

# VICTORIA'S SECRET & CO.

## VS&Co Executive Leadership Series - Masako Konishi

May 11, 2022

### VS&Co Executive Leadership Series

The Victoria's Secret & Co. Executive Leadership Series is a behind-the-scenes conversation with our leaders on the topics they are most passionate about. Stay tuned as we continue our commitment to welcome, celebrate and honor our customers, our associates, and the communities where we engage. We are excited to have you on this journey with us.

### Masako Konishi, VP of Emerging Businesses on her Leadership at Victoria's Secret and Honoring AAPI Heritage Month

At Victoria's Secret & Co., we know diversity, equity and inclusion makes us stronger and is the foundation of everything we do – and this month, we were thrilled to talk to Masako Konishi, VP of Emerging Businesses and executive sponsor of our associate-led Inclusion Resource Group (IRG) for Asian-American and Pacific Islander associates and allies, ALL IN. Throughout the interview, she discusses her role in Emerging Businesses, her favorite quote to live by and the importance of AAPI representation throughout May and beyond.

Hear directly from Masako on how businesses can become better allies to the AAPI community and how her Japanese American heritage has influenced her role as a leader at VS&Co.



*"I believe that seeing the world through an international lens is so important because it introduces us to ideas that we may never have been exposed to otherwise."*

#### 1. Tell us about yourself and your role at VS&Co.

I am Vice President of Emerging Businesses, where I manage brand partnerships for swim, lingerie, apparel, and footwear. In addition to our work in managing these day-to-day relationships, we are also involved in strategic investments for the company. For example, you may have recently seen that we acquired a minority stake in Frankies Bikinis!

I am also the executive sponsor of ALL IN or The Asian Learning, Leadership, & Innovation Network Inclusion Resource Group (IRG) for associates who identify as Asian and/or Pacific Islander and their allies, as well as a founding member of the VS&Co Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council, which works to strengthen our company culture by embedding DEI into everything we do.

#### 2. What led you to working in Emerging Business?

I could not pass up the opportunity to help Emerging Businesses develop a portfolio of brands that champion woman founders and all aspects of inclusion. We've been very intentional about forging partnerships with brands owned and led by people of color as well as with innovated, size-inclusive brands that are true experts within their space.

#### 3. Talk about your heritage and background. How does this influence you professionally? How do you bring this perspective into your work?

I am Japanese American and very proud of this heritage. I was blessed to have a merging of cultures in my household, and it influenced my outlook on the world and instilled in me the importance of always appreciating and making space for different viewpoints.

I've had the opportunity throughout my merchandising career to be involved in many global projects, which is a passion of mine. I believe that seeing the world through an international lens is so important because it introduces us to ideas that we may never have been exposed to otherwise. It's something I always strive to keep in mind as I interact with my colleagues and external brand partners.

#### 4. What made you want to become the executive sponsor of the ALL IN IRG?

I love the quote: "Be the person you needed when you were younger." Although I was fortunate enough to have worked in many diverse workplaces, I did not always see people who looked like me in leadership positions as I was progressing in my career journey. I feel incredibly humbled to be in a position that allows me to champion and uplift other members of my community and hopefully inspire those who are just starting out in their careers.

We're thrilled to be hosting a series of engaging events for VS&Co associates throughout May such as panel discussions, workshop sessions, and speaker

series in celebration of AAPI Heritage Month. I'm proud of the work we do and so happy to support the ALL IN IRG in my role as an executive sponsor.

**5. What are your thoughts on representation of the AAPI community in the fashion industry?**

I think the fashion industry is lucky to have so much wonderful AAPI talent. In my career, I've personally worked with so many incredible designers, merchants, sales executives, and leaders in a variety of functions who share this heritage. We have a continuing opportunity to bring these unique voices to the table.

**6. How can the business community be more inclusive of and allies to the AAPI community?**

The business community has an opportunity to embrace different types of leadership. It is not one-size-fits-all – leaders, too, are unique as individual members of a community. This is part of the reason why the ALL IN IRG has chosen the theme "Limitless Leadership" for May's AAPI Heritage Month.

As companies come to embrace and celebrate these differences, representation will rise as we create a framework for different types of leadership for the next generation of leaders. I am such a firm believer in one of VS&Co's important values: inclusion does make us stronger.

**7. What is one of the most memorable projects you've worked on at VS&Co?**

It's a project I'm still actively involved in, which is size inclusion. In furthering our goal to be the world's leading advocate for women, we are aiming to cover multiple spectrums of size inclusion – be that band or cup size.

We will be launching a couple of partnerships this fall that have a particular focus on this. In addition, we already work with fantastic brands in this space, like MINDD, an innovative woman-founded intimates company engineered specifically for the D+ cup customer.

**8. What is your favorite part about working at VS&Co?**

Bringing to light voices of innovative founders who perhaps wouldn't have gotten the reach or the platform if it weren't for VS&Co. We are excited to be focusing on women founded and led brands that are at the forefront of culture. I love discovering forward thinking brands that create a halo of relevance for VS&Co and having the chance to build a relationship with the founders to grow the business together.

**9. Any advice or life lessons you'd like to share?**

Always be coachable – it shows the world that you have the humility and drive to get better, and that you are willing to put in the work and effort to grow.