

HOW WOMEN EXECUTIVES ARE ENERGIZING THE TRANSFORMERS COMPONENTS SECTOR

The H-J Family of Companies is a global leader in the manufacturing and supply of products and solutions to the heavy electrical industry. These components support the transformer, switchgear, regulator, recloser and breaker industries, along with specialties in the utility market.

Founded in 1969, H-J is headquartered outside of St. Louis, Missouri, USA. The company maintains a global presence with offices operating in Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, India, Mexico, the Philippines, Spain, Germany, the Netherlands and throughout the United States, all of which allow H-J to serve domestic and international customers. The H-J Family of Companies conducts business in more than 70 countries across all continents.

In this article, *Women in Power Systems Magazine* is proud to feature four exceptional women leading the world of components for transformers and switchgear in The H-J Family of Companies. Through their roles as directors and managers, these four women have demonstrated their ability to lead teams, make strategic decisions and make a difference in the industry. In this article, we will explore the stories of Diana Diaz, Cinthya Alcaras, Stephanie Sherrill and Carolina Bermudez, highlighting their achievements and impact on the electrical components and solutions industry.

Diana Diaz

Director of Sales in Latin America

Diana is an inspirational leader in the world of sales of solutions and components for the transformer sector in Latin America. As sales director for The H-J Family of Companies, she has played a vital role in expanding her company's presence in the region. Her ability to understand customer needs and her commitment to excellence in customer service has made her a reference in the industry.

Cinthya Alcaras

Supply Chain Manager

Cinthya is an expert in supply chain management in the electrical industry. Her leadership has optimized logistics and ensured on-time delivery of critical components in an era where lead times are a crucial issue for many industry players. Cinthya believes in the importance of operational efficiency and cross-departmental collaboration to achieve success.

Stephanie Sherrill

Production Manager

Stephanie is a visionary in managing the production of bushings, connectors, terminals and other in-house-manufactured products at The H-J Family of Companies. With more than 30 years in the industry with The H-J Family of Companies, her focus on automation and continuous improvement has increased the efficiency and quality of the company's products. Stephanie is an advocate for investing in innovative technologies to drive manufacturing excellence.

Carolina Bermudez

Head of Latin America Inside Sales

Carolina leads the Latin America Inside Sales team with passion and dedication. Her ability to coordinate strategies and maintain effective communication with her service teams in each region has significantly improved order management, claims, and ultimately, customer satisfaction. Carolina believes in empowering her team to achieve bold goals.

Diana Diaz, Cinthya Alcaras, Stephanie Sherrill, and Carolina Bermudez are extraordinary examples of female leadership in The H-J Family of Companies and the electrical components industry. Their achievements and contributions demonstrate that women are critical in driving innovation and excellence in this essential industry. Through their vision, dedication, and commitment to excellence, these leaders are paving the way for future generations of women in power systems.

ENERGIZING THE TRANSFORMERS COMPONENTS SECTOR

Diana Diaz

Director of Sales in Latin America

Cinthya Alcaras

Supply Chain Manager

Stephanie Sherrill

Production Manager

Carolina Bermudez

Head of Latin America Inside Sales



Diana Diaz: I started my career with a power transformer company 26 years ago, where I worked as a purchasing manager. I spent my time there perfecting my role and learning about each area of the organization. It was there that I came to understand that the more knowledge I could learn about the company and industry, the more quickly I could advance my career. I was able to grow with the company, learn from its challenges, and contribute to its successes.

After ten years in my purchasing role, I had a thorough grasp of how I wanted to advance my career. It was then I made the decision to move to the other side of the desk and explore the sales world. I wanted to become the kind of salesperson I hoped to find when I was in my purchasing role. I based my principles of service on understanding the customers' needs and providing quality responses in a timely manner. This decision was a turning point in my career and opened my mind to a great deal of new experiences and successes.



“When I visit with customers in person, I can learn about not only their business needs, but about their cultures, lifestyles, and families. Creating these relationships and collaborating with them to find solutions is what motivates me to continue improving even in the face of everyday challenges.”

Diana Diaz

When I became the Director of Sales, I was most challenged with defining my leadership style. I learned that leading a team is not only giving direction but giving my team a voice to build solutions by creative thinking. Together we develop & implement their strategies. I strive to continuously expand upon their talents and together we improve as a team. My sales team in Latin America is not limited by a position or title. They are encouraged to contribute to the improvement and growth of the company overall. I am also conscious of my personal comfort zone. I actively seek to challenge it daily. By doing this, I am practicing what I teach to my team.

I am proud to be a part of a company that deeply respects our cultural differences and believes in our talents. I consider it a big responsibility to guide the new generation of The H-J team to work and live with passion while striving every day to be the best version of themselves.

Photo: The H-J Family of Companies

Cinthya Alcaras: In November 2022, I joined The H-J Family of Companies as Supply Chain Manager, bringing a background in supply chain management from my previous experience in the electrical sector. Throughout my career, I've consistently worked in supply chain roles, starting as an MRO buyer with no prior experience. The initial challenges were immense, and the resulting stress was substantial, but overcoming these hurdles provided valuable lessons in the processes of understanding and prevention.

