



# channel mastery

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Kristin: Welcome back to another episode of the Channel Mastery podcast. It is with great fanfare that I introduce today's guest Kim Miller, the CEO of Scarpa North America, a dear friend of mine, a revered Verde client. Welcome to the show. It is long overdue and I'm so happy to have you here.

Kim: Hi, Kristin, thanks for the invitation. I'm really happy to be here and it's an honor to join the ranks of all the great interviews and people that you've spoken with.

Kristin: Oh, thanks. So we had such a fantastic conversation today that I think so many people will find value in. Kim and I stayed close in contact through the course of the events of 2020. I mean, literally like we stayed up on each other's businesses and helped each other a lot. And there were some very scary phone calls both of us had with each other. So first of all, thank you for your ongoing support and partnership, but also for your friendship. I just want to say that upfront. And I also just want to say this year for Scarpa 2020 and now 2021, I saw an incredible, beautiful thing happen amongst the very, very huge challenges that we were all in. You're an Italian founded and owned company. I would like to, you know, as we get through our conversation, I'd love to talk with you about what that was like.

Because obviously COVID had Italy by the throat for a long time. And you're very close on a family level with your colleagues in Italy. But I also want to talk about the beautiful contrast and what's come from this, in terms of the beacon of like just directional leadership that Scarpa North America is stepping into right now that is much needed around JDEI, around BIPOC initiatives, around getting people of all backgrounds, no matter how they identify to enjoy and love the outdoors as much as you do Kim Miller, because I think the outdoors probably saved you as, as it has many of us. So I'm going to stop talking. I would love you to give an introduction where you can give us a little bit of color from your history and then how you got into your role and then where we are now going into 2021. And then we'll get into the meat of the interview here.

Kim: Okay. Well let me start with a little bit of a background and introduction of myself. I'm the CEO of Scarpa North America. This is my 15th year. It's our, it's our 16th year in existence in North America. And in July, this coming July I've been in the outdoor

industry, almost all of my working life, starting in retail. And also in the outdoors I would call it guiding or outdoor instructional part of our, it's not really the outdoor industry, but it was a huge part of my life. And it has been a huge influence. So I grew up in Denver. I was born in Seoul, Korea, and I was adopted to an American family at a very young age and ended up in Denver. And I also have two sisters, one who's also Asian and also adopted.

So we grew up in a very cool mixed family which was a really great experience for me and I always wanted to be in the outdoors. How I got into the outdoor industry is really a story about how I got into the outdoors. And that's, that's important because it's really pertinent to how I've been thinking about getting other people into the outdoors. So I grew up in Northeast Denver park Hill, a very diverse part of Denver, very a lot of ethnicity, a lot of people of color, a lot of large gradient of economic status and anybody who's grown up in Denver knows park Hill. I went to East high school. These are all really important parts of my life that made me who I am, are part of who I am. So I wanted to be a teacher and I went to the University of Colorado, graduated with a teaching degree and ended up in teaching and quickly decided that I want to do something.

I wanted a job that had more impact in the world and actually was more fun. And so I ended up using my teaching skills to get into outdoor education. And then eventually I started a retail store cause I loved, I loved outdoor equipment. I still do. I always will. And that was in Denver. And this is, this is kind of what ultimately led me to Chouinard Equipment, which was the first big company I ever worked for in the outdoor industry. Up to that point, I'd been a retailer, an athlete, a guide. I had spent a lot of time perfecting my outdoor skills specifically climbing and skiing is two sports that still feed me. And in, I've been dating myself here, but in 1987, I sold my store. And because of a funny non-compete clause I couldn't work in that industry in Denver and the Colorado front range.

So I took a job with one of my best friends and climbing partners who some people know him in the outdoor industry. Peter Metcalf, still one of my best friends and he invited me to come for a sabbatical. So to speak, I spent a year in California, worked for Chouinard Equipment, learned how to surf, we'll climb and ski, and we'll do all this stuff. So I went there a year, turned into three years and at the end of that third year, I'm just about ready to go back to Colorado. Lost arrow chapter, Chouinard Equipment, long story, different story. But that's when we started Black Diamond. So I was on the startup team, the original founding team of Black Diamond, which was maybe the second great adventure of my life to that point. And we built Black Diamond and I, I spent 18 years or so there.

