

TRAILBLAZING WOMEN IN SUPPLY CHAIN 2025



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this year's edition of Reuters Events' Trailblazing Women series, a collection of inspiring, influential and impactful women we have curated to celebrate International Women's Day.

This list of trailblazing women has been curated from an open nominations process, more information on which can be found below. We'd like to thank all of those who nominated individuals for this year's list, and those who helped us assemble our list.

The theme for this year's International Women's Day is #AccelerateAction – a call to celebrate and acknowledge the strategies and activities that impact the advancement of women.

As you'll see throughout this report, we have asked each of our nominees a series of questions designed to inspire and accelerate the action that is necessary for greater diversity and representation. The advice given by this year's Trailblazing Women, particularly in how we can foster greater representation in senior positions, is incredibly insightful.

We hope in continuing this series, we increase the visibility of such success stories and accelerate action in the industries we serve.



Liam Stoker

Head of Market Insights

Reuters Events

HOW WE ASSEMBLED REUTERS EVENTS: TRAILBLAZING WOMEN 2025

In naming our list of 2025 Trailblazing Women, we sought nominations of individuals who have excelled in four key areas;

- **Professional Track Record & Achievement:** What have they achieved in their careers and industries to date?
- **Influence:** How have they affected change in their organizations/industries?
- **Social Impact:** What have they done to better the people, communities and industries they operate in?
- **Leadership:** How have they demonstrated leadership capabilities within their organization/industry?

We sought evidence in each of these factors, with a particular emphasis placed on achievements within the past year.

An open nominations process was run throughout December, with nominations accepted via an online portal.

This pool of nominations was assessed individually against each of our four key criteria by an internal team. Additional weighting was given to nominations from underrepresented communities and/or industry sub-sectors.

Efforts were made to ensure that we received nominations from as broad and representative a pool of stakeholders as possible, and our final list of Trailblazing Women has been assembled to reflect fair representation ethnically, geographically, per industry and from across the political spectrum where necessary.

All individuals nominated in our list of Trailblazers have given their consent to be named in this list.


Harshida Acharya
Partner & Chief Strategy Officer
Fulfillment IQ

Harshida Acharya, Partner and Chief Strategy Officer at Fulfillment IQ, a specialized supply chain tech consultancy, brings over 15 years of experience in logistics and leadership roles in enterprise technology, innovation programs, and FinTech. A full funnel marketer, Harshida's growth strategy and comprehensive marketing skills have consistently delivered multi-million dollar, tangible results for companies of all sizes. She is also the driving force behind the acclaimed eCom Logistics Podcast, a trusted resource for logistics professionals seeking insights and best practices, ranked amongst the top 1% globally and is one of the most shared business podcasts of all times. Additionally, Harshida serves on the board of Forum Venture, a venture capital firm, where she lends her industry expertise in marketing and supply chain to guide and nurture emerging startups.

What inspired you to work in supply chain?

While I was growing up, I saw my dad — an entrepreneur in the logistics space — build, scale, and successfully exit an incredible company. That experience always inspired me, but I never thought I'd follow the same path. Instead, I focused on tech, innovation, and enterprise growth, working on digital transformation initiatives that helped companies scale. Eventually, the logistics industry found me, and it just felt like home.

I quickly realized that supply chain is where strategy meets execution. It's the backbone of global commerce, yet for too long, it has been bogged down by inefficiencies and outdated systems. Technology has the power to change that. My work at Fulfillment IQ and the eCom Logistics Podcast is about bridging that gap — leveraging innovation to optimize logistics, create more resilient supply chains, and drive real business impact. The industry is evolving faster than ever, and I'm driven by the opportunity to help shape its future.

What can organizations do to promote better representation and diversity in this industry, particularly in senior positions?

Representation isn't about checking boxes — it's about changing the industry's DNA. Companies need to move from mentorship to sponsorship, actively advocating for diverse talent at decision-making tables. It's also about visibility — women need to be in the rooms where strategies are built, deals are made, and policies are shaped. Real change happens when organizations commit to making diversity a business advantage, not just an HR initiative.

