



Progress & Perspectives

WOMEN IN STEEL

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Where did your education and career start?

You can say it started on the golf course! Growing up in Halmstad, which is one of Sweden's most well-known golf towns, I quickly fell in love with the sport and started competing. One day my parents told me that golf could potentially give me a full scholarship at an American college, which then became the ultimate goal. I ended up at the University of Colorado in Boulder, beautifully situated at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, with a physics department that recently received two Nobel prizes in physics and a golf team that played in one of the most famous conferences — The Big 12.

While traveling around the U.S. in different golf tournaments, I used the dead time in the mini-van for problem-solving homework. During the wintery days when snow covered the golf courses, I built simulations in the lab. The topic for my research was covariance analysis of electromagnetic showers of the International Linear Collider, where I successfully found the mass of the Higgs bosons.

When it was time to graduate, my game had developed to a scratch player and the most natural step was to try out for the LPGA. I played professionally for 18 months, both in the U.S. and Europe. I made enough to pay for my own expenses, but when I did not manage to get the card for the LPGA, I decided to apply for grad school. During my time on the tour, new golf clubs with a catapult effect had become prohibited from the tour. At the same time, I had been in a car accident and thought, “what if we could produce steel

for cars that could take the collision and then buckle out again, just like the golf clubs?” I was accepted into Harvard University's Ph.D. program in applied physics and studied metallic structures and their defects by modeling the crystal with colloidal silica spheres. By manipulating the structure of the steel at nanoscale, I could create a material that was much more elastic when affected by external forces.

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When I was done with my Ph.D. I also felt done with academia. I love the constant learning the university environment gives, but I found myself hungry to apply my knowledge in a business setting. So my next step was to join McKinsey's Manhattan office. I spent the following eight years working with customers in the metals, mining and paper industries to set new strategies, find production improvements, and drive digital transformations.

What brought you to steel and H2 Green Steel?

In February 2020, Harald Mix and Carl-Erik Lagercrantz called me with a new idea to produce

green steel at scale in the north of Scandinavia. The duo co-founded the Swedish green battery cell producer Northvolt in 2016 and at a board meeting one customer, also an early investor, mentioned the frustration around decarbonizing not only the user phase but also the manufacturing of the car, where steel was the biggest emitter. None of the existing steelmakers could give the carmaker an abated solution in the near term despite the customer being willing to pay extra for it. Harald and Carl-Erik wanted me to lead a pre-feasibility phase to build a business case, identify the right technology beat, find a location and drive customer dialogues. Our first business case looked too good to be true. After pressure testing it several times, realizing that the technology was ready, and finding customer demand not only in the automotive industry but across multiple industries, we decided to launch the company a year after we had started. I left my partnership at McKinsey to join H2 Green Steel as chief technology officer.

Can you talk about support you've received to advance your career?

I have been very fortunate growing up with two parents that both have pursued successful careers. Hence, I have learned a lot in just daily discussions around the dinner table. My mother was an authorized public accountant at Ernst & Young. She coached me through my first job, which was to be an accountant for my father's business, a small consultancy firm after a successful career as chief executive officer taking on and turning companies around from close to bankruptcy to flourishing healthy listed companies. Both my parents have been my biggest supporters and mentors.

But I was also fortunate to work for so long at McKinsey. The internal structure at McKinsey is built upon sponsorship, mentorship and apprenticeship. It's the whole reason why so many people that spend a few years there have learned a tremendous amount in record time. Finally, when making the step into H2 Green Steel, I did it not only because of the very exciting entrepreneurial journey we are now on, but also because I saw two very inspiring global leaders in both Harald and Carl-Erik and I am fortunate to be able to call them both my mentors.

What are you most proud of in your career?

That I always have given 100% to everything that I have done. I believe life is short and that what you make out of it is what you get. By giving 100% all the time, I get to experience a tremendous amount. I get to meet new and interesting people, I get to

travel and experience new cultures, I get to learn new things, and I get to make a difference. It has led to me being a part of transforming a 100-year-old industry to not only become decarbonized, but also much more resource efficient and modern. That I am very proud of.

What has been the best thing about being a woman in the steel industry?

I get to bust myths on a daily basis — this idea of who works in steel. When traveling around at the large American steel mills almost everyone I met had a former career as a college football player. They were huge. But what is so funny is that there is literally no reason for it! For sure, every single product produced is heavy, really heavy — so heavy that not a single American football player can lift it, not even if they were a whole team.

Also, the steel industry on a global basis is very diverse. You have steel mills on almost every single continent and even country. But each and every steel mill itself is quite homogenous. By bringing best in class from each part of the world, and recruiting from the whole population, not only half of it, I know we will have a very dynamic workforce that can accomplish incredible things. That, coupled with an ultramodern highly digitalized steel factory, will be our biggest competitive advantages.

H2 Green Steel boasts 47% women in management. Can you speak to the importance of diversity in management, as well as the workplace in general?

Hugely important. If you want to become an impact company with sustainability at its core, you have to attract the best talent in the world. That you can only do when you talk the talk, when the recruiters can see that the same language is spoken at each level of the organization. I also believe a diverse team is much more likely to bring different angles and solutions to a table when a decision needs to be made, and an informed decision is much more likely to be the right one than an uninformed decision. ♦