



Neil Evans

Director/Head of Space, Formats and VM | Highly experienced retail professional | Delivers results for global brands

Great Britain, United Kingdom

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Languages

English (Native)

French (Work Proficiency)

About

Creating the perfect retail and visual experience can be challenging. My vision has always been to make it easy and inspiring for customers and that's a key focus for me in everything I do.

I specialise in directing the creation of visually innovative, captivating and profitable branded multi-channel retail customer experiences.

I'm an accomplished retail professional with extensive commercial leadership, space and formats design and visual experience built on a foundation of successful store management. I've earned a reputation as a passionate visual ambassador of brands delivering measurable entrepreneurial retail results for Value, Core and Luxury Goods retailers across Beauty, Textiles, Fashion & FMCG.

Previously, I've held progressive retail leadership roles with Poundland, Frasers Group, Sainsbury's, Courvoisier, Marks & Spencer Group PLC. and French Connection.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE:

- Retail Leadership.
- Commercial Focus & Driving Sales.
- Brand Partnerships & Launches.
- Strategic Business Planning.
- Stakeholder Management.
- Innovative Concept Creation, Visual Merchandising & Format Development.
- Customer Journey Ownership.
- Team Leadership & Talent Development.

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BRANDS WORKED WITH

Poundland & Dealz
Blackbook London
House of Fraser
Sainsbury's
Beam
Anthem Worldwide
Marks and Spencer
French Connection

Experience

● Head of Space Planning & Formats

Poundland & Dealz | Aug 2021 - May 2024

Responsible for defining the space & formats store planning principles and store design specification for Poundland/Dealz UK & ROI formats.

Accountable for space management across Poundland/Dealz UK & ROI essentials, core and flagship destination store models. Plans all new/re-sites/refurb/extension stores cross format delivering over 300+ store plans since 2021.

Planned a record breaking 87 stores launched in a single qtr. adding +1m sq ft of new space growth to the store portfolio - Q1 2023.

Launched new Pepco store formats in ROI. Projects/new formats/design featured in Retail Week/Retail Gazette/BBC Business.

Leads format development for the brand with end to end define, design and deliver of new concept briefs aligned to business and category strategy with multiple stakeholder engagement, covering innovation concepts across equipment, display, visual and environment for FMCG, GM, Clothing and services.

Accountable for store design specification covering all aspects of customer and colleague existing and new equipment, store environment

lighting/flooring/tills/digital/navigation/signage etc.

Fully integrates customer insight and experience, colleague operation and feedback and a review of costs across all projects galvanising stakeholders at all levels.

On company diversity, inclusion and wellbeing committee. Working closely with D&I in grocery facilitated and delivered by GroceryAid.



● Senior Talent Partner

Blackbook London | May 2021 - Aug 2021

BlackBook is an intelligence led executive search and consultancy practice working across consumer-facing industries globally.

We believe success is born out of creating demonstrable value for both our clients and network, we do this by developing strong relationships and demonstrating exceptional commitment and efficacy.

Simply put, we are a brand attractor. We offer honesty, integrity, commitment and, above all, results. We work in partnership with our clients, ensuring our priority is to understand their business – this includes their culture and long-term strategic objectives.

I partner the BlackBook team and drive talent acquisition strategies and intelligence projects to meet our clients' current and future business needs by generating a pipeline of candidates for executive and hard-to-fill positions in a diverse range of industries including Fashion, Luxury Retail and commercial sectors globally.



● Director Of Visual Merchandising

House of Fraser | Apr 2018 - Aug 2021



● Head Of Visual Merchandising

House of Fraser | Feb 2015 - Mar 2018



● Format Development manager

Sainsbury's | Mar 2012 - Jan 2015

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Delivered key projects across GM, Health & Beauty, Clothing, Technology and Foods.
- Launched multiple brands into store including Apple, Sony, Dyson, L'Oreal and 'TU' clothing.
- Responsible for define, design and deliver of key projects.
- GM projects delivered a double digit increase and rollback to store estate.
- Positive customer/colleague insight and feedback with projects published in Retail week.
- Improved stockholding, range availability and brand consistency in stores.

● Retail Consultant Courvoisier

Beam | Oct 2011 - Mar 2012

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Designed store environment, layout and retail shoplift.
- Project managed the refurbishment of Courvoisier retail proposition in Jarnac France.
- Designed dual language colleague training principles.
- Footfall +11% year on year. Sales +6% year on year.



● Retail Consultant Anthem

Anthem Worldwide | Oct 2011 - Mar 2012

Consultant for Food To Go project



● Store Manager

Marks and Spencer | Feb 2009 - Jan 2011

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Driving all key performance indicators of Sales, Service, Standards, People & Costs within multi million £ turnover stores.
- Proven financial year on year uplift on areas of responsibilities during tough trading conditions.
- Managed a range of people and performance issues, resolving complex appeals, grievance procedures and driving down team absence to -3% on previous year
- Assessor status for recruitment of graduate and managerial roles across the business. Mentored, coached and developed numerous managers to advanced levels
- Project managed the development of a 12,000 sq. ft. addition to an existing store, leading a phased six month transition across all touch points and stakeholders, delivering a successful launch and CEO/MD recognition.
- Introduced a dedicated trading focus day as part of working week framework with detailed emphasis on all aspects needed to exceed targets and an improved analytical approach for store teams



● **Business Unit Development manager: Modernisation programme**

Marks and Spencer | Feb 2005 - Feb 2009

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Menswear, Childrenswear and lingerie development manager for the store modernisation program with 80% of the store portfolio undergoing huge development and refurbishment.
- Successfully planned, supported and launched 93 stores within UK store portfolio during program.
- Delivered modernised store environments, strong brand identity and effective space usage.
- Drove stakeholder sign off so projects were delivered to specification, budget and timescales.
- Designed and cascaded a key toolkit to educate +90 store teams on new format equipment disciplines and usage; 'Get Fit For New Kit'.



● **Visual merchandising manager and trainer**

Marks and Spencer | Feb 2001 - Feb 2005

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Store and regional based post.
- Responsible for customer journey and consistent delivery of brand within store and across the region.
- Trained regional and store teams on corporate rebrand of Marks & Spencer.
- Developed new corporate training tools for stores.



● **Store manager**

French Connection | Jun 1997 - Feb 2001

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Managing all key performance indicators of £4 million p/a turnover store.
- Drove an unbroken 18 month sales target delivery.
- Supported the brand's expansion of stores across the UK recruitment, training and launches.

Education & Training

1994 - 1997 ● **University of Leeds**

BA Art & Design,

1988 - 1993 ● **Outwood Grange School**

GCSE's,