Do you have any specific lessons or advice for other women working in this sector?

Don't play small. Be intentional about where you invest your time, energy, and influence. Find mentors, but more importantly, find champions—people who will advocate for you behind closed doors. And remember, leadership isn't about being the loudest in the room—it's about driving results, making an impact, and lifting others as you climb.

What are your aspirations for the next five years?

I want to help build a supply chain industry that is agile, tech-driven, and sustainable. That means expanding Fulfillment IQ's impact by scaling innovative logistics solutions, growing eCom Logistics Podcast into the leading platform for industry insights, and driving initiatives that empower more women and young people to lead in this space.

Supply chain is no longer just about moving goods; it's about resilience, intelligence, and transformation. My goal over the next five years is to drive meaningful change and leave a lasting legacy of innovation and progress.



Real change happens when organizations commit to making diversity a business advantage, not just an HR initiative.



Vanessa Clémendot

Chief Supply Chain Officer, North America
L'Oréal Groupe

Vanessa Clémendot is the Chief Supply Chain Officer for L'Oréal North America, a role spanning the four divisions of L'Oréal and over \$10 billion in annual revenues. She is in charge the end-to-end management of the supply chain across all distribution channels and leads strategic data and infrastructure transformation projects for the zone.

An accomplished supply chain leader, Vanessa has held various senior roles within the L'Oréal Group, including Head of Operations for L'Oréal Canada (2019-2021), Head of Travel Retail Operations for EMEA and India (2015-2019), and she assumed various supply chain responsibilities for the Luxe, Professional Products and Dermatological Beauty divisions.

Vanessa is a highly experienced transformation and change management expert, who has a very strong track record in organizational design, end-to-end planning, and network (re)design. She is very committed to fostering a "People First" culture and is adept at creating highly engaged teams.

A mother of four, Vanessa is a lifelong learner who holds degrees in supply chain, organizational development and human resources management from Université de Paris I, HEC and CEDEP.

What inspired you to work in supply chain?

My day-to-day as Chief Supply Chain Officer for L'Oréal North America is anything but typical. One moment I'm analyzing data, the next I'm collaborating with teams across the country, and the next I'm strategizing about the future of our network. But underlying every decision, every challenge, every success, is the same fundamental passion that first drew me to this field: the drive to optimize, to connect, to deliver. It all started with a seemingly unusual internship transporting clothes on hangers in the U.K. during my college years.

What can organizations do to promote better representation and diversity in this industry, particularly in senior positions?

Our supply chain leadership needs a diversity upgrade. It's not enough to just talk about inclusion; we need to build it. This starts early. Representation matters. Young people need to see themselves reflected in leadership to even consider it a possibility. Mentorship programs, early career exposure, and showcasing diverse role models are key to building that pipeline. Forget outdated hiring practices. We need to actively seek diverse talent from non-traditional backgrounds and career paths. At L'Oréal, we're investing in targeted development, leadership training, and sponsorship to create equitable opportunities.

Do you have any specific lessons or advice for other women working in this sector?

Never take no for an answer. Take it as a conditional yes. Find your voice, build your network, and own your expertise. Don't wait for permission to lead. This industry needs your perspective. Make it heard.

What are your aspirations for the next five years?

My aspirations for the next five years? Honestly, it's less about a five-year plan and more about a five-year evolution. Like most working moms, I'm juggling a lot. Spreadsheets, soccer schedules, you name it. So, I choose. I choose to focus on building a truly innovative and responsible supply chain model. I choose to mentor and empower the next generation of leaders, especially women. And I choose to embrace the messy, beautiful chaos of it all, because that's where the real growth happens. It's not about having all the answers; it's about asking the right questions, taking risks, and never losing sight of what truly matters. And for me, that's making a difference, both in the boardroom and at the breakfast table.



