

RETAIL

Saks' Alicia Williams: Luxury Woman to Watch 2023

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Alicia Williams

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 25 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.

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Here is one honoree:

Alicia Williams

Vice President of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI)

Saks

New York

"In DEI work, particularly in luxury, the biggest challenge is demystifying what luxury looks like and who it is for across communities who may have been historically excluded"

What do you most like about your job?

As vice president of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) at Saks, I love being part of a team that values both my presence and voice at the table.

I am empowered to show up to work as myself every single day, and I see that level of authenticity across the company.

Saks has made tremendous progress in DEI, but also recognizes that this is a journey and there is always room for more growth, development and advancement.

Saks CEO Marc Metrick and fellow leaders' support of our DEI strategy give me the inspiration I need to be innovative and fearless. It is the Saks way.

What is the biggest challenge in your work?

In DEI work, particularly in luxury, the biggest challenge is demystifying what luxury looks like and who it is for across communities who may have been historically excluded. There is a lack of trust that extends well beyond the last two years of civil and social unrest.

This means being willing to think outside of the box as we do at Saks, continuing to educate ourselves even in positions such as DEI leader and formulating our strategy in ways that will encourage collaboration and inclusion along the journey.

What is your work priority for 2023?

My work priority for 2023 is continuing to execute Saks' three-year DEI roadmap, which is focused on our purpose, people, culture and brand.

I am also working toward the next phase of our DEI strategy overall, placing a greater emphasis on advancing equity.

While equality is making things fair, equity is leveling the playing field across luxury, which we are working to do at Saks. This includes how we enact change in policies, metrics and the ways in which we communicate and operate to keep momentum and reinforce our goals in inclusivity and belonging, retention and development and recruiting and hiring.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

I am proud to have joined a company that is committed to advancing its pipelines, amplifying racially and ethnically diverse brands, elevating its community service efforts and expanding learning and development opportunities for employees.

Working to further develop our programs, initiatives, onboarding, talent development and recruiting for our most impacted diversity segments and communities in partnership with our marketing, merchandising and people leadership teams has been as inspiring as it is rewarding. Looking ahead, I am excited to see it all unfold.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2023?

As the face of luxury continues to change, so will the way companies define impact in order to stay relevant.

Now and in the future, there is greater demand for fearlessness, accountability and clear definitions of success in support of communities that have been historically marginalized and underrepresented in luxury.

In 2023 and beyond, the industry will need to continue championing evolving DEI efforts to demonstrate to employees, consumers, brands and the entire industry that DEI is not sporadic and it is more than heritage months and hashtags.

[Please click here to see the entire Luxury Women to Watch 2023 list](#)