



Women in Steel: Progress & Perspectives



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Where did your education and career start?

My education began with a dual focus in business and Spanish, which was shaped by both personal inspiration and practical advice. I was encouraged to double major by my father, an entrepreneur and car dealer, who believed that if he was investing in my education, I should maximize the opportunity. At the same time, a high school Spanish teacher who believed in me sparked a lifelong interest in language and culture.

My career began in finance and accounting, starting as a credit analyst at Hewlett-Packard. It was a strong foundation that taught me discipline, attention to detail and how to understand the financial mechanics of a global business. That said, I often reflect on the fact that my career really started much earlier — in high school, when I was waitressing tables at a local restaurant in Houston. That's where I learned the importance of customer service, pace and adaptability. It taught me

how to read people, multitask under pressure and stay grounded — skills that have served me well in every role since.

Why did you choose the steel industry?

I've had the opportunity to work across a variety of industries — oil and gas, industrial gas, building materials, and now steel. Each one has offered unique challenges and learning experiences, but what I've realized over time is that I don't choose the industry — I choose the company.

For me, it's about finding an organization that values people, has a clear vision for growth and fosters a culture of care. What drew me in even more was the people. There's a grit and authenticity in this industry that's hard to find elsewhere. It's filled with individuals who take pride in their work, who value relationships and who are committed to building something that lasts. That culture of integrity and hard work has been inspiring to experience. The steel industry itself is dynamic and foundational, but what makes it truly special is the people behind it — their grit, pride and passion for what they do.

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

Throughout my career, I've been fortunate to have both mentors and executive sponsors, and I truly believe that having both is essential for long-term growth and advancement.

Mentors have been the people I could turn to for guidance, perspective and honest feedback. They've helped me navigate challenges, think through decisions and grow as a leader. Mentors are often sounding boards — people who invest in your development, help you build confidence and encourage you to stretch beyond your comfort zone. Their support is personal, developmental and often behind the scenes.

Executive sponsors, on the other hand, play a different but equally critical role. Sponsors are senior leaders who advocate for you when you're not in the room. They help open doors, connect you to

opportunities and put their credibility behind your potential. Sponsorship is about visibility and advancement. It's someone saying, "I believe in this person and I'm willing to stake my reputation on their readiness."

Early in my career, I leaned heavily on mentors to help me grow and learn. As I progressed into more senior roles, sponsors became increasingly important in helping me access opportunities that aligned with my strengths and aspirations. Having both has made a meaningful difference — not just in the trajectory of my career, but in how I've learned to support others.

Now, I'm intentional about paying that forward — being a mentor to those coming up behind me and a sponsor when I see someone ready for the next step. Because leadership isn't just about where you're going; it's about who you're bringing with you.

What has been one of the biggest challenges you've faced in your career, and how did you overcome it?

One of the biggest challenges I've faced in my career was learning to recognize and recover from burnout. Early in my career, I operated with a mindset that success meant saying "yes" to everything. I took on every opportunity, every relocation, every stretch assignment. I was constantly pushing myself to exceed expectations, often going far beyond what was required. At the time, I believed that being available, responsive and always delivering

was important as a leader. But over time, that approach became unsustainable. The pace, the pressure and the lack of boundaries started to impact how I showed up at work and at home. Overcoming that challenge required a fundamental shift in how I defined success.

When my daughter was born four years ago, everything changed. When I first transitioned to work after my daughter was born, I would arrive at the office at 5 a.m. and watch my daughter sleep from her crib from the monitor app on my phone. Those were some of the hardest and darkest days — being away from her and feeling like I'm missing out on the milestones that she's having. In that moment, I decided to change how I viewed success. It was no longer about what I was accomplishing at work but how I showed up at home. I went from watching videos of my daughter sleeping on the monitor to eating breakfast with my daughter in the mornings before work. I went from going on overnight work trips without making contact with my family to sending videos to my daughter at the airport, on the airplane and from the hotel to let her know that I loved her and was thinking of her. And when I was more integrated into my daughter's life, I became a more integrated leader. I experience much less burnout and am more motivated when I have a better balance between work and home. I measure success today with how connected I am with my family.





Have you had opportunities to mentor others?

What lessons do you try to pass on?

Mentorship has been one of the most rewarding aspects of my career. Over the years, I've had the privilege of mentoring through formal programs, employee resource groups, external organizations and informal relationships. In my view, it's a responsibility that we have as leaders to invest into others. There are a few lessons I consistently share with others:

1. Choose your boss, not the job title: The right leader can accelerate development, open doors, and create a culture where people thrive and meet their full potential.
2. Prioritize self-care: Leadership is demanding, and sustaining it requires intentional care of your physical, mental and emotional well-being.
3. Growth doesn't happen in the comfort zone: The most transformative moments often come when we stretch beyond what feels safe or familiar.
4. Stop shrinking yourself to fit places you've outgrown: Growth requires space, and sometimes that means recognizing when a company, a role or even the people around you no longer support the direction you're heading.

How has your perspective on leadership or success evolved over time?

Over the course of my career, my perspective on leadership and success has shifted significantly. Early on, success was often defined by job titles, promotions, relocations and measurable business outcomes. I measured

progress by how quickly I was advancing, how visible my contributions were and how often I was tapped for the next big opportunity. It was a very achievement-oriented mindset and ultimately a very narrow definition of success — one that was more about how I was doing than how I was showing up as a leader.

Today, I define success by the impact I have on people — how I show up for my team, how I help others grow and how I contribute to a culture where people feel seen, valued and empowered. Leadership is no longer just about driving results — it's about creating clarity, fostering trust and leading with empathy. It's about being intentional in how we communicate, how we make decisions and how we navigate change.

I've also learned that resilience, adaptability and authenticity are just as important as strategy and execution. The most meaningful moments in my career have come from helping others find their voice, guiding teams through uncertainty and building something lasting together.

Do you have any professional development book recommendations that you'd like to share?

I'll take a slightly unconventional approach here and recommend a few podcasts that have had a meaningful impact on my growth as a leader. These conversations offer fresh perspectives, challenge conventional thinking, and often feel more personal and dynamic than traditional books.

- Adam Grant – *ReThinking*: A powerful reminder to stay curious, question assumptions and embrace the idea that changing your mind is a strength, not a weakness.
- Simon Sinek – *A Bit of Optimism*: Insightful and uplifting, this podcast explores leadership, purpose and human connection in a way that's both practical and inspiring.
- Brené Brown – *Dare to Lead*: Her work on vulnerability, courage and authenticity has shaped how I lead and how I show up for others — both professionally and personally. ♦