Our supply chain leadership needs a diversity upgrade. It's not enough to just talk about inclusion; we need to build it



Deborah Dull

Founder

Circular Supply Chain Network

Managing Partner

Trillium Digital Services

Deborah Dull is the founder of the Circular Supply Chain Network and Managing Partner of Trillium Digital Services. She authored “Circular Supply Chains: 17 Common Questions” and “Sustainable Supply Chains: Unlearning for a Better Tomorrow,” with additional books about circular supply chains and self-driving supply chains due in 2025. With experience at Zero100, GE Digital, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Genpact, and Microsoft, Deborah specializes in AI-driven supply chain innovation, circularity, and responsible business practices. She is a sought-after speaker and has been published in numerous industry publications.

Deborah’s work centers on the human dimension of supply chains, recognizing that they employ 37% of America’s workforce and impact countless lives globally. She believes everyone is part of a supply chain ecosystem—from employees in factories and warehouses to communities where trucks travel and materials are sourced from mines worldwide. Through her research and advocacy, Deborah works to improve the human experience through responsible supply chain operations that benefit both workers and the communities they touch.

Deborah holds a BA in Supply Chain & Operations Management from Western Washington University and an MSc from the University of Liverpool, where her thesis focused on digital supply chain. She is currently pursuing her DBA from Heriot-Watt University.

What inspired you to work in supply chain?

I discovered supply chain while studying business, and my professor used the first day of class to plan an extravagant Thanksgiving dinner. He told us we have just one burner and one oven and asked us what to do? In that moment we did demand planning, supply planning, constraints, work-back schedules... and I was sold.

As I entered the workforce with Microsoft I started to understand the breadth of supply chain. Even in an outsourced model, we had hundreds of people all working across different parts of the business – and all connected to each other. Supply chain has a reach into workforces and communities like few other fields, and we can choose to make a positive impact and to leave people places better than we found them.

What can organizations do to promote better representation and diversity in this industry, particularly in senior positions?

In 1965, a book called “Always Ask a Man” epitomized the gender dynamics of its time. While our world looks different today, we’re far from parity. Even in Iceland, the best country for gender equality, women earn just 91 cents for every dollar men make.

Despite seeing women in leadership roles in my networks, the broader reality is different. Organizations need to move beyond generalities and address specific gaps. They can track gender metrics across all supply chain roles, create transparent promotion paths, and actively sponsor women for leadership positions.

If you’re the only woman in a meeting, recognize your role in paving the path for others. Men who notice this imbalance can be allies – supporting women’s contributions without mansplaining. Organizations must create inclusive environments where women’s expertise is respected and their career progression receives the same attention as their male counterparts.

Do you have any specific lessons or advice for other women working in this sector?

Be curious. Ask others for their perspectives, even when you feel confident in your approach. Asking targeted questions is an excellent way to build connections and gain advocates. Your professional network functions like a bank account – you may not know when you’ll need it, but having someone to call is invaluable.

Invest those extra few minutes at networking events or during team calls to genuinely get to know colleagues and stakeholders. These connections create bridges that can support your journey throughout your career. Join professional networks like ASCM or the Circular Supply Chain Network where you can find mentors and peers facing similar challenges.

Remember that the decisions we make in supply chain have real-world impacts. Take pride in your role and its influence on companies, communities, and sustainability. Your unique perspective as a woman brings diversity of thought that the industry desperately needs, especially as we transition toward more circular and sustainable supply chains.

What are your aspirations for the next five years?

I have been (very slowly) working on my doctorate to better understand the relationship between regional supply chain capabilities and the health and wellbeing of the people that live there. It’s work I focused on while at the Gates foundation and I would very much like to spend more time exploring how supply chain can improve lives – to get very specific about what we can do in our field and across the international development community.



Line Hildebrand

Senior Vice President Global Operations
Pandora

With over 15 years of experience in supply chain and operations, Line began her career as a consultant at Accenture before transitioning to a global role at Arla. There, she was responsible for Business Development and Sales and Operations Planning.

