

Report on the 6th CEO Roundtable
Held 29 April 2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LEAD Network's sixth CEO Roundtable was held virtually on 29 April 2021, taking as its theme **COVID-19 Revisited: What lessons can we learn from the pandemic to create a more inclusive and gender-equal future for our industry?**

The session was designed as a follow-up to last April's event, held when we were in the early days of the pandemic. Twelve months on, companies have learnt a huge amount about the impact of the pandemic on women's careers and gender diversity.

Three key takeaways

- 1 The issue of attrition must be addressed urgently. Potential solutions include accelerating promotions for women and rewarding female employees; creating a return-to-work programme for women who have left; and communicating a sharper sense of purpose.
- 2 The future of work is likely to be hybrid, with a blend of office-based and remote working. Now that the workforce has the technology and skills needed for virtual work, companies can become more flexible about requirements for location and travel for specific roles. This will widen the talent pool and open up more opportunities for women who have traditionally been deterred from taking senior roles because of mobility issues.
- 3 Companies have been creative about setting clear parameters to make remote and flexible working a success. This template can be further developed once the crisis is over, to make sure the new hybrid model of work supports women as much as possible..

The roundtable was chaired by Richard Mayfield, Executive Vice President, Global Sourcing and Regional CEO – Walmex and Canada. Richard said the pandemic had unleashed greater agility, innovation and purpose within the consumer packaged goods and retail industry. But the merging of home and office had led to exhaustion and burnout for many, with the impact on women being more significant than on men; one in four women and one in three mothers have considered leaving the workforce or downshifting their careers.

Richard said: "In my view the changes that COVID has driven create both risk and opportunity. If we respond to the changes we are seeing with thoughtful leadership and with flexible thinking we can accelerate our goals for women in the workplace."

The roundtable brought together 40 CEOs and regional presidents – on a par with our record turnout last autumn. Of these, 40% were women. Discussion was lively and there was considerable enthusiasm for the idea of creating a regular CEO forum to discuss the future of work, possibly to be facilitated through a platform such as LinkedIn or WhatsApp.

This report is distributed to CEO Roundtable participants only, and all identifying information has been removed. We hope it will offer you a valuable resource as you and your teams emerge from the COVID crisis and explore what diversity and inclusion look like in our post-pandemic world.



Richard Mayfield

*Executive Vice President, Global Sourcing and Regional CEO – Walmex and Canada
Chair of the 6th CEO Roundtable*

1 WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT ABOUT NEW WAYS OF WORKING, PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO WOMEN?

