

# Lessons on Becoming a Game-Changer from Sophia Popov

[This article first appeared on the OneStream blog by Gloria Willis](#)

Sophia Popov has captured the hearts of many around the world. A dual US-German citizen, she won the 2010 International European Ladies Amateur Championship at the age of 17. Sophia continued to play at the University of Southern California (USC), where she was a four-time All-American. In 2020, ranked 304th and coming out of a battle with Lyme disease which took years to diagnose, Sophia turned the golf world upside down when she won the Women's British Open at Royal Troon. Earlier this year she represented Germany at the Tokyo Olympics, followed by a victory with Team Europe at the Solheim Cup.

Melissa Breen, Head of HR EMEA at OneStream, had the pleasure of interviewing Sophia in a [recent webinar](#) and they delved into the history of the game of golf. Interestingly, golf briefly appeared in the 1900 and 1904 Olympics, the former being the first time women were allowed to compete at all in the Olympic Games. It then fell off the programme until it re-emerged in 2016.



By then, women in sport and golf, in particular, had considerably advanced. The Ladies Professional Golf Association was established in 1950 (the men's Professional Golf Association in 1916), and there was a better understanding of women's athletic ability. Similarly, finance and software have traditionally been male-dominated industries, but initiatives like [Women in Finance](#) and OneStream's own Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) goals are changing the game. At USC, Sophia learned lessons in independence, leadership, and communication which she brings to her professional career.

It's notable that technology, and social media specifically, has played a huge role in positioning female athletes as role models for girls. As overall public exposure to golf grows, awareness and interest also grow and opens up possibilities. Golf is gaining popularity globally and is increasingly seen as an accessible sport that transcends socioeconomic hurdles. OneStream employees who volunteer as STEM Ambassadors in local schools share this vision of breaking down barriers and helping young people realise their potential. With paid time off to engage in volunteer work, we aim to inspire and equip the next generation of technology and finance leaders.

## How Finance Leaders Can Be Game-Changers

Sophia's interview was followed by a OneStream Customer Panel Discussion featuring Lotfi Kabbaj (VP

Finance Transformation, Majorel), Henrietta Amiri (FP&A Manager – Reporting Lead, Global Fashion Group), and Nadine Heydenrych (Global Head Finance Systems and Transformation, OLX Group). These OneStream customers are changing the game across Europe, in their organisations, and in their industries. Majorel is revolutionising the customer experience, while Global Fashion Group and OLX are turning the traditional marketplace on its head.



The panel discussed learnings and best practices in Finance Transformation and shared a lot of collective knowledge. Some words of advice regarding preparing for a transformation project included:

- Take the time to clean up historical data and align data sources
- Consider the [risk](#) of over-reliance on manual processes and spreadsheets
- Engage closely with Line of Business leaders and become a strong business partner
- Take a holistic view of people (including culture), processes, and technology
- Rethink your business processes and implement new technology to modernise and transform Finance (a journey in itself rather than an end goal)
- Update your team’s skillsets and nurture fast learners who are adaptable to change



Achieving successful transformation starts with a big vision coupled with small wins that deliver short-term success. These foundations then allow an organisation to scale and shift the focus of Finance from governance to guidance, storytelling, and business analysis. The role of Finance then grows until it becomes embedded throughout the business, from Sales to Operations and beyond. With the right tools, Finance can provide an end-to-end, comprehensive view of the business, and the CFO effectively becomes a “co-pilot” with the CEO in steering the business. The value of the office of Finance in a [post-pandemic world](#) is unquestionable.

OneStream is honoured to have Sophia Popov as a Brand Ambassador. She is a game-changer and role model for young women everywhere, and we look forward to seeing her career unfold. [Click](#)

[here](#) to watch the replay of the webinar featuring Sophia Popov and our customer panel discussing best practices in change and finance transformation.

Be sure to catch our next [Women in Finance event](#) on 14 December featuring Moonsun Park (CFO, Sharp Electronics Corporation), Amy Corbin (CFO, Surescripts), and Beth Elwell (VP Financial Analysis & Reporting, Trane Technologies).