

Steph Warnery

Executive Coach · HR & Organisational Advisor · Supervisory Board Member

Professional Profile

A strategic, commercial HR Executive turned Executive Coach and Board Advisor, with over 25 years of experience driving large-scale transformation across Tech, Retail and FMCG. Draws on deep experience from multiple executive and statutory board roles in global, regional and local organisations to bring an insider's understanding of the complexity, pressure and human dynamics of senior leadership — combined with the independence, objectivity and governance grounding to provide genuine oversight in the boardroom. Approach combines empathy and strong relational trust with challenge, candour and practical insight, creating the space for leaders and boards to ask the questions that matter and navigate complexity with confidence.

Key Skills

ICF accredited Executive Coach · One-to-one & team coaching · Governance and board engagement · Organisational design · Change Management · Mergers & acquisitions · Compensation and benefits · Stakeholder engagement · Building high-performing teams · Executive presence

Career History

Zalando — October 2021 – Present

SVP People Solutions (August 2024 – Present)

Promoted to lead the global HR organisation of 300+ across business partnering, performance management, talent management, comp and benefits, DEI, culture, change management and strategic workforce transformation.

- Partner with the Management Board and Senior Executive Team to align people strategy to business goals
- Acted as coach and mentor to the Executive Team, Board and Senior Management, building trust and collaboration and facilitating individual empowerment and growth
- Oversee teams across Europe and Asia to ensure strategic workforce plans are aligned and cost effective
- Led a major transformation programme and designed a new HR organisation with a 24-month roadmap to drive a culture of clear performance management with performance-linked compensation
- Built trusting relationships with Works Councils and trade unions to facilitate restructuring change within a challenging, highly regulated system
- Partnered on the Logistics strategy to save €100m in logistics by 2027, focusing on key European hubs and ramping up use of AI and robotics technologies
- Led M&A; initiatives including the smooth integration of 1,200 employees following the acquisition of About You in 2025
- Developed a robust talent pipeline including the recruitment of five new SVP roles as future leaders

VP – Business Engagement (October 2021 – July 2024)

Hired to a dual role leading an HR business partnering community of 85 across commercial, technology, logistics and group functions, and also acting as right hand to the Chief People Officer.

- Designed a new business partnering organisation, transitioning it from an operational service to strategic business advisors with clear mandates and role responsibilities

- The new business partnering organisation improved capability and increased automation, facilitating headcount reduction from 85 to 62 with employee engagement scores rising from 58% to 83%
- Introduced a new change model across the organisation — still in use today — to create a more coherent, structured way to manage multiple complex change programmes sustainably
- Acted as strategic advisor to the Chief People Officer on all global strategic HR matters

Beiersdorf AG — October 2015 – September 2021

DAX-listed global consumer goods and skincare company including Nivea, Eucerin, Hansaplast and La Prairie.

Global HR VP – Strategic Change and Transformation Officer (October 2020 – September 2021)

Worked directly for the CEO to lead change management and cultural transformation across key strategic pillars.

- Designed and delivered the first-ever global Diversity & Inclusion strategy, successfully achieving 50/50 male/female representation in leadership roles by 2023, two years ahead of the original 2025 target
- Co-led "Shaping our Next Normal" (SONN), the strategic project that reshaped Beiersdorf's entire innovation process end to end, building in a dedicated focus on short, medium and long-term innovation grounded in consumer insight
- Created a new, decentralised performance management model across 20,000+ staff, creating a tangible link between pay structures and regional and local performance
- Led a global digitalisation programme with the CEO and external advisors, building executive buy-in for technology adoption within a change-resistant leadership culture
- Secured €10m of technology investment to digitalise the company, driving automation, robotics and machine learning capabilities

Global HR VP – Pharmacy and Selective Brands (January 2018 – October 2020)

Member of the Senior Leadership Team, designing and developing a new people strategy alongside the creation of three new major divisions.

- Designed and developed a new operating model, building the team from 6 to over 1,000 employees
- Led major organisational restructuring and cultural transformation that helped the Eucerin brand grow from €500m to €1bn in sales by 2023, two years ahead of target

HR Director – Northern Europe (October 2015 – December 2017)

Operational HR lead for one of Beiersdorf's largest affiliates, covering the UK, Ireland, Netherlands and Nordic regions.

- Sat on the affiliate's board of directors, providing guidance on organisation design, change management, talent, reward and industrial relations
- Developed a 3-year HR strategy, securing €2m of investment from the Board for new organisational design and career initiatives that increased employee engagement by 45% across 9 countries
- Managed the closure of underperforming markets and sponsored new HQ office moves in the UK and Sweden

Britvic Soft Drinks plc — August 2009 – October 2015

One of the largest soft drinks manufacturers in the UK and licence holder for Pepsi, part of the Carlsberg Group.

Director of International HR (September 2013 – October 2015)

- Led development of a new business unit to grow local talent and operations across 11 markets outside the UK and Ireland, including M&A; projects in Brazil and Eastern Europe, and new HQs in the USA and Asia

Group HR Business Partner, then Group Head of HR (July 2009 – September 2013)

- Set up new business units across the USA, Asia, Europe and India and established core HR policies and practices

Early career

Head of HR and People Leadership roles.

Professional Development

- Advanced Practitioner Diploma in Executive Coaching, AOEC (ICF accredited)
- Hogan Certified Coach

Education

- BA (Hons) English Literature and English Language, University of Wales

References available on request.