

RETAIL

The RealReal's Allison Sommer: Luxury Woman to Watch 2020

November 20, 2019



Allison Sommer

By STAFF REPORTS

Luxury Daily annually honors 25 smart women executives who show the potential to make a difference next year in the luxury business. This year's list features honorees who have set ambitious goals to achieve in a luxury market that, while growing, is also challenged by rapid changes in consumer behavior and technology.

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**
Plus: Just released
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

Here is one honoree:

Allison Sommer, director of strategic initiatives, [The RealReal](#)

"We see consumers shopping luxury retail in the primary market come to us, before making a purchase, to get a sense of an item's resale value in the secondary market"

What do you most like about your job?

Before The RealReal, I worked for U.S. Congress and Google, experiences that gave me a front row seat into the power of innovation to make sweeping change, but the threat of bureaucratic stagnation to stifle that opportunity.

I came to The RealReal because I saw an industry ready for disruption and a company focused on the big picture built by smart, scrappy action.

The chance to create positive change in how we consume and care for the planet are boundless.

We're growing and innovating and, as a result, my job is constantly evolving. No two days are the same and there's certainly no day that goes by without a new set of challenges or "ah-ha" moments.

I enjoy having real autonomy to think creatively and strategically to build partnerships and sustainable initiatives.

What is the biggest challenge in your work?

I'm constantly thinking about how to quantify the impact of consignment on the environment. It's about understanding the where, what, why and how of fashion production and consumption, which drives The RealReal's circular model as well as a growing community of brands investing in smarter production and conscious buyers.

However, waiting for widespread industry change as fast as we know customer attitudes and behaviors have already changed requires patience.

After all, we've only just begun to scratch the surface on understanding the impact of fashion on the environment and the benefit of circular economy models.

What is your work priority for 2020?

I am looking forward to more and more conversations with brands and retailers around building innovative partnerships that bring conscious consumerism to the forefront.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

Launching our partnership with Stella McCartney was one of the more monumental moments, not only for myself but I think for the fashion industry.

Stella is ahead of her time in recognizing that the secondary market helps introduce new customers to her brand and extends the life of her goods to keep them out of landfills by putting them in the hands of new owners.

It's a circular economy model that I believe has prompted other brands/retailers to look more closely at the benefits of resale not only to drive the financials of their business but for the environment.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2020?

I think we're already starting to see that resale is becoming a built-in part of retail, and I hope that continues.

As traditional models of ownership change, the mindset of consumers changed.

We see consumers shopping luxury retail in the primary market come to us, before making a purchase, to get a sense of an item's resale value in the secondary market.

A strong resale value encourages the primary market sale.

What's more, customers are realizing the sustainable benefits of extending the lifecycle of items whether that's buying consigned or shopping consignment.

It's also fun to witness luxury brands and retailers realizing the benefits of a secondary market to not only lessen fashion's environmental impact, but also extend their reach and covetability and then warm up to the idea of resale as a strategic partner.

[Please click here to see the entire Luxury Women to Watch 2020 list](#)

© 2020 Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

Luxury Daily is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your [feedback](#) is welcome.