



Michelle Burns

Former Executive Vice President
Global Coffee and Sustainability
Starbucks

Michelle Burns is the former executive vice president of Global Coffee and Sustainability for Starbucks. In this role, she drove the company's strategy to support a thriving business, guiding its best-in-class ethical sourcing program and building on the tradition of great coffee which had set Starbucks apart for more than 50 years.

Burns led a global team of industry experts responsible for sourcing, developing and roasting coffee; advancing coffee R&D and innovative farming practices; developing and executing programs, initiatives and partnerships to support Starbucks environmental and farmer promises through the lens of coffee, tea and cocoa communities; and driving partner and customer engagement, education and experiences to bring coffee storytelling to life – all with the aspiration of ensuring a sustainable future of coffee for all.

Burns was a Starbucks partner from 1995 until her retirement in 2025. Much of her career focused on business development and relationship management, driving strategic retail relationships across numerous segments through licensing and foodservice channels. She previously led the Branded Solutions team and was a key member of the Starbucks Channel Development and Licensed Stores leadership teams.

Contributing more broadly to Starbucks culture, she was the executive sponsor for Starbucks Indigenous Partner Network and served on the board of The Starbucks Foundation. Outside of the company, Burns is a member of the Women's Foodservice Forum and serves on the Board of Directors for FareStart, the National Coffee Association, and the University of Iowa Tippie College of Business Advisory Board.

Prior to joining Starbucks, Burns worked in sales and distribution in the Natural Foods Industry where she first found her passion for coffee. After an expedition to the Global Seed Vault in Svalbard Norway in 2018 and her many conversations with farmers around the world over the course of her career, that passion had grown to include a desire and sense of responsibility to care for the future of our food supply and the many people who grow it.

Burns has a bachelor's degree in communication studies from the University of Iowa. Following a great Starbucks journey living in many cities across the country, Burns, her husband and two children enjoy calling Seattle home.