

Passion, Trust and Selflessness

An Interview with Kari Cohen, General Counsel, New York Red Bulls

EDITORS' NOTE Since joining the New York Red Bulls in January 2020, Kari Cohen has overseen all legal matters pertaining to New York Red Bulls, Red Bulls Arena and RBNY Academy. This involves identifying and leading legal matters in all departments across the company as well as regulatory, compliance and real estate matters and governmental affairs. Cohen was hired by BSE Global in June 2011 as Associate Counsel, was promoted to Counsel for Legal & Business Affairs, and then promoted to Vice President and Assistant General Counsel before becoming Deputy General Counsel. As part of her duties, Cohen handled the negotiation and drafting of agreements with respect to suite licenses, ticketing, vendors, and naming rights/sponsorships for the Brooklyn Nets, New York Islanders, Barclays Center, NYCB Live, home of Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, and Webster Hall. Cohen was one of 50 women in roles across the sports industry selected for recognition as part of Sports Business Journal's 10th annual class of Game Changers. She earned a B.A. degree cum laude in journalism and political science from The George Washington University and a J.D. from Cardozo School of Law.



Kari Cohen

ORGANIZATION BRIEF The New York Red Bulls (newyorkredbulls.com) is one of 26 teams in Major League Soccer (MLS). RBNY, one of the ten charter clubs of MLS, has competed in the league since its founding in 1996. The Red Bulls play home matches at Red Bull Arena (RBA) in Harrison, New Jersey. The three-time MLS Supporters' Shield Winners are owned by the Austrian beverage company Red Bull for which the team is named. The New York Red Bulls offer one of the nation's premier youth soccer development programs, from local soccer partnerships across New York and New Jersey to Regional Development Schools and the Red Bulls Academy teams.

Will you discuss your role and key areas of focus for the New York Red Bulls?

I oversee all legal matters pertaining to New York Red Bulls, Red Bulls Arena and RBNY Academy including regulatory, compliance and governmental affairs. I am responsible for advising the Red Bulls' leadership team and my colleagues on key business, strategic, and legal matters for the organization and have oversight for all corporate,

commercial, transactional, media, litigation and day-to-day legal affairs for the company. I also work closely with management on a wide range of critical arena operations and event programming initiatives.

How do you define the New York Red Bulls culture and how critical is culture to the success of the organization?

Culture is key. We believe our people are our most valuable assets. Without a happy and engaged workforce, we would not be as successful as we are. Our culture consists of shared values – passion, trust and selflessness – that are constantly reinforced through various methods. Our entire workforce commits to living them each and every day and these ideals are the glue that binds us together.

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How critical is it for the New York Red Bulls to build a diverse and inclusive workforce in order to bring diverse perspectives and experiences to the table when making business decisions?

It is critical to our culture to build a diverse and inclusive workforce. In order to be successful and connect with our fans and members of the community which come from a wide variety of backgrounds, cultures and ethnicities, we recognize that the commitment to diversity and

inclusion starts with us. We are fortunate that as a prominent organization within the sports world, our athletes and employees have a unique platform and can make a tremendous impact that changes our world culture for the better, and we are committed to encouraging and promoting the right causes regardless of current events. In addition, the focus that we place on racial and gender hiring practices is of utmost importance in order to establish a diverse and progressive workplace.

Do you feel that there are strong opportunities for women to grow and lead in the sports industry and what more can be done to create these opportunities?

I am confident that there will be strong opportunities for women to grow and lead in the sports industry. Now that women are achieving unprecedented and highly-regarded opportunities, we will prove that we can be just as successful as our male counterparts, whether it's in a front office position or on the field. I think that two important factors to contribute to creating more opportunities for women in the sports industry is encouraging and educating the younger generations. The more we come together to highlight the value of women in sports, the more likely young girls will realize the bright future sports offers. Widely sharing women's accomplishments in the sports world can have a significant impact and create a domino effect of change. When we take our children to watch women in sports and bring our daughters to “take your daughter to work day,” we expose them to incredible role models and this helps to inspire young boys and girls alike to continue to pave the way for women to succeed.

What advice do you offer to young people interested in building a career in the sports industry?

First, build meaningful relationships (think quality, not quantity) with individuals already in the industry, and second, become the best overall professional you can so that you can succeed in any industry that you pursue. The rest will all follow.

Did you always know that you had a passion for the sports industry and what makes the industry so special for you?

It was always very important to me to pursue a career in an industry that I was passionate about and, for me, that was sports. Not only do I love watching and following sports, but I love how sports have the unique ability to establish incredible camaraderie and create special bonds among so many different individuals around the world. ●