

A Reality Retrospective

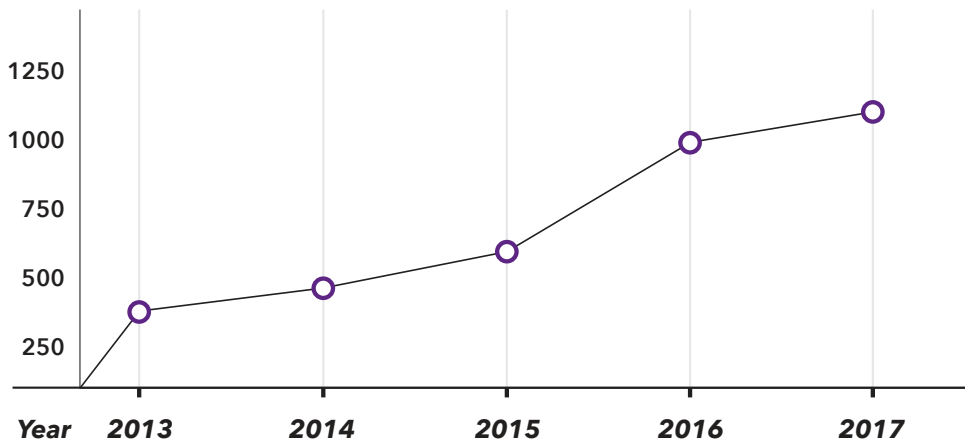
Beginning with the first symposium in May 2013, AWESOME has collected wisdom from leading women in the supply chain field and compiled those insights and learnings into REALITY CHECK. The participants' experiences and observations, their challenges and accomplishments all contribute to understanding key changes that must be made to advance women's leadership.

In sync with the growth of the AWESOME network, the Symposium has expanded the opportunity for women to speak candidly and to hear each other's stories. Our discussion also has included the views and viewpoints of leading men in supply chain and leading women in other fields.

This retrospective reflects on the progression of thinking and understanding we've observed over the past five years.

Reality Retrospective: A Progression of Membership and Momentum

of senior supply chain women in the AWESOME network



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VOLUME 1 – 2013 WHAT WE NOW KNOW

Meeting each other

- Participants agree that top women in the supply chain field are mostly isolated. Often women in supply chain are the first woman in their position, and, just as frequently, the only woman at the decision-making table.
- Words of Wisdom: “So far, in our field, women have achieved success as ‘the exception’ and by navigating a structure and environment developed by men for men.”
- Opportunities for women to excel and lead in the field are being influenced by the changing nature of supply chain leadership.
- More young women are entering the field, providing a pipeline that didn’t exist before.
- Participants are eager to be part of the network – but not yet certain about how networking will benefit them.
- One of the first outcomes is that women feel they aren’t alone in wanting to change the culture and re-think old patterns of leadership.

VOLUME 2 – 2013 WHAT WE LEARNED IN DENVER

Surfacing issues

(Insights for Volume 2 were collected at AWESOME discussions at the 2013 CSCMP Conference.)

- Qualities that are perceived to be among women’s strengths have become relevant to supply chain leadership – ie. teambuilding, collaboration, communication.
- Conversations begin to take shape around certain interests participants have in common: from helping their company’s senior management gain a better understanding of the supply chain to sharing innovative ideas and best supply chain practices to identifying obstacles that hamper career advancement.

VOLUME 3 – 2014 WHAT WE CAN DO

Comparing experiences and learning from the experiences of others

- Women recognize they need to manage their own advancement – and approach that challenge with confidence.
- Successful women sharing lessons they’ve learned offer valuable insights for women who may face similar situations.
- Women are encouraged to be their own advocates...to find their voice...to ask for help...ask for a mentor or sponsor...ask for a leadership role or experience...ask for equal pay.

- Words of Wisdom: “There are moments that you’ve got the mountain right in front of you. And you have to decide: Am I going to go through the mountain? Am I going to scale the mountain? Or am I just going to smile and go around the mountain?”
- Discussions also focus on the challenge of trying to integrate or “balance” professional and personal lives.
- The business case for diversity is gaining general acceptance. Companies employing women in large numbers outperform their competitors on every measure of profitability.
- There is growing resistance to letting the “boys” network go unchallenged.
- Companies are beginning to re-think structures and policies that drive women out and considering alternatives that are more “women-friendly.”
- There is more interest in understanding unconscious bias.

VOLUME 4 – 2015 | THE NEW REALITIES OF WOMEN’S SUPPLY CHAIN LEADERSHIP

Identifying solutions

- Supply chain is beginning to be seen as a valid path toward the C-Suite.
- The need to keep the business case in front of people is emphasized; diversity is seen as important because it makes decisions more relevant, drives innovation, and represents a broader talent pool.
- To achieve diversity, men need to be involved in contributing to and supporting initiatives.
- While companies’ intentions to achieve diversity are more widespread, the reality is that many companies and many company leaders aren’t really accountable for getting results.
- Addressing unconscious bias is becoming a priority for many companies.
- There is general agreement around the difference between mentorship and sponsorship and that although mentorship is more common, sponsorship may be even more important for advancement.
- The idea of company cultures that offer more flexibility is gaining credence.
- Women are feeling more empowered to be authentic as leaders – to take their “whole selves” to work.

VOLUME 5 – 2016 | HOW WE MAKE THINGS HAPPEN

Reaching New Levels of Leadership

Getting clarity, gaining courage, sensing urgency

- The number of women in top positions is growing – but obstacles still exist. There is the growing conviction that diversity is not just the “right thing,” but the “smart thing.”
- Forces such as digitization, the need for innovation, and the talent shortage in the supply

chain profession are adding impetus to the need for companies to open leadership ranks to women.

- Women are encouraged to position themselves for success by taking risks and not hesitating to let others know what they have accomplished, what they are capable of, what they want, and that they're ready for the next opportunity.
- Women have a responsibility to support and empower other women.
- Words of Wisdom: "Every one of you acts as the standard bearer for your colleagues, for your staff, for students who come and intern at your company and for your own daughters."

VOLUME 6 – 2017 | PASSION, PAIN AND PROGRESS

How women are seizing opportunities, overcoming obstacles, and creating new paths to leadership

Committing to action

- Women who have risen to the top of the supply chain field – and those who are up and coming – share certain qualities and one of them is that they are passionate about being leaders and are determined not to be stopped.
- Women need to own their career and they need to realize it won't be easy to keep advancing and to overcome obstacles.
- Women and men who believe that diverse leadership and women's advancement will benefit their company and all the individuals who work there must accept responsibility and take action and not wait for change to happen on its own.
- Participants are ready to leverage key learnings from the AWESOME network and to make a difference by applying them to their own careers, their own organizations, and their opportunities to advance other women.