

Empowerment, Measurement, Representation and Communication

An Interview with Paloma DeNardis, Head of Inclusion and Diversity, DICK'S Sporting Goods

EDITORS' NOTE *In her role as Head of Inclusion and Diversity of DICK'S Sporting Goods, Paloma DeNardis leads the overall strategy and execution of the company's I&D initiatives, working across the organization to engage leaders, corporate, distribution center and store teammates. Her background is in talent acquisition which is where she grew her passion for people and for advocacy and recognized that diversity makes teams and organizations better. Prior to DICK'S Sporting Goods, she served as Director of Global Talent Acquisition at Mylan, and Senior Talent Manager for Kforce Inc. DeNardis earned a BS in business administration and international business from the University of Rhode Island College of Business Administration.*



Paloma DeNardis

COMPANY BRIEF *Founded in 1948, DICK'S Sporting Goods (dicks.com) is a leading omnichannel sporting goods retailer offering an extensive assortment of authentic, high-quality sports equipment, apparel, footwear and accessories. As of May 1, 2021, the company operated 730 DICK'S Sporting Goods locations across the United States, serving and inspiring athletes and outdoor enthusiasts to achieve their personal best through a combination of its dedicated teammates, in-store services and unique specialty shop-in-shops dedicated to Team Sports, Athletic Apparel, Golf, Outdoor, Fitness and Footwear. Headquartered in Pittsburgh, DICK'S also owns and operates Golf Galaxy and Field & Stream specialty stores, as well as GameChanger, a youth sports mobile app for scheduling, communications, live scorekeeping and video streaming. DICK'S offers its products through a dynamic eCommerce platform that is integrated with its store network and provides athletes with the convenience and expertise of a 24-hour storefront.*

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

In my role, I'm responsible for building a sustainable strategy for fostering inclusion and diversity at DICK'S Sporting Goods. I seek to make I&D a meaningful part of our people practices by identifying ways to support our team members on their journeys to learn and grow, and also by ensuring that our

team members and customers feel represented. Our key focus areas are anchored within empowerment, measurement, representation and communication, and we drive our work forward through education, training and experiences.

How do you describe DICK'S Sporting Goods' culture and how critical is culture to the success of the company?

The culture at DICK'S is similar to that of any sports team – we all have a job to do and rely on each other to

win the game. It is a no ego environment where no matter your role or level, we work collaboratively to innovate and deliver for our athletes (that's what we call our customers) every day. This culture has been the foundation to ensuring inclusion is embraced and permeates everything we do. Many of our team members (teammates) are former athletes and understand what it means to truly belong on a team and to walk out on the field and know your team has your back.

Will you discuss DICK'S Sporting Goods' commitment to building a diverse and inclusive workforce?

At DICK'S we want to be part of the change we need to see in our nation. We are committed to accepting our responsibility to work toward social justice and seek to reflect the communities we serve. With more than 50,000 teammates from across the country, our organization brings together and celebrates a beautiful array of individual differences, life experiences and unique talent. We aim to create an environment where each and every one of these teammates, as well as our athletes and communities, feels valued, respected and empowered to help one another become better humans.

How important is it for DICK'S Sporting Goods' team members to reflect the diversity of its customers and the communities it serves?

It's crucial for DICK'S to reflect our athletes and communities to ensure that the experience in our stores is one where everyone is treated with dignity, respected for their differences and feels that they belong. Diverse perspectives also help us to ensure we are meeting the needs of the communities we serve and support.

How valuable is it to have such deep engagement from the management team and board members for DICK'S Sporting Goods' diversity and inclusion initiatives?

Inclusion starts at the top, and support from our leadership team and board has been critical for the adoption, activation and amplification of our efforts. Along with backing from senior leadership, I believe that the success and staying power of an inclusion strategy also relies on the support of managers throughout our organization. Many of our messages, trainings, experiences and more are so impactful thanks to the leaders in our stores who cascade the content and activations to our largest population of teammates.

While diversity is the right thing to do, it is also a business imperative. What do you see as the impact of diversity and inclusion on business performance?

Our athletes are as unique as our teammates, and they each have their own individual goals around sport and fitness. Diversity helps us ensure our athletes' needs are met and that their expectations of us are exceeded with every interaction, whether that is through the products and merchandise we offer, visual representations in-store or personal interactions with our teammates.

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

At DICK'S, we are working to set a standard across the industry where women feel empowered and supported to achieve their dreams. Over 50 percent of our athlete base identify as female, and we are fortunate to have a leadership team that reflects them. Our recent "Inside Moves" campaign highlighted some of the persistent, powerful, and visionary women at DICK'S who use their roles at the company to ensure that women and girls everywhere are successful in sports and life.

What advice do you offer to young, diverse talent beginning their careers during this unprecedented time?

Seek out a company that aligns with your personal and professional goals. If the company makes a commitment, hold them accountable with your presence. Remember, your time and contributions are valuable. ●