

**DIVERSITY**  
champions of 2018

**FINTECH FOCUS**



1

CLAIRE SAVAGE  
COO, AqMetrics

**What can you tell us about your business and its views on diversity?**

At AqMetrics, we strongly believe that diverse teams produce the best results. Our team is solving complex problems with software solutions for the asset management industry. We recognise and draw upon neurodiversity within the team which comes from differences in gender, age, ethnicity and socio-economic backgrounds. With diversity comes non-linear thinking, a valuable trait in a software company.

**What has been your journey to current position?**

I studied engineering in university, which is a fantastic starting point for a career in the software industry. I have been fortunate to have multiple roles in four different fintech firms over the last 18 years, each firm has had a strong focus on research and development.

**What interested you in this space?**

When I completed university in 1999, the software industry presented so many exciting opportunities. I completed an internship in an actuarial firm, building models in Visual Basic to assess and compare the performance data of actively managed pension funds versus passively managed pension funds. This piqued my interest in data-driven, software solutions.

**How have you settled into the business?**

I have worked in Fintech for 18 years with a focus on risk, compliance and surveillance. My career started in payment fraud detection, moving in to compliance and surveillance solutions for banking, and now in risk and compliance

for the asset management industry.

**How have you seen the landscape change in FinTech in terms of diversity?**

In the early 2000s, teams in Fintech firms tended to be homogenous, primarily staffed with male software engineers. Over time, fintech firms have realised the importance of embedding financial services industry knowledge in the software, and in doing so have built more diverse teams with different frames of reference and experience. This has in turn, embedded better business knowledge in the software, leading to higher customer delight.

**What do you think are the reasons for this change?**

The industry has realised that the software and technology is just the enabling tool. The best software companies need neurodiverse teams that can think non-linearly and solve the complex problems that our customers face.

**How does your company differentiate itself from its competitors from an equality perspective?**

AqMetrics takes ownership for reflecting the diversity throughout the organisation, including the executive team. The AqMetrics board is gender diverse, with two female board members.

**What do you feel are the biggest obstacles facing minorities in the industry?**

Candidates from minority groups without access to third level education are at a disadvantage from a recruitment perspective. Certain software companies, >



**AQMETRICS**



> particularly in Silicon Valley, have traditionally favoured candidates with degrees from ivy-league universities. A third level university degree is not always the best nor the only starting point for a career in software engineering.

**How do you plan to overcome those obstacles in your company?**

AQMetrics recruits' candidates from the FIT programme, which offers candidates the chance to complete a software apprenticeship, without a related third level degree.

**What makes your company an employer of choice?**

In AQMetrics, our team members get hands-on experience building solutions for realworld problems that our customers face. We trust our

diverse team to take ownership for solving our customers' problems.

**What would you like to see change in FinTech as an industry?**

Increased regulation is a likely factor in the future of Fintech. The Fintech industry is evolving so quickly that regulators are struggling to keep up with it. Increased regulation is not necessarily a bad thing. This will help will make the Fintech industry more professional and more secure, increasing customer delight. When trust increases, there should be a corresponding increase in adoption and innovation in the fintech industry.

**Why do you think finance/banking/FinTech have been male dominated industries in the past?**

It is a closely networked industry.

Networks tend to be formed at school and at university from peer groups. Gender singularity is a predominant feature of peer groups.

**What is the most exciting thing about FinTech for you personally?**

Over the last few years it has been exciting to see the democratization of the retail brokerage market with mobile apps such as Robinhood. Looking forward, with a keen interest in natural language processing (NLP), I will be excited to see how machine learning and NLP can be successfully applied to streamline the operational compliance for emerging regulations.

**What do you look forward to for the industry in 2018?**

Higher levels of fintech adoption!

**"The industry has realised that the software and technology is just the enabling tool. The best software companies need neurodiverse teams that can think non-linearly and solve the complex problems that our customers face."**