

Martha Rojas on creating visibility for women leaders

October 3, 2022



(<https://metalpackager.com/2022/10/martha-rojas-on-creating-visibility-for-women-leaders-and-celebrating-female-perspectives/>)

Next in our mini-series on inspiring women who are leading by example and paving the way for the future of women in male-dominated industries, we shine a spotlight on Martha Rojas, executive vice president of sales at Good Logistics, USA (<https://goodlogisticsgroup.com/>). In light of her prolific career in the logistics industry, she speaks to Iris Arsic, our features editor, about the need for women to trust their voice and make that voice heard.

Although women are exploring new opportunities and making inroads into industries once almost exclusively male, the gender gap continues to prevail today. It's a long journey ahead for gender diversity on executive teams, Rojas notes. Her advice for women aspiring to move up the career ladder is to stay the course and build meaningful professional relationships. Lending a helping hand to others has been the constant in her career.

You started working in the logistics industry right from the start of your career in 1983. What sparked your interest in the sector and was it unusual for women to pursue this career at the time?

In 1983 after returning from a year of study abroad I obtained a temporary position with a freight forwarding company. The dynamic nature of the work, and its ever-changing challenges had me hooked. When my focus on the can making

sector began in 1988, I knew this is the career I wanted to pursue.

At the time the logistics industry was a male-dominated sector with very few women having visibility or a voice in the industry. Women, for example, were not allowed at the exclusive Downtown Athletic Club in Manhattan except when there was an industry event – there was a single bathroom for men. A few prominent women soon created the National Export traffic League, which was the first of its kind in NYC. I wanted to be part of creating that visibility/voice for women, so I immediately joined this worthwhile organisation, among others.

What were the challenges you had to overcome and some of the most rewarding moments of your career?

Being a Latina in a male-dominated industry created its own challenges. Becoming visible first and then having a voice – fighting for a place at the table as a professional, to be noticed and not undermined. To be perceived as a substantial member who adds value to the organisation/business/industry.

The rewards are many: I've friends all over the world at all job levels in the workplace. Each friendship/professional relationship is a gift, and every completed project a triumph. It's gratifying to watch those whom I've helped along the way thrive.

You're now with Good Logistics, where you've been for two years. Can you describe your journey and what attracted you to the company?

It had been my privilege to work with Ray Nash and Dean Temple for over 30 years moving can lines and can-related goods all over the world. Ray invited me to join the Good Logistics family, stating that they were a good company, focused on its people and growing the company.

Good Logistics' commitment to its people is inspiring: it invests heavily in building careers for its members, with a strong focus on innovation, information technology & digital strategy. It's a forward-thinking company transforming its business by building successful people.

What do you enjoy most about your role?

Overcoming the difficulties and challenges. It's most gratifying to be a part of the successes of our clients, partners and staff, while developing long lasting relationships in different cultures across the world.

What challenges do you face now?

The current chaos in supply chain and the shipping industry is daunting. There are logistics provider capacity issues, inflation, shipping delays, increased freight costs, depleted inventory levels, labour shortages and demand peaks to name a few. All of these make our job more challenging.

What steps is Good Logistics taking to create a workplace that is both diverse and inclusive?

Good Logistics creates an environment where people can excel, enjoy and have a clear career path within an industry that offers many opportunities on a global scale. Employee engagement is paramount, where we encourage a sense of belonging by way of surveys, regular reviews/check-ins, training, office-hopping and social events that enable colleagues to casually connect with each other.

Our values at Good Logistics are valuing our people, acting responsibly and looking ahead which is the core of our organisation, and a culture that has been nurtured over many years.

Do you see meaningful progress being made on gender equality in the industry?

Yes and no. Although there're more and more women in the industry, the majority of the top positions are still held by men. We've a long way to go before we're on an equal footing.

Do women need to be "more like men" to move up on the career ladder?

No. Women bring a different perspective to the job and we should embrace who we're with all the positive aspects of being female.

What are some of the most effective ways to inspire and encourage young women to pursue a career in the logistics sector?

Stay the course and continue to move forward. All careers have obstacles – it's how we handle the challenges that set us apart from the rest. Most of all, enjoy your work.

The transport and logistics sector is particularly vulnerable to economic shocks. How has Covid-19 affected it?

The ripple effect of the pandemic has led to higher prices, space and staff shortages, port congestions, complicated transactions and costly delays. As a service provider, we're continuously looking for additional, alternative, longer-term, stable, reliable, and flexible solutions which are not so easily obtained.

How do you see its future due to the ripple effects of Covid?

The current challenges are temporary and will last until the global markets recover. They're both obstacles and opportunities across the sector. Many carriers are reallocating their fleets to meet cargo demand and are adapting their systems to improve digital capability. E-commerce's explosive growth over the past couple of years will eventually stabilise, along with the ongoing imbalance in supply and demand. The concern would then be that the imbalance will shift in the opposite direction.

The shipping industry will continue to adapt in the next few years.

Describe yourself in three words: Inquisitive, industrious, and persistent

Your favourite leisure activity/activities: Reading, hiking, traveling and exploring new places

One thing on your bucket list: Experiencing the Great Migration in the Serengeti.

**THE METAL
PACKAGER**

© COPYRIGHT 2020-2022 THE METAL PACKAGER. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.