Currently, at Pandora, Line oversees global operations, including supply chain planning, procurement, and warehouse and logistics management, both in-house and outsourced. Line is leading a major strategic transformation toward a standardized digital platform. Her background also includes extensive hands-on experience in frontline roles, such as Customer Relations and Operations Execution Manager, as well as Managing Director of a warehouse in Hamburg.

Line holds a Master of Science in Economics and Management from the University of Aarhus.



Promoting diversity isn't just about meeting targets, it is about fostering an inclusive culture where all employees have opportunities to grow and succeed

What inspired you to work in supply chain?

I was drawn to supply chain because of its highly cross-functional nature. It allows me to work across the entire value chain of a company, collaborating with colleagues from different departments, suppliers, and customers. It is a truly holistic function that provides a broad perspective on how a business operates.

Beyond that, it is the people that inspire me the most. Success in supply chain is driven by collaboration, and I love fostering teamwork, enabling strong partnerships, and building high-performing teams. Given that supply chain often acts as the central hub, connecting multiple functions and external partners, effective collaboration is not just valuable it is essential to delivering great results.

What can organizations do to promote better representation and diversity in this industry, particularly in senior positions?

Organizations can drive better representation and diversity in the industry, especially at senior levels, by setting clear, ambitious, and tangible goals. Diversity efforts should be bold and intentional, ensuring that they are embedded into the company's broader strategy rather than treated as a secondary initiative.

At Pandora, we have taken concrete steps to align our diversity commitments with leadership accountability. For example, our gender, circularity, and climate targets are directly tied to senior leadership incentives, reinforcing our commitment at the highest levels. One of our key goals is to achieve gender parity in senior leadership by 2030.

However, promoting diversity isn't just about meeting targets, it is about fostering an inclusive culture where all employees have opportunities to grow and succeed. At Pandora, our leaders are expected to create a safe and supportive environment that enables team members to develop their skills, expand their careers, and reach their full potential. Beyond being the right thing to do, we firmly believe that prioritizing diversity will drive long-term business success.

Do you have any specific lessons or advice for other women working in this sector?

Dare to be yourself! Your unique strengths and perspectives are what set you apart and make you a valuable asset to your team. Embrace what makes you different and bring your full self to the table.

Another key piece of advice is to actively seek opportunities to grow and develop. Building a broad skill set and gaining diverse experiences can be incredibly rewarding. For me, a career spanning management consulting, FMCG, and retail, across multiple functions within operations and supply chain and in different geographies, has been invaluable. Expanding your breadth of experience not only strengthens your expertise but also opens doors to new and exciting opportunities. So, be bold, stay curious, and embrace the adventure!

What are your aspirations for the next five years?

Over the next five years, I am excited to be part of some major milestones within operations at Pandora. We are working towards a 50% reduction in CO₂ emissions across our entire value chain by 2030 and continuing the digitalization of our end-to-end integrated supply chain. Leveraging our unique strengths, we aim to drive efficiencies and innovation to support Pandora's ongoing growth.

On a personal level, I would love to gain experience in board work. As my career has progressed, I have been increasingly involved in shaping operational strategies, business plans, and long-term trajectories. At the same time, I have built deep expertise in operations and supply chain management. Stepping into a board role feels like a natural next step, one that would allow me to contribute my experience while gaining new perspectives at a strategic level.



Joanna Kostecka

VP of Cloud Global Supply Chain Planning

Microsoft

Joanna Kostecka is the Vice President of Cloud Global Supply Chain Planning at Microsoft, where she drives innovation, operational excellence, and strategic planning transformation. With over 20 years of executive leadership experience at Fortune 500 companies, she has built a reputation for leading large-scale global planning, materials process optimization, and digital supply chain modernization in fast-paced, complex environments.

Before joining Microsoft, Joanna led Hewlett Packard Enterprise's (HPE) 500-member team, owning Global Planning and Materials Management and overseeing a multi-million-dollar budget for next-generation supply chain planning and digital transformation. She played a key role at ABB, leading Global Planning and Fulfilment, and at Honeywell, where she implemented and shaped their Integrated Business Planning (IBP) strategy.