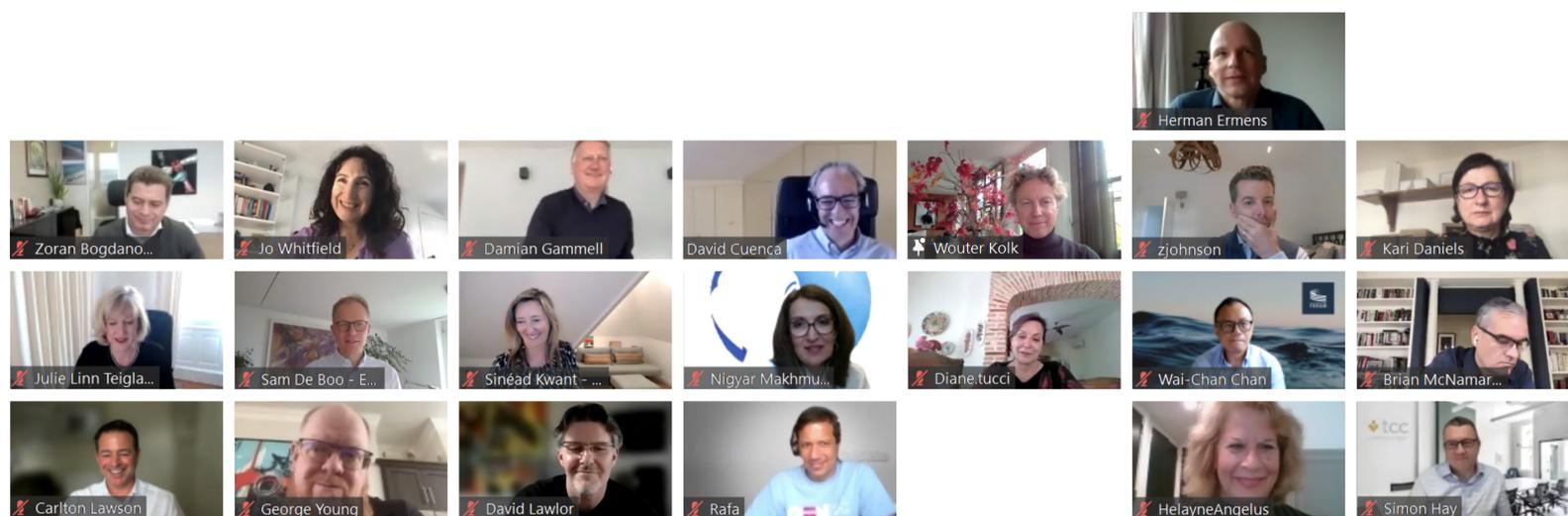
- Many women are leaving or have left the workplace due to the extraordinary pressures of the pandemic. The attrition of senior women is a very real concern. If companies lose women at the managerial level it creates a hole in the middle of the pipeline, storing up problems for later. Also, the loss of female role models can have a serious knock-on effect on the career aspirations of younger/more junior women.
- Virtual meetings mean we have all seen inside each other's lives and homes; leaders have consequently gained a greater understanding of the pressures faced by employees, especially women and parents. A more compassionate, holistic model of leadership seems to be emerging.
- Remote-working technology such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams has led to a breaking down of barriers and hierarchies. Some individuals feel more comfortable participating in virtual meetings and have gained in confidence and visibility; this may work in favour of women whose contribution can be overlooked in traditional in-person meetings.
- Virtual working doesn't suit everybody and the future of work is likely to be hybrid, with a blend of office-based and remote working – whether that is from home or from local shared workspaces. Some companies are consulting employees to find out more about their needs and preferences, and to aid buy-in for potential changes.
- Companies have been creative about setting boundaries on remote working to protect employees' mental health and work/life balance. For example: no meetings to be scheduled outside defined core hours; Zoom-free hours; a daily 30-minute 'home schooling' slot; regular breaks for exercise; an hour for lunch; meeting-free days; 'recharge' days.
- Many firms have provided practical assistance. One set up a home meal-delivery service to ease the burden (which usually falls on women) of providing three meals a day for the family. Others have formed partnerships with healthcare providers to offer medical and psychological support; these services have delivered important new data about women's particular needs in the workplace. Employees themselves have also set up peer-support groups.

2 HOW DO WE EXTEND THE POSITIVE IMPACTS OF THE COVID CRISIS WHILE MITIGATING THE RISKS FOR WOMEN GOING FORWARD?

- The problem of attrition can be tackled in a number of ways. For example: accelerating promotions for women and rewarding female employees; creating a return-to-work programme for women who have left; and communicating a sharper sense of purpose, as women are often driven by the need to make a difference and benefit society.
- The holistic leadership model emerging from COVID has the potential to transform what we value in our companies. This leadership model is more mindful, flexible, caring; it's also focused on trust and accountability rather than checking and control. This can profoundly influence corporate culture to take more account of the needs of the individual, the family, the company and the industry. There is an opportunity to accelerate on diversity KPIs while the Board is empathetic and tuned in to the pressures being faced by women.
- Companies need to explore and develop tailored solutions to address the needs of all types of workers post-COVID-19 and to ensure D&I becomes more ingrained in these solutions. Women are likely to need more support with a partial or full return to the physical workplace. Companies could allow staff to use rental offices and shared workspaces close to their home as an alternative to commuting into a central location or working solely from home. In future the office is likely to be used in a more defined way, for the five Cs: collaborate, connect, celebrate, create, and coach.
- Now that the effectiveness of remote working has been proved, and employees have the necessary skills and technology, job descriptions can become more flexible about the requirements for location and travel; jobs can be done from anywhere. This should open up possibilities for companies (a wider talent pool to draw on) and for women (who have often been deterred from taking senior roles because of a reluctance to relocate or travel).
- Companies need to take a fresh look at their employee policies and benefits. Parental leave policies may need redrafting: many men have welcomed the chance to be more involved in childcare and family life. And future-fit benefits packages are required; for instance, benefits such as travel allowances and company cars may no longer be appropriate, and medical insurance and childcare vouchers more appreciated.
- New bonds, networks and team spirit should be nurtured and perpetuated. They contribute to an organisation's sense of purpose and can help reduce attrition. We must not forget that managers and leaders themselves need training and mentoring if they are to support their teams effectively.

3 WHAT COLLECTIVE ACTIONS CAN WE EXPLORE AS AN INDUSTRY?

- Continue to share best practice on flexible and remote working to ensure diversity and inclusion are built in.
- Explore the possibility of creating a regular forum to discuss the future of work; this could be facilitated through a platform such as a LinkedIn or WhatsApp group.
- Increase cross-company mentoring programmes.
- Train line managers on how to listen effectively and how to stay resilient themselves. LEAD Network could organise 'train the trainer' sessions.
- Develop KPIs as an industry on how to manage people on output and not on presenteeism.



