

Handling Inventory with Care

Global Locations

An Interview with Anita Garrison, Senior Vice President, Merchandise Sales



Anita Garrison

EDITORS' NOTE Anita Garrison joined Active in 1993 as a Merchandise Sales Representative, focusing on soft goods, HBA, and luxury goods. In 1995, she was promoted to Vice President and, based on her contribution to the growth of the department, was named Senior Vice President in 2012. Before Active, Garrison worked in the fashion industry both in retail and wholesale at Howland/Steinbach, Macys, and Liz Claiborne (Hosiery Division).

What is your function within Active and how broad are the markets you serve?

Active's Merchandise Sales team is responsible for all aspects of the inventories we purchase from our clients. It begins when our sales team brings us potential inventory. We review and analyze all the requirements associated with it. A resale distribution plan is then created and given to the manufacturer for their approval.

Once approved, the team is responsible for finding a home for that inventory. We resell only into areas of distribution that the manufacturer allows. We may also suggest additional creative solutions to move the inventory.

Regardless of where the product is located or resold to, there is strict adherence to our clients guidelines and restrictions on protecting their brand. This is on a global basis.

Because of our combined experience, historical sales data, and market intel, we will have a good feel prior as to where we're going to sell the stock, and what the pricing will be. My Logistics staff will then work directly with the manufacturer to arrange shipment of the goods, in accordance with the terms of our buyers' Purchase Orders.

Is the value that Active brings as a business solution well understood in the market?

Our clients see us as a top-of-the-line solution. If they can't sell their stock off at full wholesale, they may have to move it as a promotional inventory to some of their first-line customers or run through their own outlet stores to find a home for it. Otherwise, they will look to resell it into the secondary market.

When selling into the off-price market, buyers from those retail chains look to obtain this inventory at a specific price that is much lower than the manufacturers wholesale.

They need to maintain the retail that fit into their customer base.

Manufacturers would end up having to take a hit against their wholesale if they were to sell to this market at the price they would need to pay.

When Active gets in the middle, we bring up the bottom line for the manufacturer through corporate trade.

What do retailers need to do to drive store traffic, and will brick-and-mortar continue to be an important part of the process?

Buyers are bringing goods in much earlier and getting a jumpstart on how fast the stock will turn. We're seeing seasonal promotions much earlier.

Any prior season's clearance that remains in stores is getting larger markdowns taken earlier as retailers want to make room for the next hot items and the next big selling season.

Whether it is first-line retailers or off-price discounters, everyone is promoting earlier and with deeper discounts. You're going to see more reward programs, coupon specials, BOGOs, GWPs, and doorbusters.

As far as the future, consumers still want to touch and feel the quality of the merchandise.

I believe the off-price retailers are still going to be around for a very long time because they continue to push the "treasure hunt" mentality. It gives customers a reason to go back and shop their stores every week to see what is new and exciting, and they make it fun to shop regularly. ●

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