Noémie **Bercoff**



CEO

Organisation
Urbanloop

City, Country
Lyon, France

Noémie Bercoff is CEO of Urbanloop. A lawyer by training, she spent much of her career at the Egis group, rising to deputy managing director of its 20,000-strong consulting arm and leading its rail and infrastructure divisions. Her guiding principle has always been the public interest: she was drawn to transport for its blend of public purpose, complexity and technical challenge, and its room to find solutions.

Which moment prompted you to enter the field of mobility and infrastructure?

The guiding principle behind my career path is the public interest. I have always wanted to work in a sector that benefits the public: transport, health, food or education. After gaining some initial experience in local government, I moved into the transport sector, which combines the public interest, complexity and technical expertise: I enjoy simplifying things, getting things done, experimenting and finding solutions.

Asked what support was indispensable to her career, Noémie's answer is disarmingly short: "My feminist husband." On changing the sector, she is just as direct: Never make concessions on competence and diversity!

What is your ultimate goal? Share your vision for infrastructure and mobility if everything turned out the way you imagine.

It's simple in every sense of the word: changing the world, and introducing low-carbon, efficient and inclusive transport services.

Do you have, or did you have, a role model who influenced you to fight for what you are doing now?

Yes, my mother, my grandmother, my daughters, and women I met trought my career. But I often feel like a 'pioneer', and I'm taking the time to act as a role model for other women now.

How does it feel to work in a male-dominated environment, and what would you like to change or (not) experience in that context?

That's an interesting question. Sometimes it's rewarding to be the only one, to succeed despite the obstacles, with strength and perseverance. Often it's complicated; I feel like an outsider. The issue of women's progression to the highest positions is a real challenge. We are sometimes criticised, in general terms, for being too sensitive; I often say that sensitivity does less harm to a business than certain expressions of anger – which are generally more typical of men and much more widely accepted. What I'd like to change, and what I'm changing on a daily basis, is simply this: I'm recruiting women so that I'm no longer the only one. It's a very effective and simple solution.

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