

Doing not Trying:

Lead through Inclusion

Report on the 9th CEO Roundtable

Held in Paris on 13 October 2022

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our ninth CEO Roundtable was held in Paris on 13 October 2022 as part of LEAD Network's annual conference – a dynamic session bringing together 40 CEOs and regional presidents from across our sector.

Building on the success of the previous Roundtable, held virtually in May, the goal of this session was to identify one industry-wide action to propel change and break through bias. CEOs have been vocal about their wish to have an immediate impact on gender equality and inclusion, so the emphasis was on practical measures and individuals stepping up to act as champions.

Key takeaway: the chosen action

Formation of a joint board, comprising both CEOs and NextGens, in partnership with the LEAD Network NextGen Chapter, to identify barriers to the growth of emerging female talent and solutions to advance women faster within our industry. These solutions could include:

- 1 Cross-company sponsorship/mentorship programme for emerging talent
- 2 Cross-company leadership programme to expose NextGens to different environments, including rotational programmes with a distinct focus on sustainability talent exchanges



Sinéad Kwant
President, Europe, at Diversey
Chair of the 9th CEO Roundtable



SUMMARY OF THE SESSION

The CEO Roundtable was chaired by Sinéad Kwant, President, Europe, at Diversey, and moderated by Sarah McGowan, Partner at August Leadership and member of LEAD Network's Advisory Board.

Sinéad told participants: "By being together we are sending a strong and motivating message that we as leaders believe inclusion is critical for our growth and the growth of our industry."

To ensure the session was data-driven, Sarah presented the findings of LEAD Network's 'Voices of the Future' research into what young professionals think of our industry, and what they need from senior leaders to advance their career.

The research took the form of a focus group and online survey of NextGens aged 25-35, 60% female, and representing 20 LEAD Network Partner companies. For comparison, research company Gradus Research also conducted a survey via mobile app of European professionals from a broader base of industry, with the same age and gender profile as above.

- When asked how 'future fit' the consumer products and retail sector is, NextGen respondents gave an average score of just 4.8 out of 10.
- Only 28% of NextGens currently intend to remain within the consumer products and retail industry.
- The top barriers to progression cited by NextGens are 'not being viewed as a leader because of age or experience', and 'not feeling seen by senior leaders'. This was in contrast to respondents from other industries, where the top barriers are 'lack of self-confidence' and 'combining career growth with family/caring obligations'.
- There is a higher ambition for growth within our industry for NextGen talent, compared with other industries (97% v. 87%). And there is no disparity between male and female respondents' willingness to grow. This shows there is an opportunity to develop female talent within our pipeline, as the younger generation has a clear ambition for growth.



Having listened to the research findings, our CEO Roundtable participants went into five breakout discussions, each with a potential industry-wide action to scope out. Lidia Timkovskaya and Julieta Hermosilla Rafecas, representatives from our NextGen Chapter, were also present and brought their valuable insights to the debate.

The groups reported back and participants then voted on which action to pursue. The decision was:

1 To champion the NextGen Chapter via a joint board

A joint board, comprising both CEOs and leaders from the NextGen Chapter, will work to identify barriers to growth and solutions to advance younger women (and men) in our industry with urgency. Working jointly in this way will deepen the communication and understanding between current and future leaders.

2 To form a cross-company sponsorship/mentorship programme for emerging talent

NextGens say they want to be part of agile teams that will give them new experiences; they want to be purpose-driven; they want exposure to inspirational leaders and they want training in functional and leadership skills. Shadowing opportunities will provide true visibility and access to leaders – something our research showed is seen as a key enabler. Setting up this initiative will require tapping into LEAD Network's existing mentorship scheme, in order to source a diverse range of mentors. Cross-gender mentorship is valuable, so this should also be considered.

3 To develop a cross-industry leadership programme

This will offer gender-equal participation, to ensure all future leaders have the chance to progress. A possible option would be to create bi-lateral exchanges where participants work on a shared challenge of the two companies involved. Sustainability would be a good area for this, to avoid conflicts of interest – for example, regenerative agriculture or packaging reduction. Swaps could last for 1-2 years, with LEAD Network playing the role of matchmaker.

The next steps are to schedule a follow-up session with the leaders of the NextGen Chapter and the CEOs who have volunteered to act as champions. This will happen in November/December, and progress will be reported at the next CEO Roundtable in spring 2023. If you would like to get involved, in any capacity, please email Mick Broekhof at mick.broekhof@lead-eu.net.



