



Alan Cook

Menswear Design Specialist /
Head of Design

📍 London, UK

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Languages

French

English (Fluent)

About

I am a very passionate, driven and creative leader with over 20 years experience in the menswear design industry.

I deliver a strong vision with solid commercial understanding and I always ensure that design is at the heart of any business.

I am product focused with a vast knowledge of fabric, fit and garment make up covering all product areas from tailoring to sportswear and have experienced in sourcing from China, India, Bangladesh, Turkey, Portugal, Italy and the UK.

I pride myself on having achieved extensive travel to research global trends - New York, LA, Tokyo, Seoul, Stockholm, Milan and Paris.

I am a team focused leader with excellent people skills.

I deliver clear and strategic ways of working, ensuring individuals are challenged, inspired, nurtured and supported. Ultimately creating great team morale and a forward thinking, progressive environment where creativity and development flourish.

BRANDS WORKED WITH

ARCADIA GROUP

Firetrap (Wdt)

Fullcircle (Wdt)

Kangol (Big Hit Limited)

Marks and Spencer

Smith & Brooks

Experience

● A. R. COOK DESIGN CONSULTANT

| Jan 2021 - Now



● Design Lead / Manager

Marks and Spencer | Apr 2014 - Jan 2021

Managed the design process for all areas of the menswear business delivering £900m of sales (2020/21) and led the design and development of over 2000 new ways for Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter 2021 across the menswear business with a team of 20 designers.

Delivered significant market share gains through implementing design clarity and customer focus:

Knitwear - Number 1, owning 14% of UK market share and growing 10% (2016 - 2021).

Denim - Number 2, owning 8% of UK market share and growing 6% (2016 - 2021).

Essentials - Number 1, owning 22% of UK market share and growing 6% (2016 - 2021). (Market share date - Kantar).

Maintained M&S menswear as UK number one overall market share owning 14% (2021)

Curated and directed 4 product strategy presentations per year ensuring a closer to market process detailing market trends, consumer trends, sustainability trends, colour, fabric and key items relevant to the business and M&S's core and grow customers.

Presented the strategy to all key stake holders via physical and digital presentations.

This ultimately delivered improved range structure, better colour delivery and re-established the importance of core ranges whilst improving M&S's style credentials by 17% - KMB Brand Tracker - January 2021.

Formed strong relationships with the buying team to influence range building, line reviews and product development to ensure the product strategy was followed ready for detailed presentations to the leadership team and menswear director for final sign off.

Consistently at the forefront of delivering and beating sustainability directives set by the business. Contributed to M&S menswear being the first UK retailer to use 100% BCI cotton (Better Cotton Initiative) beating the business target of being 85% BCI by 2020 by 2 years.

Led the design team to deliver sustainable credentials for every new

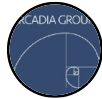
style designed for 2020, Implemented recycled and organic fibres, non-mulesed and 100% traceable wool, use of eco factories, and reduced and waterless processes throughout the range.

Collaborated with tech teams to implement brand new PLM and 3D design software packages ahead of the industry, resulting in sample costs savings of £150k per season.

Enabling a sustainable and sample-less buying process initially used for formal shirts and ties and later for active-wear and essentials ranges.

Set campaign ideas and strategies for marketing, working with VM teams on in-store outfitting and layout and establishing styling and dressing principles for E.com teams.

Delivered much improved e-com imagery leading to improved on-line sales of + 48% on the year (2019 / 2020).



● Design Manager

ARCADIA GROUP | Jun 2012 - Apr 2014

Created and implemented a new design and development process to improve ways of working for the design department in-line with the new business critical path. This ensured flexibility and speed to market for new products and ranges. Restructured the design team to ensure alignment with business needs and relevance in the changing market place leading to improved morale and productivity and established a clear handwriting and creative direction. Worked strategically with the trading director and the head of buying to re-imagine and update the BHS menswear brands through improved ranges, range structure, quality, branding and visual communications achieving improved style credentials, increased profit and reduced markdown.

● Design Consultant

| Feb 2010 - Jun 2012

Clients included JIGSAW, FI LA & WH ITE STUFF JIGSAW. Completed an in-depth consultancy project for the relaunch of Jigsaw Menswear. I worked with the creative director to establish and set the complete feeling, tone and direction of the Jigsaw Menswear brand. Created detailed visual direction for every product category with mood boards and full range designs. Established a strong customer and brand strategy around "Honest clothing with a lived in charm based on a man's favourite wardrobe pieces" which lead to a hugely successful relaunch February 2012. FILA. Delivered concepts and designs for a new life style range that embraced Fila's rich heritage whilst radically modernising the brand and successfully launched in the UK in 2013. WHITE STUFF. Consulted on a proposal for a re-imaging of White Stuff's menswear offer. Compiled range DNA, store environment, customer profile and full product range design and tech packs.

● Head of Design

Fullcircle (Wdt) | Mar 2002 - Feb 2010

Defined the global design direction and tone for FULLCIRCLE menswear, increased menswear sales by 125% (2002 – 2008) and ensured entry into premium accounts including SELFRIDGES, HARRODS, MACY'S and LANE CRAWFORD and leading independent stores worldwide. Led, motivated and coached the design team to translate the over-arching seasonal creative concepts and briefs into four brand appropriate collections per year whilst expressing themselves and thinking non-laterally to create compelling, exciting product. Worked closely with Sales and Merchandising teams on range planning, critical paths, pricing strategy and market feedback. Presented design concepts to the WDT board for approval. Accomplished sourcing relationships with Far East, and European suppliers and worldwide travel to assess trends and market developments. Maintained an avid interest in contemporary culture and art, applying to the product and brand where appropriate. Worked closely with the Marketing team to deliver on-brand communication e.g. advertising, look books and retail and e-tail design concepts. Creatively presented and launched new collections to fashion press, sales and retail teams via trade shows, catwalk shows and in depth product presentations.

- **Senior Designer**

Firetrap (Wdt) | Feb 1999 - Jul 2001

Multi product and full range design for leading UK denim brand.

- **Designer**

Kangol (Big Hit Limited) | Apr 1996 - Feb 1999

Licensed casual / sportswear, Outerwear design specialist.

- **Designer**

Smith & Brooks | Apr 1993 - Apr 1996

Designed for key account, TOPMAN.

Education & Training

1989 - 1992

- **Epsom School of Art & Design**

BA Degree, Fashion Menswear

1987 - 1989

- **Southfields College.**

BTEC Diploma, Fashion Design and Knitwear