My educational background includes a degree in business administration from the Queretaro International University and a master's in supply chain and logistics from the Mondragon University. I have always been passionate about my work, finding joy in the constant learning and problem-solving it entails.

Having had the opportunity to work in various companies and sectors, I've gained a broad perspective on managing different teams, organizations, ERPs, suppliers, and problem-solving strategies. However, nothing has been as transformative as navigating the challenges brought by the pandemic, reshaping the world of supply chain management.

In this ever-changing landscape, the pandemic emphasized the importance of working harder and faster, diversifying sources, and maintaining flexibility. It highlighted the necessity of having alternative sources from different countries to ensure resilience in the supply chain. Beyond professional impacts, it also led to a shift in personal values, emphasizing the importance of relationships with family, friends, and colleagues.



“Navigating these changes [brought by the pandemic] has further honed my adaptability and strategic thinking, making me a more resilient and forward-thinking Supply Chain Manager.”

Cinthya Alcaras

Navigating these changes has further honed my adaptability and strategic thinking, making me a more resilient and forward-thinking Supply Chain Manager.

As challenging as it may be, this is a job that I truly enjoy and am passionate about. I wouldn't exchange this for anything else. I consider myself fortunate to work in a field that I love, with a company that shares my passion.

Working with H-J is a genuine pleasure. While experiencing the typical ups and downs of any company, the people here form one big family, and that's something I greatly appreciate.

Since joining H-J, I have enjoyed new challenges and opportunities, all of which have contributed to my personal and professional growth. To work within a company culture that aligns so well with my own principles is a wonderful opportunity that I am thoroughly enjoying and learning from every day.

Stephanie Sherrill: In January of 1994, I started working for H-J Enterprises, Inc. as a Machine Operator with no background in manufacturing. I always focused on clerical and business classes in my education and had goals of becoming a Real Estate Broker. However, when I experienced the world of manufacturing, I knew this would become my career path, and even more so, one I wanted to excel in.

During my time as a Machine Operator, I became familiar with different machining operations and techniques. This includes quality expectations and inspections, production quotas, and the importance of standard operating procedures.

Shortly into my career, I became a Lead in our Machine Shop which introduced me to the leadership role. This experience taught me the importance of teamwork and how to manage people. I attended several different leadership and managerial classes and eventually worked in a production supervisor role.

As a supervisor, I began to work closer with our engineering, sales, and process improvement groups. In this role, I was introduced to a more technical side of our industry, the need for constant improvement and customer relationships. After a few years, I became the Assistant Plant Manager. This role had many of the same responsibilities as the supervisor position, but also expanded into Scheduling I was not involved in before.



This experience has not only taught me the world of manufacturing but has also taught me the importance of leading by example, developing relationships, and working as a team with people from every walk of life.

Stephanie Sherrill

Now as Director of U.S. Manufacturing, I work very closely with our teams making sure our production goals are met. This is achievable through continuous improvements and while maintaining our commitment quality products.

Each one of these roles was a steppingstone to the next level. This experience has not only taught me the world of manufacturing but has also taught me the importance of leading by example, developing relationships, and working as a team with people from every walk of life.

It's been a wild ride and I've enjoyed it!

Carolina Bermudez: I started working for The H-J Family of Companies in 2010 as a sales assistant in the Bogota, Colombia, office. Holding a bachelor's degree in international business administration from the Andean University of Pereira Colombia and specializing in customs and international trade from the Externado University of Colombia, my career trajectory had previously centered on foreign trade and supply chain, so delving into the commercial and customer service arena was a new adventure for me.

I come from a small city in the heart of the Colombian coffee axis and joining a multinational company with a global presence was a challenge that I still enjoy intensely to this day. In my new professional role, I transitioned from a very local scope to being part of an internationally dynamic business with an impact at the Latin American level. A whole world of cultures, languages, and processes unfolded before me! My challenge: understanding the needs of our customers in their cultural language and translating them into our own.

In this process of managing our customers' needs, I started to develop a different leadership style and became deeply involved in our internal processes of quality, manufacturing, logistics, and continuous improvement. This resulted in creating a synergy of connections between processes that, far from being independent, are fully complementary to each other. I firmly believe that connecting all these links makes a different and more effective experience for the end customer.

In this ever-changing landscape, the pandemic emphasized the importance of working harder and faster, diversifying sources, and maintaining flexibility. It highlighted the necessity of having alternative sources from different countries to ensure resilience in the supply chain. Beyond professional impacts, it also led to a shift in personal values, emphasizing the importance of relationships with family, friends, and colleagues.

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Carolina Bermudez



Now, as the Inside Sales Manager for the Latin American region and with a new base of operations in Leon, Guanajuato, Mexico, I expand my scope not only to take care of our customers but also to create strategic commercial actions aiming to enhance the customer experience and achieve a level of excellence that allows us to continue maintaining long-term relationships.

Each step I've taken has shaped me as a professional with interdisciplinary skills, as I like to define myself. This experience of being a Latina woman leader in the commercial field of the electrical industry has been a fascinating world of experiences and learning.