

# Storytelling With a Purpose

An Interview with Stacie M. de Armas, Senior Vice President, Diverse Consumer Insights & Initiatives, DE&I Practice, Nielsen

**EDITORS' NOTE** *Stacie de Armas assumed her current position in July 2020 after having served in a variety of senior roles at Nielsen since joining the company in 1998. She began her career as a Media Buyer for McCann Erickson. She was named one of Latina Style Magazine's Top Latina Executives, and one of Imagen Foundation's Most Powerful and Influential Latinos in Entertainment. She studied at Cal Poly Pomona, completed her B.S. in Marketing and earned her M.B.A. from Texas A&M University.*



Stacie M. de Armas

**COMPANY BRIEF** *Nielsen (nielsen.com) is a global measurement and data analytics company that provides the most complete and trusted view available of consumers and markets worldwide. Nielsen is divided into two business units. Nielsen Global Media provides media and advertising industries with unbiased and reliable metrics that create a shared understanding of the industry required for markets to function. Nielsen Global Connect provides consumer packaged goods manufacturers and retailers with accurate, actionable information and insights and a complete picture of the complex and changing marketplace that companies need to innovate and grow. Its approach marries proprietary Nielsen data with other data sources to help clients around the world understand what's happening now, what's happening next, and how to best act on this knowledge. An S&P 500 company, Nielsen has operations in over 90 countries, covering more than 90 percent of the world's population.*

**How do you define the Nielsen culture and how critical is culture to the success of the company?**

We're building a globally inclusive and impactful culture where everyone reaches their full potential. Our objective is to begin open, honest conversations that break down barriers and encourage diversity and equality. As the world has evolved, there is a central truth at Nielsen that is steadfast. We are an inclusive culture where respect, equity, and recognition of differences are all celebrated. We believe this truth is critical to the success of our business and all business. Because we measure everything and everyone, we have an obligation to

not only understand the richness and benefit that diversity adds to our industry and communities, but also to use our platform to speak out for equality. We seek to truly and thoroughly treat everyone with dignity and respect. Our corporate culture is what makes our work meaningful, our people happy and our future bright.

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

I am the Senior Vice President of Diverse Consumer Insights & Initiatives. The area of the business I look after sits in the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion practice. The work I do involves data harvesting, narrative development and socialization of inclusive insights that cascade across multiple diverse identity groups – storytelling with a purpose. I sit in a unique space that crosses between our commercial work and our community outreach. This special space allows me the opportunity to use all of Nielsen's resources to uncover diverse community insights that empower and educate. My background is as a consumer researcher, behaviorist and thought leader on diverse communities.

**Will you discuss Nielsen's commitment to building a diverse and inclusive workforce?**

Diversity and inclusion are essential to everything we do at Nielsen. When we operate in a culture that is diverse and inclusive, innovation flourishes, our clients win and employees are engaged and collaborate to bring the best that Nielsen can offer to the communities we measure. Specifically, we focus on systematically integrating inclusion and accountability into the full employee experience through three areas – talent, culture and accountability. We believe that diversity in people and ideas allows us and our clients to be successful. We're focusing on driving impact by increasing diverse representation among associates and leadership, enacting diverse slates, hiring from diverse talent pools and expanding our inclusive hiring practices. At Nielsen, everyone is accountable for building our inclusive culture. We challenge ourselves with a daily commitment to seek diversity in any way that we can, and we use data to make sure that we're staying true to our promises. We offer our associates myriad ways to engage, including 9 business resource groups where more than 7,500 members engage, build, grow and learn.

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Externally, we have made our commitment to diversity known. We have outlined our Commitment to Fight Racism with Action, which includes engaging policymakers and the government to build out comprehensive reforms. We developed initiatives that support Black-owned small businesses. We signed and submitted a friend of the court brief to the U.S. Supreme Court to help preserve DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals). We publicly called for the exclusion of a citizenship question on the 2020 census, which would have discouraged minority participation (*New York Times*, Reuters, Data Science Principles, Project True Count). In addition, we have a global non-discrimination policy that ensures equal opportunity for LGBTQ+ associates in all Nielsen markets.

**What do you see as the impact of having a diverse and inclusive workforce on driving business results?**

We know that fostering diversity and inclusion isn't just a good thing to do – it's crucial to the success of our business and all business. The business case for diversity is well known. At Nielsen, we focus our people managers on the benefits of having diverse teams and inclusive environments – better outcomes, better perspectives, better culture and happier people. From our early commitments to diverse community representation in our surveys to our Black small business pro bono support website to our newest product, Inclusion Analytics, which illuminates on-screen representation of different identity groups, we have a long history of understanding that inclusion drives business results for Nielsen, but most importantly, for our clients.

**Nielsen is a purpose-driven company. Will you highlight Nielsen's commitment to corporate social responsibility and its engagement in the communities it serves?**

Nielsen has a strong history of being involved in our communities, both locally and globally. We know that people want to do business with like-minded companies that are responsible. People want to feel good about where they

work. To that end, we have several initiatives that touch our people directly, including Data for Good, Nielsen Cares, and Nielsen Green. Additionally, we have several that improve transparency in the marketplace, such as Responsible Practices & Reporting and Sustainability Insights for Clients. Data for Good is a project that is close to my heart because it ties community work to our business and allows us to use one of the most important resources, our data, to support partners. Data for Good is a program that uses Nielsen data to create new solutions to social and environmental challenges.

We aim to drive continuous improvement and positive change across the environmental, social and governance issues that matter most to help build a better Nielsen and a better community for all.

**Do you feel that there are strong opportunities for women to lead in the industry?**

In our industry, I feel that the sun is setting on the time when women weren't given opportunities to lead. With that said, there is still much work to do. Female executives are often passed over for promotions and face discrimination at work. During the pandemic, as many are working from home, the lack of visibility for women in the workplace and the additional pressures many have faced with child or elder care responsibility have altered the trajectory for women for many years to come. Additionally, women's equal pay-day is a stark reminder that it takes women longer to earn the same income that it takes a man to make in a single year. With the decks still stacked against women, I encourage women to find their circles of trust, personal networks of support either through social or professional organizations that focus on helping women create and maximize career advancement opportunities. Our work is never done; we need the support of other women and of men too.

**What advice do you offer to young people beginning their careers during this challenging and uncertain time?**

One of the most important things you can do is focus on building your personal brand externally on social platforms like LinkedIn, Instagram, and Twitter. Having a strong professional social presence is no longer optional, and a well-constructed personal brand is one of the most important tools you can have in a digital world. Your personal brand is your reputation, and it is what people say and see about you when you are not there. As a result of the pandemic, we are less often in face-to-face circumstances. Your online brand is an indispensable way to completely own and control your narrative, your story and your outcomes across multiple platforms. If you are just starting in your career, whether you are looking for a mentor, a sponsor, a promotion or a new opportunity, your online presence and reputation will be a factor in your success. ●

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