Beyond her leadership in supply chain, Joanna is deeply committed to diversity and inclusion (D&I). She actively champions initiatives that foster inclusive, high-performing teams, ensuring that Microsoft's global operations foster a culture of belonging and innovation.

As a wife and mother of two, Joanna understands the art and challenge of balancing the demands of executive leadership while supporting her family and empowering her teams to succeed. She leads with authenticity, collaboration, and a forward-thinking mindset, guiding organizations through evolving market conditions and complex challenges.

What inspired you to work in supply chain?

It was fate — literally. I applied for a project management job at a Japanese automotive company, but when I arrived for the interview, they admitted the job posting was incorrect. What they actually needed was a materials planner on the logistics team. At the time, “supply chain” wasn't even a coined term. I had no experience, but I had the skills they were looking for. From day one, I was hooked.

What can organizations do to promote better representation and diversity in the industry, particularly in senior positions?

Diversity and representation aren't solved with a one-time initiative; they require a long-term, intentional strategy and execution of that strategy. It's not just about increasing diversity at the senior level. It's also about building a strong pipeline and providing a clear runway for diverse talent at every level, ensuring they have opportunities to grow, develop, and advance organically over time.

Organizations must be proactive in fostering a culture of mentorship, sponsorship, and leadership accountability. This means investing in career development, employee resource groups (ERGs), and equitable opportunities that empower talent to thrive. But beyond programs and policies, leaders must cultivate an environment where open, honest communication is valued—where people feel safe to share their perspectives, challenge ideas, and learn from one another. The most impactful growth happens when we listen, engage in real conversations, and create space for collaborative learning and continuous improvement.

Diversity shouldn't just be a corporate goal—it must be woven into the company's DNA. At Microsoft, we actively participate in and drive D&I initiatives, ensuring diverse perspectives are not only heard, but amplified. True diversity is about sustained investment in people, ongoing development, and creating an environment where everyone has the opportunity to succeed.

Do you have any specific lessons or advice for other women working in this sector?

Being a woman in any industry (not just tech) comes with challenges. You will encounter obstacles, but don't let them define your path. Be bold, take risks, and don't wait for permission to go after what you want. If you don't take an opportunity, someone else will.

One of the biggest lessons I've learned is: no one succeeds alone. Women often feel pressure to juggle everything—excelling at work, being present at home, leading, and proving themselves in environments that weren't always built for them. My advice is to seek out mentors, allies, and a strong support system—whether that's colleagues who push you forward, or family and friends who remind you of your strengths.

Through it all, find time for yourself. Women tend to put themselves last, but that's unsustainable. Just like on an airplane, you have to put your oxygen mask on first before assisting others. If you burn out, you can't support your team, your family, or yourself. Even if it's just 20 minutes a day, dedicate time to something that restores your energy. Self-care isn't a luxury, it's a necessity.

Lastly, be true to yourself and own your space. Not everyone will like you, and that's okay. You don't need everyone's approval to succeed. The best way to make an impact is to stay authentic, embrace your strengths, and carve out your own path. Leadership isn't about fitting into a mold; it's about defining your own presence and making sure your voice is heard.

Women in supply chain and beyond must continue pushing boundaries, advocating, and lifting others as they climb. The industry needs diverse perspectives, and the best thing we can do is show up, support each other, and create space for the next generation of women leaders.

**Brieane Olson***CEO and Board Member***Pacsun**

Serving as President of Pacsun, the popular youth retailer since 2021, Co-CEO since March 2023, and transitioning to her new role as CEO starting June 15, 2023, Ms. Olson has played an instrumental role in building and strengthening Pacsun's brand through innovative strategies with a Gen Z focus, including leading Pacsun as the first retailer in its space to accept Bitpay. As an Innovative, tech-centric retail executive who consistently drives brand strength and revenue growth through game-changing merchandising and marketing initiatives, Brieane leads with creativity, innovation, and a digital first mentality.

