Ralph Lauren unveils gender parity roadmap for the fashion industry

By Robin Driver - 25 October 2020

Iconic New York-based fashion group Ralph Lauren Corporation has teamed up with non-profit Parity.org and a group of industry peers, including PVH Corp., Lacoste, Tiffany & Co., and Movado Group Inc., to reveal a new roadmap for achieving gender parity in the fashion sector.

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As explained in a paper entitled “Unlocking Gender Parity in Fashion,” the new roadmap outlines step-by-step methods that can be implemented by companies to make measurable progress in achieving gender parity and pay equality across all levels of their organizations.

Adapted from The Parity Model developed by Parity.org, the roadmap is the result of discussions organized by Ralph Lauren and the non-profit with other leading fashion companies in 2019. The plan focuses on five areas, which have been conceived in such a way that companies of all sizes and budgets should be able to implement the initiatives.

The first step is making a visible commitment to closing the gender gap. Following this, the roadmap highlights the importance of an effective recruitment strategy in ensuring that qualified and diverse women are hired at equal levels, positions and pay.

The third point in the plan is executive preparedness, which aims to guarantee that high-potential women are ready for leadership, while benefits and policies are also pointed out by the roadmap as essential for improving work-life balance.

Finally, the importance of equal pay is emphasized in achieving and maintaining gender parity.

“We are excited to partner with the fashion industry, which inspires and employs so many women overall but is lacking meaningful representation at the top,” explained Parity.org founder and CEO Cathrin Stickney in a release. “The companies that joined us are leaders in recognizing the need to address this proactively as an industry, and I know that, together with this roadmap, they will bring the kind of progress that their employees need and consumers increasingly expect.”

Parity.org is a San Francisco-based non-profit dedicated to promoting gender parity at the highest levels of business. Launched in 2017, the organization counts Ralph Lauren among its founding members.

“Across the industry, we recognize that we need to make discernible progress on diversity, equality and inclusion,” added Ralph Lauren chief people officer Roseann Lynch. “By coming together to develop a consistent method and approach to achieving gender parity and greater diversity, we can move further, faster.”

Ralph Lauren's participation in the creation of the roadmap are part of its wider efforts to promote diversity within its organization. The company achieved its 2023 gender parity goal three years ahead of schedule this year, with women now holding 50% of positions at the VP level and above.

Recently, Ralph Lauren also became a founding member of Parity.org’s ParityPledge in Support of People of Color.

The full “Unlocking Gender Parity in Fashion” paper can be found on the Parity.org website.

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