

The Art of Transition: Maria Lombardo's Bold Pursuit of Sustainable Solutions



Who is Maria Lombardo?

Maria Lombardo is the Founder and CEO of RO-SE Global and a leading expert in sustainability and finance. With more than 30 years of experience in investment banking, capital markets, and ESG advisory, she is known for translating complex climate and transition challenges into practical, strategic solutions. Her leadership blends technical depth with a people-first approach, positioning RO-SE as a trusted partner for organizations seeking to align sustainability with long-term value creation.

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A Philosophy Rooted in Craftsmanship and Purpose

Maria Lombardo's journey into sustainable finance did not begin in a boardroom. It began in her grandmother's atelier in Italy, where she watched masterful hands create tailored garments for clients who expected nothing less than excellence. Those early moments stayed with her, shaping her belief that exceptional work requires partnership, precision, and a commitment to enduring quality. Today, that same philosophy guides her work as Founder and CEO of RO-SE Global, where she helps organizations navigate the complexities of sustainability with clarity and strategic intent. Her career reflects a simple but powerful principle she carries forward: ***the best solutions are crafted, not improvised.***

Early Influences and the Formation of a Global Perspective

Maria's path into finance took shape through a blend of rigorous academic training and early exposure to global markets. With degrees from Università Bocconi, CEMS, Louvain School of Management, and further executive education from the University of Cambridge's Institute for Sustainability Leadership, she cultivated a foundation that merged international business knowledge with analytical strength.

Her career began at Lazard, followed by roles at CDC Group, UBS, and Sberbank. These early years sharpened her understanding of complex market environments, deal structuring, equity sales, and emerging economies. She navigated demanding roles that required precision, resilience, and a deep grasp of global financial trends. What emerged was a professional who excelled at understanding client needs and building trust in fast-paced, evolving markets.

Even then, her people-first approach stood out. Colleagues and clients often noted her ability to simplify complexity without losing nuance. These formative experiences later became instrumental when she pivoted toward sustainability and the broader purpose-driven work that would define her next decade.

Building Expertise and Leading Through Transition

Maria's shift into sustainability was not a departure from finance but an evolution born from insight. Nearly ten years ago, she recognized that the future of finance depended on understanding climate risk, transition pathways, and the strategic opportunities embedded in ESG integration. She moved into impactful roles at Invesco and CDP, where she gained firsthand experience shaping data-driven sustainability strategies and engaging institutional investors.

The defining chapter of this ascent came when she joined Standard Chartered Bank as Global Head of ESG Advisory. Here, she built the ESG advisory function from the ground up within a vast global organization. It was a space where her financial background, entrepreneurial mindset, and sustainability expertise converged.

She often reflects on this period as pivotal, sharing, ***"Complex challenges require bringing together the best minds and resources."***

Her work at Standard Chartered reinforced her conviction that sustainability should be a strategic driver, not a separate category. She became widely recognized for creating bespoke solutions, fostering collaboration, and guiding clients through periods of uncertainty with both empathy and decisiveness.

This philosophy ultimately led to her next chapter: founding RO-SE Global.

The Creation of RO-SE Global and the Vision to Transform Sustainability

In 2025, Maria took the bold step of launching RO-SE Global, an advisory firm designed to bridge corporates and financial institutions through a shared language of sustainability, climate strategy, and transition financing. RO-SE is rooted in the very values that shaped her professional identity.

As she describes it, ***"RO-SE represents the culmination of my 30-year journey and a tribute to my grandmother's legacy."***

RO-SE's mission is clear: help organizations transform sustainability from a regulatory obligation into a strategic advantage, particularly in emerging markets where support is often limited yet urgently needed. As CEO, she built a model centered on partnership, assembling a team of specialized experts across climate science, financial structuring, technology, and transition strategy.

Her leadership approach reflects the principles that guided her career: attentive listening, tailored solutions, and an unwavering commitment to quality. She emphasizes that ***"sustainability and profitability must be mutually reinforcing drivers of success."*** RO-SE's partnerships with innovative firms like Climate Aligned for AI-driven capabilities and Climate Horizons for transition analytics demonstrate her commitment to integrating best-in-class expertise.

Through RO-SE, Maria has become a trusted advisor to organizations seeking clarity amid complexity. Her work is particularly recognized for its depth, customization, and pragmatic orientation, helping clients move past theoretical frameworks into actionable, bankable solutions.

Empathy, Resilience, and a Life Anchored in Purpose

Maria's leadership is informed not only by professional experience but also by personal values shaped through three decades of industry cycles and global transitions. She believes empathy and resilience are essential, particularly in moments of uncertainty.

As she often notes, ***"Empathy and resilience aren't just personal values; they're strategic imperatives."***

Beyond her professional work, she is an ASA Swimming Teacher, an STA Open Water Swimming Coach, and a competitor in open water master swimming events. For her, swimming mirrors the nature of transition work: reading changing conditions, adapting with intention, and working with natural forces.

She also serves as a pro-bono advisor to ocean protection foundations and remains closely involved in education, mentoring university students and volunteering with CFA UK. These commitments reflect her belief in empowering the next generation, just as her grandmother empowered her through example.

Crafting the Next Chapter of Sustainable Finance

Maria sees the next era of sustainability as one defined by integration, innovation, and accessibility. She believes that climate transition strategies must become more practical and tailored, especially in emerging markets. RO-SE stands at the center of this mission, proving that when organizations combine deep expertise with thoughtful collaboration, meaningful change becomes possible.

Her forward-looking philosophy continues to guide clients seeking to navigate shifting regulatory landscapes, emerging technologies, and evolving expectations from investors and stakeholders. With RO-SE's growing network of experts and partners, she is poised to expand the firm's impact across global markets.

A Leader Shaping the Future of Sustainable Solutions

Maria Lombardo's career is a testament to the power of craftsmanship, partnership, and purpose. From her early days in investment banking to her leadership of RO-SE Global, she has consistently transformed complex challenges into opportunities for meaningful progress.

Editorial Note

Maria's story is a reminder that leadership is not defined by titles but by the willingness to shape a better future with intention and expertise. Her work demonstrates that sustainability and financial strategy can coexist as forces for innovation, resilience, and competitive advantage. For executives navigating their own transitions, her journey offers a compelling call to action: embrace complexity, lead with purpose, and craft solutions that endure.