During her tenure at Pacsun, Olson spearheaded innovative collaborations for the LA based lifestyle brand, including working closely with Kanye West on his first clothing launch for Donda in 2013, and the signing of Kendall + Kylie clothing partnership exclusive to Pacsun when the girls were 12 and 15. She also took Pacsun global with the first ever shop footprint in London, launching both Men's and Women's shops at Selfridges in 2018 with launch parties hosted by Pacsun partners Jerry Lorenzo. True to her core leadership belief in nurturing in-house talent, she has consistently demonstrated a commitment to promoting from within the company.

Brieane graduated from the University of California, Berkeley with a Bachelor of Arts, Mass Communications & Business and attended Harvard Business School's Advanced Management Program, where she is currently an AMP Ambassador. She is a board member at Women In Retail Leadership, Shoptalk, Pacsun and Design Thinking for UC schools. She currently resides in Newport Beach, California with her two children, Colette and Rousseau.

What can organizations do to promote better representation and diversity in this industry, particularly in senior positions?

Promoting better representation and diversity within the fashion and retail industry, especially in senior positions, is essential to driving innovation and creating a more inclusive culture. Organizations can take several key steps to promote diversity and ensure equal opportunities for all:

- 1 **Commit to Diversity at All Levels:** Diversity needs to be woven into the fabric of an organization, starting with the leadership team. This means setting clear, measurable goals for representation at every level, from entry-level roles to senior positions. It requires actively seeking out diverse candidates and ensuring that they are given equal opportunities for advancement.
- 2 **Mentorship and Sponsorship Programs:** Creating mentorship and sponsorship programs that specifically support underrepresented groups can be incredibly effective in helping individuals rise to senior positions. Leaders in the company should actively sponsor diverse talent, providing guidance and opportunities for growth. We have a mentorship program annually, as well as an internship program, and a Be The Change program that foster this at Pacsun.

Inclusive Hiring Practices: Organizations should ensure that their recruitment practices are designed to attract a wide range of candidates. This includes eliminating unconscious bias in hiring, ensuring diverse interview panels, and leveraging partnerships with organizations that support underrepresented communities.
- 4 **Invest in Employee Resource Groups (ERGs):** ERGs provide a platform for employees to connect, share their experiences, and advocate for change within the company. These groups can help promote diversity and inclusion, foster a sense of belonging, and offer valuable insights to senior leaders.
- 5 **Ongoing Education and Awareness:** Continuous training on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is essential for all employees, particularly those in leadership positions. By educating employees on the importance of representation and offering resources to address unconscious bias, companies can create a more inclusive and supportive workplace.
- 6 **Foster an Inclusive Culture:** Beyond policies, creating a culture that values and celebrates diversity is key. Companies should prioritize inclusivity by encouraging open dialogue, amplifying diverse voices, and ensuring that employees feel seen and heard. This leads to higher engagement and retention, especially among underrepresented groups.

At Pacsun, we believe that diversity is not just a business imperative but a reflection of our values. By fostering an environment where all employees feel empowered to succeed, we are not only helping individuals advance in their careers but also enhancing the creativity and innovation that drives our company forward.



Promoting better representation and diversity within the fashion and retail industry, especially in senior positions, is essential to driving innovation and creating a more inclusive culture



Suzy Pollack

President and Chief Product Designer

Creative Balloons Manufacturing Inc.

Since founding Creative Balloons Manufacturing Inc. with her husband, Jules Pollack, in 1973, Suzy Goodman-Pollack has driven the family-owned global business to success as President and Chief Product Designer. Renowned for her visionary leadership and creative talents, Suzy has developed innovative balloon weights and sealing accessories sold through and used in major retailers like Walmart, Amazon, and McDonald's. The company's products simplify balloon decorating while elevating celebrations with modern, eye-catching designs. Under Suzy's guidance, the brand has launched best-selling retail products in over 4,000 stores and remains a trusted partner for retailers and wholesalers worldwide. Beyond her design expertise, Suzy leads with integrity, fairness, and an enthusiasm that inspires her team and partners alike. She prioritizes "win-win" outcomes and embodies values often overlooked in business, making her a respected leader in the global balloon industry.

