

## Report on the CEO Roundtable

Held virtually on 6 October 2020

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since its inception in 2017, the CEO Roundtable has become a unique forum for senior executives within the European consumer packaged goods and retail industry to speak openly about the challenges and rewards of promoting more women to leadership positions.

This year, the session was held virtually, due to the COVID-19 crisis. A record 51 individuals took part, half of them women. The topic under discussion was how to get more women onto boards and executive committees, in order to ensure equal representation at the highest level of companies. Participants shared the actions they and their companies are currently taking to get more women round the top table; discussed the barriers to progress; and explored ideas that individual businesses and the industry as a whole could use to improve gender balance in the boardroom.

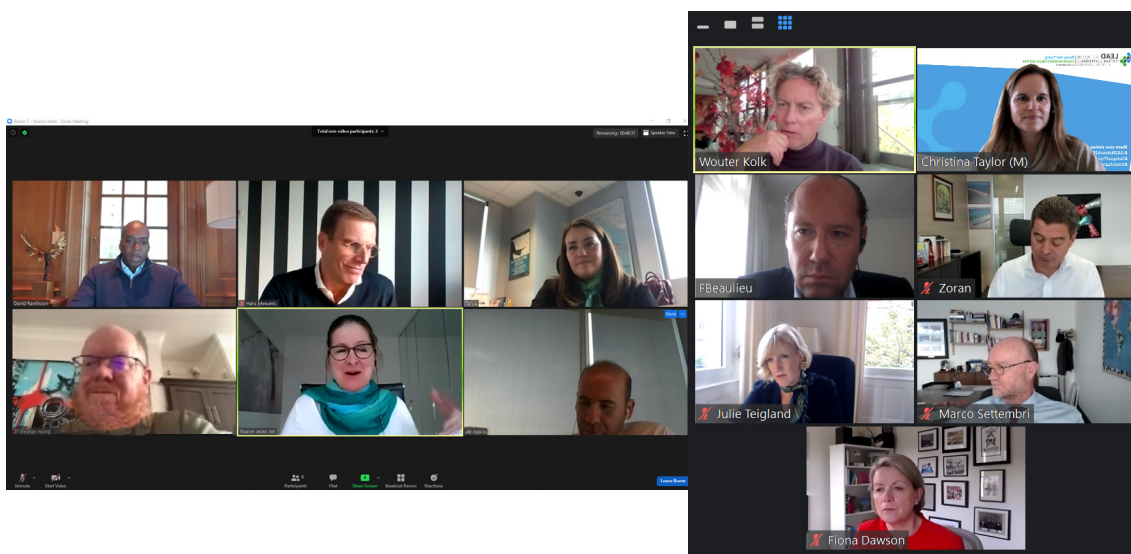


**Wouter Kolk**  
CEO of Ahold Delhaize  
Europe & Indonesia,  
Foundation Partner LEAD Network,  
Chair of the Fifth CEO Roundtable

## Three key ideas to drive change:

- Make a gender-balanced board core to the business strategy. Urge senior male leaders to publicly join the UN 'He for She' campaign: <https://www.heforshe.org/en>
- Raise the issue with suppliers and partners, and make their performance on gender-balanced boards a factor in the selection process.
- Set up a taskforce of CEOs to spearhead industry-wide action.

During the discussion, our participants generated scores of insights and practical suggestions. This report summarizes those points as a basis for deeper understanding and future action. The report is distributed to CEO Roundtable participants only, and all identifying information has been removed. We hope you find it a useful record and a springboard for further discussion.



