



LEAD NETWORK
NEXTGEN
CHAPTER

Business travel experience after Corona – virtual vs F2F visits Madeleine Forsch



The LEAD Network NextGen team runs their program #Learning Journey to explore ways to protect our wellbeing and improve our ability to bounce back. As part of this journey, NextGen individuals contribute to this monthly blog series.

In this month's blog, we interviewed **Madeleine Forsch**, Senior Technical Service Technologist Key Accounts at **Ingredion** Germany GmbH.

Madeleine enjoys surfing, exploring new countries and food.

Tell me a bit about yourself: what you do at work and who you are as a person.

I support three of Ingredion's Key Accounts in the EMEA (Europe, Middle East, Africa) region. Working in tandem with the respective Key Account manager, I am working on strategies for the Accounts and supporting the customer from a technical perspective with training, workshops, or collaborating with them during new product developments.

I love traveling and exploring new countries in my free time. For me, a perfect holiday is when I can get to know a new culture & people, explore new food, and go surfing. Moreover, I like to use my holiday to work as a volunteer on projects focusing on environmental protection.



Why does NextGen resonate with you?

I have experienced hurdles myself to being a woman and the youngest in the room. Moreover, I see that the working place is changing. Much workload needs to be balanced with other life activities, so the need for a good work-life balance is getting more important.

With NextGen, we are addressing the needs of the younger generation and how we can implement new ways of working in the industry.

It's great to have a platform via the LEAD Network so that we are heard.

What's causing most of your stress at work?

The workload during the pandemic increased, and the expectation for speed of response changed. Most people worked from home and were not traveling, so the answer to emails was faster than before.

Now going back to traveling to visit customers is challenging, not only because of the new expectations but also because the travel time needed is even higher than before due to constraints of airlines.

What are the pros and cons on F2F visits vs. virtual?

For sure, it's great to be able to meet customers and colleagues F2F again! There is the possibility of building a much stronger relationship and having more in-depth discussions, which could lead to new opportunities.

Training is excellent F2F as you directly see the participants' reaction; questions could be addressed easier as they do not need to be asked in front of the whole group, prototypes could be evaluated together, there is more exchange.

On the other hand, virtual meetings are sometimes more efficient and use less time. It's easy and quick to connect for e.g., short project updates via Teams.

Companies have invested a lot in digital capabilities during the last years, we can use these new tools to have an outstanding customer experience during a virtual meeting.

Another strong argument for virtual meetings is less traveling by plane and car, which positively impacts the environment.

Do you think there is a good middle way for the future?

From my perspective, there will be a combination of both, depending on the purpose of the meeting.

For big strategic or technical workshops/training, a F2F meeting is crucial for a good exchange and learning. Moreover, F2F team meetings are also important to keep the team spirit. Some meetings could easily be done virtually to save time and resources.

We will always need a virtual backup plan for F2F meetings as we have unpredictable times, making planning difficult.

What is THE one piece of advice you'd give to NextGens..?

You are responsible for setting workplace boundaries so that you are not overloaded. The same applies to considering travel needs and if some meetings really need a F2F attendance or could be easily done virtually. With that, we do not only save time for us to work on other priority topics but also save time for our colleagues, customers and positively impact the environment.

Check out our [webinars](#) or tune in to the [podcast](#) for insights from our authentic guests and speakers on becoming more #Resilient.

Join the LEAD Network NextGen Chapter

We are a dynamic new Chapter, representing the industry leaders of tomorrow. We want to empower NextGens to grow their careers, and to connect and share experiences along the way, for example through our #LearningJourneys events. We'd love you to be a part of it. Join our [community](#) to stay tuned!

About LEAD Network

LEAD Network Europe 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. The LEAD Network is run by and for its members, women and men, and we value every individual for their unique perspective. With a primary focus on promoting gender equality the organisation strives for the advancement of women of every race, ethnicity, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, educational background, national origin, religion, physical ability and lifestyle. Its vision is of a fair, diverse and vibrant industry where everyone can thrive. A diverse workforce where both men and women are enabled to contribute their full potential and lead their organisations to the next level of value creation. LEAD Network accounts for 14,000+ members – both women and men – from 81 countries.

For more information, please visit www.lead-eu.net