What inspired you to work in Supply Chain?

My journey into supply chain was inspired by my husband, Jules, the founder of Creative Balloons Manufacturing Inc. He recognized my passion for design, which was nurtured from my early education in fashion design and later at California College of The Arts. This foundation in creativity and design was instrumental when I joined the company, initially focusing on developing products that would resonate with our customers. As I delved deeper into the business, I found myself naturally gravitating towards supply chain management, learning on the job and embracing the intricacies of logistics, production, and distribution. Today, as President and Chief Product Designer, I leverage my creative background to drive innovation while ensuring our supply chain is robust, efficient, and aligned with our core values of quality and collaboration.

What can organizations do to promote better representation and diversity in this industry, particularly in senior positions?

Strong communication and visibility are key to fostering diversity in leadership. Companies must create an environment where different perspectives are valued, and people feel empowered to contribute. Clear company messaging—through networking, leadership initiatives, and digital presence—helps attract top talent. At Creative Balloons, we believe in collaboration, trust, and inclusion across our supply chain. Representation isn't just about filling positions; it's about giving people the tools and opportunities to lead. By investing in mentorship and fostering open dialogue, businesses can create stronger, more innovative teams that reflect the diversity of the customers they serve.

Do you have any specific lessons or advice for other women working in this sector?

Clear, timely communication is essential in supply chain management. Delayed responses or overlooked details can disrupt production, logistics, and relationships. Women in this field can build credibility by being proactive, detail-oriented, and responsive. Business success comes from strong partnerships. Rather than seeing supply chain as transactional, we approach it with a "win-win" philosophy, ensuring mutual success for suppliers and customers alike. My advice: communicate effectively, build lasting relationships, and lead with integrity—these qualities open doors and create opportunities for long-term success.

What are your aspirations for the next five years?

We aim to expand our global partnerships, supplying both balloons and accessories to more brands and retailers worldwide. Sustainability is a growing focus, and we are investing in compostable balloon accessories to meet evolving market demands. Our relationship-centric approach remains at the heart of our business—we seek to establish long-term partnerships that enhance brand engagement, create festive experiences, and drive sales for our customers. By focusing on innovation, sustainability, and strategic growth, we continue strengthening our position as a trusted industry leader.

“

Companies must create an environment where different perspectives are valued, and people feel empowered to contribute



Sarah Ricketts

SVP Procurement Excellence

Rolls-Royce

Sarah is an accomplished procurement professional with over 20 years of experience delivering results through strategic leadership and collaboration. In her current role at Rolls-Royce, she drives performance and transformation across global procurement functions, and has previously managed a £750 million annual spend while navigating the challenges of supply chain disruption and market volatility.

Sarah is passionate about fostering inclusive, high-performing teams and championing diversity as a cornerstone of success. She believes in the power of varied perspectives to spark innovation and build stronger solutions. Known for her pragmatic, people-first approach, Sarah excels in clear communication, data-driven decisions to achieve impactful outcomes.

Her career is built on a foundation of delivering change, including negotiating impactful supplier deals, implementing innovative sourcing strategies, and driving major cost savings across Direct and Indirect spend in Engineering and FMCG. With a proven track record in driving cultural and operational transformation, Sarah combines her expertise with a commitment to empowering teams and ensuring sustainable, measurable improvements across the supply chain.

What inspired you to work in supply chain?

When I graduated I knew I wanted to go into business. I talked to my Dad about options, his view was that I was great at spending money so I should go into procurement to learn how to spend it well, and to spend someone else's money. I took his advice and have never looked back. I love the fact that every day is different, you get to meet so many different people across the globe. The supply chain is ever changing and developing with so much new technology and AI on the horizon and there is always a new challenge to keep me learning.

What can organizations do to promote better representation and diversity in this industry, particularly in senior positions?