# 1 WHAT COMPANIES (AND INDIVIDUAL LEADERS) ARE CURRENTLY DOING TO GET MORE WOMEN ONTO THE BOARD

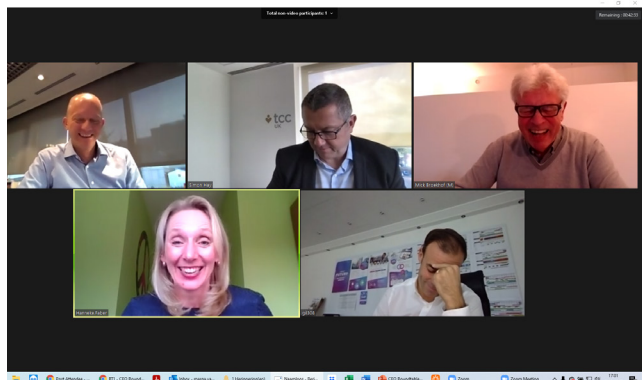
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- Mandating unconscious bias training for senior leaders to tackle underlying prejudices.
- Using robust metrics to drive accountability. This includes publishing targets and results so that the whole business can see what progress is being made, and deploying data analytics to understand where the gaps are.
- Incorporating a commitment to creating a gender-balanced board within the D&I statement and the business strategy (rather than treating it as an HR issue).
- Giving stretch assignments to women to build their confidence in going for the most senior positions.
- Having a robust succession plan in place so that when senior women leave the company there are suitable replacements lined up.
- Overhauling the recruitment process for board positions. This includes: pushing external recruitment agencies to be more flexible and creative in sourcing candidates; requiring gender neutral CVs; creating 50/50 slates; implementing hiring quotas; using gender-balanced hiring panels; and providing transparency about how decisions have been made.
- Identifying successful women and getting them on the radar in order to broaden the talent pool. This can involve taking chances on candidates who might not have the perfect skillset on paper but bring other vital strengths to the table, and looking for female candidates with transferable skills from other sectors, such as the energy industry.



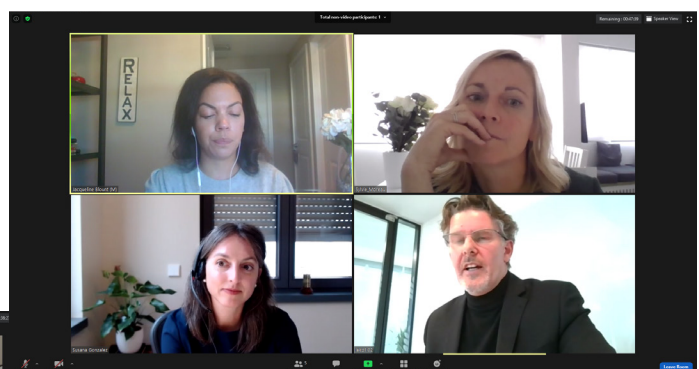
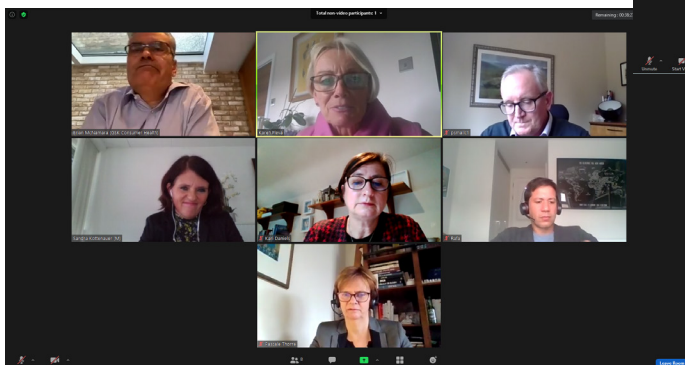
## 2 THE KEY BARRIERS

- Social perceptions and the wider culture mean that women are not readily seen as natural board members. And unconscious bias means that both men and women may have prejudices about who is suitable.
- Women on boards are often not treated as peers by male board members. Once one woman has been appointed to the board, the effort stops. Where there is a lone woman she can feel like the 'token female', and her voice may well get lost.
- Senior men tend to have a lack of women in their network. Boards are often dominated by like-minded individuals who appoint others who resemble them; there is a 'clique' mentality. Male advocacy may not be forthcoming and the necessary tone and example is not being set from the top.
- There are few female board members to serve as role models and inspire women lower down the organisation. As a result, some women lack confidence in going for the most senior roles.
- Headhunters and external recruitment agencies may have an outdated view of who is suitable for the most senior positions. They may have a list of very traditional criteria and experiences.
- There is competition between companies for qualified women, who are in high demand for board positions as businesses seek to become more gender balanced.
- There is a lack of data around the issue, making it harder to tackle root causes and monitor progress.



