



Paula Cooper Leads Toyota Success In The First Inspiring Automotive Women Awards

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Paula Cooper, director of Toyota GB's ConsumerOne function, has been named the Inspiring Automotive Woman of the Year. Her success was the leading honour in the first Inspiring Automotive Awards, hosted at the RAC Club in London last night.

Three other Toyota GB employees were also among the 30 award-winners. Rachel Shepherd, General Manager HR and Facilities; Emma Johnson, Manager, ConsumerOne Connection and Experience Innovation; and Marie Barry, Manager, Academy Strategic Projects.

The awards were organised by the UK Automotive 30% Club to encourage its members to recognise and celebrate women who in their organisations are doing great work and inspire their colleagues. The club's ambition is for women to hold 30 per cent of the leading roles in Britain's automotive sector by 2030.

Announcing Cooper's award, the judges commented: "Paula has been selected as the Inspiring Automotive Woman of the Year because she is a pioneer in terms of reaching the senior ranks of Toyota, and is also a positive catalyst for change within the business.

"She is a coach and a mentor, and has supported others in their career development, as well as participating in the Toyota women's network and many 30% Club activities.

"The large number of nominations she received show clearly how she is inspiring many people in her company and commands a great deal of respect with her collaborative approach, integrity and leadership skills. She is a positive role model to both women and men and is truly an inspirational businesswoman."

Paula Cooper was appointed the first director of Toyota GB's ConsumerOne function in 2016, having already amassed more than 25 years' experience in the motor industry. In her role she leads a team responsible for identifying opportunities to improve customer experiences, introduce mobility solutions and drive change. This includes working with centres in the retail network to develop the skills and roles necessary to support customers' requirements.

Accepting her award, Paula Cooper said: "I work with and meet so many talented women in this industry, so am surprised and delighted to have won this award. I hope that the breadth of roles among everyone involved in IAW demonstrates the fantastic opportunities that are available and helps encourage more women to consider a career in automotive.

“I am incredibly proud to be part of Toyota and greatly appreciate the opportunities I have had to learn, develop and gain experience, and I hope I can support and encourage others to join this fantastic industry and develop their career and skills.”

There was a further Advocate Award, announced on the night and presented to Paul Van der Burgh, Toyota GB President and Managing Director, in recognition of his commitment to achieving a better gender balance within the automotive industry.

Julia Muir, CEO Gaia Innovation and UK Automotive 30% Club founder, said: “Paul Van der Burgh was the very first member of the UK Automotive 30% Club and has supported every activity that the club has undertaken. This has included hosting one conference and attending all of the others, becoming a speaker in our schools' outreach campaign, supporting the Inspiring Automotive Women Day activities, sponsoring the Inspiring e-zine, and being a sponsor of the Inspiring Automotive Women Awards dinner.

He has already received external recognition for his leadership and action on gender equality, and I am extremely pleased to be able to recognise and celebrate his valuable contribution and to present him with our inaugural Advocate Award. ”

Paul Van der Burgh said: “I’m honoured to receive this award, but the real winners who deserve the spotlight are all the women who have taken part in the inaugural Inspirational Automotive Women programme. My warmest congratulations go to Paula, Rachel, Emma and Marie, and to all the women whose great work has been recognised today. Their dedication and their achievements in their chosen careers illustrate perfectly the invaluable contribution women can make to our industry. I will continue to work to provide greater opportunities for women to succeed and prosper, supporting the excellent ambitions of the UK Automotive 30% Club.”

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