingham, and we have been here ever since. It is more than just a place to work, it is a foundation and central to our ideas; a place where we can think and create as well as make, and I have always felt lucky to have it.

I was very much aware that I was entering a man's world of course, but I didn't see this as an impediment in any way, I simply set about carving out a role. I have never accepted that things have to be a certain way and like to make changes where I can, and in this way, I suppose, I invented my own job. There were big issues to begin with but none that were related to gender or equality. The biggest challenge was to develop an understanding of what was required in a small business led by an entrepreneurial person. It needed a completely different mind-set to anything that I was remotely familiar with or "conventional". Transitioning from the comfort of a large organisation that operates according to procedures and timetables with a regular salary and guaranteed holidays was tough. It took a while, but I have a resilient nature and eventually adapted. I realised that I was actually enjoying the learning process as I went along and soon began to embrace this approach; something that continues to this day.

Working alongside someone who has a lot of creative energy with enough drive and motivation to make things happen can be a thrilling and exhilarating experience, but it can also be exhausting and

requires an enormous amount of determination. Having a flexible and resourceful attitude helps to embrace new ideas, but the challenge is to keep a sharp focus on the day to day nitty-gritty running of the business whilst also adapting to quickly changing situations. And for all of the excitement and thrills there are plenty of late nights and anxieties and a fair share of rallying around when things go wrong, as they inevitably do. But being at the coal face with a team of like-minded people and seeing ideas evolve and dreams materialise is infectious. It helps make it all worthwhile.

Equality in the work place is very much a part of the current conversation, and 2018 is turning out to be a year of momentous changes for women around the world. When the streets of London were full of women marching on International Women's day a couple of weeks ago, to demand the right to live and work without fear of harassment, it signalled a collective shift; yes big changes have been made but not enough. Women can lead the narrative and it's always going to be easier to change the attitude of an individual than an entire industry, so we need to be able to speak out without fear of reprisal and tackle issues head-on.

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Hand on heart I have never experienced sexual harassment in the Audio industry, although I have in previous jobs. In the early days I might have a conversation with an older person who was slightly suspicious that a woman could understand the needs of an audiophile, but even that rarely happens these days; maybe because people know me better or maybe because attitudes have changed.

The audio industry is crowded with people who are highly intelligent and talented, and the simple fact is that the overwhelming majority of these people are men. Unfortunately, a large percentage of these men are very sure of their own importance and I've seen plenty of unattractive 'Alpha-male' behaviour targeted towards other men (which may be considered inverse sexism, of course). However, in my experience the majority of these people are liberated in their attitude to women. In fact, on the whole I would say that most people would actually like to encourage more women in.

The facts about gender diversity in the workplace are well documented and it is common knowledge that companies who employ more women in key roles and have a good overall gender balance perform far better than those who do not. It is not rocket science. Personally, I have always felt a part of a team and lucky to be living my life doing something that I enjoy, surrounded by so much talent and learning something new almost every day.