- Demystify board roles and demonstrate that they are achievable for women.
- Ensure all vacancies for senior management positions have balanced slate, without exceptions. Be transparent about the process, and track the results.
- Expose board members and senior executives to diverse views in order to expand their horizons. Listening to the views of young people is especially important.
- Create ways for existing board members and senior executives to network with talented women in a friendly and informal environment, for example 'She can' events.
- Make a gender-balanced board core to the business strategy. Urge senior male leaders to publicly join the UN 'He for She' campaign: <https://www.heforshe.org/en>
- Allow newly appointed female board members to connect with senior women already in the company, to foster a sense of confidence and belonging.
- Don't give women board members special treatment; this reduces their credibility. But do support all new board members to feel comfortable. Aim to appoint a minimum of two women to the board to build critical mass and shift the power balance.
- Encourage women to build powerful networks: not just internally but externally too, to broaden their options and boost visibility. Support women to take up NED positions with external bodies such as charities and non-competitor companies.
- Learn from other sectors, markets and companies, for example through cross-company mentoring and inviting external speakers with expertise on the issue.
- Give an award to the best-performing business unit (on diversity issues) to spur internal competition and accelerate progress.
- Work with recruitment agencies to encourage them to pursue different avenues when seeking out senior female senior executives.

- LEAD Network could create a talent pool of women who are looking for NED positions, perhaps in the form of a directory that businesses could consult when making appointments. A new Chapter focused on the topic might also be useful.
- LEAD Network could develop a scorecard on gender-balanced boards and publish progress.
- Set up a taskforce of CEOs to spearhead industry-wide change.
- Lobby the Consumer Goods Forum to put the issue of gender-balanced boards on its agenda.
- Raise the issue with suppliers and partners, and make their performance on gender-balanced boards a factor in the selection process.
- Lobby government regulators to take diversity into account when giving ratings to publicly listed companies (as is currently the case in Scandinavia). A duty to provide a gender-balanced board could be integrated into governance rules.

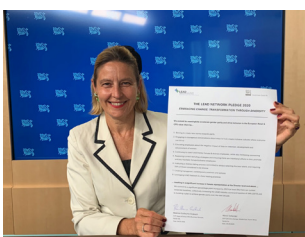
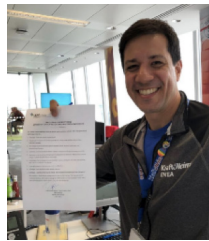


# 4 CEO PLEDGE

LEAD Network continues to make great progress on the CEO Pledge. To date, 31 company leaders have signed, in a clear signal that they are taking gender equality seriously at the strategic level.

You can help drive industry-wide take-up of the CEO Pledge by tapping into your network and encouraging friends, colleagues and contacts to sign. If all current signatories did this, we could quickly double our numbers.

When negotiating a contract with a supplier or manufacturer, you could consider requesting that they sign the CEO Pledge. This is already common practice in certain areas such as sustainability.





## FEEDBACK

We are grateful to those participants who filled in our survey after the CEO Roundtable; this will help us to improve future sessions. The event received an overall score of 4.4 out of 5, with 74% of respondents saying they would recommend LEAD Network to a friend or colleague. The element that CEO Roundtable participants most appreciated was the chance to have a frank conversation with peers within a safe environment.

