

Tracy Kosiarek on the People Side of Supply Chain Innovation



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Supply chain resilience and innovation to quickly respond to market disruption are more critical than ever amidst ongoing regulatory changes and geopolitical tensions. Tariffs are nothing new. If you work in supply chain then you know that as long as they've been around, they've traditionally been used as a way to protect domestic industries. So, what's changed? Escalating tariffs in recent years are unprecedented, and they are sending major reverberations across supply chains.

With various governments now imposing higher duties on both imports and exports, businesses are challenged with greater expense, uncertainty, and obstacles to remain resilient and competitive. The recent onslaught of tariff hikes is forcing business leaders to reevaluate sourcing strategies. That means abrupt shifts in supply chain that can disrupt expansive, established logistics networks. The quick jump in expenses may cause longer lead times and put companies in a compromising position—passing the cost onto consumers or absorbing painful financial losses. Either way, significant tariff increases severely strained profit margins—either by losing the bottom line or consumers who can't afford the additional costs.

Then geopolitical tensions add another layer of complexity to an already chaotic global trading system. So, it isn't surprising that conflicts, trade wars, and sanctions fuel a disruptive market environment with businesses constantly navigating and pivoting to fast-changing regulations and political risks. This market instability hinders the movement of goods, long-term investments in new markets, and supply chain planning. That's why supply chain and procurement leaders must rethink and diversify supply sources while rerouting shipments to mitigate unnecessary and dangerous risks. These moves often snowball into the perfect storm of delays and operational costs. The inability to plan amidst so many uncertainties is causing corporations to limit supply chain disruptions by holding more extensive inventories.

The combined impact of tariffs and geopolitical tensions is reshaping the global trade landscape, pushing companies to rethink and restructure their supply chain strategies. While the industry is constantly ripe with fresh obstacles, these challenges present an opportunity to accelerate innovation and build more flexible supply chain networks.

Adapting to these frequent and fast changes demands diversity in thought and representation. Our Let's Talk Supply Chain [Women In Supply Chain™ program](#), blog, and podcast series highlight the profound impact of growing gender representation. We hope our Women In Supply Chain™ blog series motivates you to break out of traditional gender roles in your personal and professional lives.

With a volatile market ripe with changes and disruptions, [Tracy Kosiarek](#) is the perfect woman in supply chain leadership to feature this month. Tracy is the Principal Consultant for Zinata, Inc. She brings expert supply chain, change management, and project management skills to life with a team of world-class supply chain and change management professionals. Tracy and her team are dedicated to delivering proven end-to-end manufacturing and supply chain solutions—leading the people side of change. She boasts Kinaxis Rapid Response Author and Prosci Certified Change Practitioner certifications. Tracy has a Bachelor of Science in Management and Applied Science from the United States Naval Academy. She has an impressive, decades-long supply chain career that started with her experience in the supply corps in the Navy.

1. How did your supply chain journey start?

I started my career in the U.S. Navy and spent five years as a Supply Officer. This role allowed me to gain invaluable experience in logistics, procurement, and operational readiness in diverse and challenging environments. My tenure included managing supply operations aboard the USS Fulton in Groton, Connecticut. I oversaw procurement and supply chain strategy at the Trident Systems Command and Control Center in Newport, Rhode Island. One of my most formative experiences was leading remote supply operations at Diego Garcia, Indian Ocean, where I developed a critical spare parts program that ensured seamless communication continuity.

Following my service in the Navy, I transitioned to a civilian career at Procter & Gamble, where I spent twenty-two years driving large-scale supply chain and manufacturing initiatives. My roles spanned from crucial operations in the United States to Manufacturing Site Leadership in Saigon, Vietnam, and leading MRP-II and SAP implementations across China. These experiences deepened

my expertise in global supply chain complexities and honed my cultural adaptability. Today, I stand as a leader in supply chain strategy and operations, focusing on digital transformation and empowering people to succeed.

As a leader in supply chain strategy and operations at [Zinata](#), I am committed to driving digital transformation while ensuring people remain at the center of change. The rise of agentic AI is set to revolutionize our industry, but one constant endures: the power of human collaboration. By bringing together the fresh perspectives of the next generation—including the growing number of young women entering the supply chain—with the deep expertise of industry veterans, we create people-centric solutions that redefine what's possible. This is a pivotal moment for women and girls in the supply chain. Technology reshapes our industry and opens new doors for leadership, innovation, and impact. Together, we are not only embracing change—we are shaping it, ensuring that the future of the supply chain is more inclusive, dynamic, and driven by diverse voices.

2. How have mentors played a role in your growth as a woman in supply chain?

Procter and Gamble have always championed Women Supporting Women. Through this initiative, I met Jeanne Reisinger, who impressed me immediately with her ability to be present and care deeply for her team in Asia Logistics during the nineties. Despite the pressures of our rapidly growing business, Jeanne made everyone feel like her sole focus. She asked thoughtful questions, offered sage advice, and was dedicated to improving business performance. Jeanne taught me that supporting women enhances business results. We remain close friends thirty years later, and she continues to make me feel valued.