FEEDBACK

Participants gave the CEO Roundtable an overall rating of 4.7 out of 5, with ‘new insights’ and ‘organisation’ both receiving a score of 4.8.

CEOs particularly appreciated the NextGen insights and call to action; honest debate within a safe space; and the opportunity to network with peers. They would like more time to be allocated to the session, and want to ensure the chosen action is followed up on. In future they would also like to see more discussion of the CEO Pledge.



Thank you for hosting the event. It was a great opportunity for us to engage, and see how other companies are moving forward in D&I.”



I enjoyed the honest, spirited debate and conversation around the five topics, as well as the opportunity to network. This is clearly a safe space to voice opinions.



This was a provocative discussion grounded in facts and analysis. We had a clear call to action, an interactive problem-solving format, and were able to collectively select one critical action that will have an impact.



The knowledge sharing was just phenomenal

PARTICIPANT BREAKDOWN

Number of participants: 40, the highest number to date for an in-person CEO Roundtable. The number includes 8 moderators who are executives themselves.

Repeats: Half of the participants were attending for the first time. This is a higher percentage than the typical 30%.

Gender: Women 22; men 18. This is the first time that women have been in the majority.

BACKGROUND TO THE CEO ROUNDTABLE

The CEO Roundtable was started by Frans Muller, CEO of Ahold Delhaize, in 2017. Since then it has become a unique forum for senior executives within the European consumer packaged goods and retail industry, bringing together retailers, wholesalers, manufacturers and service providers.

Our aim is to build a dynamic community of CEOs and regional presidents who are not only committed to making diversity and inclusion a strategic priority at every level of their organisation, but who want to steer the whole industry towards gender equality.

Meetings of the Roundtable typically involve individuals from around 40 different companies. In a 'safe haven' environment, participants talk frankly about their personal challenges and successes, with a focus on practical actions that others can put to good use within their own organisations. Learning takes place at three levels:

- 1 Individual – Taking personal action to listen, learn and adjust. Being a role model for your team and company in the area of D&I.
- 2 Institution – Adopting company-wide changes that improve D&I across all business processes (not just HR).
- 3 Industry – Acting collectively with other CEOs to make industry region-wide progress on inclusive policies, making our industry more attractive to diverse talent.

The CEO Roundtable is run largely by volunteers, with support from LEAD Network staff. If you have any feedback on the latest CEO Roundtable or ideas for future CEO activities and events, please contact Mick Broekhof at mick.broekhof@lead-eu.net.

This report is shared among our Partners. In keeping with our 'safe haven' policy, all identifying information has been removed.



CEO ROUNDTABLE PARTICIPANTS

Piers Heaton-Armstrong Vice-President Advertising Europe
Amazon

Paolo Lanzaarotti CEO, **Asahi Europe & International**

Cécile Beliot Group CEO, **Bel Group**

Stephen Watkins Managing Director, **Boots Ireland**

Philippa Purser Vice President and Group Leader
Cargill International S.A

Rami Baitiéh CEO of **Carrefour France**,
Member of the Advisory Board of LEAD Network

David Cuenca President, Europe, **CHEP**

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Finland, **The Coca-Cola Company**

François Gay Bellile General Manager / VP
Coca-Cola Europacific Partners

Nicolas Rieul Vice-President, **Criteo**

Nigyar Makhmudova Chief Growth Officer, **Danone**

Sinéad Kwant President, Europe & Member of Executive
Committee, **Diversey**
Chair of the 9th CEO Roundtable of LEAD Network

Adrien Geiger Managing Director, **L'OCCITANE**

Francesca Amadei VP Southern Europe, **IFCO Systems**

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Laurence Etienne President Northern Europe
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Tracey Massey Chief Operating Officer, **Nielsen IQ**

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Member, Advisory Board of LEAD Network

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Hanneke Faber President of Nutrition, **Unilever**

MODERATORS

Mick Broekhof Co-Founder & Secretary of the
Executive Committee of LEAD Network

Jill Hopper Writer

Antonio Coto Former CEO of **Dia**; retail expert

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Sarah McGowan Partner, **August Leadership**



The NextGen survey was carried out by Gradus Research
<https://gradus.app/en/> within 12-16.09.2022 in UK, Germany,
Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, France,
sample size = 100 interviews per country.

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