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

**"Thrilled to have had such a productive session at the LEAD Network CEO Roundtable discussion on driving diversity within boards, with so many great insights given by all the members. The conversation really reinforced the critical role that we all play as leaders in setting the tone from the top and aligning our words and actions – leveraging the 'superpowers' of those of us in leadership roles to drive inclusivity."**



Julie Teigland, EY



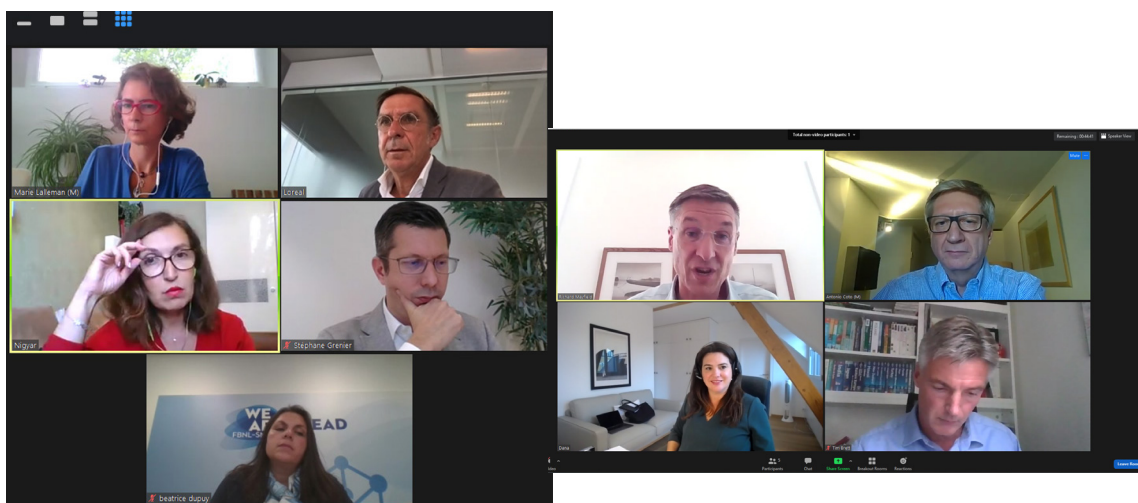
**"An inspiring discussion on the importance of inclusion and belonging in the workplace. I had the pleasure to share some of the improvements our Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging team has been working on at The Kraft Heinz Company. Most importantly, it was an opportunity to listen and learn."**

Rafael Oliveira, President International, The Kraft Heinz Company

**"The Roundtable was even better than last year. There was some real sharing of what can and should be done, and some very actionable outcomes on an individual/company and even societal level."**



Hanneke Faber, Unilever





# PARTICIPANTS ALPHABETICALLY BY COMPANY

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## Wouter Kolk (Chair)

CEO of **Ahold Delhaize** Europe & Indonesia  
Ahold Delhaize renewed the Pledge

## Stéphane Grenier

Managing Director **Amazon Advertising France**

## Paolo Lanzarotti

CEO of **Asahi Breweries Europe Ltd.**  
Asahi has committed to sign the Pledge

## Maria Bianca Tulumello

CHRO at **Barilla Group**

## Isabelle Esser

CHRO of **Barry Callebaut**

## Rami Baitié

Executive Director at **Carrefour France** and member of Advisory Board of LEAD Network

## David Cuenca (sends regrets)

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

## Sylvie Moreau

President Professional Beauty at **Coty**

## Tim Brett

President, Western Europe at **The Coca-Cola Company**

## Burak Başarır

CEO at **Coca-Cola İçecek**  
Coca-Cola İçecek has committed to sign the Pledge

## Zoran Bogdanovic

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

## Nigyar Makhmudova

Executive Vice President, Growth and Innovation at **Danone**  
Danone has committed to sign the Pledge

## Nikola Hagleitner

EVP Global Head of Marketing & Sales of **DHL Global Forwarding**

## Sabine Müller (sends regrets)

CEO of **DHL Consulting**  
DHL Consulting signed the Pledge

## Julie Teigland

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

## Hans Meeuwis

President at **Royal FrieslandCampina**

## Dana McNabb

Group President Europe and Australia at **General Mills**  
General Mills signed the Pledge

