



# Diana Vargas Gilbert

Product Merchandising Strategy | Business Strategy

London, UK

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## Links

[LinkedIn](#)

## Languages

English (Fluent)

Spanish (Fluent)

## About

HEAD of PRODUCT - APPAREL Leading vision, strategy, and tactical execution from launches to licensing A discerning product visionary with 25+ years of leadership experience helping brand's launch, grow, & innovate for their target audience while retaining their core DNA. Collaborative and entrepreneurial, leveraging retail/digital insights and strategizing at the highest levels of leadership to map new opportunities and unite the key players and resources to make an idea stick. An engaging leader that elevates abilities and extracts the best from others. • Customer Centric Innovation: Fueled by a lifelong passion for product design & technology, I bring a customer-centered perspective, combining functionality & fashion to meet consumer demands effectively. • Strategic Product Development: I Excel as a creative and adaptable product builder, perfecting existing products, generating cutting-edge ideas, crafting execution roadmaps & product briefs for billion-dollar fast paced brands across multiple categories. • Brand Expansion Expertise: As a brand protector, I identify market trends and untapped opportunities, strategically extending brands into new & existing categories, licensing agreements, and partnerships, while maintaining authenticity. • Proven Market Impact: Consistently deliver tangible market impact and fostering executive collaborations enhancing the success of globally renowned brands such as Victoria's Secret, TARGET, Levi's, FABLETICS, CONVERSE, JUSTICE, NEW ERA, lululemon, NIKE and SKIMS. Fitness Apparel Product Expert Profit & Loss Ownership Global Buying & Sourcing Category Optimization Omni-Channel Management Product Design & Development KPI Development & Monitoring Complex Contract Negotiations Market & Sell-Through Intelligence

### BRANDS WORKED WITH

- Adidas
- Gap Inc.
- INVISTA
- Russell Corporation
- Umbro
- Victoria's Secret
- WHITE SPACE STUDIOS

## Experience

### ● Business Transformation and Product Innovation Leader

WHITE SPACE STUDIOS | Jan 2020 - Now

After receiving ongoing client interest, I resumed my independent consulting career, strategically elevating brands across diverse product categories in DTC, Wholesale and Retail distribution channels. This flexible approach allowed me to balance work commitments with parental caregiving responsibilities during the pandemic. Notable successes from this period include:

#### JUSTICE

(A BLUESTAR Alliance Brand): Spearheaded a comprehensive licensing project for the \$1.59B tween brand Conducted a deep analysis of successful products and the brand's target demographic. Ensured that licensing agreements complemented the brand and resonated with customers without diluting its identity. Market Research and Customer Engagement: Personally engaged with young girls through in-store conversations, gaining critical insights to develop product categories that resonated with the audience. Negotiation and Portfolio Expansion: Crafted an exclusive licensing agreement with Wal-Mart comprised of a launch of 140 products including accessories, seasonal footwear, home furnishings & personal care/beauty across 2400 stores in 1 calendar year. Strategic Partnerships and Long-Term Vision: Collaborated closely with the President and Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) to establish the brand's long-term licensing strategies, aligning them with the brand's vision and growth objectives. Digital Transformation and Revenue Growth: Leveraged Research and Customer Insights to define the need for a stronger digital presence to cater to young buyers and subsequently drove a 47% increase in online business within increasing revenue by 19% through buying strategies, expansive product storytelling and CRM activities.

MAGNOLIA

(A Chip & Joanna Gaines Brand): Defined a strategic merchandising and buy plan for MAGNOLIA home décor and the expansion of the Hearth and Hand brand for TARGET. Successful Expansion from Concession to Store- Within-Store: Orchestrated the development of a comprehensive, long-term strategic plan to bolster the growth and omni-channel focus of the MAGNOLIA portfolio of brands. Diversification into Ancillary Categories: Spearheaded the identification of new product extensions across ancillary categories, including personal care, holiday gifting and soft lounge items, aligning them with the brand's vision and market demand.

