

MARKETING

KRW Consulting's Kathleen Ruiz: Luxury Woman to Watch 2021

November 10, 2020

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

Luxury Daily annually honors smart women executives who show the potential to make a difference next year in the luxury business. This year's list features 26 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.

Here is one honoree:



Kathleen Ruiz, founder/CEO, [KRW Consulting](#), New York

"Luxury faced a big challenge this year that every business faced: find a way to survive in a world that has suddenly stopped"

What do you most like about your job?

I love that none of my days look quite the same and I have the ability to advise clients in areas that I am most passionate about, including marketing, partnerships and media relations.

Further, consulting is an ever-changing industry that has allowed me to work with a variety of clients from retail and real estate to service and nonprofit.

Having previously spent decades in corporate roles in luxury, building my own consulting business has been an exciting and, at times, scary undertaking, but I am grateful that I took the leap and have the opportunity to work with incredible brands with an amazing support team.

What is the biggest challenge in your work?

Now that my name is on the door, I am directly responsible for exceeding the expectations of my clients and providing them with as much of my time and full attention as possible.

In my prior roles, there was a certain level of protection and safety that came from working for someone else. I have been lucky to work for some of the best retail brands in the world, but when I started my own business, the stakes were much higher.

I'm accountable for bringing successful results to my clients and steering them on the path that achieves their objectives. It's challenging, but it's also what I thrive on the most.

How have you adapted to the new order of things with the public health crisis?

COVID-19 has certainly challenged the way brands communicate with their customers.

The consumer mindset has shifted and I anticipate we will feel this shift well into the future.

We are living and learning through this time along with our clients and advising them to focus in areas that make the most sense, such as digital marketing.

Digital is important now more than ever as brands must connect with consumers in a virtual way that still feels meaningful and authentic.

As far as my business goes, in a strange way, I feel closer to my team now more than ever.

We check in via video calls more frequently as we need to be even more connected now to better serve our clients.

It's been a challenging world to navigate, but we are finding it has encouraged us to be more creative.

What is your work priority for 2021?

My priority is always the same, to provide as much value as I can for my clients.

I operate a lean business with a core group of skilled team members that have followed me throughout my career plus an outside group of executive advisors and industry experts that I leverage as needed depending on the needs of my client.

The agency model is evolving before our eyes from one that is factory-like, churning out work with account managers, to smaller, leaner organizations that have the ability to provide customized, tailored service.

For 2021, I hope to expand my company and offer additional resources for my clients while providing the same level of service they have come to expect.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

This is such a tough question for me.

I have been fortunate to work with iconic luxury retailers Neiman Marcus and Saks Fifth Avenue at very exciting times.

I was always surrounded by the most incredible creative minds that worked with me to develop incredible and memorable customer experiences.

But in the end, I would have to say building my own business has been my proudest achievement and something I never thought I would have attempted a decade ago.

Going into our fourth year, I feel very proud of what I've accomplished and hope I can serve as an inspiration to women everywhere to follow their dreams and to always believe that you can achieve what you want to achieve with hard work and dedication.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2021?

Luxury faced a big challenge this year that every business faced: find a way to survive in a world that has suddenly stopped.

Within a matter of days, we had to fundamentally change how we do business.

For 2021, brands will need to look at new ways of attracting the luxury consumer and providing brand experiences that don't involve traveling or large groups.

We are already seeing this with creative virtual events or presentations that provide unique experiences.

While digital marketing and ecommerce is a given, I do believe that consumers will still desire to touch and feel luxury, so finding ways to keep consumers safe and comfortable in person will definitely be an evolving trend we see in 2021.

Transparency and sustainability will continue to be important to today's consumers, so I think we will see increased brand messaging about that in the coming year.

Lastly, luxury needs to be nimble.

If we learned anything during this time, it's that customers want brands that are honest, ethical and, above all, authentic.