

FRESH VS.  
FROZEN 3PL

MITIGATING SUPPLY  
CHAIN THREATS

CPG  
PACKAGING

# Food Logist

Global Supply Chain  
the Cold Food &



National DCP's

## LIZ LONGSTREET DARR

Proves the Importance of Quality Leadership  
Amid Global Pandemic

# HOW THE 2021 ROCK STARS



## OF THE SUPPLY CHAIN KEPT INDUSTRY AFLOAT DURING COVID-19

Food Logistics announces the winners of the 2021 Rock Stars of the Supply Chain award.

**T**o put it mildly—2020 was a challenging year. And, it was hard on everyone—no particular person or industry was safe. The Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic changed life the way we know it. People were panic buying and experiencing long delivery times and stock-outs were suddenly considered the norm. But, the supply chain remained persistent.

We have said it time and time again, the supply chain will not break—it will only bend. And, the people that keep the supply chain moving are rock stars. Their hard work and innovations have shaped the global cold food supply chain, allowing consumers to get their groceries delivered to their house and trace where their food comes from.

According to a survey by Ubimo, 2.3% of consumers did all their shopping online. Although there has been a massive e-commerce boom driven largely by mandated quarantines and shelter-in-place orders, only 9.6% of consumers say that they now conduct weekly shopping online.

All these efforts made within the global food supply chain in a shortened amount of time has garnered these professionals with millions of adoring fans. Without these rock stars, the supply chain wouldn't be able to keep moving.

"Historically, there has been an inaccurate and pervasive view that frontline workers aren't worth investing in. Luckily, the tides are changing because nothing brings a level of focus to the things that truly matter quite like a global pandemic," Carol Leaman, CEO of Axonify, said in a press release. "It's now crystal clear that business runs through the frontlines. The things frontline employees do and don't do absolutely impact how a business performs."

The seventh annual *Food Logistics'* Rock Stars of the Supply Chain award recognizes the industry's most influential people for the role they played in improving the global cold food supply chain. These champions represent different industry segments and individuals who spearheaded partnerships among growers, packers, processors, retailers and logistics providers. From early pioneers and entrepreneurs to non-conformist thinkers and executive standouts, *Food Logistics* is pleased to honor these leaders and their contributions to the industry.

This year's recipients have found a way to navigate the supply chain during the pandemic all while keeping employees safe.

Take the overall winner of 2021 Rock Stars of the Supply Chain for example. Liz Longstreet Darr started her new position as executive VP of strategic sourcing for National DCP just one week before the country went into lockdown. She managed to rally her new team behind her and proved the importance of quality leadership amid a global pandemic.

"In the supply chain, professionals get recognized quickly when something goes wrong. And, rarely does supply chain people get recognized for all the things that go right. If you get 99% of the products there on time, people contact you about the 1% that doesn't get there. That's just how it works in the supply chain industry," Longstreet Darr adds.

The remainder of this year's winners of *Food Logistics'* Rock Stars of the Supply Chain also exemplify what it means to be a leader. It's fitting that exactly one year after COVID-19 turned the world upside down, we are honoring those who helped keep it afloat.

Go to <https://foodlogistics.com/21271809> read more about all of this year's winners.



# COVID-19 PROVES THE IMPORTANCE OF QUALITY LEADERSHIP

Liz Longstreet Darr, executive VP of strategic sourcing, National DCP is named *Food Logistics' Rock Star of the Supply Chain.*

Entering a new job and juggling motherhood can be some of the most stressful moments of someone's life, but when you add a global pandemic to the mix, it is anyone's ball game.

That's exactly what happened to Liz Longstreet Darr in 2020. Just one week into her new position as executive VP of strategic sourcing, National DCP, the country went into lockdown because of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. But, with everything she learned throughout her career suddenly being put

**"It's pretty humbling for me. There's so many talented supply chain professionals out there, and everyone's worked so hard this past year and accomplished so much."**

to the test, Longstreet Darr didn't miss a beat. She rallied her new team behind her, encouraging them to focus and deliver industry-leading results. Her efforts to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic by strategically problem solving, among accolades, has earned her *Food Logistics'* 2021 Rock Star of the Supply Chain winner.

Now in its seventh year, the *Food Logistics'* Rock Stars of the Supply Chain award recognizes influential individuals in the global cold food and beverage supply chain whose achievements, hard work and vision have shaped the industry for the better.