## Brian McNamara

CEO of **GSK Consumer Healthcare**

## Pascale Thorre

Global Inclusion & Diversity Head at **HEINEKEN**

## Per Strömberg (sends regrets)

CEO of **ICA Gruppen**  
ICA Gruppen signed the Pledge

## Patrick Smallcombe

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

## George Young

Global Managing Director at **Kalypso: A Rockwell Automation Company**  
Kalypso signed the Pledge.  
'Founding company' of LEAD Network

## David Lawlor

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

## Olena Neznal

Vice-President, Head of EAME at **Kimberly-Clark Professional**  
Kimberly-Clark signed the Pledge

## Rafael Oliveira

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

## Sylvain Desjonqueres

Group Managing Director at **Groupe L'OCCITANE**  
L'OCCITANE is committed to sign the Pledge

## Herve Navellou

Directeur Général of **L'Oréal France**

## Alp Ögücü

General Manager of **Lila Group**  
Lila Group signed the Pledge

## Jérôme Gilg

CEO of **Manor AG**

**Fiona Dawson**

Global President **Mars Food**, Multisales and Global Customers  
**Mars signed the Pledge**

**Malcolm Swift** (sends regrets)

President, Global Flavor Solutions, International-EMEA and  
 Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) at **McCormick & Company**

**Dr. Hans Dittrich**

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

**Andrea Euenheim**

CHRO at **METRO AG**  
**METRO signed the Pledge**

**Tanya Kopps**

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

**Marco Settembri**

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

**David Rawlinson**

CEO of **Nielsen Global Connect**  
**Nielsen signed the Pledge**

**Béatrice Dupuy**

President and General Manager France, Belgium, Netherlands,  
 Luxemburg at **Procter & Gamble**  
**Procter & Gamble signed the Pledge**

## MODERATORS

**Jacqueline Blount**

Global Lead, Diversity & Inclusion at **Ahold Delhaize**

**Mick Broekhof**

Co-founder & Secretary of the Executive Committee of LEAD  
 Network

**Catherine Bullen**

Chapters Manager at LEAD Network  
**CB Consulting**

**Antonio Coto**

Former CEO of **DIA**. Member of CEO Pledge Team of LEAD  
 Network.  
*Corporate Advisor in Retailing and Consumers*

**Jill Hopper**

Freelance writer and editor

**Fabrice Beaulieu**

EVP Group Marketing Excellence & EVP Category Development  
 Organization Hygiene at **RB**  
**RB signed the Pledge**

**Susana Gonzalez**

EMEA President at **Rockwell Automation**

**Paola Pomi**

CEO of **Sinfo One**  
**Sinfo One signed the Pledge**

**Karen Pleva**

CEO Global Strategic Accounts, Corporate Services  
 at **Sodexo**

**Kari Daniels**

CEO of **Tesco Ireland**

**Simon Hay**

CEO of **tcc global**  
**tcc global signed the Pledge**

**Hanneke Faber**

President Global Foods & Refreshment at **Unilever**;  
 Member of Advisory Board of LEAD Network  
**Unilever signed the Pledge**

**Richard Mayfield**

EVP and CEO Mexico, Central America, Canada & UK at  
**Walmart**

**Sharon Jeske**

Executive Director of LEAD Network

**Sandra Kottenauer**

Chief Product & Marketing Officer, Executive Committee Member  
 at **Manor**; Member of Switzerland Chapter Committee of LEAD  
 Network

**Marie Lalleman**

EVP, Managing Director, Global Client Solutions at **Nielsen**

**Füsün Tavus Mumçu**

Partner Engagement Director at LEAD Network

**Christina Taylor**

Owner of **Learn to Grow**, Chair of LEAD Network Education  
 Committee



Foundation LEAD Network  
Keizersgracht 59A  
1015CE Amsterdam, Netherlands

[mick.broekhof@lead-eu.net](mailto:mick.broekhof@lead-eu.net)



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