

Improving People's Lives

An Interview with Juliana Azevedo, President, Procter & Gamble Brazil

EDITORS' NOTE *Juliana Azevedo is the first woman to hold the General Manager position at P&G Brazil, one of the top 10 markets for the company, and she has recently been recognized by Forbes as one of the most powerful women in the country. During her 25 years at P&G, where she joined as an intern, she acquired a holistic vision of the business, having deepened in areas such as marketing, sales, strategic planning and management.*



Juliana Azevedo

Azevedo's personal mission is to promote education in Brazil. She believes it is the basis for the development of a better world. In addition to being a Council Vice President of United Way, she is also connected to UNICEF as a continuous effort to improve education standards. Azevedo holds a law degree from Pontificia Universidade Católica de São Paulo and a degree in industrial engineering from Escola Politécnica da USP.

COMPANY BRIEF *P&G (pg.com) serves consumers around the world with one of the strongest portfolios of trusted, quality, leadership brands, including Always®, Ambi Pur®, Ariel®, Bounty®, Charmin®, Crest®, Dawn®, Downy®, Fairy®, Febreze®, Gain®, Gillette®, Head & Shoulders®, Lenor®, Olay®, Oral-B®, Pampers®, Pantene®, SK-II®, Tide®, Vicks®, and Whisper®. The P&G community includes operations in approximately 70 countries worldwide.*

Will you provide an overview of your role and key areas of focus for P&G?

My history at P&G began in 1996 as an intern in marketing, working with its feminine protection line-up. I fell in love with the company's principles and values, as well as with the amazing development opportunities I had even as an intern - my graduation paper was the development of a new sanitary pad which was a real project at P&G. Hence, the plan of staying for a couple of years to learn about sales and marketing turned into a life project from intern to CEO in my home country.

Soon after becoming a product manager, I accumulated additional responsibilities for diaper products, expanding my impact into two of the largest brands in the early years of P&G Brazil - Always and Pampers. One of the most remarkable projects was the development of the first in the world lower priced line-extensions for Always and Pampers - from product design, to packaging, to price and overall strategy. A milestone for a P&G subsidiary that accelerated profitable growth with superior products closer to the Brazilian consumer's needs, the learnings were captured in a Harvard Case Study used today in many universities.

Creating alternative business models that allowed our international brands and technology to delight Brazilians, and doing so in a profitable manner, turned into a trademark in several of my projects for different brands - Pantene development all the

way to market leadership with Gisele Bündchen's endorsement, Head & Shoulders shampoo, and Old Spice deodorant launches in Brazil. I was also fortunate to lead Wella's and Gillette's integrations and businesses, wonderful opportunities to learn about new cultures and solve some of the hardest organizational challenges in my career.

It was around 2009 when, already a Brand Director, I was offered the opportunity to accumulate the role of sales director, broadening my experience outside marketing. These were years of absolute vertical learning not only in sales, but also in logistics, company trade policies, and finance. This was a true blessing that jump-started me and, three years later, I was promoted to VP of Beauty for Latin America with responsibilities for five different business units, dozens of brands, several manufacturing sites around Los Angeles, and teams in every single country in the region. Under a strategy of product and execution superiority that was grounded on the local consumer business, we accelerated growth and regained the top position as a profit and growth contributor for the entire region.

Finally, before returning to Brazil, I worked as Global VP for P&G Feminine Care and Adult Incontinence brands, coordinating everything from strategies to product development and communication in more than 152 countries and my teams were spread all over the world. In Femcare we were facing a declining market leadership and the business needed a total revamp. In Adult Incontinence, Always was the newcomer and challenged the status quo. We achieved our goals and delivered strong results.

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Leading P&G Brazil had always been in my dreams. It is a huge honor and another great professional challenge, since Brazil is the third largest market in which P&G competes and has huge growth potential. Over the past three years, my organization and I have created a plan grounded on innovation that aims to delight the Brazilian consumers, combined with strong citizenship efforts, all powered by a very strong leadership team. We promote from within the company and it is critical to hire and develop the best people that can perform at their peak with autonomy. This is one of my most important responsibilities.

While we have been strong innovators for more than 183 years, we have recently adopted a powerful start-up mentality to drive agility and advance our processes (P&G Startup Way). Strong leaders in our local innovation center (LAIC) guided by clear strategies and processes have succeeded in developing superior products for the Brazilian consumer by taking advantage of our global technologies and local touches.