And that's actually how I came into contact with Scarpa cause Black Diamond was Black Diamond distributor. I love Scarpa products. I use them. I decided, long story short, to come back to Colorado because of family reasons. And just by coincidence, Scarpa

decided that they wanted to start a wholly owned subsidiary in North America. And they asked me if I could help them do that because of our friendship. And as you noted, Scarpa is an Italian family company. And relationships are really important connections. Your sense of integrity and trust is based on your relationships. And that's how I think the conversation started. So that's how I ended up starting to work at Scarpa North America, really starting to build the company and kind of brings us to today 15 years ago, or so actually it was January of 2006.

Kristin: So yeah. So we're having an anniversary moment here.

Kim: Yep. That's it. And an anniversary after honestly, a very transformational year kind of bringing us to today. I don't even know where to start and it's not going to be about the virus in the current environment of the world in a health state. We all know about that, but it's really about what that made us do, what, what that, what that made us think about. And it was transformational for a bunch of reasons. I would say, first of all, we were on course to have so we were looking forward to celebrating what was looking like the best, biggest, and best year of our 15 years here, which has been a really great 15 years. In fact, April of 2020 was supposed to be the biggest month of the biggest year of our existence.

And it turned out to be about the same size as April of 2005. Our first April, it was, let me just say significantly below our original goal and like everybody, we all started thinking about a lot of things, a lot of, and started thinking about them in a lot of different ways. So it was transformational because it was so defining for me as a CEO and a leader for our company as a team for our, obviously our industry and our greater community, but it really clarified the things as, as I like to say, this is a time that really reminded us of what's really important. What's most important. Obviously staying healthy was a big part of that, but it, in something that we both, we always think about and, and not as individuals, most of us, and as a, as a business leader, I think it's really important to not just think about the success of the business in a financial or commercial sense, but what are you really doing?

What are you really contributing to the world? What are you really taking to deem to do that? Ever since I started at Scarpa, we've always talked about our values. We've always we're family business. And the first value that most people thought was it, top of her mind was making great products. Well, that's certainly true. But as we evolve through that, especially in these last decade or so, we've been thinking about how do we make great products and then do other things. What a lot of people would say, what's the value added side of your business? What are the contributions, what's going to be the legacy of Scarpa and of, of your work. And it, it, I used to refer to it as I have three things that are really important to me beyond just the products.

I'm thinking about people, I'm thinking about places. And I think about policy, and obviously these are things that are bigger than us. I'm thinking about the wellbeing of the people, my colleagues, my company, or our people around the world. The thing about our people is the community, the outdoor industry. I think about it every day, I thought of you know, so much about places where really my way of saying we have to, we have to really protect the work on protecting the environment. We have to protect access. We have to do our work, we have to give back. And then the policy part came in at the end when I was being asked more and more to talk about policy, to be in places with people and represent and and really speak my mind and, and try to work on the things that I thought needed to be changed, not just in our industry, but I'm talking about governmental policies and talking to lawmakers and senators, and it really cool experience that, that had been rolling along and, and working on it when I could.

And it was always in my mind, but not at the very apex, not at the top. And then honestly in 2020 everything changed. And I think with, really so much respect to my colleagues, everything changed for me and, and the people I work with were so kind and supportive to hear me out and listen to not just what I was saying, but why I was saying here. And it became really introspective for me. I had to think about a lot of things that were really personal. And I said, I want to formalize, we need to formalize, we talk all the time about values based leadership, about making our decisions based on our values and the set of filters that we run things through. And that, that, that we need to talk to address before we can say, this is a good decision, or this is a good plan.

And then we refined it into what we would like to describe as our, our pillars of principles, our pillars of values. And we formalized it, we put it in writing, which is, is a moment, you know, that's when it goes from an idea to something that you're sharing.

Kristin: And I have a quick question on timing. When did you formalize this in 2020? This is important.

Kim: Oh, we started working on it honestly in I would say early Spring. So, but there were so many things going on around us and not to not to speak about politics, not to speak about COVID, but just think about the things that we've gone through in the last year between the political climate Black Lives Matter. And it keeps going on, you know, and, and these are things that have been piled on top of really important things like art, the reality of the state of our planet and the need for material action to, to address sustainability issues in conservation.

