

Women’s Leadership Spotlight: An Interview with Kathrin Halfar

At the recent GXN conference in Vienna, I had the privilege of meeting Kathrin Halfar, CEO of Halfar System GmbH. Picking up right where we left off, our video interview conversation was effortless, shaped by our ongoing discussions and connection within the GXN community. As an accomplished entrepreneur and leader, Kathrin has incredible insights to share.

As we establish the GXN Women’s Leadership Council (WLC), one of our first priorities is understanding the current state of women in leadership within our organization. Once we have a clear picture, we can set meaningful goals to increase diversity and foster leadership opportunities for women across industries. Kathrin’s journey, experience, and leadership philosophy provide valuable perspective as we take these next steps.

A Passion for Business & Leadership

Kathrin’s journey into the promotional products industry began when she was still a student. Alongside her husband and business partner, Armin, she traveled extensively to suppliers across China, Asia, and Europe. She quickly fell in love with the business, recognizing its reach across multiple sectors—from promotional products to electronics, medical, automotive, and even aviation.

She has successfully balanced her roles as owner, CEO, mother, and wife, crediting strong organization and support as key enablers. “If you want it, you can make it happen,” she shares.

Evolving as a Leader

Leadership as a woman comes with unique challenges, and Kathrin views them not as obstacles, but differences to be understood and navigated. While certain stereotypes still exist, she sees a positive shift—women are now driving conversations and making decisions at the highest levels.

Her leadership style is highly inclusive and collaborative. “I believe in gathering diverse opinions to ensure alignment and buy-in,” she says. Kathrin is passionate about direct customer and supplier engagement, emphasizing the importance of building trust through face-to-face interactions.

Advice for Aspiring Women Leaders

Kathrin’s advice isn’t just for women—it applies to anyone looking to advance: Be visible, build relationships, and be proactive. True collaboration thrives in face-to-face interactions, which can be challenging in today’s remote-work environment. For those starting out, she stresses the value of visiting suppliers and customers firsthand: “You gain a much deeper understanding of their culture, systems, and management styles.”



She also highlights the importance of in-office presence for professional growth. “Receiving direct feedback—positive or constructive—is invaluable. Written communication can be misinterpreted; in-person dialogue fosters clarity and understanding.”

Kathrin believes that employees who bring solutions along with challenges are the ones who can thrive in leadership roles. She also emphasizes a leadership style that balances business goals with personal and family needs.

GXN Women’s Leadership Council: A New Chapter

Kathrin is excited about the GXN Women’s Leadership Council, viewing it as a platform to showcase the strengths women bring to business. “By simply having a visible committee, sharing our conversations, and featuring inspiring leaders, we start to dismantle the traditional norms of all-male leadership circles.”

Kathrin sees the WLC as a group of committed, dynamic women leading diverse businesses—a powerful example of what’s possible with vision and dedication.