



Top takeaways from

PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY CHAIN LIVE CHICAGO

In May 2025 many of the global supply chain and logistics industry's most prominent leaders landed in Chicago for Procurement & Supply Chain LIVE Chicago (and its neighboring event Sustainability LIVE). It didn't disappoint—presenting powerful panels, speeches and fireside chats with major players from Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, Mars, AstraZeneca, Bosch, Unilever and many more.

Proudly among them were HH Global's Chief Procurement Officer Kathy Presto and Director of Sustainability, Americas Sean Carr—lending their informed reflections and expert insights to the pressing hot topics of Women in Procurement and Sustainable Supply Chains.

Here you'll find our top takeaways from two impactful days—capturing the key themes that resonated most with the decision-makers.

01

AI is reshaping procurement – but people and process come first

As an enabler of procurement transformation, AI can be unrivaled. In her keynote speech, **BDO USA's Ashley Hetrick** echoed this, outlining three converging trends – **sourcing complexity, data democratization and broad tech adoption**—to pinpoint how **AI is enabling faster, more strategic decision-making** across each area.

Yet the most resonant thread of the show was **AI's future success depending most on how we invest in the human element**—adopting hyper-smart change management approaches alongside the innovative technology.

From **Northwestern Mutual's Chris Kee** discussing the “era of orchestration”—**using AI in guiding procurement behaviors – to Westfall Technologies' David Schultz** presenting his ideal breakdown of AI investment – **70% going on people and process** – the emphasis was on **AI enhancing human capability, not replacing it**.

02

Inclusive and human-centered leadership is a strategic advantage

Inclusive leadership and soft skills like empathy, advocacy and storytelling are essential senior competencies for building resilient, high-performing teams.

In the Women in Procurement Breakfast Briefing, **HH Global's Kathy Presto**—joined by the CPOs from Coca-Cola Bottlers' Sales & Services and AstraZeneca—urged the audience to model **inclusive behavior, advocate for others and challenge the status quo** to drive positive change in this male-dominated field. Meanwhile, in the keynote speech **Leadership is the Algorithm**, **David Schultz** discussed **how developing your people and processes** in line with technology is key to **transforming your business**.

03

Supplier collaboration has never been more critical for innovation

Strategic supplier relationships are no longer purely about cost and savings—they're a critical source of **innovation, agility and long-term value creation**. Multiple sessions explored this—highlighting how the role of suppliers has evolved from transactional vendors to strategic partners, with **close collaboration and intelligent, sustainable wins** taking precedence over pure cost-cutting approaches.

Day one's keynote The Evolution of Procurement in the Age of AI saw **BDO USA's Ashley Hetrick** highlight how supplier relationships will be critical as AI adoption grows. On day two, **Oliver Wyman's Anne Valtink** reinforced this with her keynote The Silent Champion—evangelizing the value of **leaning into supplier relationships during tariff challenges**. The panel **Risk & Resilience in Supply Chain** then underpinned this, with representatives from RapidRatings, amfori, Baker Hughes and Bristol Myers Squibb concluding that **strong supplier identification and engagement are essential early steps to successful AI adoption**.

04

Sustainability is now a business imperative – powered by AI, data and collaboration

With 70% of CSOs now reporting to the CEO, sustainability has become a value-generating board-level priority. In the **CSO Strategy Forum**, speakers from PMI, Capgemini, Arcadis and AIT Worldwide Logistics highlighted the need for **materiality, value chain collaboration and embedding ESG into compensation and operations**. Naturally, **AI is also playing a growing role in sustainability**—from waste sorting to energy optimization—but its environmental footprint must be managed. **Siemens' Eryn Devola*** put it best, saying we need “**sustainability ambassadors**,” not just titles—and a **culture of collaborative data sharing** to drive real progress.

05

Data alone isn't enough – to really matter it must be trusted and shared

High-quality, accessible and shared data is the backbone of successful AI, sustainability and procurement strategies. Without it, transformation efforts stall.

In the fireside chat Driving Business Value Through Strategic Procurement Transformation, **PepsiCo's Lauren Hyman** discussed how “**democratizing data**” places accountability on the user, teaching them to **respect, value and use data wisely**. This was supported by Siemens's Eryn Devola* challenging businesses to shift from “don't share unless” to “share, unless.” Across the show, poor data quality was cited as demotivating and limiting. The takeaway was clear: data is a strategic asset, but only when clean, governed and shared across silos.

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