So in part of this whole thing was about trying. We were trying, sometimes you're trying to do so much that you're not actually effective, and we needed literally an architecture, almost this strategic plan, if you will, about what we are going to do? How are we going to do it? And that's where we came up with this and a number of really great ideas that grew from that. So I have to say that it was a collective group of like-minded people

inside our company, inside Scarpa America, inside Scarpa globally, inside our industry, inside our community, a lot of friends, a lot of people that I haven't talked to for a long time actually. It took a lot. The first step was listening, really honest, listening and leaving all of my thoughts and opinions and ideas aside for a moment just to, to take the pulse of, what was going on around us and see if there was consensus. Like, do you, my, my people, my friends, my peeps, my community. Do you see what I see? Do you think this would be relevant and would it help people?

Kristin: So let's back up for one second, because I need to ask a couple of questions while you're going through this. But one of the things I wanted to ask is we're going to get to what those principles are that you landed on, but it's important that we stop for a minute and talk about who you were talking about. Okay. Cause you, the reason that I thought you'd be such an exceptional guest, I mean, there's many reasons, but around diversity in the outdoors, especially is the fact that you've spent over 40 years as a leader in the outdoor recreation markets as a person of color. And we are going to get to the principles and how, you know, there is a big facet of that in terms of, you know, how that's included in there and the action Scarpa's taking around that. But let's talk a little bit about the community that you are tapping into to pressure test. Cause it wasn't just like the people that we all see at the shows. Like, I think you invited people into a conversation through this process.

Kim: You kind of asked two questions there and I'll adjust the first one first because it's your, first of all, I would say that I, I really looked at, I look at myself last, I've trained myself to do that and my wants and needs, but this is relevant and I'll come back to that. So the way we would say it is reaching outside of way beyond what we would consider our endemic community of outdoor people out there, industry snow sports, industry people, completely different much broader group of people, not people that were a lot, a very diverse group of people as well, people that were some that I grew up with, some that I know who have grew up in the same way I did. Some are professionals that are working, not in the outdoor industry, but in the greater corporate world, trying to figure out how does corporate America actually move the needle in terms of their own diversity and creating a more inclusive environment?

It was pretty broad. I talked to you, of course. I mean, I, I went anywhere and everywhere. I really focused on young people, people that I thought had minds were not so influenced by the things that influence adults and that were less biased. That was one of my greatest sources of inspiration and understanding. I also work with a number of groups that focus on, on young people. Many of those groups focus on young people, from underserved, and historically marginalized communities. Some of those people grew up in the neighborhood I grew up in. It was a pretty easy conversation for me because I kind of remember what that was like. I will never forget it actually. So I went back a little bit to my roots, and then I went back a little bit to an area that has nothing to do with the outdoor industry yet.

And that is just the greater community and it's not just people of color. And we spoke a lot with, with people from the LGBTQ community, people with disabilities. It was, it was quite an amazing journey and to kind of go full circle and, a number of these people who became my confidant and my greatest advisors and critics, constructively critical, in so many ways. I learned so much about something I knew a little bit about at least. And they really were the ones that reminded me of who I am, which was maybe the greatest epiphany of this whole thing was being reminded that you need to speak about who you are and where you come from. That was a really interesting thing for me because it's, I've never tried to use my background or my ethnicity in any way as an advantage.

And I, and I'm hypersensitive to the feeling of being tokenized. So I tried to just be neutral, but honestly I couldn't be neutral anymore. And it was clear that I could see things from a perspective that not everybody could, just because of the lack of diversity in the outdoor industry. And I've always felt very welcome in the outdoor industry, maybe. And the outdoor sports space community, but I've also felt and have vivid memories that I'll never forget about moments where people said you don't belong here. The things that you build a really thick skin too early on. I mean I could tell you so many stories about it, but they're only relevant in the sense that that was part of that's part of who I am and an experience that I understood and understand still today, intimately.

