

URL: <https://ecorner.stanford.edu/clips/go-global-from-the-get-go/>

David Allemann, co-founder and executive co-chairman of On, observes that through digital channels, companies can now reach consumers and collaborate from anywhere. He explains how On built their international team, and how their diversity is core to innovation.



Transcript

- So innovation was super core, 00:00:06,600 but, of course, it was also very much, hey, Switzerland has 7 million people.. That's the Greater New York area, so you can't build a global sports brand out of Switzerland.. And so it was very clear to us, if you want to be a global sports brand, you have to go global from the get go.. And you for sure appreciate that the world has completely changed.. If you would want to do that 20 years ago or 30 years ago, it would have been impossible.. But now because we have so many digital channels to reach consumers, we have also digital channels to collaborate across different locations around the world.. It's, for the first time, probably in the last 10 years and we started in 2010, possible to go global in an instant.. So we started out in Switzerland, but then we took, we went to New York and that orange rock, there is a rock that actually existed on the mountain where we did this Nothing is Impossible Hike.. And we scanned it with a laser and we transferred it to New York and then it was 3D printed to kind of bring back that rock to the New York store.. We opened that in the middle of the pandemic..

So for the first few months, it was very much a local community store, but now there are a lot of queues in front of that store and in front of that rock.. That was 2000, we started in New York in, or we started in the US in 2012.. The store came later.. And in the next year, in 2013, we went to Japan.. We went to China, and this is a running group that I recently ran with in China because now it has become a movement of millions around the globe.. And On, it's also a very diverse movement.. So we are now 94 different nationalities.. We are across the globe in 20 different locations, 54 different languages spoken.. It's pretty much an equal gender split, not just kind of on an overall team level, but also on a management, on a leader level.. Our P&L is firmly in female hands because our chief commercial officer in the US, Britt, is leading the commercial drive..

Our COO, Jiahui, from China is our COO.. So it's very much a very diverse team and we feel that very diverse team is core to the innovation core of On because diversity is really the Petri dish of innovation.. It's also not just people from the business side, it's engineers, it's also a lot of creative people.. We chose to build our creative team, our marketing team internally.. So it's around 250 people who come from a creative background.. And I can tell you, there are always super, super intense debates at On because this different perspective, they also collide and then we have intense discussions and it leads to bad results.. So we opened in China as well.. This is the Region Street store.. We are trying to innovate in retail as well.. So how can you be something that is a shop, but at the same time is a little bit of a science museum as well that is super interesting

and where you can learn something? We just opened Paris..

We're actually gonna open a second store at the Champs-Elysees in Paris ready for the Olympics because, of course, that's gonna be one of the most important moments in sport...