

NORDSTROM

Alexis DePree Joined the Council of Supply Chain Professionals to Discuss Supply Chain at Nordstrom

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Chief supply chain officer, Alexis DePree, joined a panel discussion examining the impacts of this past year on the supply chain industry. Alexis highlighted the importance of flexibility as a company, providing a great employee experience and her thoughts on the future of the supply chain.

It seems like there's no going back to 2019 in terms of the practices around offices—how does the work from home format support your customer-focused strategy?

We're all going through this together, but the employee has just changed dramatically during this year. Flexibility is a huge part of that—we asked for a lot of flexibility out of our teams in the last year as we navigated together. There's a desire for a lot of that flexibility to remain going forward.

It's going to be a good exercise for each of us to continue to be articulate about our corporate cultures and protective of them while finding new ways to ensure that that our culture continues to live and thrive. Supply chains are well suited to be a place to look for ideas or best practices because we've been operating in distributed models—global operating teams stretched nationally that have operated together or fulfillment networks that do the same. Supply chains have always incorporated a distributed and blended hybrid virtual model which can provide some ideas as the corporate environment transitions to a more hybrid state.

How has the labor pool changed over the last year and what are you doing to attract and retain talent?

Several things are happening. The first is that we've shifted to a type of white-glove service in terms of recruiting and onboarding. This makes it as seamless as possible for the applicant and has streamlined onboarding significantly. Second, we've turned to data science which helps us understand trends in the types of work and the amount of work that people are receiving over a four to eight-week period. From there, we bring that information to our frontline supervisors to make sure we're communicating with our people—ensuring we understand what fits their schedules and their desire to work.

We are focused on providing the best employee experience and responding to the changing needs on safety, onboarding and flexibility. We're looking forward to welcoming people back to work in parts of the economy that haven't been working—that is going to be very important to us and our frontline supervisors.

What are your thoughts on the future of the supply chain industry?

There is an increased desire to understand the supply chain and to recognize its critical role in the survival of this last year. There will be a level of innovation that is going to come out of the pain of the last year—how we remove that friction and unlock new capabilities for customers is exciting as we look ahead.