And it, when I, I was speaking to my own colleagues and reminding them, don't forget partly about who I am and where I come from, because that's part of the origin of this, and I'm not trying to make a big deal about it, but when you look at...and a lot of my friends said, I just think of you as Kim, not as these other things. And I said, I know, and I really appreciate that, but those are parts of who I am. And you don't see that in me because we've been friends for so long and we just see each other as people, but a lot of people do still. And it's a weird feeling. And, and actually I've had many friends that have experienced that with me and said, that is the weirdest thing I can I've ever imagined.

Kristin: What was specifically weird?

Kim: Well, I'll give you an example. My passport says that I was born in Korea, which is absolutely true. I'm a naturalized citizen and I travel around the world one or two of my colleagues often travel with me. And they've just become used to the fact that Kim does not get through immigration quickly. In fact, sometimes he gets so much extra love, they take him into a private room and have these conversations with him. And most of the time it's the US. US Homeland Security and Immigration. I've never known why, it doesn't really matter to me, but it's pretty obvious. I mean, I'm used to it, but one of my colleagues, who you know well, is still just blown away. It's like a, a little bet every time.

"I wonder if you're going to make it through." And like, "you carry all the samples you carry. I don't want to have to even talk about."

I do believe that a lot of people of color have felt that, but let's talk about women. How about gender equality? And I can only imagine I'm not a woman, but I've seen it.

Kristin: Some of the things you've described, I literally was like, I definitely can relate with that.

Kim: Yeah. So.

Kristin: Not on the level that you have. But you know, just certain things around. Yeah. Just, I guess, feeling like you have to work twice as hard to have the same to take up the same space at a strategic table or whatever.

Kim: That's right. And actually that is the one thing that I can so appreciate and respect about gender equality is that I felt that it's like you don't have to be as good as everybody else. You have to be better because for some reason you need to prove yourself. And it's a weird feeling. And I think it takes a lot of us a few minutes to actually put it all together. That's what's going on here literally now today, I would say that I, I feel blessed really. I'm so fortunate to have worked and planned on this being my career in a community that does understand me now, they're learning more about me and, and us, I guess I would say whatever, however you identify. I think that our industry has always been pretty open-minded, but through a very, very narrow lens it's, it's very focused. So it's a big question now, and it's the right question. We've been okay.

Kristin: Let's get back to the, if you don't mind, I would love to get you back to the principles because you haven't actually talked about, did they pivot away from people, places in policy?

Kim: No, that we expanded them and we refine them. And we created an architecture that allowed us to articulate. This is really about telling the story. And that's when I said writing it down is when it gets very real, you know, and you're trying to tell, you know, what you're thinking in your own environment. Now you're trying to explain it to somebody else. So we sat and we, my colleagues, it was really a team effort. And let's just talk about what's important to us. Let's start there. And we started these buckets that things started falling into, well, that's a people thing and, oh, that's a product. Those are product values. And those are sustainability and conservation values. And a lot of the things we said, that's just a principle. That is a basic principle that, you know what I used to say, "the list of things your parents should have taught you kind of list."

So we ended up with people, planet, principles, and product, the four pillars that we felt

could, if you will, they can, how's the things that we thought were most important. And instead of just saying, we want to do good things, we do good things. We're always trying to do that. We wanted it to be, and it was for really our own accountability. We want to hold ourselves accountable. We're very self motivated in this. Nobody's making us do this. And...

Kristin: Which is one thing I want to focus on for a second. In the outdoor recreation space, obviously it's blown up and during COVID, but like even prior to that as we all rolled these industries together under the outdoor recreation roundtable, and we're seeing these offices of outdoor recreation pop up in the States, like this is becoming a much bigger conversation. And that responsibility of using your brand as a vehicle for positive change is more and more important than ever as a small, independently owned boutique brand, frankly like a really cool brand. Like I just am so stoked that you all are able to put yourselves, you know, in this build out, if you will, it's not about appeasing shareholders, it's not about hitting numbers. And that's one thing that I think is super fantastic in terms of like the, just what happened in terms of COVID the news stream that you mentioned, the level of awareness, your background and your incredible team and the brand that's now ushering forward change.

Kim: Well, thank you. I think that this was the realization of all of us collectively. I can't, emphasize enough the power of collective thinking because it's like a team and this was going on simultaneously within the same team that was trying to keep our company afloat through the pandemic. And it actually gave us this amazing motivation in a time when people, a lot of us were looking for, how do I find hope? How do I find motivation? How do I find to fulfill myself and happiness? And this, this was one of the things that really fed that for us. And it's like, honestly, it was, we just said, why? Because this is the right thing to do. These are the right things to do. And how can we, how can we say that we are this way?

