



**LEAD** NETWORK  
VIRTUAL CONFERENCE  
6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2020

**Doing Not Trying:  
Unprecedented Opportunities**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Europe's flagship diversity event goes virtual for the first time.**

***Executives from the consumer products and retail industry will come together in October for Europe's largest diversity event, which is happening virtually for the first time. Leading speakers include Unilever CEO Alan Jope and P&G's Carolyn Tastad. Delegates will explore the opportunities that have emerged during the COVID crisis; share best practices in diversity and inclusion, and enjoy networking and career development sessions.***

Europe's flagship diversity event for the consumer products and retail industry, organised by LEAD Network, will be held virtually for the first time this autumn. The new format means up to 1,000 executives will take part, making this the largest and most inclusive conference in the event's eight-year history.

Delegates – including the CEOs of some of Europe's largest companies – will assemble online on 6 – 8 October 2020 for the event, which takes 'Doing not Trying: Unprecedented Opportunities' theme. The COVID crisis created a leap forward in remote and flexible working, both of which are vital drivers for gender equality. The industry is now coming together to find ways to embed these positive changes and develop a more strategic approach to diversity inclusion.

The conference, sponsored by The Coca-Cola Company, P&G, GSK and METRO, is designed for people at all levels and stages of their career in consumer products and retail. It includes discussing leading diversity practices; workshops on personal development and leadership; and country-based 'happy hours' where delegates can forge new relationships and share ideas. For the first time, all formal sessions will be recorded, and delegates are given 12 months' access to continue to benefit long after the event has concluded.

Sharon Jeske, co-founder and executive director of LEAD Network, said: "Our membership is growing exponentially and has now topped 8,000 – both men and women – all of whom want to see a level playing field for female leaders. The increase this year in participation by members, companies, and CEOs shows there is unwavering support for gender equality in the retail and consumer goods sector."

### **What's on the agenda?**

The first day of the event, 6 October, focuses on joint industry action to seize the opportunities that have emerged during the Covid crisis. A panel will discuss how we can each unlock our 'superpowers' to contribute to an equal workplace, while breakout sessions explore how the next generation of leaders is embracing authentic leadership. In the evening, a CEO Roundtable, which is by invitation only, brings together more than 40 senior

executives for a unique opportunity to share experiences and explore how to make progress together faster.

On 7 October, attention turns to D&I best practice, with personal stories from inspiring speakers and a panel discussion on companies' strategic priority to become more inclusive. A virtual marketplace showcases what businesses are doing to promote gender equality, with videos and downloadable materials. Meanwhile, breakout sessions examine topics such as the intersectionality of gender and ethnicity, inclusive hiring; male advocacy; and work-life balance.

The final day of the event, 8 October, includes more keynote speeches from leading industry figures, including Alan Jope, CEO of Unilever. A panel will discuss how leadership has changed in 2020 and what transferable lessons have been learned. There will also be a mentoring marketplace and sessions on negotiating and building a personal toolkit to break through the glass ceiling.

You can view the full conference programme here:

<https://www.lead-eu.net/wp-content/downloads/LEAD-Network-Virtual-Conference-Programme.pdf>

### **Leading speakers from the industry**

Throughout the event, delegates will hear from individuals at the forefront of building gender diversity within their organisations. Speakers include:

#### **Per Strömberg, CEO, ICA Gruppen**

Per's opening keynote speech examines large companies' power and responsibility to create a fair and inclusive culture. He calls for industry collaboration and sets the context for the conference theme of 'Doing not Trying: Unprecedented Opportunities.'

#### **Carolyn Tastad, Group President – North America, Chief Sales Officer, and Exec Sponsor Gender Equality, P&G**

Carolyn Tastad has a strong track record of leading change to unlock growth in both organizations and individuals and is a true advocate for gender and intersectional equality. Over the last nine months, Carolyn has led P&G's business and organization through many unexpected demands and challenges – without losing sight of what really matters. She'll share the importance of focusing on clear priorities, redefining what's possible, and ensuring this crisis can be a step forward for equality – not a setback.

#### **Alan Jope, CEO, Unilever**

Alan describes Unilever's journey to the milestone of 50/50 gender balance and outlines what's next on the D&I agenda for his company, which has won multiple awards for its efforts to create a more diverse workplace.

#### **Lana Popovic, President, Central & Eastern Europe BU, The Coca-Cola Company**

Lana tells the personal story that led her to become a courageous and empathetic leader. She shares the challenges of being a single mother in a high-profile, demanding role, and talks about how her experiences shaped her during the Balkan War.

## **How to register**

To register for the virtual event on 6 – 8 October 2020, visit <https://www.lead-eu.net/lead-network-virtual-conference-2020/> Tickets are on sale until 5 October 2020. Registration gives you automatic free membership of LEAD Network, allowing you to participate in its other activities throughout the year, including webinars and a mentoring programme.

## **What is LEAD Network?**

LEAD Network is a non-profit and volunteer-led organisation whose mission is to attract, retain, and advance women in the consumer products and retail sector in Europe through education, leadership, and business development. LEAD Network has a fast-growing membership of more than 8,000 people – both women and men – drawn from 81 countries. Members can build their leadership skills, widen their circle of contacts, and be inspired by female role models and male champions in the industry. Twenty-seven companies have signed LEAD Network's CEO Pledge on gender diversity, with six more have committed to sign this year.

Read the report on last year's event in Madrid:

<https://www.lead-eu.net/wp-content/downloads/LEAD-Network-Event2019-Executive-Summary.pdf>

## **Contact**

For more information about LEAD Network and the event, please contact Roser Pujol, Marketing and Engagement Manager of the LEAD Network at +31 641 899 080 or [roser.pujol@lead-eu.net](mailto:roser.pujol@lead-eu.net)