

# Memo

**To:** Erik Nordstrom, CEO

**From:** Sarah Davidson, Vice President of Communications

**Date:** November 1, 2020

**Re:** Proposal for Dress for Success CSR Program

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At Nordstrom, we are committed to promoting women's empowerment. While we are currently engaged in several significant initiatives in this area, I feel we have left out a focus on one major group: low-income women.

My team and I have identified an opportunity to launch a Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative (CSR) that enhances our empowerment objectives by partnering with our customers and an important non-profit organization focused on the shared goal of lifting up low-income women.

This organization, Dress for Success, is a global non-profit that empowers women to achieve economic independence by providing a network of support, professional attire, and the development tools to help them thrive in work and in life.<sup>1</sup> One of the primary ways they do this is by providing women with business attire for job interviews and a week's worth of outfits when they find employment. To date, Dress for Success has helped more than one million women globally.

As you know, in 2019, women's apparel accounted for 31 percent of our total sales.<sup>2</sup> We know that our customers like to be up to date with the latest fashion; therefore many clothes go unworn after less than a year. By partnering with Dress for Success in North America, we could expand the pool of low-income women that could benefit from wearing our clothes. They have

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<sup>1</sup> We brighten the lives of women across the world. (n.d.). Retrieved November 02, 2020, from <https://dressforsuccess.org/>

<sup>2</sup> Department, P., & 30, M. (2020, March 30). Nordstrom: Net sales share, by merchandise category worldwide 2019. Retrieved November 02, 2020, from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/620110/global-net-sales-share-of-nordstrom-by-merchandise-category/>

shown that one outfit that allows a woman to feel confident in an interview could forever change her life.

In order to help make the "Women Helping Women" program successful, we need to create an easy way for our customers to donate their gently used Nordstrom women's business attire. We could create incentives for our customers to support this program by giving them Nordstrom points every time they donate their clothes back to us. As you know, today, when members buy clothes, they are given 1 point per dollar when they use any type of payment, 2 points per dollar with a Nordstrom debit card, and 3 points per dollar with a Nordstrom credit card. When members donate their clothes, they will get 10 points per item of clothing. At the end of the year, the member who donates the most clothes at each store would receive a bonus of 1000 points and would be recognized via various social media posts and in-store advertising, if they choose.

Research suggests that when a company carries out a corporate social responsibility program, consumers' views are positively affected. We know that brand image plays a significant role in the consumer purchase decision process on different psychological, sociological, and economic levels.<sup>3</sup> Implementing the "Women Helping Women" program is an excellent opportunity for Nordstrom to show its support for women's empowerment nationwide while engaging and rewarding our loyal customer base for supporting this effort. This CSR program can be favorable for the Nordstrom brand and reputation, which is favorable for our customers who participate. It will add to the supportive attributes that the company values.

Last year, we announced that by 2025, 90 percent of all of our Nordstrom Made products would be produced in factories that are investing in women's empowerment.<sup>4</sup> This is an incredible goal, but why should we stop there? Giving women the chance to feel confident in our clothes as they enter or re-enter the workplace is something we can be incredibly proud of.

The Nordstrom communication team hopes that you share our energy around establishing this program. We look forward to hearing your feedback and would be honored if you were to greenlight us to move forward, implementing the "Women Helping Women" CSR initiative.

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<sup>3</sup> Swedenborg, Jesper & Mattsson, Frans (2015). Corporate social responsibility in Brand equity: A study on how CSR can increase local franchised fast food restaurants brand equity. *Linnaeus University*, 19-24.

<sup>4</sup> Empowering Women Across the Globe. (n.d.). Retrieved November 02, 2020, from <https://press.nordstrom.com/news-releases/news-release-details/empowering-women-across-globe>