How can we really, we need to own it, and we need to show it through our actions. And this is a time in our society when words are, wow. I mean, words are powerful, but action, as we know, positive and negative action is the final statement of your intention, I think. And that's what we thought we needed to do is, we really tried to do something material that we could say, this is this, this is that this is what we're going to do. And it was like it was, we were building a company and saving the mission. The vision of this company is to do good things. All right. You're in the people department, you're in the planet department now go to work and your departments, your little think tanks are about generating ideas, positive ideas, creative, positive ideas that will impact positive change. I mean, that was really where it started. And...

Kristin: I think a really big idea came out of this, that we haven't even done a reveal on.

Kim: I think we just opened the door, a big door, very little crack. And what was cool is when we opened it, the only thing that came through was bright, beautiful sunshine. And there was a, you know, there's a lot of shamers and critics out there right now. And a lot of people that are very vocal that was also something we were really aware of. And we have heard people who've been very critical of our stand on some of these issues. And I respect that. I also respect that some of them might not want to buy our products anymore. And I'm sorry for that. But I also know that this is much bigger than what you just said. And, and you know, maybe this, the way I would explain to our board of directors might be a little different.

I might say, look, a company that does good things. I would start like this. People want to know more about the companies they're buying their products from than just, what the products represent. They want to know how you make the product, who makes it, do you take care of the people who make it, do you use sustainable practices? They want to know at all. And so transparency is a big deal. And I believe in fact, I feel I can say, I know that what we're doing has been positive for us in the business sense. And not just, it's not about the money, as you said, it's about creating, using our voice to create positive influence and action, and not just your voice, everything, all of our resources. Open the minds, the hearts and minds of so many of my awesome colleagues to be, as soon as you do that, I'm coming to work for a Italian footwear company, and I'm gonna go skiing and climbing and hiking and running, and that's going to be so cool.

Most of them never thought we'd be sitting in a room talking about what we are going to do about social justice? How are we going to use our voice, our resources to create some positive impact here in a time when we need it? The idea that if everybody did this like if everybody were wearing a mask, I mean, if everybody does this, it'll, it'll help everyone. It won't just help a small group of people. I guess I should back up, I, we described this as the Scarpa's Stands, which scarred stands is kind of a collective group of initiatives that we were putting together. We needed a way to talk about it. It was really a little bit about messaging, but even within our own, and, and now we're talking to a lot more people and they're like, what is this?

You know, what do you call it? And like, well this is us standing up for what we think is right. And, you know, one of, one of my colleagues said "Scarpa's Stance" and it was just so cool how this organically came up. And these are literally like product design meetings. If we're talking about social justice.

Kristin: I love it!

Kim: And yeah, I do too. I mean, honestly, at this point in my career, I couldn't have imagined creating really honestly a worse year in business than what we're experiencing. I also could not have imagined the good stuff that would have come out of that. And feeling it, you know, it's, really bringing, you know, nature of whores a void. And if there's not

goodness, that space could be filled with not good things, unless you refill it with good things really quickly.

So keep your glass full of goodness. And, and it's a better way to run. He, and it leaves us room under Scarpa's Stands, under the four pillars, there's lots of latitude and lots of room for more creative thinking. But it's also about, as I said, really our own accountability, this whole thing, first thing, there's a lot of, how would you say, it's introspection. Like you have to really think as a leader, what do I really think? How do we really feel, what does our brand really represent? What does it need to be? And you have to be honest with yourself. You can't just sit there and go, we're so awesome. Pat yourself on the back. You really have to go in that space where like, where are we really not awesome and where do we have the upside potential? So I think that it's part of our responsibility, simply put, if we're gonna be in a brand and people, we, and people respect us. And we, we think we deserve that. We need to step up and do more. And, yeah, product is always gotta be the foundation of that, but we can do more. And we've realized how much more just through these exercises, we've been working on some of these things for years,

