

PRACTICING DIVERSITY EVERY DAY

Associate Christine Botnick got her start at The Home Depot as a part-timer selling paint. Now she leads hundreds of supply chain associates. Her career demonstrates that embracing diversity, equity and inclusion fuels success, and she is committed to representing LGBTQ, women and minority associates climbing The Home Depot ladder.

Christine Botnick already had a full-time retail job when she started working at a Home Depot store in Oakland Park, Florida. But she needed more money for rent, groceries and college tuition.

She was 19, on her own and living paycheck to paycheck, just as her parents had always done. But Christine wanted to do better. That's why she was pursuing a degree in psychology, on her way to becoming the first person in her family to graduate from college. And that's why, when her Home Depot manager suggested she stretch beyond her part-time role in the paint department, she listened. Christine increased her hours, quit that other retail job, and 18 months later became a paint department supervisor.

"I just really felt, for the first time in my life, that other people were interested in seeing me succeed," Christine recalls. "They saw past my age and offered me an opportunity and the means to build an income and a better life for myself. They saw that I had potential, even when I didn't."

That was 2003. By the end of 2006, Christine was a 22-year-old assistant store manager. In 2011, she became a district services manager in South Florida. Three years later, she was promoted to store manager and ultimately led three Florida stores, in Sunrise, Punta Gorda and Miami Gardens. (Along the way, she earned that college degree.)

Then, in 2020, as our company was facing a huge surge in online orders, another Home Depot leader suggested that Christine take another stretch assignment — this time in supply chain. Today, she leads more than 700 associates as the general manager of our Tracy, California, rapid deployment center.

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Christine's career climb brought her what she wanted: economic security, upward mobility and a job she loves. But it also delivered something she hadn't expected and now treasures. It turned her into a trailblazer.

"Every time I got a promotion, it sparked a great deal of conversation with other female associates. They asked me how I did it. Then they started applying for higher-level jobs, too, and getting them," Christine says. "That's when I realized that success is contagious."

Embracing her distinction as a trailblazer, Christine became diversity and inclusion

Christine Botnick

General Manager,
Rapid Deployment Center,
Tracy, California



How to Practice Diversity, Equity & Inclusion with Intention

Christine's guidance for leaders aiming to foster diversity, equity and inclusion: Make it an everyday mindset.

- Recognize the value of a diverse workforce, which brings fresh ideas, sparks innovation, aligns The Home Depot with our customers and communities and helps us avoid groupthink.
 - Build a broad, diverse network inside The Home Depot, at all levels, and also in your community.
 - Talk to and listen to people you don't necessarily agree with; that's where real conversation and understanding begins.
 - Keep an open mind, and be willing to amend your point of view.
- +** Learn more about The Home Depot's commitment to DEI in our [ESG Report](#).

captain in every store she worked. She found her own role models, too, among them, Laura Mathe, who started as an assistant general manager in our Ontario, California, rapid deployment center and rose through the ranks to her current role as senior director of operations leading our Western RDCs. Laura is one of 11 SDOs companywide. Another role model for Christine is Hector Padilla, who began as an hourly store associate in Hialeah, Florida, in 1994, and now is executive vice president leading our Outside Sales & Service business.

When Christine became a store manager, she transformed routine workforce diversity reports into a call to action and focused on hiring and promoting associates to better reflect the communities that the stores served.

"Once I got to a leadership position, I asked myself, 'What can I do with my podium?' The answer," she says, "was to make sure the day-to-day actions under my direction aligned with The Home Depot's core values."

Christine describes herself as an atypical corporate leader. She's under 40, gay and covered in tattoos. She grew up in a tough, impoverished environment. That's why, she says, her success is bigger than she is. It gives others hope. "I have a responsibility to represent," she says.

"I look at the data and think, 'Where can we do more?' Our stores and supply chain facilities should look like the

demographics of the communities where they operate," Christine says. "We've got to get women deeper into the stores and higher up into management." (See The Home Depot's workplace diversity data on Page 28.)

Business has to come first, which in Christine's case means keeping associates safe as they work on the supply chain front lines during a pandemic, and keeping products flowing to the more than 100 stores across four states served by the Tracy RDC. Nonetheless, she finds a way to make diversity, equity and inclusion a daily priority.

"What I can do every single day is set the tone and the intentional, deliberate focus so that leaders who work under me understand that diversity, equity and inclusion is important to the company and to me," Christine says. "Then it becomes important to them, too, and influences how they manage and advance our people."

She remembers what it's like to be on the bottom rung of the ladder — as a 19-year-old store associate worried about making ends meet and unsure about the future. "That part-time associate selling paint is always in my head. I want to make sure the people who are on our front lines today get the same opportunities that I did. That's how I pay it forward."



At our 636,000-square-foot Tracy, California, rapid deployment center, Christine Botnick (center) leads with a DEI focus.