



Louise Balmford

Director | Marketing Operations | E-commerce Photo Studio | Multi-Channel Creative Services | Shoot Production

📍 London, UK

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Languages

English (Native)

French (Basic)

About

Highly experienced in creative content delivery and photo studio production within the premium fashion, beauty and lifestyle sector. I consider myself creatively, operationally and commercially astute, handling end-to-end creative content production and processes, from initial concept to execution, for multi-channel retailers. Taking ownership for budgets of up to £35m. Leading large multi-functional teams within a fast-paced and ever-changing environment, located in-house, external and global.

During my rewarding career, I have gained valuable skills and played a key role in the realisation of creative visions. Adept at managing the creative, operational and people aspects of high volume digital content production, complex editorial photo shoots and creative design operations. With 20+ years experience in creative content delivery, who owns and improves the processes, workflows, guidelines, timelines and resource management, with full financial accountability. Ability to hone own creative flare to lead high performing teams to deliver excellent content and design that is on brand! Communicates very well cross functionally with external vendors and internal departments such as Buying, Digital Merchandising, Marketing, Tech, PR, Finance, Legal etc.

A proven track record of previously working with international high profile luxury and high street brands to safeguard the integrity of the brand, whilst aiding in the creative promotion and story-telling.

By nature, I am positive person, resilient, proactive, detail-orientated and dedicated. A compassionate leader who invests in my team.

BRANDS WORKED WITH

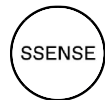
- Burberry
- NET-A-PORTER
- OTTO GmbH & Co KG
- SSENSE
- The White Company
- Zalando SE

Experience

- **Director, Marketing Operations, Photo Studio, Creative Services**
| Feb 2022 - Now



- **Director, Marketing Operations**
Burberry | Sep 2023 - Mar 2024



- **Senior Director, Studio**
SSENSE | Nov 2020 - Oct 2021

SSENSE is a luxury fashion, beauty and lifestyle department store and ecommerce platform with global reach. It is pacing the vanguard of directional retail, exploring the nexus of content, commerce, and culture.

Reporting to the Chief Operating Officer, responsible for leading a group of diverse and creative photo studio professionals to deliver the end-to-end production of the ecommerce photography and written content for 100,000+ products annually; defining and implementing a global strategy to ensure the team achieves excellence in operations and creative quality and to scale to meet the business needs of expanding into Europe and Asia; partnering closely with key leaders in Buying, Marketing, Tech, Finance and Sales to ensure SSENSE conveys a distinct point of view to customers and create long term value for the company.

- Initiated setting up a strong foundation for growth
- Led creative teams through new product launches of Beauty, Kidswear and Everything Else
- Implemented strategies, changes and improvements to the studio operational processes

- