



Taking time out is essential to a sustainable worklife



[l-r]: Lindsay Reed (DCN); Jana Stone (Stone Freight Solutions); Caroline Zalar (Freight & Trade Alliance) at the breakfast event on 8 March

Wellness the focus for women in logistics

The inaugural women in logistics wellness walk and breakfast, on 8 March, was a celebration of achievement and solidarity, writes **Paula Wallace**

THE FREIGHT & TRADE ALLIANCE

hosted an event for International Women's Day, it's Inaugural Women in Logistics Wellness Walk & Breakfast.

The event included a beach walk and breakfast at North Bondi Surf Life Saving Club in Sydney and a range of stimulating speakers including Sarah Pike from Amazon Flex and Maersk's My Therese Blank.

The country manager for Amazon Flex (Australia and Singapore), Ms Pike took on the logistics role at the online retail giant in the height of the pandemic in June last year, moving from a marketing role in the company.

Amazon Flex is responsible for providing the best possible and fastest delivery experience for Amazon's retail customers and launched early last year before the pandemic took hold.

Historically, Amazon has been dependent on third party carriers to deliver the last mile but Amazon Flex leverages the gig economy to deliver packages.

"International Women's Day is a call to action," Ms Pike said.

"Around the world there are 2.7 billion women who are legally restricted from having the same job as a guy. Thirty-five per cent of women around the world have experienced some sexual or physical violence."

In research commissioned recently by Amazon, 76% of Australian respondents

said they thought the transport and logistics sector was male dominated.

"We can be a force for change, a force for good... and create more freedom, more choice, more opportunities for the women that are coming up behind us," she said.

"Gender diversity is also good for business, it helps address the skills shortage not just in terms of recruitment, but organisations that have really strong inclusivity and diversity qualities also have much better retention."

Ms Pike said research shows that organisations that have at least three women on their board see a 66% improvement on the return on capital invested and a 53% improvement on their earnings before tax.

Shipping line Maersk's head of Oceania market, My Therese Blank said, "For me, diversity and inclusion is all about having an open mindset and really giving people a chance for who they are and what they can contribute. Not about how we look or what our background is.

"At Maersk we really try to create opportunities for women such as Strategies for Success.

Strategies for Success provides opportunities for participants to spend dedicated time on their careers and leadership journey, hear different perspectives from research and role models and equip themselves with a broader tool set fitting the challenges they face.

"It's really thinking about your image and what you want to project to others, how you build a network around you of people who can support you and open doors and create opportunities," Ms Blank said.

PAST YEAR

Amazon experienced an "explosion" of volume in 2020 according to Ms Pike. Generally the company experiences a peak period in November/December each year but with the first lock-down in March/April 2020, Amazon experienced similar peak volumes within a week.

And it wasn't just about volume.

"From a safety perspective all our processes have had to change," she said, adding that since that time Amazon has implemented 150 new safety policies and procedures.

"Loo roll was a big challenge for us. A big box of loo roll completely blows out all your assumptions [in regard to package size].

"So we actually had to restrict loo roll going out via Flex, we had to send it via our other carriers," she said.

Add to that, the need for new procedures around staff movements, health checks and social distancing and it was "rolling out a whole new way of delivering parcels overnight".

Remote working also presented new challenges.

"As a manager, a leader, you're trying to keep everyone motivated, keep everybody



Sarah Pike, country manager, Amazon Flex (Australia and Singapore)

focused but also be appreciative of the different circumstances that people are operating in," Ms Pike said.

Ms Blank said of COVID, "Everything has changed. In a day we packed our bags and went home".

She urged everyone to "turn on that camera" referring to video conferencing.

"It doesn't matter if you didn't do your make up, if you have your laundry in the background, just put a background picture on, no one has to see.

"Really that's a new way of connecting with people."

During the early months of the pandemic, the importance of self-care became evident said Ms Pike. She related her own experience of being on conference calls most days from 6am-10pm.

"My diet was a nightmare, I wasn't sleeping, I drank way too much alcohol," she said.

As lock-downs progressed she said it was interesting to see the evolution with video conferencing to walking during calls and setting step challenges.

"I've tried to get where I could a bit of time for me," Ms Pike said.

"It's small things like taking five to 10 minutes to get a coffee or a walk by the beach and just be... it helps.

"You need to take care of yourself and you need to take care of your mental health because if you're not fighting fit it actually has big implications for your teams, your families, your customers and the business."

2021: WHAT'S TO COME

Ms Pike identified three key focus areas for logistics, especially last mile delivery, over the course of this year: volume, safety and speed.

"We've seen this huge increase in volume and demand, that's not going to go anywhere.

"We will continue to see more and more people buying online.

"Safety is clearly here to stay... safety in terms of deliveries, safety in terms of packaging particularly in the food industries," she said, adding that Amazon

will continue with contactless deliveries.

"I think we will continue to see huge demand to get products quicker."

Ms Blank encouraged women to volunteer for projects.

"Try to take ownership outside your direct job scope and show what you can do. Don't wait for someone to nominate you for a project either, seek it out.

"Be visible, look for opportunities to show what you can do every day and when the opportunity is there, take it. And please give back to the rest of the women in our industry," she said.

Ms Pike believes it's important to continue to find the time to develop and coach and mentor people. So what are her top tips for 2021?

"Take time out, if you do anything take a week and completely switch off.

"I think we should all expect the unexpected, that's not going to change.

"Focus on yourself ... and look out for each other. We're all in it together, we've all got challenges and we are each others' best sources of support," she said.

"My last message to you all as we go into this year, if you do one thing, help all the women who are coming through, celebrate their successes, support their development, try to mentor people if you can, call out bad behaviours from both women and men," she said.

Ms Blank concluded, "Our industry is changing, just look around, but we still have more things to do to improve".

Profits from the event on 8 March will be donated to charities Waves of Wellness and Bayside Women's Shelter. ■

NOD TO CAPTAIN DRUMMOND ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



Captain Jeanine Drummond

■ Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack said International Women's Day is an opportunity to celebrate the women around us and their achievements which help shape our nation.

Captain Jeanine Drummond was appointed to the AMSA Board in November of last year.

"Today we recognise Captain Drummond's impressive global experience across shipping and leadership roles, which will complement and enhance the AMSA Board's collective maritime and governance expertise," Mr McCormack said.

"Captain Drummond is a strong, up-and-coming leader in the maritime sector and continues to support female representation in a historically male-dominated industry.

"In 2018, she was the inaugural recipient of the Australian Shipping and Maritime Industry Women in Shipping and Logistics Award."

Ms Drummond said that, having started her maritime career as an Australian seafarer, it was an absolute honour to have been appointed by the Deputy Prime Minister to AMSA's Board.

"Having worked across a variety of maritime industry sectors, at sea and ashore, in Australia and overseas, I look forward to being able to contribute an often unique perspective and understanding to a range of issues - that will allow me to offer valuable input," she said.

"I am particularly passionate about maritime safety, the environment and communities we operate in, seafarer welfare, and the continual evolution of a diverse and inclusive maritime industry - one that is ready to respond to the regulatory and operational challenges of implementing wisely the next generation of evolving technologies and digitalisation, at sea and ashore."