

**Betty Lau Sui Hing**  
Group Chief financial officer  
Sime Darby Property Bhd

"I believe that creating a corporate culture of inclusion and gender equality is important for the growth and advancement of women in the industry. To achieve this, we must prioritise diversity and ensure that everyone, regardless of gender, feels valued and empowered to reach their full potential. Education and awareness are also equally important to build the right corporate culture. By providing training and development programmes that focus on recognising and addressing conflicts and biases in the workplace, we can create a more equitable environment where all employees are treated with respect and fairness. Additionally, providing opportunities for mentorship can be instrumental in supporting the growth and advancement of women in the industry.

"I encourage women to approach their journey with positivity and fearlessness. Believe in your abilities and maintain a positive outlook even in the face of challenges. Just remember that anything is possible when you have the right team to support you, so surround yourself with individuals who share your vision and values, and who will uplift and empower you along the way. It is also important to continuously seek opportunities for growth and learning. Stay informed about industry trends and developments and be open to acquiring new skills and knowledge. Networking with peers and mentors can also provide valuable support and



guidance as you navigate your career path.

"Finally, don't underestimate the power of your voice and your presence as a woman in the property industry. In an industry that is often dominated by men, it's essential for women to recognise their unique strengths and capabilities."



# Amplifying their voices

Celebrating International Women's Day with views from property women

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The celebration of International Women's Day which falls on March 8 this year, StarProperty embarks on a journey to amplify the voices of powerful women from the property industry. This annual observance serves as a poignant reminder of the invaluable contributions, triumphs and struggles of women throughout history and in contemporary society. These trailblazing female leaders have shattered barriers, challenged norms and reshaped their workplaces. Join us as StarProperty delves into the diverse narratives, perspectives and experiences of these property women, honouring their resilience, achievements and unwavering determination to make their voices heard. ♀



**Datuk Cynthia Lim**  
Executive director  
LBS Bina Group Bhd

"Creating a sustainable work culture that prioritises the needs of employees, particularly women, is essential for their growth in the industry. We recognise that empowering women means providing opportunities for growth through tailored training, education and flexible work arrangements. By offering these resources, we not only enable women to excel in their roles but also foster their engagement and sense of belonging within our organisation. Embracing a culture of inclusivity and empowerment not only benefits individual employees but also contributes to the overall success and sustainability of our company.

"To the ladies embracing the property industry, I would recommend investing your time in skills that match today's market trends, namely soft skills. Soft skills such as effective communication, active listening, and the ability to work in teams foster a positive work environment and promote cooperation. For example, being able to work well in teams is an essential soft skill. This skill would go hand-in-hand with communication skills which are crucial to address consumer concerns as well as stakeholders with persuasive and active listening skills. Another important skill is possessing strong adaptability by being flexible and open to change, especially when we are exposed to market trends, regulations and technology which are constantly evolving. Last but not least, have a strong skill in digitization, in particular in learning to integrate business operations in effective platforms. It could help in property management, data analysis, software development, intelligent automation, cyber security and many others."

**Anna Chew**  
Chief executive officer  
REU Living

"Empathy is a very huge part of this healthcare industry. Traditionally, women have grown up as caregivers: being mothers to begin with so it is expected of them. There is a gender issue and it is sad to see women quitting their jobs to take care of their family and the elderly. If you look at it, caregiving is a profession on its own. But they (women) should leave caregiving to the professionals (and remain in their profession).

"As in this industry (or other profession), they should trust themselves and be confident. Women need to step up and lead in their respective industries. Their voices need to be heard as they are making a difference."



**Monica Ong**  
Director  
i-City

"With Malaysian higher learning institutions achieving gender parity of 61% female enrollment, it is only natural to expect equitable participation of women in the property industry both from the workforce and stakeholders' universe. As such, not only will women continue to assume leadership roles and contribute unique perspectives in decision-making, they will also be serving a landscape where female customers are on the rise. To excel, strategic thinking, digital proficiency, and effective communication are crucial for success in this evolving sector.

"The property landscape is dynamic due to evolving market trends, expected regulatory changes as technology evolves, and societal shifts. Women entering the field should forge meaningful connections by seeking guidance from mentors and expanding their professional network. Embrace challenges not as obstacles but as avenues for personal and career growth. Persistence is key; stay committed to goals, and let each experience shape their journey in the dynamic landscape of the property industry.

"A corporate culture that would benefit the growth of women in the industry embraces a collaborative and inclusive workforce while promoting principles of unity, justice and service. Such culture not only encourages equitable gender participation, ethical behaviour and social responsibility, but it also fosters an environment where both women and men can thrive alongside each other and contribute meaningfully to the industry's growth."