"It's pretty humbling for me. There's so many talented supply chain professionals out there, and everyone's worked so hard this past year and accomplished so much," Longstreet Darr says. "In the supply chain, professionals get recognized quickly when something goes wrong. And, rarely does supply chain people get recognized for all the things that go right. If you get 99% of the products there on time, people contact you about the 1% that doesn't get there. That's just how it works in the supply chain industry. That's what we all signed up for, and it's fine. But, what's great about this award is it recognizes people for the great work they've done behind the scenes. I think for me that's what it means. It is just recognizing the positive impact that I've done."



Brenda Upton Photography

Longstreet Darr has been in the foodservice industry all her professional life, moving toward the food supply chain industry 13 years ago.

"I always loved the foodservice industry. I started out—like many people—bussing tables, eventually waiting tables, and then worked in the front of house in restaurants. I was able to get an internship at Darden Restaurants as a supply chain intern when I was in college," she explains. "I didn't know about supply chain when I was young, and I didn't really ever think about supply chain as a career, but I was fortunate



On top of leading a team amidst a pandemic and having a baby on the way, Liz Longstreet Darr cares about making a difference in the community where she lives and works.

enough to get that internship and realize that supply chain was a way for me to stay close and connected to restaurant operations without physically being in a restaurant every day. I didn't intend to go into it, like I think most people did not intend to. We all just kind of ended up here and fell in love with it."

Longstreet Darr started her position in March 2020, overseeing the program management team and working with suppliers to source and negotiate all of Dunkin's packaging needs for distribution. Her background in the foodservice industry helps her make decisions as she understands what products may impact operations if an issue arises.

"You end up empathizing with them because you've been there—you know what it's like to tell a customer that you're out of something. It's never fun," she says. "Having that background is helpful and certainly helps with connecting with the restaurant operators when dealing with supply chain challenges."

Longstreet Darr is always looking to better improve processes, especially when

it comes to the COVID-19 pandemic. She asked her team how they can work together to improve things, however, all of

**"I have encountered challenges like anyone in my career, but they always lead to me having a chance to reflect and figure out how I can do things differently, to be better and better myself professionally."**

this had to be done virtually, as National DCP's employees worked remote.

"There's more supply challenges than

there used to be, but as a supply chain professional, we've all dealt with supply challenges," says Longstreet Darr. "I think probably the way we work is actually a bigger change than the amount of supply challenges we've faced. Our team is working together via video and other tools that we can find for collaboration."

While many things have changed because of the pandemic, visibility into the food supply chain will remain. Longstreet Darr believes that the restaurant industry is now finally catching up to the foodservice industry in terms of technology and reporting. This allows for better decision making and planning in the long term.

"I think technology is continuously improving and getting more sophisticated. The more that happens, the better decisions we make. There's nothing more important to a supply chain professionals

than not running out of product, so improved, timely visibility into inventory continues to be important," she adds.

Though, supply chain challenges will continue to be the norm post-pandemic. Rather than being

defeated by it, Longstreet Darr encourages her peers to be energized by it. By being persistent and dedicated to the task at

Liz Longstreet Darr stands outside of Dunkin', which National DCP serves.





hand, it will lead to a more satisfactory outcome.

"I have encountered challenges like anyone in my career, but they always lead to me having a chance to reflect and figure out how I can do things differently, to be better and better myself professionally," she says. "I think with every challenge, you learn something, and as long as you can see past it and know that you're going to learn something from it and get through it, I think that is the key."

Despite its stressors, work is still considered a safe place for Longstreet Darr. She explains that her work allows her to have consistency in a time when the world is pretty inconsistent.

"We'll look back on this year five years from now and say, 'Oh, my gosh, like, how did we get through that year? What really happened?' I think we're all a little bit in survival mode, just hunkering down getting through this," says Longstreet Darr. "Work is consistent, and fortunately, I enjoy what I do. I work with great people at National

DCP. When everything else is kind of falling apart, I can still log in at 8 a.m. and see my team members and see how they are advancing our strategic planning. It's just good to do the best you can." **FL**



Liz Longstreet Darr began her National DCP career in March 2020, a week after the country shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



## Is your organization prepared for the FDA's New Era of Smarter Food Safety?

Visit our [New Era resources page](#) for useful articles and insights to help you navigate the future.



Smarter tools for outbreak prevention



Tech-enabled traceability



Food safety culture



New business models and modernization

Learn more: [controlant.com/new-era-blueprint/](https://controlant.com/new-era-blueprint/)  
Contact us: [contact@controlant.com](mailto:contact@controlant.com)

Follow us @Controlant on  
Twitter and LinkedIn