4 FEEDBACK

Participants reacted very positively to the event, giving a satisfaction score of 4.5 out of 5. They praised the quality of the insights, the sense of connection and trust, and the chance to explore an important topic.

Here's what some of our participants had to say:

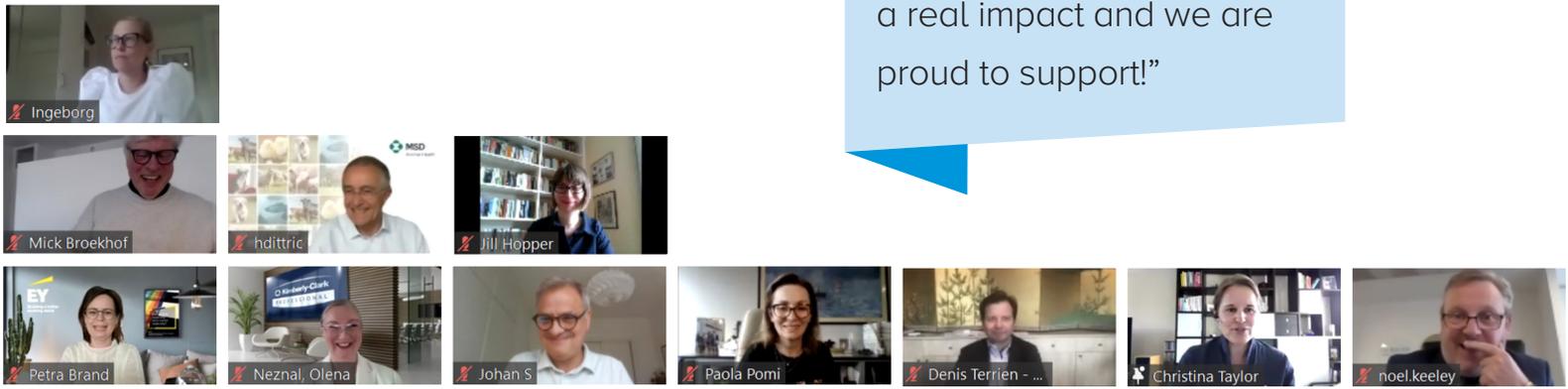


“You have pulled together an impressive group of individuals focused on an important topic that we as an industry have a responsibility to address.”

“It was an amazing networking event, rich in insights and shared experience. The format is great and allows openness in a trusted environment, friendly attitude and real networking.”

“I am happy we are now making progress – step by step. I really enjoyed the CEO Roundtable today and very fruitful discussions.”

“My thanks go to you for the outstanding Roundtable, perfect facilitation and great insights. LEAD is making a real impact and we are proud to support!”



5 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 action-points that others can put to good use within their own organisations. Learning takes place at three levels:

- 1 Individual – becoming a more knowledgeable CEO
- 2 Company – becoming a more inclusive company
- 3 Industry – becoming a more attractive option for the talent pool

The CEO Roundtable is run largely by volunteers, with support from LEAD Network staff. Judith Kuiper of NielsenIQ recently took on the role of Chair of our CEO Engagement Team, to ensure we continue developing our programme for senior leaders. If you have any feedback on the roundtable or ideas for future CEO activities and events, you can contact Judith on judith.kuiper@nielseniq.com



Judith Kuiper
Commercial Leader Benelux and Nordics at NielsenIQ;
Chair of LEAD Network's CEO Engagement Team

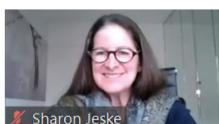
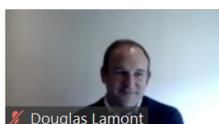
HAVE YOU SIGNED THE CEO PLEDGE YET?

Post-pandemic, our industry has a significant opportunity to harness the lessons of flexible working and make a step change for gender equality. And you can play a key part in making this happen.

If you have not yet signed the CEO Pledge, please consider doing so, and join the growing number of companies who have already made the commitment. Visit www.lead-eu.net/ceo-pledge for more information.

If you have already signed, you can help spread the message further:

- Drive industry-wide take-up by tapping into your network and encouraging friends, colleagues and contacts to sign the Pledge. If all current signatories did this, we could quickly double our numbers.
- When negotiating a contract with a supplier or manufacturer, request that they sign. This is already common practice in certain areas such as sustainability.



