Steph Warnery

Executive Coach · Advisor · Supervisory Board & Non-Executive Director

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Professional Profile

Senior HR executive turned executive coach, advisor and board member, with over 25 years of experience driving large-scale transformation across tech, retail and FMCG. Most recently SVP People Solutions at Zalando, partnering with the Management Board and Executive Team, and previously a statutory board member at Beiersdorf UK & Northern Europe. Brings an insider's understanding of the complexity, pressure and human dynamics of senior leadership, combining empathy and strong relational trust with challenge, candour and independent, objective judgement. Supports C-suite executives and leadership teams at pivotal moments, and brings governance, workforce transformation and M&A experience to supervisory and non-executive boards.

Key Skills

ICF-accredited Executive Coach (ACC) · 360 and psychometric assessment (LCP, Hogan) · One-to-one and team coaching · Leadership development · Executive presence · Board engagement · Governance and compliance · Independence and objectivity · Workforce transformation · Organisational design · Change management · Mergers and acquisitions · Compensation and benefits · Performance management · C-suite strategic advisory · Building high-performing teams

Career History

Zalando — October 2021 – September 2026

SVP People Solutions (August 2024 – September 2026)

Promoted to lead the global HR organisation of 250+ across business partnering, performance management, talent management, compensation and benefits, DEI, culture, change management and strategic workforce transformation.

- Partnered with the Management Board and 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
- Oversaw teams across all locations to ensure strategic workforce plans were aligned and cost effective
- Led all workforce transformation programmes, including a new HR organisation with a 24-month roadmap, to build a future-ready workforce and a culture of performance with performance-linked compensation
- Took major workforce transformation and AI-adoption programmes to supervisory board level for approval
- Built trusting relationships with works councils and trade unions to land restructuring within a challenging, highly regulated system
- Partnered on the logistics strategy to save €100m by 2027, focusing on key European hubs and ramping up the use of AI and robotics
- Led the people side of M&A, including the integration of 1,200 employees following the acquisition of About You in 2025
- Built 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 acting as right-hand person to the Chief People Officer.

- Designed a new business partnering organisation, moving from an operational service to strategic business advisors with clear mandates and role responsibilities
- Improved capability and increased automation, reducing headcount from 85 to 62 while employee engagement scores rose from 58% to 83%
- Introduced a new change model across the organisation, still in use today, for managing multiple complex change programmes in a sustainable way
- 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 skin care 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 pillars.

- Co-designed the first global diversity and inclusion strategy, which went on to reach 50/50 gender parity in leadership in 2023, two years ahead of the 2025 target
- Co-led "Shaping our Next Normal", the strategic project that reshaped Beiersdorf's innovation process end to end, redesigning global, regional and local operations to bring new products from idea to shelf faster
- Created a new, de-centralised performance management model across 20,000+ staff, creating a tangible link between pay and regional and local performance
- Led the global digitalisation programme with the CEO and external advisors, designing a transformation roadmap and change plan to shift the mindset of the Global Leadership Team
- Secured €10m of technology investment to digitalise the company, using AI and technology to drive automation, robotics and machine learning

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

Member of the Senior Leadership Team, designing a new operating model and people strategy in line with the creation of three new divisions, to reduce reliance on Nivea and unlock the growth potential of other brands.

- Built the division from a small, non-dedicated team to a dedicated team of almost a thousand people, developing the operating model, talent and capability
- Led the major organisational restructuring and cultural transformation that helped the Eucerin brand grow from €500m to €1bn in sales, two years ahead of target

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

Hired to oversee HR strategy across the UK, Ireland, Netherlands and Nordic regions, working closely with regional leadership teams to align people strategy to their business goals.

- Statutory Board Member, Beiersdorf UK & Northern Europe, sitting on the affiliate's board of directors and shaping HR strategy alongside the General Manager and regional leadership team
- Developed a three-year HR strategy that gained €2m of investment from the Board, with new organisational design and career initiatives that increased employee engagement by 45% across nine countries
- Managed the closure of three low-profit markets and sponsored two 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, now part of the Carlsberg Group.

Director of International HR (September 2013 – October 2015)

Led the growth of 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 (August 2009 – September 2013)

Set up new business units across the USA, Asia, Europe and India and established core HR policies and practices. Led the Group HR Shared Service Centre, ensuring flawless execution of core people processes and designing the organisational setup to support the group as it expanded into multiple territories.

Early career

Head of HR and People Leadership roles.

Professional Development

- ACC (Associate Certified Coach, ICF)
- Advanced Practitioner Diploma in Executive Coaching (AoEC, ICF accredited)
- Hogan Certified Coach
- Leadership Circle Profile (LCP) Certified

Education

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

References available on request.