3. What's your experience working in a male-dominated industry?

The funny thing about being in the Navy and proving to myself every day that I could do as much as my male peers is that when I got to the civilian world and in the Supply Chain, it seemed like 'business as usual.' I was used to working hard to make everything as perfect as possible, making my boss's job easier, being creative about how to get everything done on time, and being able to go home to my family.

I also started to understand the power of many versus the power of one. I had to work with my team members and all genders for the best result. Through strong leadership and respect for and belief in everyone's capability, I was able to be more successful and to be provided with increasingly challenging assignments.

4. When did you find your voice in your career?

I had the perfect blend of parenting growing up. My mom instilled confidence in me at an early age. She always encouraged me to work harder, swim faster, practice more, and study intensely. While my mom was always stretching my boundaries, my dad ensured that we could smell the roses along the way—literally. He taught me that listening to other ideas and bringing a team together would accomplish much more than acting alone.

I attended the United States Naval Academy in the early eighties when it was still new for women to attend service academies. Teamwork was a key to survival in those days, whether with your company mates or women in your sport. The concept of teamwork was reinforced daily.

And when did everything come together for me? After a few years with P&G, I left the US Navy and accepted an assignment in Guangzhou, China. The work was intense, the staff was young and eager to learn, and the expectations were extremely high. My assignment was to implement an MRP-II work process across nine manufacturing sites and three business units, starting with the General Managers and their leadership team and extending to all the Plant Sites. Concurrently, I was the SAP implementation leader for these nine sites. Eight of the nine sites used an abacus to do their daily work, and very few spoke English. When we started, they didn't have computers and had no idea what Manufacturing Resource Planning was! After three years, our project was a complete success and was a direct result of the teamwork of our young team members working together for a common goal. To this day, I am still so proud of our team (many of whom are now industry leaders in China).

5. What advice do you have for Women In Supply Chain™ and others looking to start a career in the industry?

Don't be afraid of hard work. Seek adventures across the world or multiple disciplines. Walk in someone else's shoes to learn about working with others different from you. If you aren't being heard, speak up for yourself. Support other women and speak out on their behalf when they are not in the room. Respect everyone, even when some are not the easiest to work with.

6. Who do you admire in and outside of the supply chain?

Early in my P&G career, I was in awe of Mary Ann Gale, P&G's first woman Plant Manager. She is tremendously bright, effective at driving excellent business results, and always takes time to support other women. When promoted to VP of Manufacturing, she took time to meet with the women managers and technicians during each Plant tour. Mary deeply cared about how everyone was doing and asked penetrating questions about the health of the Site culture.

She set the standard for supporting women in manufacturing, demonstrating that true leadership is not just about driving results but also about fostering an inclusive and supportive culture. I have always strived to follow her example, balancing professionalism, a results-driven mindset, and a genuine commitment to championing diversity in every space.

7. What have you learned on your supply chain journey so far and what's next?

I've developed a stronger together-abundance mentality. Our consulting space is crowded with many firms vying for corporate, supply chain, or manufacturing business. There is room for those who can leverage their people's skills. With so much AI and technology focus, we must guide leaders through all these changes, emphasizing the people side of change. How we treat each individual through the changes in our workplace determines our success. Respecting and understanding your people, recognizing that change is hard and each person's voice matters, ensures that your people will adopt the latest and greatest technology and thrive through the change.

My time in the Navy instilled in me the discipline, resilience, and leadership necessary to navigate complex challenges. My experience at P&G broadened my understanding of operational excellence and large-scale supply chain dynamics. These experiences paved the way for me to craft my journey in

consulting. They led me to my current work, helping organizations and leaders embrace transformation with a people-first mindset. In an industry that is increasingly opening doors to women, Zinata is a place that actively fosters this progress, valuing diverse perspectives and empowering individuals to drive meaningful change. As I look ahead, I see a future where more women step into leadership roles, technology and human insight work hand in hand, and the next generation of supply chain professionals—especially women—are empowered to shape the industry in unimaginable ways.

In the future, I plan to continue:

- Advocating for women in the supply chain and beyond. I have strongly advocated for women across the supply chain, manufacturing, and the U.S. Navy, championing opportunities for growth, leadership, and inclusion. Through mentorship, advocacy, and action, I have helped create spaces where women can thrive and lead.
- Inspiring the next generation by leading by example, I have continued to build a future where my two daughters—and young women everywhere—see that there is no limit to what they can achieve. Whether in business, leadership, or personal growth, I strive to be a role model who demonstrates the power of resilience, ambition, and integrity.
- Driving Meaningful Impact at Zinata, I have played a key role in shaping organizational influence, ensuring we continue to help our customers navigate complex change and win in the marketplace. By championing people-centric transformation, I have contributed to helping more companies, teams, and individuals succeed in an evolving industry.

8. What does this Women In Supply Chain™ feature mean to you?

This **Women In Supply Chain™** feature is exciting, but not because it highlights me, per se. As a woman, the more that I can give voice to successful Women In Supply Chain™, the greater the possibility that other women will want to follow in our footsteps. Perhaps then the path may be smoother. Just maybe, we can continue to weave a common thread of strength through all our accomplished women's stories expanding our collective voice. "Stronger Together" has recently become a favorite phrase of mine and being featured in Women In Supply Chain™ is bringing this mantra to life.