PARTICIPANTS ALPHABETICALLY BY COMPANY

Wouter Kolk

CEO of **Ahold Delhaize** Europe & Indonesia
Chair of LEAD Network's 5th CEO Roundtable
Ahold Delhaize renewed the CEO Pledge

Zach Johnson

Director, International Advertising Sales & Global Accounts
at **Amazon**

David Cuenca

President, Europe at **CHEP**
CHEP signed the CEO Pledge

Damian Gammell

CEO of **Coca-Cola European Partners**
Coca-Cola European Partners signed the CEO Pledge

Zoran Bogdanovic

CEO of **Coca-Cola Hellenic Bottling Company**
Coca-Cola Hellenic Bottling Company signed the CEO Pledge

Wai-Chan Chan

Managing Director of The Consumer Goods Forum

Jo Whitfield

Chief Executive Co-op Food

Diane Tucci

Country Manager Spain & France at **Costco Wholesale**;
Costco Wholesale signed the CEO Pledge

Nigyar Makhmudova

Chief Growth Officer at **Danone**
Danone signed the CEO Pledge

Sinéad Kwant

President, Europe and member of Executive Committee
at **Diversey**
Diversey signed the CEO Pledge

Sam de Boo

Executive Vice President & President - Western Europe
at **Ecolab**
Ecolab signed the CEO Pledge

Julie Teigland

EMEA Area Managing Partner at **EY**
EY signed the CEO Pledge

Herman Ermens

President, **FrieslandCampina** Ingredients

Brian McNamara

CEO of **GSK Consumer Healthcare**

Douglas Lamont

CEO of **innocent drinks**
innocent drinks signed the CEO Pledge

Carlton Lawson

Company Group Chair, Consumer Health EMEA
at **Johnson & Johnson Consumer Health**

George Young

Global Managing Director at
Kalypso: A Rockwell Automation Company
Kalypso signed the CEO Pledge

David Lawlor

President Europe at **Kellogg**
Kellogg's signed the Pledge

Olena Neznal

Vice-President, Head of EAME at **Kimberly-Clark Professional**;
LEAD Network Advisory Board
Kimberly-Clark signed the CEO Pledge

Rafael Oliveira

President International at **Kraft Heinz**
Kraft Heinz signed the CEO Pledge

Myriam Cohen-Welgryn

Worldwide President **L'Oréal Active Cosmetics**;
LEAD Network Advisory Board

Tracey Massey

Global President, **Mars Pet Nutrition**
Mars signed the CEO Pledge

Tanya Kopps

CEO of **METRO Italy**;
LEAD Network Steering Committee
METRO signed the CEO Pledge

Özgür Tort

CEO of **Migros Ticaret**
Migros signed the CEO Pledge

Dr. Hans Dittrich

SVP, Head of EURAM (Europe, Russia/CIS, North Africa,
Middle East) at **Merck/MSD Animal Health**

Noel Keeley

CEO of **Musgrave Group**

Marco Settembri

CEO Zone Europe, Middle East & North Africa (EMENA)
at **Nestlé**
Nestlé signed the CEO Pledge

Sean Cohan

Chief Growth Officer and President, International
of **Nielsen Global Media**

Johan Sjöstrand

Global President, Retail Intelligence, **Nielsen IQ**
Nielsen signed the CEO Pledge

Darina Stoyanova

CEO of **Prestige 96 AD**

Prestige 96 committed to sign the CEO Pledge

Béatrice Dupuy

President and General Manager France, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxemburg at **Procter & Gamble**;

Member of the Advisory Board of LEAD Network.

Procter & Gamble signed the CEO Pledge

Fabrice Beaulieu

EVP Group Marketing Excellence & EVP Category Development Organization Hygiene at **Reckitt**

Reckitt signed the CEO Pledge

Denis Terrien

CEO Southern Europe of **Salesforce**

Paola Pomi

CEO of **Sinfo One**

Sinfo One signed the CEO Pledge

Marcel Guinchard

Chairman – Continental Europe at **Sodexo**

Simon Hay

CEO of **tcc global**

tcc global signed the CEO Pledge

Kari Daniels

CEO of **Tesco Ireland**

Hanneke Faber

President Global Foods & Refreshment at **Unilever**;
LEAD Network Advisory Board

Unilever signed the CEO Pledge

Richard Mayfield (Chair)

Executive Vice President, Global Sourcing and Regional CEO – **Walmex** and Canada

Chair of LEAD Network 6th CEO Roundtable

MODERATORS

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Co-Founder of LEAD Network and

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Chair of LEAD Network CEO Engagement Team

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Member of LEAD Network Executive Committee

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Organiser and Overall Moderator of

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