



Heather Smartt: The Visionary Leader Moving from Strength to Strength

Spend even a few minutes with Heather Smartt, and you'll come away believing that grit, vision, and heart really can take you anywhere...Lisbon, for example. Today, Heather is the Global Head of Goldstar®, a standout leader known for her clarity and magnetic presence. I caught her at an especially meaningful moment: the one-year anniversary of her promotion to the global helm. But her story is decades in the making, and it's one that inspires anyone daring enough to chase both career success and personal fulfillment.

Heather's journey in promotional products spans nearly 20 years, including formative roles at Polyconcept and beyond, with experience across Pennsylvania, Florida, Shanghai, and Amsterdam. Those early years working under a world-class executive leadership team shaped her high standards and global fluency in a fast-paced industry. "They taught me the right way to do things," she says now, with a tone of gratitude and confidence. But as much as she was growing professionally, a dream was forming quietly in the background, life in Lisbon.

"I put my personal goal before the career," Heather says, reflecting on the bold leap she took. With no job lined up, she packed up and moved to Portugal. It was a choice rooted not in impulse, but in long-held desire, and she was fully committed to making it work. For a year, she lived the expat life she had envisioned, then turned back to her network to explore new international opportunities. Naturally, one of the first calls was to the industry's legendary connector, Michele Bell at ASI. That call led directly to Goldstar®, and within two days, the fastest hire in Goldstar® history was complete.

From day one, Heather moved with intention. She brought a clear, decisive vision to the company and wasted no time putting it into motion. Within her first five months, alongside her passionate and talented team, she led a complete rebrand of Goldstar®, not just in visual identity, but in corporate ethos. She embedded ESG deeply into the brand's DNA, redefining what value looks like in the European and global market.

"Sustainability is part of life in Europe. We just take it to the next level," Heather explains. "It's a critical theme in our relevance and central to our value. We are completely transparent in how we communicate with customers." That authenticity defines her leadership style: direct, values-driven, and unapologetically clear-eyed.

Her passion for promo wasn't always the plan. Originally, she set her sights on being a buyer in the fashion industry, but without a textile background, doors didn't open.

"Rejection is redirection," she now says. It's a mantra that could sum up much of her career, from every pivot, a better path emerged.



Throughout her journey, Heather credits the people who shaped her approach. Michele Bell remains a powerful influence, “She’s someone I’ve always trusted as a sounding board,” Heather shares. Current mentor, Sharon Eyal (founder of ETS Express), provides unfiltered wisdom and high-impact guidance. “He gives me feedback with no filter, and that authenticity is something I value deeply.”

What would she tell her younger self? “Don’t stress over decisions. Follow your intuition. Make the decision and move on. Act now...and ask for forgiveness later.”

That inner drive, matched by discipline and a keen sense of urgency, powers her leadership today. She doesn’t second-guess. She moves. And that momentum has served her, and the business, remarkably well.

As a female leader, Heather notes that while her environment has generally been supportive, there’s still room for more progress. “In my experience, women often bring a strong emotional intelligence to leadership, which I believe is essential if you want to lead with authority.”

And authority, in Heather’s case, is not loud or theatrical. It’s calm, unwavering, and purpose-driven. She had the vision to define the life she wanted, and the courage to make it happen.

Heather Smartt didn’t just imagine a new chapter, she made it real, choosing her destination and moving confidently toward it. For the rest of us watching, she isn’t just a global head of a major company, she’s a living reminder that with clarity, courage, and hustle, the life you want is absolutely within reach.