

Podcast: NDC Plans Synthetics Myth-Busting Campaign



**THE RAPAPORT
DIAMOND
PODCAST**

WITH SPECIAL GUEST
DAVID KELLIE

The Natural Diamond Council (NDC) will soon launch a campaign to counter some of the myths the lab-grown diamond sector has been promoting, said CEO David Kellie in the latest Rapaport Diamond Podcast.

The trade is aware that most synthetics producers do not use sustainable energy to grow their diamonds, yet the consumer is being misled to believe they do, Kellie asserted. This and other myths “are damaging to the industry as a whole,” he said, and that is “where we have to step in.”

The campaign, which is set to kick off at the end of March, marks a change in the

NDC's approach to lab-grown since its inception in mid-2020. The organization has preferred to focus on highlighting the virtues of natural diamonds rather than taking a combative stance against synthetics, even as many in the industry have called for a more aggressive tone.

That said, the new campaign and accompanying "myth-busting report" will not attack lab-grown, Kellie stressed; it will simply present the facts so consumers can decide for themselves which type of diamond is better for them.

"We have a duty to make sure that you are serviced with the facts about sustainability, about values, about pricing" for both products, he stated, adding that the campaign will outline the values of the natural-diamond industry and the positive impact it makes on society.

In addition to its consumer-facing efforts, the NDC will embark on a large-scale education program for jewelry retailers.

The move follows a recent report the NDC commissioned to measure the consumer experience in jewelry stores. One of the more disappointing points in the report — which a third-party agency conducted for the group — was the level of education the sales professionals had about diamonds, Kellie said. This exposed one of the bigger challenges the NDC faces: how to help the US retail segment improve its natural-diamond storytelling abilities.

Meanwhile, the NDC is exploring new membership channels to help fund its programs. The group suffered a major blow to its budget last year when Russian miner Alrosa withdrew its membership following the invasion of Ukraine. Alrosa accounted for nearly half of the NDC's annual funding, leaving the remaining six members to foot the bill.

While those mining companies will remain the core board members, the NDC is now finalizing a program that will let additional partners join the group.

“We have built significant expertise in each of our major markets around content creation and storytelling, and around media buying in the digital areas,” Kellie explained. This is all expertise it can share with the varied segments of the trade.

“Whoever I speak to wants to participate in different ways...and we’ve met with a lot of manufacturers, designers and smaller brands that want to use our capabilities,” he related. “It’s not a one-stop blueprint, but it’s saying, how do we all come on board together and use the expertise of the NDC, bringing in other investments and just multiplying the visibility of the diamond message?”

During the podcast discussion with Rapaport Senior Analyst Avi Krawitz, Kellie also outlined the NDC’s ongoing work with brand ambassador Lily James, the fashion trends that are influencing the jewelry industry, and the group’s plans for 2023.

Listen to the podcast above.