Finally, P&G is committed to be a force for good and a force for growth, impacting the community, driving equality and inclusion, and environmental sustainability. Through our brands, employees, operations, and business partners, we make significant differences in the lives of people around the world. In Brazil, more than 4 million kids have been helped with educational programs, more than 70 million liters of clean drinking water has been donated, 40 percent of Brazilian P&Gers are women, P&G has been carbon neutral for the decade and has been a key player to mitigate the impact of the COVID crisis.

I personally expand our citizenship agenda through my work on the boards of UNICEF, United Way and AMCHAM Brazil.

Will you discuss P&G’s history in Brazil and the strength and leadership of P&G’s business in Brazil?

Brazil is the third largest market in potential for P&G. While globally P&G enjoys 183 years of experience, we are relatively young in Brazil only with 32 years of presence in the market. Still, we already occupy leadership positions in half of the categories where we compete, employing 4,000 direct people in the factories of Rio de Janeiro, Louveira and Manaus, our administrative office in São Paulo, and our distribution centers around the country.

Brazil offers P&G growth opportunities and inspiration – both critical pillars of our “Brazil Project.” We are among the 10 largest subsidiaries globally, but not in the top three – hence a hiatus to close. In addition, I want our operation to be increasingly an inspiration to other P&Gs in the world through our thought leadership and innovation capacity, especially now, with LAIC in Louveira.

Finally, we want to do more for Brazilian society. We already have beautiful projects such as Pure Water for Children which benefits more than 35,000 families, and P&G for Education, which touches more than 2 million children from early childhood to high school. I believe we can use our strength to grow the business and do good for society and return more to this country that received us so well 32 years ago. Our priority is to continue with our purpose of improving people’s lives.

How has P&G adapted its business in Brazil in order to address the challenges caused by the global pandemic?

Our key priorities have been the safety of our people, to guarantee the supply of our essential products and to help the communities in need. We have reinvented the way we work by working from home and transforming offices and protocols in the plants, the velocity and autonomy of our decision-making process, and innovation which has increased by more than 30 percent in the past 6 months, in order to fulfill these objectives. Our strong culture, historic partnership with customers and suppliers as well as digital transformation that had started ahead of the pandemic were fundamental for our success in these turbulent times.

We have been more in touch with consumers than ever. More than 100 hours of video calls on top of active social listening and real-time analytics. This has inspired innovation, new product positionings, and new ways to talk to consumers. Due to the pandemic, consumers are seeking replacements for external activities to do at home. They want products to cook, to moisturize their hair, to wash clothes even more often, etc. Shoppers want a safe, fast and productive experience, and we have partnered with our retailers to develop these solutions. It’s up to us to help them make decisions at the point of sale.

Our citizenship efforts have been intensified, and we have donated more than R\$ 50,000,000 in products of all our brands,

as well as provided input for health issues and investment in science and solutions to combat COVID-19. We also donated 100 tons of food to communities in Paraisópolis and Capão Redondo in São Paulo via Projeto Vida Corrida, Associação das Mulheres de Paraisópolis and Cidade de Deus, as well as in Rio de Janeiro via the United Way and Gerando Falcões.

We also invested in science through our Always brand and gave R\$ 200,000 to the team led by Dr. Ester Sabino who is the first researcher to sequence the genome of the new coronavirus in Latin America from the Medical Research Laboratory of the USP Medical School Foundation. In addition, through the support of the Vicks brand, an artificial lung was purchased in the amount of R\$ 315,000 for the Polytechnic School of USP as part of a low-cost ventilator project.

With all of our efforts during the pandemic, we know that we have the capacity to further expand our citizenship work, being increasingly an effective agent in generating solutions, uniting investments in science and service to return to society resources that help improve critical situations. Since we know we can’t do this alone, we launched the Aceleradora P&G Social.

In early 2021, Brazil entered a second wave of COVID cases. The city of Manaus suffered from a lack of oxygen and medical equipment so P&G engaged in multiple fronts to help the entire Manauara community. We gave 2500 m3 of oxygen, more than a thousand N95 masks to the Hospital 28 de Julho and Nilton Lins Hospital, plus half a million disposable masks for the vulnerable population, and supported the arrival of 43 respirators from Poli-USP to hospitals in the Amazon in partnership with LATAM.