#### FABLETICS:

Guided the strategic road mapping and merchandise planning for expansion into fitness related ancillary categories (Accessories, Soft Lounge, Swimwear) for the prestigious DTC brand specializing in fitness apparel. In this role, I played a pivotal role in navigating new avenues for the brand's growth. Product Growth and Expansion Strategies: Identified trends and developed comprehensive strategies encompassing merchandising, pricing architectures, competitive analysis, brand identity and aesthetics. Brand Development: Spearheaded product presentations to external sourcing partners and engaged in key account management activities, forging strong relationships with prominent sourcing agencies and manufacturers. Talent Management and Development: Oversaw a dynamic creative and buying team dedicated to design, development, merchandising and production, ensuring a seamless synergy in our efforts while meeting challenging deadlines.

#### TOTES/ISOTONER:

Met the formidable challenge of bridging the gap between the brand's soft goods, protective gear business and their footwear division, crafting a cohesive aesthetic and brand identity across all product lines for major retailers TARGET, COSTCO, JCPenney's, Federated Stores & Kohls.

- Demonstrated exceptional skill in unifying distinct, conventional product categories through innovative merchandising strategies that preserved each brand's unique identity, focused on Continuous Improvement and resulted in double digit growth within 1 year.
- Effectively oversaw a revenue-generating global product portfolio valued at \$200MM, encompassing diverse categories for Totes and ISOTONER. Profit and Loss responsibility, KPI Ownership and

#### NEW ERA:

Led collaborations with the world's largest headwear company to identify global product opportunities and create a strategic merchandising roadmap for brand visibility through high-profile partnerships with Major League sport's teams, Prominent Lifestyle retail brand's and sport's/music celebrities.

- Established a new collaborative business arm for NEW ERA, driving revenue from \$20MM to \$130MM within with strategic merchandising initiatives. Managed complex sales, sourcing & licensing negotiations across multiple global markets and DTC, Wholesale and Retail distribution channels.
- Provided C-level leadership teams with category optimization analysis, strategic management, pricing strategies, and point-of view analysis of emerging market trends.

### ● Senior Director, Product Strategy & Innovation

Gap Inc. | Jan 2018 - Dec 2020

Successfully led a Product Strategy & Innovation team in redefining the collaborative approach of the brand portfolio including GAP, GAP Outlet, Old Navy, ATHLETA, Banana Republic, Banana Republic Home, Janie & Jack. Developed & presented differentiation strategies, buying approaches, strategic sourcing plans & product improvement opportunities to brand presidents, external partners and internal senior leadership teams, resulting in optimized categories, growth and enhanced synergy among the brand's. Supply Chain Optimization and Cost Reduction

- Successfully integrated Old Navy's denim program into GAP's supply chain and design processes, leading to a substantial \$5 Retail price reduction in 6 months. Increased product revenues of 20% for new & existing products in GAP denim ranges.
- Pioneered a supply chain and cost engineering framework that allowed GAP and GAP Outlet to source fleece for core branded programs from the same supply chain, enabling GAP Outlet to lower core prices by 12%

in while freeing up 23% of product development resources for GAP's holiday gifting product lines. Category Expansion and Buying Innovation

- Adapted ATHLETA's award winning sports bra business for a seamless introduction into GAP Body creating a dedicated sports bra category which, created an additional revenue stream contributing 6% to bottom line growth.
- Transformed Banana Republic's wrinkle-free concept into Old Navy's shirt business, catapulting it to become the No.1 category within 1 year and creating a new revenue stream with a \$280M value. Strategic Collaboration and Long-Term Planning
- Forged partnerships at the CEO and Brand President levels to shape the long-term brand portfolio strategy, make recommendations on global sourcing partners and drive sustainable growth. Talent Management & Development
- Talent Management and Development: Managed a diverse global team with a strong emphasis on talent development and bench strength for future leadership.
- Orchestrated structure of cross-functional teams, uniting strategic buying analysts and sourcing innovation experts to drive forward thinking value-added product and experience upgrades for the brand portfolio.



