

# Working in insurance combines a unique set of different expertise and skills.

## Nina Arquint in Women in Insurance series

Continuing our Women in Insurance series, we talk to Nina Arquint, Chief Risk Officer of Swiss Re Corporate Solutions.



## Women in insurance

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Starting at the beginning, how did you decide on a career in

insurance? Was it an intentional choice, or rather something that you found your way to?

In the beginning it happened by accident really. Let me explain. I was offered a role in the legal department of the Swiss Insurance Supervisory Authority after graduating from university. I was intrigued by the opportunity and after exploring the insurance industry and talking with friends and family I took them up on the opportunity. It was a great decision and after 12 really enjoyable years I took the decision to join Swiss Re and continue my career in the insurance industry. That part was an intentional one.

And what made you stay in insurance?

A number of factors – the people absolutely and I've been fortunate to work with some amazing individuals and be part of some dynamic teams. Also, I have found in insurance a diverse and international working environment which combines a unique set of different expertise and skills. And last but by no means least is the purpose of insurance. Building resilience and providing people with peace of mind, knowing they can rebuild their lives and businesses after losses.

And now, tell us something about your current role? How did you arrive here? What are the most enjoyable parts of your job, and the most challenging?

I joined Swiss Re in a global Risk Management role with group-wide responsibility for different risk management frameworks covering qualitative risks such as cyber risk, operational risk and sustainability risk. After four years in that role, I got the opportunity to become Chief Risk Officer of Corporate Solutions, Swiss Re's commercial insurance business arm.

Looking back over your career, what would you say are the biggest changes you have seen in terms of the workplace? How have insurance companies changed as employers? Looking ahead, what changes do you think that we will see?

There are two that come to my mind. First, the agile way of working which has different facets and a strong focus on value delivery. It has been a strong enabler

for the transition to working from home due to the ongoing pandemic situation. And second, a changing leadership approach which I would describe as moving from a commanding to a coaching leadership style which I enjoy a lot.

It's hard to look past how the pandemic has changed the workplace. We have a good infrastructure at Swiss Re and an 'own the way you work programme', which is centred around flexible working. This meant we were ready to transition to home working very well. However, this has come with the challenges of personal resilience and wellbeing. Topics we take seriously and areas we are helping colleagues with. Looking ahead I certainly see the topic of personal resilience and well-being playing a central role. In addition, the area of diversity and inclusion will continue to influence the insurance sector. Diverse teams are a business imperative and are rightly one of the Swiss Re Group's key priorities to push the company forward.

For many people, insurance is not seen as the most attractive career. Many people associate insurance companies with the small print on their policies – technical, legal, sometimes inflexible. First, how do you explain what you do to your friend and family? And what do you think is the biggest misconception about working in insurance?

To my friends and family, I really talk about the Swiss Re mission which is all about making the world more resilient. I soon find that this piques their interest!

In terms of the biggest misconception – that insurance is boring! However, I'd argue that operating in a complex and competitive environment, where there is so much going on is anything but boring. With data and new technologies, the future of insurance is changing and turning more into a holistic risk servicing business. And big challenges such as climate change risk and pandemics are spurring us to build partnerships and find new solutions to close the insurance protection gap.

Two final questions: Why would you recommend a career in insurance? And what advice would give to young women who are thinking about starting a career in insurance or financial services?

I would recommend a career insurance as it offers a purpose driven and interdisciplinary work environment. My advice to any young woman at the beginning of her career is to be yourself, be self-confident about what you bring to the table and do not let failures discourage you but use them as an opportunity to learn and grow!