There are so many ways to increase diversity in an organisation, some options are enforced recruitment targets, a flexible working policy and also subconscious bias training for anyone doing interviews to name just a few things you could consider. The important thing is to have a strategy to address diversity and that you are transparent and visible in the execution of that strategy. A culture of belonging comes from having a diverse workforce and a culture of belonging means people are more likely to go the extra mile for you and less likely to leave.

Do you have any specific lessons or advice for other women working in this sector?

The supply chain is dynamic so working in this space is a fantastic opportunity to break barriers and pave a way forward for the next generations who follow. My advice would be to speak up with confidence and never shy away from sharing your ideas, never downplay your skills or experience, find your support system through mentors, allies, friends and use every new challenge as an opportunity to keep learning and growing. It is also important to lift others as you rise, advocate for diversity, mentor those who come after you and help to keep improving the system.

What are your aspirations for the next five years?

My aspirations are to always keep learning and growing and meeting new people, this is what keeps me driven. I want to keep driving transformation, I am hugely inspired by the amount of AI and tech opportunity being developed for supply chain and I want to stay involved in driving that change. I also want to focus more on sustainability so that I can contribute to making the planet more environmentally friendly for generations to come. I will continue to drive for diversity, I have two teenage daughters and four nieces and I want them all to enter whatever workplace they choose with equality in opportunities and pay from day one.



The important thing is to have a strategy to address diversity and that you are transparent and visible in the execution of that strategy

**Shannon Stewart***Principal Research Scientist***Altana**

Shannon Stewart is the Principal Research Scientist at Altana, where she leads efforts to identify and mitigate forced labor and human rights violations within global supply chains. Specializing in multi-lingual entity resolution, Shannon develops innovative methods for tracking and sharing human rights and environmental due diligence information while working closely with clients to create strategies for managing supply chain risks.

Previously, as Senior Data Scientist at the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery, Shannon spearheaded large-scale projects on forced labor prevalence in India and Vietnam and developed an award-winning machine learning-based tool to assess forced labor risks in supply chains. She helped create a framework for collecting data on modern slavery survivors with the International Organisation for Migration.

Shannon's prior experience also includes research roles at the Leiden Asia Centre, where she analyzed North Korean supply chains and money laundering networks in Europe, and MIT's Center for Biomedical Innovation, where she applied machine learning to counter counterfeiting in FDA-regulated supply chains.

Shannon holds a Ph.D. in Molecular Cellular and Developmental Biology from Yale University. She has received numerous recognitions, including Women Who Code's 100 Technologists to Watch (2023) and was a finalist for the Stop Slavery Innovation Award (2020).

What inspired you to work in Supply Chain?

My first project in supply chain, detecting purposefully adulterated foods and medicines, really piqued my interest both in the mathematics of supply chain modeling and also in the real human impact I could have working in this field. That quickly led me to projects on forced labor in supply chains, which I have found to be a really rewarding application of my skills. Forced labor is a human rights violation that also really undermines the dignity of workers who experience it, and I am glad to be able to bring visibility to the situation where it is urgently needed. We are really just beginning to see how illuminating multi-tier value chains can change corporate behavior, so it's a very exciting time to be in the field.

What can organizations do to promote better representation and diversity in this industry, particularly in senior positions?

I think the data suggests that reviews of women and members of underrepresented groups frequently focus on qualities that are not correlated with performance and frequently do not accurately assess their leadership potential. How to fix this is well beyond my expertise, but I think it's worth measuring and experimenting with potential solutions.

Do you have any specific lessons or advice for other women working in this sector?

One thing that has helped me immensely is establishing mentoring relationships that are outside my reporting line or outside my organization entirely. It has helped me see my own performance and potential more clearly in a way that is not as clouded by concerns about competition or budgets. I also have peer mentors, both men and women, that I speak to regularly to help develop our thinking about shared goals. My mentors have helped me stay accountable to my goals and have really challenged me to grow.



One thing that has helped me immensely is establishing mentoring relationships that are outside my reporting line or outside my organization entirely