Kristin: Right. So I have a question, as you know, we're looking to kind of wrap up here today, your story. I almost feel like we need to have an audio book and do chapters because this is amazing. But one of the things I want to make sure that we talk about is the athlete mentorship initiative, and as a marketing and branding professional, that does not mean in any way that this is a marketing and branding effort. It's not, but I love it because of the, what I've seen more than ever before with what's happened in the pandemic and our consumption of content and how we've had to solve problems, just because our world's changed so much is we're literally, we're tethered to our browsers and we're really wanting to belong to things, but oftentimes marginalized people and communities have a hard time experiencing like an aspiration to do that. If they can't see it, or if they don't feel invited in. And I think that that's one thing that really, you just, you guys just nailed it with the athlete mentorship initiative. And I'd love to have you talk about that with our incredible audience here today.

Kim: Well, this is really, probably one of the best parts of Scarpa's Stands and certainly focused on the pillar of people that it speaks to a number of things. First of all we have to create not just access, but we have to represent. And if people who go, Hey, we just need to hire more people of color. And it's like, I'm the good luck with that because that's not, you need to take a bunch of more steps back into this. You have to go back into it. You have to create. That's why I keep talking about young people, because look, my experience. But the best thing I can, I can tell you is my experience. My life experience informed me on this one more than anything else, because I know that being a big, first of all, getting access, having somebody I can name the people to this day, who made it possible for me to be, even be in this conversation with you today.

Little things, little breaks, little opportunities, every single one of those added up to a set of stepping stones, a progression of one acceptance, two of understanding, and three of ascension into exactly where I deserve to be. I wanted to go, I wanted to be a great conference here. And people accepted fact, they didn't diss me. They said, all right, you know, well, you gotta do your thing. And then I wanted to get into business. So mentorship is the age-old way of sharing knowledge. It's because I was a teacher. That was why I wanted to be a teacher, and I wanted to help people grow. And I still do. You know why I do this business? It's not about the business. It's about, I get to get people outside and make me usually with people, they love doing things. They have fun doing, and they're getting healthy at the same time.

I mean, what, it's my secret evil, evil mission, evil plan. Don't tell anybody that I knew that two, two, two, there are so many good athletes really right on the cusp of becoming pros or advancing. We use the athletes first because we have an amazing athlete team. It's a resource that was, and, and the athlete team embraced the idea, so enthusiastically, it was overwhelming. I mean, there are so many moments in this exchange, I can almost feel the tears coming to my eyes because it's so powerful for me. So the athletes are in, and then we were talking to so many people like, I just don't know how to get into the industry. I just don't know how to get into the sport. And we'd asked, what do you mean, *in*, like how to get accepted, how to get, I just want to be part of it. I don't expect anything extra, anything special that really resonated with me.

Kristin: Oh, me too! I feel teary now.

Kim: And I just want to chance, give me a chance, the chance I'm on the chance. I, not only that, I want to give you a boost because I, we have these athletes that are amazing. They're not only just amazing in their athletic endeavors, but they're amazing people. Yeah. So, and then we started asking, would anybody be interested in this? And it was overwhelming. The response was overwhelming. So I talked to all the different people in all the communities and all my friends, pretty much thumbs up from everybody. And we took the big kind of scary step to launch the "Ami", I call it the, the Athlete Mentorship Initiative.

All of these are, they're scary. It's like the first ascent set kind of stuff. But I can tell you, I feel so good about this. And so to all the people involved, it's we today is the deadline for the applications.

Krisitn: Yeah.

Kim: For the first year, this is an ongoing program. What I would like to envision here is it's a one-year mentorship program. And when you graduate or when you finish this program, I expect these people to be offered sponsorships. They deserve them. They're

athletically capable. They need the exposure and they need the institutional money. They need the mentoring and access to a network.

People they can talk to. You will not believe how many, so two ways to free with like my cell phone for people that I want to have access to. I have conversations that one guy said, "what do you do again at Scarpa? And I told him, like, I can't believe that you're talking to me, I'm talking to the CEO of Scarpa like, why couldn't you believe that I'm just a human being, you know, it was like, it just seems impossible. It seems impossible that I could be on the phone with you. So that's what you got to get out of your head. This is the moment where nothing is impossible. Dreams can become real dreams. I mean they've become real in so many ways. And I feel I'm not only proud of that, but really that I need to, I need to do that for somebody else. This is the, pass it along thing. I'll tell you, I think it's already been a success because I don't even know what the total application number is, but I know it's, it's well into the close to 200 applications, I think.

