

Interview series.

Leaders making a difference, 2025



Mar Perrote

Global Head of Health, Safety, Environment and Quality (HSEQ) at Moeve

From managing complex industrial assets to leading cultural transformation projects, Mar Perrote is an enthusiastic advocate of multiculturalism, a mindset that has seen her work in five countries across three continents. Now, as a Global Head of Health, Safety, Environment and Quality (HSEQ) at Moeve, the new brand of the former company Cepsa, she talks to dss⁺ about drawing on her international experience to drive meaningful change.

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How would you describe your career journey? What has influenced and shaped your career path, and how has this helped you in your current role?

In my current role I am bringing all my industrial expertise into the corporate world. It feels like I'm connecting all the dots from my various roles in the energy sector over the last 20 years and I take great pride in being the first female to hold the Head of Corporate HSEQ role in Moeve. Reflecting on my journey, I chose to pursue chemical engineering because I wanted to influence the future of energy. I went to university in my hometown of Cadiz in southern Spain and spent my third year at Kingston University in the UK, where I stayed to complete a second degree in Environmental Science, while also working for an environmental consultancy. My time in the UK confirmed my desire to work in the energy sector and I relocated to France to gain additional industrial experience and complete a master's degree in petrochemicals. This led to a new role as a process engineer in Canada, followed by an exciting opportunity upon returning to Spain to establish Moeve's first chemical plant in China. This assignment was a huge challenge as I was in charge of overseeing safety, environment, process engineering and quality, all while hiring a team, learning unfamiliar processes and caring for my two young children. Though at times the task seemed overwhelming, I knew this would be the adventure of my life and I remained focused on how amazing it would feel to achieve our goals. I learnt to speak Chinese, adapted to a new culture, and developed transformational management skills. After spending four years in China, I returned to Spain to manage product quality and control across all industrial laboratories. I also began shaping a circular economy strategy, which ultimately led to my current role, where I support Moeve in addressing the challenges involved in the energy transition.

The corporate world can easily drag you away from being 'on the ground,' but I never forget how I got here."



Embracing challenges has undoubtedly influenced your leadership style. In your experience, what key leadership qualities are essential for fostering a company culture that can successfully navigate the current challenges in creating a more sustainable future?

As a leader, it's important to have a very clear vision and communicate it effectively by making it inclusive and bring everyone on board. It's also important to accept that difficult times will arise, and you cannot always have 100% of people on board. In such circumstances, having a group of influential ambassadors can help you maximise your impact and achieve even better outcomes by introducing new ideas. Additionally, it is also essential to lead by example, walk the talk, be visible, and embrace your vulnerabilities. These are the leadership qualities that are universal and valid in all cultures. As a leader you must also give people a voice. Each month, I visit a different site (or business unit) to ensure I am visible and engage with a diverse group of individuals to hear their issues and concerns. Corporate world can easily drag you away from being 'on the ground,' but I never forget how I got here.





How do you see the role of innovation and technology in terms of moving to a low carbon and more sustainable future?

In the energy sector, shifting from fossil fuels to renewables requires innovative technology and whilst the benefits of this transition are clear, it must be affordable and supported by enabling regulations. At Moeve, we aim to reduce 55% of CO₂ emissions by 2030 compared to 2019 levels and eventually create net-positive energy with future technologies. This transition poses technological and safety challenges, especially as we adapt existing assets for new raw materials such as agricultural waste and used cooking oils. Innovation and supportive regulations are vital for Europe's competitiveness and for harnessing new energy opportunities. In addition, developing new competencies and leveraging digital capabilities are essential for ensuring safe and affordable energy transition



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Although there are obstacles to overcome, the energy industry has a significant opportunity to make a positive impact right now. Do you feel optimistic about achieving this?

Absolutely. I believe there's another way to drive change and innovation, and Spain has a huge potential. We have the needed resources: skilled and ambitious teams, mature and well operated sites, and a strong vision for the future. However, collaboration is essential to achieving our goals. While we may not be the largest, we can certainly lead the way. Spain benefits from sun, wind, access to markets, and a strategically advantageous location. We have the chance to shape the industry in Europe and serve as a model for the rest of the world.



You mentioned how your current role integrates your previous experiences. How do safety, operational risk management, and operational excellence contribute to building a sustainable business that is resilient and well-equipped to withstand industry volatility?

Safety is one of the few things everyone agrees on because, in the end, we all want to return home safely to our loved ones. When activities are performed safely, excellence follows. We are currently in the construction phase of large second-generation biofuel plants, where doing things correctly from the start ensures both safety and efficiency. Safety is a pre-condition for operational excellence, a principle that was underscored by my experience in China. As the first Spanish petrochemical plant in China, the project posed significant challenges. We focused on safety and excellence by bringing together support teams from Spain and new local recruits. This collaboration led to an injury free, efficiency-driven environment that continues to thrive even a decade after starting up.



Don't be afraid to ask for help. No one is perfect; be humble enough to say, 'how can I improve' and 'how did you do it?'



Your commitment to embrace the challenges of learning new business practices and global cultures is inspiring. What are your top tips for those considering a career in management?

Experiment, be brave, trust yourself and connect with others to discover what you enjoy. Seize every chance to travel, even if you return home later. I do believe that having exposure to different cultures makes you a much more inclusive leader. While extensive international work isn't necessary, experiencing diverse leadership styles is vital for cultivating a flexible and situational leadership approach. Stay resilient and acknowledge that perfection is not always achievable. In an increasingly complex environment, having a clear and desirable vision for the future serves as a guide for both you and your team.

Lastly, nurture your overall well-being. For me, that means music and arts – I play piano professionally and even taught flamenco dance while working as an engineer in Canada. Prioritise good health and positive social connections to stay true to yourself and energised. Inspiring leaders are, first and foremost, inspiring people themselves.



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