



On 13th and 14th October 2022, LEAD Network members were reunited in Paris for the tenth annual LEAD Network conference – memorable not only for its anniversary but because it was held in person for the first time in three years. In the afternoon before the official kick-off, 50 members of the Supply Chain Chapter gathered for a special networking event dedicated to the theme “Stronger together”.

The session began with a welcome by Anna Sparty, Chair of the Supply Chain Chapter Committee and Alice Pagès, member of the Education & Events team. Anna and Alice gave an overview of the chapter’s activities over the past year and previewed the plan for 2023. Highlights included the continuation of a successful spotlight series on female supply chain role models, the launch of a new series on male allies, and the development of a best practice playbook.

The future of the supply chain: “Stronger together”



The chapter introduction was followed by an icebreaker exercise, conducted by Isabel Steinhuebel, showing the incredible diversity within the chapter in terms of where participants are based, how long they have been with LEAD Network, and in which area of the supply chain they work. Then, participants split into three groups for roundtable discussions. The topics for these roundtables had been selected before the conference based on a survey distributed to members. Our roundtables examined:

- Talent Retention
- Recruiting for the future
- Building Resilience

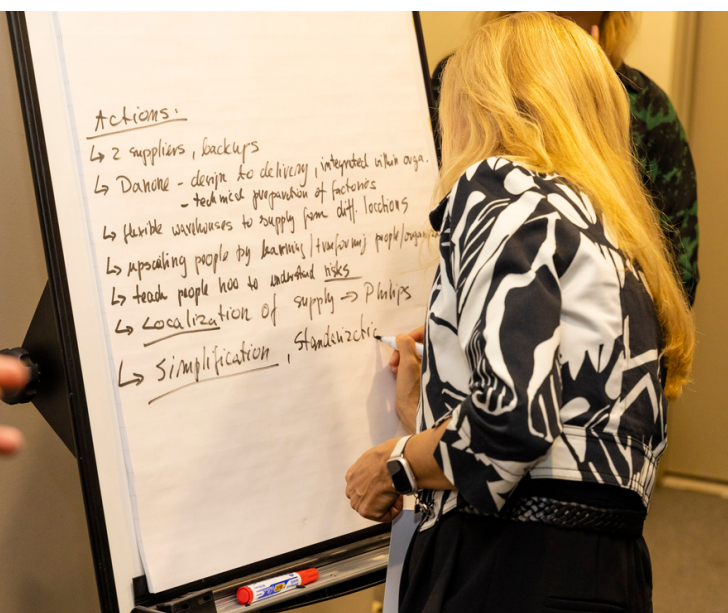
Discussions at these three roundtables, chaired by Alice Pagès, Caroline Gidrol, and Anna Sparty, centered around the following questions: What is your biggest challenge in this area? Is there any action/project initiated in your company to tackle it? Are there any successes/best practices that we can share?

Each group then presented their findings to the wider group.



“I left energized and inspired by real-life stories”

For **talent retention**, challenges that were raised included a competitive job market with supply chain experts being in high demand, a lack of flexible working opportunities, geographically remote manufacturing sites, an increasing level of stress, and the fact that Supply Chain is still treated as a cost center rather than business partner. Proposed solutions included offering career paths that provide agility to recognize and meet candidate needs through all career stages, (reverse) mentorships, and training for managers to understand the younger generation and focus on showing that SC has value (“Never waste a good crisis”).



Actions:
↳ 2 suppliers, backups
↳ Diverse - design to delivery, integrated into org.
↳ technical preparation of factories
↳ flexible warehouses to supply from diff. locations
↳ upscaling people by learning / training people/organisations
↳ teach people how to estimate risks
↳ Localization of supply → Philips
↳ Simplification, Standardization

The group focusing on **recruiting for the future** investigated challenges such as how to attract women into plants, production, and warehouses; how to engage the different age groups, and how to build a pipeline. As potential solutions the group identified collaborating with universities, offering internships and open houses, focusing on graduation programs with the right recruitment criteria, offering role rotations, and training to recognize and break unconscious bias. The group also discussed the importance of dedicated budgets and timelines as well as measuring the progress of the initiatives through KPIs.

For the **building resilience group**, the challenges that stood out were the need to focus on culture, driven by a societal need for stability and predictability, as well as the importance of creating psychological safety through leadership in times of crisis. For the latter, it was stressed how important it is to celebrate small successes and to create teams that are connected. The group discussed a range of solutions that have already been successfully implemented. These included integrating design to delivery into the organization, localization of supply, and training managers on mental health.

Productive roundtables & networking

Chapter Chair Anna Sparty complimented the productive and highly motivated atmosphere: "It was wonderful to spend time with such an engaged crowd and to share experiences and examples from different companies. Nothing beats face-to-face interactions and passionate discussions with people that care to increase diversity and inclusion in the supply chain. I left energized and inspired by real-life stories!"

At the end of the session, many of the ideas were discussed further over refreshments, before participants joined the opening plenary session for the conference.

We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all participants for making this such an inspiring networking session! And a special thanks goes to the organizing team Evelyn Battye, Victoria Cobos, Secil Ozekin Erdogan, Caroline Gidrol, Hannah Kruckenberg, Kath Martin, Alice Pagès, Isabel Steinhuebel and Kristina Weinstein.

Stay tuned for upcoming LEAD Network Supply Chain Chapter events in 2023.