Kristin: Fantastic. Congratulations!

Kim: Thank you. And reading these applications. Oh man. They're amazing. And just listening to people say, thank you, thank you for listening. Realizing, just writing these applications out has helped so many people clarify, this is what I want to do. And it's been amazing. I really don't know how else to say it. And I've watched my colleagues and the people that are working on this, that we're working on with. And everybody feels like their heart has been lifted by this. I'm doing something that really matters to people that need it. And for people that need it and no harm, no harm will be done. I'm sure we'll find something we did wrong. We accept that. Trying something new is going to involve them. But I would say so far. And honestly, the extra little part of my evil plan is I hope all brands do something like this because I was just a punk kid that wanted to be a climber and skier and by some miracle and the grace of God, I'm a leader in the outdoor industry. People are listening to me about the things that I think are really important. We have a great company here and it didn't have anything to do with me being a person of color or an immigrant. It's just part of who I am, but those things need to be recognized and celebrated more, but mostly they need to be propagated. So if you wonder why it's hard to find people, to when you post a job for your company, and it's hard to find people of color or a more diverse group of people, that's not the place to start. That's really the destination, that's kind of where things are supposed to show up. It needs to start much, much earlier, and it needs to be a holistic approach towards this idea. The outdoor recreation industry, as you know, is massive.

It's 880 billion in revenue. People say it's bigger than the pharmaceutical industry or the, or the automobile industry. If you could think about the lobbying power of those two industries, just as an example, we're bigger and we need to leverage our voice, our collective voice, whatever that means to whatever the important things are. Hopefully not too polarizing, but we've already done as an industry, a really good job on speaking

to sustainability. And I think that's ingrained in most people's minds. They'll tell you, my belief is if you're a CEO or a leader of a brand or an organization right now, and you're not thinking about equity, diversity, inclusion, and sustainability, you might be missing two of the most important brand attributes that will carry you forward into the future with a much more solid and durable business and business culture,

Kristin: Amen to that.

Kim: It's good work. It's the best work I've ever done. I would, I think this, the athlete mentorship initiative might be the best work I think I've ever done. Honestly. I've never said that to myself, but I've done some good work in the industry, but nothing that was so important, right?

Kristin: 200 applicants later, and your team I think has risen to a level of like care, loyalty, stewardship of the Scarpa North America brand and global brand that I don't think it ever could have gotten to without the journey you've been on with them.

Kim: And we've carried our Italian brothers and sisters along with us, which is also with their support, which is also a beautiful thing. We have factories in five different countries. We are pretty dang diverse right now, and I'm proud of Scarpa for that. Everyone, every factory works at this, the standard of an Italian factory safety standard human rights standards. When I look back at my career, the products I introduced or the things like that, those will be distant memories. What really is legacy style work or level work, I think is the big changes. And now that sharing with the next generation, these are the things to focus on. I do believe that the values based leadership is probably the first place to start in how to run a company. First of all, figure that out because everything else will be a lot easier to figure it out after that. Really.

Kristin: Where can people learn more about the Scarpa's Stands initiatives and specifically, I mean, obviously we're on your team in terms of getting the word out on all of this, but like, we, we serve a lot of different markets that classify themselves as passion-driven or specialty that I think you'll be inspiring today. So where can people learn more?

Kim: The easiest way to answer that is just go to [Scarpa.com](https://www.scarpa.com) and look on the landing page right now, the Athlete Mentorship Initiative is featured. But if you look under the Community, it'll speak to a deeper level to that and to a number of the other initiatives. And you can look at the Scarpa's Stands. It's it's there, it's it's there. And again, it needs to be there. We need to, we need to push this up as a priority equal to everything else, not more important, equal. So I think I think it's pretty easy to, to get, to also have a lot of our friends and supporters are sharing this information because we've gotten a lot of support from our community as well. And it's just the first year. I'm already thinking about how it's gonna grow and evolve and how we are going to support these athletes.