### ● **Leader, Global Merchandising & Market**

INVISTA | Jan 2013 - Dec 2015

portfolio of products with the objective of harmonizing products and market concepts from presentation to major retailers. Collaborated closely with a seasoned mentor, delving into the intricacies of fibres and their potential value for consumers, honing the narratives essential for effective engagement with brands and retailers. Change Agility

- Deftly scaled a steep learning curve, investing considerable time in laboratory work. This journey fostered qualities such as patience, refined technical communication skills, and a deeper understanding of how to deliver critical value to detail-oriented consumers. Product Growth and Expansion Strategies
- Product Growth and Expansion Strategies: Successfully integrated portfolio of fibers into all lululemon sports bra's to enhance continuous product improvements and consumer value.
- Developed T400 cooling technology to integrate into NIKE performance footwear for added breathability and performance.
- Partnered with Levi's to develop and launch a patented double coiled black fiber to create the ultimate black denim products. Strategic Collaboration & Long-Term Planning
- Spearheaded strategic research and product development initiatives for executive leadership, identifying immediate and long-term opportunities across core and adjacent product portfolios, encompassing the Active Apparel Segment, International Retail, Home Furnishings and Wearable Technology.
- In pursuit of operational excellence, instituted a new global strategic planning process and merchandising strategies. This transformative effort streamlined product development operations by eliminating waste, bolstered margins, and significantly reduced process time by over 10 weeks in 1 calendar year.
- Owned global line pricing architecture strategy, division P&L, and the management of new initiatives focused on expanding global footprint.
- Engaged regularly with C-level leadership with key external stakeholders including prominent brand's, such as lululemon, NIKE, Levi's, Tory Burch, and Old Navy Talent Management & Development
- Worked closely with the Global Human Resources lead, contributed to the development of a comprehensive long-term talent development plan focused on succession planning.



### ● **Vice President Of Product Design & Development**

Victoria's Secret | Jan 2006 - Dec 2009

to launch and made the Victoria's Secret Sport fitness apparel line a reality and a commercial success. With a mindset protective of customer expectations and dedication to being entrenched in detail like consistent sizing and wear testing achieved immediate market share and industry accolades. Working up to ahead of retail availability, expanded product vision and planning strengths to the initial PINK swimwear line and gifting programs. Strategic Road Mapping

- Leveraged exceptional presentation and storytelling skills to craft a comprehensive 2-year Product Roadmap aimed at bridging gaps in sil-

houette and price tiers across the product assortment. Global Team Leadership

- Successfully led and managed a globally dispersed product design, development and merchant team, skilfully assessing talent gaps and operational requirements to enhance team effectiveness. Merchandising/Buying Expertise
- Applied a profound understanding of line planning and merchandising to provide product teams with a conceptual perspective on seasonal product lines, offering valuable category commercial insights and an early merchant's perspective during the design phase. Executive Collaboration
- Collaborated closely with the Executive Leadership team to identify novel product opportunities and formulate long-term product and category optimization strategies. Conducted thorough analysis of sales data, consumer insights, and historical information to drive informed product decisions. Strategic Concept Development
- Elected as a Senior Member of a cross-functional concept team, reporting directly to the Chairman/CEO Held direct accountability for identifying fresh product collaborations, brand extensions, and emerging consumer opportunities across a portfolio of prestigious brand's, including Victoria's Secret, PINK, Henri Bendel, Express and Limited.

- **SENIOR MERCHANDISE MANAGER**

Russell Corporation |

Led a successful international emergence of the American brand, fine-tuning the product aesthetic for Mexico and Central America.



- **SENIOR MERCHANDISE MANAGER**

Umbro |

Launched the brand in the U.S. market and played a pivotal role in establishing and developing the creative design and product development team.



- **SENIOR APPAREL DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT MANAGER**

Adidas |

Contributed to the design & product development of uniforms for the first Women's Soccer World Cup as well as women's tennis and men's and women's lifestyle apparel.

## Education & Training

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- **International Institute for Management Development**

Master of Business,