



How a Swedish brand is taking North America by storm with its unique approach to retail

ABOUT FJÄLLRÄVEN

Hailing from the small town of Örnsköldsvik in Sweden, a place where mountains and forest meet the sea, Fjällräven is an outdoor clothing and equipment company that's committed to making nature more accessible. In true Swedish style, Fjällräven focuses on simplicity and practicality, and has the utmost respect for the environment.

ABOUT ZIPLINE

Retailers use Zipline to coordinate their fleet of brick-and-mortar stores by streamlining communications and task management.

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THE CHALLENGE

Improving the Experience for Retail Employees

When Sarah Tava joined Fjällräven close to two years ago, she wanted to make a difference. Like many others at the company, she joined the outdoor clothing and equipment retailer, in part, because of the company's mission to enable and inspire more people to spend time in nature. She had previously worked at lululemon and understood the power of working for a company and leading a team when everyone is aligned around a core belief and common values.

In her role as director of brand stores for Fjällräven North America, Sarah's personal goal is to improve the experience for retail employees. In her first six months on the job, she visited almost every store and spent time with each of the 34 store managers to uncover what was working and where things could be improved. Not surprisingly, since it's a problem for most retailers, she uncovered frustration around how communication flowed from headquarters to the fleet.

Sarah explains, "A common thread that I heard was that store managers didn't understand why they were being asked to do certain tasks and were constantly being surprised by new campaigns and programs. It really boiled down to frustration around communication." Luckily, Sarah knew just how to solve this problem.

In her previous role as curator at lululemon in Newport Beach, Sarah used Zipline to communicate with her staff of over 100. She says, given the size of the team, I couldn't possibly have a relationship with each and every one of them in person. In fact, I likely only met some of them a couple of times given shift schedules. But with Zipline, I was able to establish relationships with them and support them in a way that showed I care about their development and role within the brand. It allowed me to share more of myself with the team."

THE SOLUTION

Digital Communication That Aligns with Fjällräven's Values

Given her experience with Zipline and what she heard from store managers, Sarah worked with headquarters to get Zipline deployed across the North American stores. One reason that headquarters was excited about the solution was because it aligned with the company's core value of sustainability. Sarah says, "As an outdoor apparel retailer, everything comes back to our mission statement and operating within the lens of nature in place. With Zipline's resource center, a digital library to store documents, procedures and training, Sarah knew that they would be able to eliminate the reams of paper that they use during employee onboarding."

Sarah rolled out Zipline weeks before Covid-19 shut down stores across North America and it was a tremendous asset to the team at a time when everyone was forced to work from home. Being able to assign and track daily and weekly activities meant that managers could continue to work, be productive and show value. Fjällräven used the down time to plan for 2021, do community work and stay engaged with each other. In fact, the team became so adept at working remotely that they were successfully able to open up a brand new store in the midst of the pandemic.

When shelter-in-place restrictions were lifted and stores could reopen, managers were already experts in Zipline and using features like teams and surveys to communicate, share ideas and capture feedback.

With Zipline, stores operated smoother and were able to respond faster than ever before to changes in direction. For example, when the company started seeing protests turn destructive in cities across North America, Fjällräven was able to quickly communicate with managers to shut down and protect their staff and stores from any harm.

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In addition, Zipline allows store managers to quickly address new issues, like what to do when customers refuse to wear masks or how to properly protect staff from Covid-19. Sarah says, "Zipline really helps us organize everything in one place and makes it really easy to ensure that the fleet and HQ are aligned and working together."

Now nearly two years into her role, Sarah is confident that Fjällräven's store managers are happier professionally and feel more empowered and accountable, thanks to Zipline. Sarah says, "Our low turnover is a great signal that we're doing a better job at ensuring our store managers understand the role they play within the company and why the job they're doing is so important to the brand. We couldn't do that without Zipline."

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