

Rupa Nazran

Electrical Apprentice, BMSL



Rupa is an Electrical Apprentice currently working for the CMS M&E team on the Crossrail project. She is described by her peers as determined, displaying exemplary behaviour on site and well respected within her team, with her positive “can do” attitude and professionalism being an inspiration to others. Rupa is said to be as good at her job as the qualified electricians within the team. Rupa was recently nominated for a Crossrail award and is known to be willing to assist fellow colleagues at all times, including supporting them with their studying for Level 2.

What has been your career journey so far?

I began my career as a model maker in a fabrication company working with models and special effects for commercials. I then studied electrical installation in college. I joined the rail industry partly by accident! The rail industry has been in the news quite a lot, especially with exciting projects like Crossrail. I researched the industry and there seemed to be lots of opportunities and a demand for skilled workers. It felt like it was an opportunity I couldn't miss. There's a wide variety of roles in rail and you can effectively build your own career. People are so helpful and are always willing to help you and offer you advice. In my current role, I install cable management systems. It's a highly demanding safety-critical job which involves spending long periods of time underground. It can be a very noisy environment. I love the job though, it's a very hands-on, practical role.

What in rail are you passionate about?

Learning. There is always the opportunity to develop and undertake further training. I feel that the skills I have and am developing are transferable. I really enjoy the technical and practical aspect of the role. The Health and Safety part of the job is so important. I deal with lots of different departments which is interesting. Everyone I meet is so willing to help.

What motivates you to put forward your greatest effort?

I feel like I've found my dream job, even when I have to get up in the dark to start my shift at 5am! I realise that I'm part of a really big project (Crossrail) and that makes me feel proud. People recognise the project because of the publicity it has had recently. I'm really proud to be part of the team which is making it happen. It is going to make a big difference to the way people travel. Traveling to work and back is a big part of people's lives and this project is going to improve the lives of so many people.

What aspects of the job do you find the most challenging and rewarding?

It can be very challenging balancing the requirement to deliver on time whilst maintaining the requirements of health and safety. It's so important that everyone gets home safely each day. Working and studying at the same time can be hard but it's also very rewarding. I enjoy being able to put my learning straight into practice and I love having such a hands-on role. Being part of the Crossrail team is amazing but it is sometimes challenging to adapt to the physical demands of the role.

What do you like the most about your job?

Being part of such a high-profile project which is going to have a positive impact on people's lives. I think it's great that these projects are receiving the publicity they are. The TV programmes which have been made about Crossrail mean that everyone knows the project I am working on!

What do you need to do to get your dream job?

I think you need to work hard and not be afraid. You have to speak up and share your ideas – even if you're wrong! It's good to be wrong, you learn more from your mistakes than anything else. And you need to remain positive.

Where do you see yourself in 5 and 10 years' time?

I would like to be fully qualified and find myself working on the next big rail project, leading a team.

Being a winner of the 20 rising stars hopefully sends a powerful message about women in rail, how do you think it will be interpreted by colleagues?

I am really proud to win this award. I think it's amazing that someone took the time to nominate me. I had no idea at all! Teamwork is everything to be honest and I wouldn't be able to do my job with the support and encouragement from those who I work with. I have some really great mentors and colleagues. I genuinely believe that a more diverse workforce leads to a healthier and happier team.

What do you think the rail industry could improve to support and attract more women within the sector?

The biggest barrier is quashing the stereotype that the rail industry is a man's world. Once you are in the rail industry you realise that it's not like that at all. We need to get into schools and colleges to talk to young girls about the variety of roles and massive opportunities that there are in the sector. We should also advertise in places where women and young girls are more likely to see the advert, perhaps a really glossy women's magazine. We should get Vogue to do a photoshoot with women to showcase the variety of roles available in the rail industry – how cool would that be?!

What would be your advice to encourage young girls into rail?

Go for it! Don't be bothered about what other people think, especially if they don't understand what you do. The only restriction is yourself. A lot of girls think that their only career choice is something which is office-based like HR, payroll etc but that is not the case. There are loads of opportunities out there: go for it!

Do you have a role model?

My family. My parents and my brothers are all really close. My parents have worked hard all of their lives. They have inspired myself and my brothers and have instilled a really good work ethic into us. I want them to be proud of me.

What are your interests outside of rail?

As my job is physically demanding it requires a reasonable level of fitness so I go to the gym quite a lot. I also of course really enjoy spending time with my friends and family.