**Felicia Choong**  
Human resources head  
Sunway Property

"As the master community developer, Sunway Property's purpose is to build sustainable communities that thrive for generations. This includes empowering the women throughout our organisation. Currently, more than half of Sunway Property's workforce (55.6%) are women. Women also represent more than half (51.0%) of those in leadership or management positions, encompassing architecture, finance, technology, operations, marketing, and more.

"Technical skills like technological proficiency or ESG (environmental, social and governance) specialisations

can lend an advantage towards progression, but empathy and emotional intelligence (EQ) are also integral qualities, to nurture a workplace that is both safe and conducive to growth. This is particularly important for us as we are deeply committed to community building as an inherent part of our DNA.

"Inclusivity and diversity are paramount, and Sunway is dedicated to providing equal opportunities for all." To ensure a supportive working environment for working mothers, we have options for flexible working arrangements, alongside childcare subsidies and childcare services at the Sunway Little Sunshine Childcare Centre. Additionally, we provide designated car parks for expecting



mothers and mothers' rooms offer privacy and comfort to nursing mothers. Ultimately, we're cognisant that mothers often bear a significant share of responsibility when it comes to childcare, and we aim to ease this where we can."



**Alesy Lim**  
Sales and marketing general manager  
OSK Property

"Navigating the male-dominated landscape of this industry has always presented its challenges for women. Yet, with unwavering determination, a demonstration of competence, and steadfast commitment, we can overcome these obstacles and drive progress. I am grateful for the invaluable support I receive from my family, friends, and, most significantly, the OSK family, which empowers me to pursue my goals with confidence."



**Lih Shyan**  
Director  
Sri Pengkalan Binaan

"More women are stepping up into leadership roles in the property industry and we can witness the same trend in Sri Pengkalan Binaan. To excel, I believe it's important to always challenge the status quo for the betterment of the company and society, and to do that excellent analytical and communication skills would be paramount.

"The most challenging aspect to overcome is actually our own limiting mindset on what we can or cannot do as women; as long as we have clear goals, confidence and strong determination, there's nothing we cannot achieve."

**Ter Shin Nie**  
Business development director  
Sunsuria Bhd

"The most challenging aspect for me would be juggling between motherhood and a career. Managing both roles involves a steep learning curve. Similar to many working mothers, I experience feelings of guilt as I worry about not dedicating enough time to my child or not excelling as much in my career due to time constraints. The struggle to maintain a healthy work-life balance is an ongoing

challenge.

"It is crucial to maintain open communication with the employer and also family members, especially the spouse. A supportive partner is essential for working mothers to navigate the challenges of juggling motherhood and a career. Sharing responsibilities at home can help alleviate the pressure and stress caused by the time constraints working mothers face. It is important to set clear expectations about each partner's contributions for a more balanced partnership.

"Sunsuria practices open and transparent communication with our employees, who we affectionately call Sunsurians, by acknowledging the challenges working mothers face and actively working together towards solutions to create a more equitable and inclusive working environment.

"The most memorable moment for me was being involved in the process of when Sunsuria became publicly listed. It was a big milestone for Sunsuria and a steep learning curve for all of us. The transition from private to publicly listed status proved challenging as there were many changes that we needed to adapt to, but we managed to overcome the difficulties by analysing the issues and focusing on problem solving."



**Ooi Ee Sze**  
Senior general manager  
Paramount Property

"I truly believe that women bring great value to property development and should be encouraged to join the industry. Women think through details that men don't think much about, like the practical size of the kitchen cabinets, placement of electricity plug points and safety features for children and the elderly. We are building homes, after all.

"As a corporate leader, the most important skills to invest time and effort in are people-related ones. When you are in a senior position, it's about relationship building and engaging with colleagues, business partners, bankers, professionals and the authorities. Most people who have reached senior positions have technical qualifications as their foundation, and as you move up, you are also supported by a team of technical experts. So, invest in

people skills.

"I am happy that Paramount Property allowed me to play a senior management role and to front the business not just in Malaysia, but also for our only overseas project in Bangkok. However, women are still a minority among the top management of the property development industry, and even among decision-makers at the authorities.

"Climbing the corporate ladder requires a lot of time and energy. You need to have a strong family support system and be willing to sacrifice personal and family time. It's a myth that you can have it all because you can only be in one place at a time. At the senior level, you may have to travel or attend social events beyond work hours and on weekends. Be focused on what you want and be willing to give up certain things along the way. I was fortunate to have family support, including my parents and husband who cheered me on."