What has been the impact of the global pandemic on Brazil’s economy?

Regarding the Brazilian economy, I believe that, with the pandemic, a new way of doing business has emerged that is much more collaborative and at the service of society. We have seen many companies joining efforts for a greater good and I believe this may be a positive legacy that will follow us. As an example, we’ve seen the union of retailers, distributors, and the industry in favor of the mission of taking care of people and supplying the population. This common objective has narrowed our relationships to a level that will certainly last after the crisis.

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You have spent over 23 years at P&G. What has made the company so special for you?

There are so many reasons to love P&G, but I believe what enchanted me the most is how we live our purpose and strong values every day. There is a match between the company and my personal mission and principles, and I found in P&G a place to learn and continuously develop myself. The company has always given me opportunities to innovate and fueled my passions in shaping future leaders, education, and equality & inclusion. I am energized to come to work every day and practice a purposeful leadership, multiplying my impact in society.

As a leading woman in business, do you feel that there are strong opportunities for women to grow and lead in the industry?

There are differences between men and women that come long before they hit the corporate world. In general, they grow with different at-home education and opportunities, for example. All of this is reflected in the ability of women to handle various roles daily with such efficiency, resilience and leadership that is often more humanized. Nevertheless, much remains to be done.

I have always been very privileged. My parents always told me that I could achieve anything I worked hard for. I studied engineering and law, but my real inspirations were at home – my mom and my grandma. They were strong and caring women who taught me I could transform the world around me and build an inspiring future.

In P&G, I found a fertile ground. A world free from gender bias with equal voice and equal representation for all individuals. A world where everyone sees equal. When we do this, economies grow, communities are healthier, businesses can thrive, and the world is a better place for everyone.

At P&G, we’re focused on areas where we can make the greatest impact. We’re leveraging our significant voice in advertising and media to tackle gender bias. The Always brand has the beautiful purpose of empowering women to live life without limits and it was an honor to work with this brand and lead initiatives such as #likeagirl. We’re also removing barriers to education for girls and providing economic opportunities for women through corporate and brand programs and policy advocacy.

We have long created an inclusive, gender-equal environment within P&G, while advocating for gender and intersectional equality in workplaces everywhere, so that everyone can contribute to their full potential. In each of these areas, we partner with highly-engaged organizations that share our commitment, combining our resources, talents and skills to have a bigger impact.

Today, women represent 66 percent of the global workforce and are responsible for 85 percent of consumer goods purchasing decisions. However, less than 1 percent of multinationals’ spending on purchases goes to women-led companies. Therefore, companies need to put their efforts into understanding the importance of equality and make this a real thing. The She2Be initiative designed by WeConnect in partnership with P&G is one project I am very fond of, and we want to change this scenario and invest on several fronts so that all women can take their places of prominence, with the necessary skills to expand and manage businesses.

I am very, very proud of what we have achieved so far, how we are impacting and shaping the society in Brazil, and in the world, and the legacy we are building for our organization,

our brands, our partners, and our community. I strongly believe a diverse team builds a thriving business and how reflecting the world outside within our walls mitigates consumer understanding gaps, gives us other perspectives and develops new avenues by bringing more diversity to the table. Equality and Inclusion cannot be a tactical, superficial effort. It is part of why and how we do our business, and it must be as intentional, strategic, and articulated as any other business measure. There needs to be a mindset change, a systematic approach to analyze and activate this matter that can be applied to multiple realities and contexts.

We can use our power, our scale, and our influence to mobilize change for a more equal world. We must use the individual privilege we have to repair and equitize. I hope to inspire other leaders to exercise what I call “Practical Empathy” and invite you to question whether you have in your business the diversity that truly reflects the consumers you serve.

What advice do you offer to young people beginning their careers during this challenging and uncertain time?

Be mindful that your focus should be on results and your happiness, not on getting the job done as others have done in the past. Do not waste energy in trying to do things the same way it has always been done. It is important to think about the unthinkable and question the unquestionable. Know yourself and build a plan that suits you and your business.

I believe the challenges of the pandemic not only reinforced the above lesson, but also taught us the importance of adaptability, resilience, and empathy. Even after this entire crisis is over, these are critical skills for everybody’s success. ●

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