And then the next thing, so the hardest part of this is going to be going through these applications and pick. I don't even know how we're going to do it. So we've literally had had to bring in mentors to help us to go through this. So everybody needs a mentor. Everybody's a teacher, everybody's a student at some point. So and I'll share with you how it goes, because I think that it is really great and it's inspiring part hasn't even gotten to it yet. So pretty excited about all this. Yeah. Well, thanks for, thanks for asking me about it and checking in on it. I mean, really pleased about that.

Kristin: Yeah, of course. We're, this is super inspiring. And what I love most here is you just lift your team up right along with you. And it's incredible because I can see as a, you know, a person of color, who's gotten to realize like a lifelong dream of leading in this industry, you truly are like, I've had other people I've worked with over the years say there's the learning, the earning and the returning, right. I almost feel like you've always been returning definitely to your team. I mean, we work with lots of clients and you definitely are in lock step with your team, but like this initiative really is above and beyond. And I just really applaud you and your team for pulling this together and launching it during such a period of crisis. They've seen an opportunity. There's no turning back. And you've really, I think, raised the bar for people and other businesses to excitedly try and reach. I mean, that, there's a sense of permission here that you've given because of who you are and your background that you may not see. So I just want to say, there's a huge amount of gratitude for what you're doing. Myself and my company included in that. And I just can't wait to help this be successful.

Kim: Thank you for that. You know, the support that I've gotten, the support that we've gotten, the support and you're part of the team there, Verde is definitely part of the team as well. Look, we'll all live, live or die together by our actions and our words. And so just by default, you are, you are, you're also attached to this, but I want to make everybody proud. I really want to bring a little of that sunshine that we've all missed for a while and, and, and find the good opportunities in the bad situations. This is like the bad day climbing, except it's been like a bad year climbing expeditions, like nothing is going right. But even in those days, I've learned I, those are probably the best teaching days, learning days.

Great things happen, even in those moments, we just have to look for them and they may not be as obvious as you know, we're supposed to make a bunch of money this year and sold a bunch of shoes. I've always said, if you follow the sports, the business will come, which I truly believe now I'm going to expand that to, if you follow the community, the support will come. Then, the engagement will come.

Kristin: So that right there is gold.

Kim: Yeah. Well, thanks. I appreciate, you know, this is scary stuff. I'll be honest. We've been scared to death a couple of times, because it's so easy for people to be really wound really tight right now. I'm very sensitive, and I get it. But you have to try, you just have to be really thoughtful and careful and test everything numerous times before you launch to the world.

Because I did that so many times and things that I tried to vet so carefully, and my friends and the people who were helping me found things so obvious once they told me why doesn't that, you know, it was so obvious. So we all have blind spots. We all have strengths. We all have weaknesses. We are just that, that's the power of a team because we make up for each other's weaknesses and we enhance each other's strength. And thank you for saying that about the team. My colleagues, I think are some of the best, it's the best team I've ever worked with. And this year has proven that last year. I should say.

Kristin: They are remarkable.

Kim: Well, thank you so much, Kristen! It's always a pleasure to talk to you. And this is kind of a personal thing in, in many ways. So it's a little deeper than talking about just straight up biz. Thanks for taking me there and being so supportive of what we're doing.

Kristin: Of course, it's an honor, and we're just getting started just like you. I think there's a whole new world ahead for us to just create a bigger portal and a pathway in, and this is a fantastic initiative to speed that up the great accelerator, right?

Kim: Yeah. Well, thanks. I really hope that. I'm personally inviting you to the graduation ceremony for the class of 22 of our first year of athlete mentees which we hope is at the outdoor retailer show. Cause we really want to do it up, right. And that'll be a special day. So that's, you're the first official invitation I've made and any more to come, anyhow,

Kristin: I'm going to go ahead and RSVP right now. That's a yes.

Kim: Ok good.

Kristin: And definitely we'll be reporting back on this. So Scarpa's team is announcing January 29th, 2021. And the program kicks off on February 1st and we'll have all the links in the show notes, you'll know exactly how to follow this, and we'll also be covering it for you here on the podcast and on YouTube with Scarpa. So this is a huge initiative. We're super excited. And thank you so much for your time. And, honestly like your inspiration today is just amazing.

Kim: It was my pleasure. Thanks for the invitation.