

OPERATING WITH THE FULL LIFE CYCLE IN MIND

A Q&A WITH WESTROCK CHIEF SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER BRANDI COLANDER



WestRock is proud to welcome our new chief sustainability officer, Brandi Colander. Brandi's appointment is the latest extension of WestRock's commitment to imagine and deliver on the promise of a sustainable future. As a lawyer with deep policy experience and application, Brandi comes to WestRock with experience that spans the governmental, nonprofit and private sectors. Her vision for sustainability at WestRock is as ambitious as it is elegant in its simplicity: It's about people, and it's how we do business every day.

BRANDI COLANDER

Chief Sustainability Officer

Q: Tell us what sustainability means to you.

A: When I was a little girl, after church on Sundays, I would take a long walk in the woods with my father and younger brother. Throughout my education, studying urban planning, law and science, I always returned to this core experience with my dad, spending time in nature. In graduate school, I had the chance to visit wind farms in Denmark, and through my time in public service, I helped develop them here in the United States. I also worked with coal miners who were losing their jobs to identify policies to support a just transition. I know the power of removing the political charge and finding a path forward that is equitable and honors the contributions each of us can make.

As human beings, our relationship with nature is inextricably linked to our relationships with each other and our role in the ecosystem and the economy. I believe our need to make a living off renewable natural resources can be a source of dignity and a way to build a better future. The human factor is a pivotal theme for me. I believe that sustainability is about understanding our role in the ecosystem and operating with the full life cycle in mind. Wise leadership and institutions address equity impacts up front.



Q: What role can packaging play in the circular economy?

A: Here at WestRock, sustainability is not about compliance or reducing our impact. It is not a catch-all or something we only talk about on Earth Day. It's how we do business—and why. We have an opportunity to engage the community in understanding how we create the packaging they rely on every day to protect cherished products, preserve food, prevent tampering and ensure the safety of medications. The foundation of our sustainability commitment is built on



BRANDI COLANDER



three pillars: people and communities, bettering the planet and innovating for our customers and their customers—working together to imagine and deliver on the promise of a sustainable future.

Q: How will we get there?

A: Together. We will only get there if we go together. And we start by listening.

We listen to our customers. They are asking us for more sustainable packaging solutions every day.

We listen to our investors. ESG is becoming an increasingly important factor for shareholders. They understand the importance of making the investments today to create a more competitive and sustainable WestRock for many years to come.

And with the unprecedented challenges of a global pandemic, racial awakening and the enduring reality of a changing climate, we listen to our communities. As we listen, we prepare ourselves to lead through this dynamic landscape with sustainability and innovation.

We recognize that responding to these challenges requires partnership. It is how we move forward together. While we have some very strong partnerships already in place with the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and The American Forest Foundation, we are just getting started.

It's about having a stake in the outcome—sending a strong signal of commitment and inherent accountability. Partnerships are also an opportunity to stay current and keep learning from one another. To invest and work together so that over time, you can reach your goals and do so at greater scale and with a far greater impact.

Q: Tell us more about the role of equity in sustainability.

A: Over the years, my studies and work have revealed that equity is critical to sustainability. I have spent a lot of time in rooms where there weren't more women or people of color, and I know that my voice allows others to pull up a chair to the table. Through my policy work I learned the power of bringing diverse voices to the table and listening to better understand their perspectives. The human voice and the equitable perspective are often missing in our sustainability work. I think people think of sustainability as limiting agency, but to me, it's about harnessing it, like energy, to power our society toward a shared goal.

This is not easy work. It morphs, it sprawls, it is deeply challenging. Sustainability can be a battle for hearts and minds. And I am used to hearing no. But I just keep asking the questions and working my way toward yes. I believe sustainability offers businesses a competitive advantage and resilience.

I'm grateful that my parents nurtured my passion for the environment and encouraged me to explore it from so many angles, all rewarding and deeply applicable across a spectrum of industries. I'm excited to join a company with a proud legacy in responsible forestry and a promising future at the center of the circular economy.

To learn more about WestRock's sustainable, differentiated paper and packaging solutions, visit www.westrock.com