

LEADING THE PACK



Q&A with Jane Chase,
Executive Director, Institute of Packaging Professionals



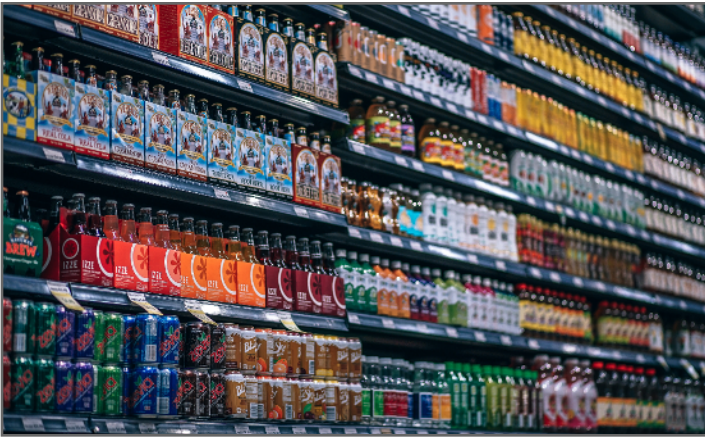
For many leaders, networking, coaching and mentoring have been powerful forces that have shaped their careers and transitions to leadership roles. The Institute of Packaging Professionals (IoPP) is an organization dedicated to creating these networking and educational opportunities that help packaging professionals succeed.

Jane Chase's support of IoPP spans more than 20 years, during which time she served both at the local level as President of the Minnesota Chapter and at the national level since 2002. She is a national Past President and currently serves as the Institute's Executive Director. In addition to her work with IoPP, Jane's professional career includes a breadth and depth of experience involving ever-expanding roles in Quality Assurance, Operations, Processing and Packaging within multiple large CPG organizations known for innovation including The Schwan Food Company, SC Johnson, General Mills, Conagra Brands, Ecolab, and US Foodservice.

We spoke with Jane about how networking, coaching, and mentoring have shaped her own career, how she would define a great leader, and what is unique about being a leader in the packaging industry.

OVERVIEW

- What are some traits great leaders possess?
- What are some strategies that can help executives achieve a more prominent role in their organizations?
- What's one leadership lesson you've learned in your career?
- How would you summarize the current state of leadership in the packaging industry?
- As a leader, what has been the most significant barrier in your career?
- How do you and the IoPP plan to empower the next generation of skilled professionals?
- What is the best piece of advice you've received from leadership?
- What advice would you give to the next generation of leaders?



Define a great leader. What are some traits you think great leaders possess?

A great leader is someone that can inspire a team, keep them focused through shifts in corporate priorities and provide them the resources they need to succeed.

What are some strategies that can help executives achieve a more prominent role in their organizations?

Executives need to focus on delivering results, regardless of external influences that can distract them. Consistently delivering results is what makes an executive stand out and be considered for larger roles that provide them the opportunity to contribute even more to the bottom line. Being seen as a developer of people makes you a highly sought after leader in any organization.

What's one leadership lesson you've learned in your career?

Once you become a leader, it's not about you. A leader develops their team to deliver results and multiplies the team's value to the organization by providing them with resources that are not just valuable to their current role, but which are transferable across the organization.

How would you summarize the current state of leadership in the packaging industry?

I would describe it as in transition. Leadership in the packaging industry continues to prove, time and time again, their value to the organizations that they serve.

By consistently identifying innovation, both revolutionary and evolutionary, they bring consumer perceived value that again delivers positive results to the bottom line. It is a continuous challenge to articulate this value to the organization, but I believe we are on an upswing in our efforts.

As a leader, what has been the most significant barrier in your career?

I think that a challenge that all packaging professionals face is the desire to innovate, which has to be balanced with providing a cost-effective, sustainable package. At times, these financial constraints are at odds, which just makes the process of finding the right balance all the more gratifying.

How do you plan to empower the next generation of skilled professionals?

My involvement with the Institute of Packaging Professionals is a critical way that I personally aspire to influence the next generation. Through promoting both networking and the philosophy of continuous learning, I constantly reinforce that this is what the next generation needs to be focused on to be successful in the packaging industry.

How do you inspire your teammates in the workplace?

By encouraging them to push themselves into new experiences that may feel out of their comfort zone, giving them the encouragement and support they need to grow, and celebrating their achievements when they succeed. I have always aspired to lead by example.

How important is mentorship, and how has that been a factor in your success story?

Mentorship is a critical element to any professional's success, and certainly has been in mine. I have been blessed with great people who have taken the time to inspire and provide guidance throughout my career.

While mentoring is critical, do not diminish the value of networking, This is where sometimes the most unlikely and valuable mentors come from.



What motivated you to become a mentor?

Having had great mentorship throughout my career, I am very aware of the impact that a strong mentor can have on someone. Being a mentor is all about giving back to an industry that has been so supportive of me and paying it forward to the next generation. I do this on a personal level as well as through my association with Institute of Packaging Professionals.

Join Jane Chase, Executive Director, Institute of Packaging Professionals for this year's "Women In Leadership Roundtable" at this year's [American Packaging Summit](#) by registering [here](#).

What is the best piece of advice that you've received from leadership?

Always guard your thinking time. Never get so caught up in getting things done that you miss the opportunity to plan for the future and assess processes that can make you, your team and the organization more effective.

What advice would you give to the next generation of leaders?

Be curious and explore all the opportunities that are presented to you. Take on new challenges daily and celebrate your successes.



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