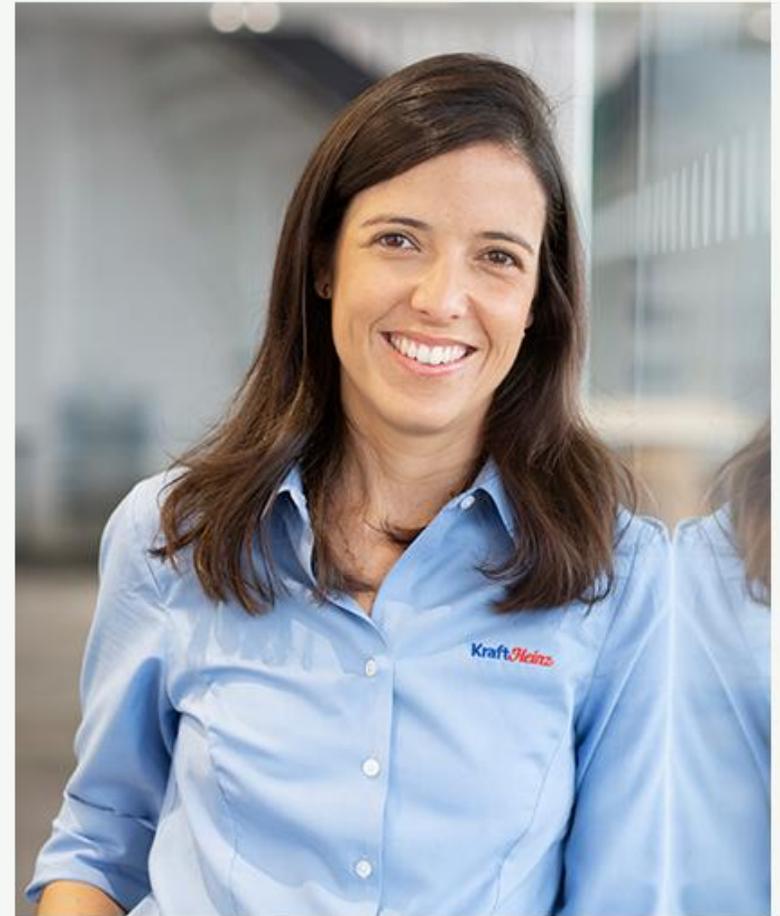


Role Models in Consumer Goods & Grocery

Georgiana de Noronha
President, Northern Europe,
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MBS Intelligence





Georgiana de Noronha

Georgiana (Jojo) is President, Northern Europe, Kraft Heinz



I was born in Rio, Brazil. I'm one of four children, and I also had two step-siblings, which I think says a lot. I'm also a middle child, so I'm one of these personalities that tried to get my voice heard. I was the only child in my family who moved abroad. I spent my time at the University of Virginia, which is an incredibly American university, so I was a bit of an outlier there, too.

People ask me why I went into investment banking. Well, my dad was an economist, my stepdad was an investment banker, and I didn't really know any different.

I made the move to private equity, which felt less disingenuous than

my experience in investment banking. But, back in 2014, I was sitting at the board of an organisation we had bought in Spain. I remember looking around and the average age was double my age, and the people knew a lot about the industry. And I thought – who am I to sit here and tell these people what they need to change?

I decided that I wanted to make a move to corporate. And that's when I came to Kraft Heinz. My last interview was with the global CEO and he said, "Which area would you like to start in, Jojo?" And I said, "I don't really know anything about the company, so I might as well start in an area where you think I'm going to learn the most and the quickest." So, he said, "Sales."

I had a mentor at the time. After I had started, she said, "Jojo, I really think you have an eye for recognising talent and coaching people. And that's quite rare with your finance background.

So would you like to have a stint in HR?" I decided to take a leap of faith in the people who took a leap of faith in me, in hiring somebody who had zero experience, who only really brought passion and will.

Last October, my predecessor decided to retire. We were quite close. He believed I could do a role as the president of a business unit. Of course, being a woman, typically, I thought I couldn't do it. I was very scared, but I took the opportunity and, 11 months on, here I am. I've got two children

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and I'm married to a man who is probably the reason I can do all I do, because he supports me every day. It's been great – tough, but great.

What challenges have you learnt the most from?

I lost my parents very early on in life, so I'm very independent and have the ability to compartmentalise my life. I've also had a lot of setbacks in my career. It means I don't take any opportunities for granted. I've always kept going and tried to prove myself wrong.

What advice would you give to the next generation?

Put the consumer at the front of everything you do. We need to stop asking consumers and start watching them: in supermarkets and on social media. And culture first. Culture is not what's written on the website, culture is how I communicate with you, how I send you an email, how I act in meetings. Meet as many people as you can, because that's how you're going to feel the culture.

What does great leadership mean to you?

There are two things that make great leaders. Firstly, trust. Having trust in your people and letting them fail first is incredibly important. The second thing is genuine care, no matter what decision you take. People know when you care – they also know when you don't.

What changes would you like to see in the food and grocery sector in the next five to 10 years?

The UK has a real issue on diversity, so definitely a more diverse workforce. The second



thing I would love to see is more of a focus on sustainability and ending hunger. One in five children go to school without a breakfast every single day, which deprives them of learning – and that deprives them of a future. If we come together as an industry, we could end this tomorrow.

What do you like most about what you do?

Having so many different topics in one single day is incredible. Secondly, feeling like you really can have an impact on people's lives is so rewarding. Thirdly, we make food for millions of people. The scale of the industry I work in and the level of impact I can have is just incredible. I know that any change I make will impact millions of lives.

What have been your biggest learnings from the Covid-19 crisis?

The importance of bravery. We did lots of things differently during the crisis. We launched the 'Heinz to Home' direct-to-consumer website. We launched our 12 million meals campaign with Magic Breakfast. We created more visibility than ever, and it took a

lot of bravery. Let's not forget the fire we had when the crisis was happening, because that's what moved our business forward.

The second is being close to our people and really understanding their worries. Because it was a level playing field, everyone had the same struggles.

The third is the importance of doing good while you do well. If we had sat here and just done super well but done no good, I don't think we would be doing our job.

If you weren't doing this job, what would you be doing?

I would have been a doctor as I'm very, very passionate about the medical world – I'm an avid reader and watch every documentary around everything medical. I did contemplate becoming a doctor later on in life, but I don't have time. It probably comes from my passion to help people!