

Core Values

An Interview with Stephanie Smith, Senior Vice President – Supply Chain, The Home Depot

EDITORS' NOTE Stephanie Smith is Senior Vice President of Supply Chain for The Home Depot. She is responsible for direct fulfillment operations across online, appliance, consumer and pro channels, as well as all the development and build of all new platforms supporting customer fulfillment across Home Depot. She joined the company in 2003 and has held roles of increasing responsibility in store operations, merchandising operations and supply chain. Most recently, Smith was Vice President of Supply Chain Development. Prior to joining the company, she was a consultant with Ernst & Young. She has served as Co-Chair for the Supply Chain Council of the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce and currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Supply Chain and Logistics Institute at the Georgia Institute of Technology. She was also recently appointed to serve on the Georgia Freight and Logistics Commission. Smith has a bachelor's degree in industrial engineering from Georgia Institute of Technology.



Stephanie Smith

COMPANY BRIEF The Home Depot (homedepot.com) is the world's largest home improvement specialty retailer with 2,295 retail stores in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, 10 Canadian provinces and Mexico. In fiscal 2019, The Home Depot had sales of \$110.2 billion and earnings of \$11.2 billion. The Company employs more than 400,000 associates. The Home Depot's stock is traded on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE: HD) and is included in the Dow Jones industrial average and Standard & Poor's 500 index.

How do you define The Home Depot culture and how critical is culture to the strength and leadership of the company?

At The Home Depot, we truly believe our culture is what defines our company and makes us a special place to work – it's our competitive advantage. The greatest gift our founders gave us is our core values. We focus on taking care of our people, so they take care of customers – everything else takes care of itself.

Our associates are the heartbeat of The Home Depot and supporting them through this time of uncertainty and beyond continues to be

a key priority. As a leader, the most important thing I can do is to support our associates, ensuring they are at the forefront of all our decisions. This in turn creates a safe, productive and supportive work environment.

Will you provide an overview of your role and key areas of focus?

I lead The Home Depot's downstream supply chain. Our upstream supply chain supports our stores, and the downstream supply chain supports all of our direct-to-customer fulfillment. This includes online fulfillment and delivery, appliance delivery and installation, and Pro support and delivery. Downstream includes about 100 existing fulfillment centers, all parcel, third party, and fleet deliveries, as well as all building design and technology innovation to support our new initiatives and buildings.

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How has Home Depot's supply chain adapted the way it works during this challenging and unprecedented time?

In 2017, we set out to offer the fastest, most reliable delivery in home improvement. The current environment has reinforced our strategy. Customers have been moving in this direction, with a need for greater delivery capabilities and flexibility, for a long time. COVID-19 truly underscored the need for this shift as delivery is growing faster than anyone previously thought. It also showed how we're on the right track

with our supply chain expansion. Because we had a foundation in place to build out our network, it was easier to pivot. For instance, with the growth in e-commerce orders, we needed to shift a market delivery center for the Chicago area to handle direct fulfillment of online orders. We were well-positioned to pivot and could meet this need within three weeks.

How critical is it for Home Depot to build a diverse and inclusive workforce in order to bring diverse ideas and perspectives to the table when making business decisions?

Diversity makes us a better company. Our commitment to continue building a diverse and inclusive workplace is consistent with our values. Last June, we established a cross-functional task force to look broadly across the company to identify, execute and measure actions that we can take to help achieve sustainable change. To start, we're focusing on supplier diversity, intentional mentoring of diverse managers and associates, expanding college recruitment efforts, and partnering with local organizations for volunteer opportunities.

Home Depot has many women executives in leadership roles throughout the company. Are there strong opportunities for women to grow and lead in the industry?

Absolutely. Home Depot's culture respects and celebrates varying perspectives and backgrounds, and the company provides great opportunities for everyone. At Home Depot, we encourage associates to take not only vertical promotions, but lateral moves as well, and jump on opportunities to learn all aspects of the business. Taking on new challenges is a skillset all its own. How to move into a new area, learn quickly, have flexibility and rely on leadership skills is a great way to build confidence and open up your career path.

What advice do you offer to young people beginning their careers who are interested in working in the retail industry?

Step outside your comfort zone; that's when you can learn the most. Once you discover your strengths, use those to make you a better leader. In my career, I have taken roles in new areas around the company that I was often scared to take, and where I wasn't always sure I would be able to succeed. However, I was able to use strengths like empathy, listening, analytics and problem-solving skills, and those roles propelled me to where I am today. ●