



Creating Many
Paths to Success for
Women in Science

 **Univar**Solutions



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At Univar Solutions, our innovative and accomplished women are making a mark on our industry—and our world

With women increasingly gaining purchasing power and driving spending, it doesn't take, well, a math genius to understand why women bring considerable insight and perspective to every point in the value chain.

At Univar Solutions, the collective intellect, points of view and voices of our women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) play an undeniable leading role in creating exciting innovations and products that not only make a difference for our suppliers and customers, but also for our world, helping people live healthier, better lives.

Lise-Laure Dunoyer Morali, technical manager for the Beauty and Personal Care team in Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA), came to Univar Solutions in 2016, bringing two decades of cosmetics technical expertise with some of the world's leading cosmetics brands. The patent-holding scientist found the move to Univar Solutions appealing; she couldn't resist the challenge of leading our Paris-based, Solution Center, a place where she could move beyond the lab and exercise her considerable technical skills along a product's entire life cycle.

"I was impressed by Univar Solutions' capacity to perceive me as an immediate contributor and intrigued to join the brilliant women I knew as mentors who were there already," she says. "The management aspect of the job was extremely appealing. I was ready to take on the challenge of driving a team through a common goal."

That was six years and more than 200 formulations and projects ago, and the challenge and allure haven't worn off. "Technically speaking, my job is never boring," she says. "The quest for innovation—to initiate relationships, to solve the next problem—is exciting. At Univar Solutions, it feels like everything is possible."

Customer Needs Drive the Science

Half a world away in Seattle, Washington, Lavanya Venkateswar, Univar Solutions' head of marketing and technical sales for Food Ingredients in North America, agrees, noting a deep understanding of consumer behaviors and customer needs helps drive the solutions her teams pursue. From the technical details of the ingredient to transforming a successful recipe into a high-quality, 10,000-pound run to marketing and packaging the end product, she loves to help solve customers' challenges—one project at a time.

Long captivated by the science of food, Lavanya left the Middle East where she grew up, to seek greater opportunity in the culinary arts and sciences. She first landed in Chicago, where consumer packaged goods (CPG) companies flourish, and she eventually made her way to Seattle. Along the way, she augmented her skills as a food scientist with brand management and business acumen.

Her five years as a customer of Univar Solutions allowed Lavanya to experience firsthand the exceptional customer care for which the company is known. Univar Solutions provided a much-needed "solution focus." It served as a one-stop shop, solving technical and process challenges and helping her launch CPG baking mix brands and ready-to-eat snacks into the global market.

When Univar Solutions expanded more broadly into food ingredient markets, her valuable combination of R&D expertise, brand management experience and customer insight was the perfect intersection of skills to help lead the charge—and Lavanya decided it would be the ideal role for her.

"What was beneficial to me as a customer was working together to understand the consumer experience and then finding the science to help deliver high-quality, great-tasting food. And that's what drives me today," she says. "The process of crafting a customer story and working with our vast network of suppliers to help curate and perfect the end product—using science and data—is enormously challenging and fulfilling."

"My years as a Univar Solutions customer allow me to put myself in the shoes of our R&D customers and help address their need for food trend information, market insights, ingredient claims and performance," she adds. "I'm driven by the challenge of first understanding the customer experience and then helping to find the science to deliver a solution. This is where Univar Solutions shines."

Navigating the Plant-Based Milk Trend

Using all of those capabilities—from gathering supporting data and marketing analysis to trendspotting—Univar Solutions can help customers navigate consumer shifts and truly understand which trends are here to stay.

One example Lavanya cites is in the milk category, where consumer shifts toward plant-based options are creating tremendous opportunities. "Every day, we're helping customers understand the consumer behaviors and drivers behind this growing category—whether for health and wellness, lactose intolerance, taste or environmental considerations," she said. "From nut-based milk products to the newest vegan snack cheese, we can provide companies with a curated set of ingredients to help achieve superior taste and texture while offering market overviews, sustainable packaging assistance and help understanding product capabilities."

Defining Clean and Beautiful

The same exciting results are happening at our Solution Centers worldwide, including in Paris, where Lise-Laure's teams work to advance skin and beauty care, focusing on consumer preferences for healthier and cleaner choices.

One impressive result is her team's Clean by Design campaign, created to help customers define and navigate the clean beauty space, from raw materials through manufacturing processes to packaging and disposal methods. "With a focus on sustainability and a shifting consumer focus from natural to clean, we show the process of clean beauty from A to Z, including every link in the value chain in developing beauty that can be safe and healthy for people and the planet."



Lise-Laure also finds enormous challenge and fulfillment in correcting misinformation and debunking myths around chemicals and raw ingredients in the beauty and personal care space. She cites silicone and paraben as two materials manufacturers have avoided, often because of incorrect information or unfounded fears.

"We know the benefits of silicone, for example, beyond all the misinformation," Lise-Laure says. "I trust the products and materials that we recommend. Our job is to explain the chemistry behind the ingredients, to convey a message of truth." That way, she says, we can help empower customers and suppliers with knowledge and science to create new and better products.

Always Teaching, Always Learning

Both women have been helped along the way by other women, and they see assisting the next generation of women in STEM as an essential way to give back.

For Lise-Laure, working with ISIPCA, the world's leading education institution in the fields of scent, cosmetics and flavoring, has been a passionate outreach. The relationship allows her to learn from and mentor budding scientists at the elite institution, sharing her knowledge and real-world experiences. And this year, when Univar Solutions brought aboard its first student-trainee from ISIPCA as a full-time member of the Paris Solution Center team, Lise-Laure celebrated the hiring as a proud victory—proof the relationship had come full circle.

Lavanya finds a way to mentor closer to home in the form of her two daughters, both of whom "look up to me and make me want to do my best every day." In addition to coaching her daughters' Science Olympiad teams, she coaches middle school "You Be the Chemist® challenge," participates in a program Univar Solutions sponsors through Chemical Educational Foundation, and works closely with her school district's college and career readiness program to help create a robust food science curriculum.

The goal, she says, is to prepare kids for the real world. "Through these activities, I've had the opportunity to get kids, especially young girls, excited about how science and technology can create innovative and impactful solutions to everyday problems."

Just like at Univar Solutions.

Both of these women—highly accomplished and leaders in their industries—share enormous pride in their work and contribution at Univar Solutions and the marks they are helping to make for the greater good. Both impress with their ability to stay intensely curious and challenged. And both ascribe to a profound belief in keeping the customer first and then finding a way to use science to deliver real solutions.

Lise-Laure puts it this way: "When you're a scientist, all of the science feeds you. I never get bored at Univar Solutions. I learn every day."

Concludes Lavanya, "My true north is to make a difference in the world." Indeed, she is. They both are.



Lise-Laure Dunoyer Morali is the technical manager at Univar Solutions for beauty and personal care in Europe, Middle East and Africa.



Lavanya Venkateswar is head of marketing and technical sales at Univar Solutions for food ingredients in North America.

**Contact us to learn more about Univar Solutions
and how to connect with a Solution Center near you.**

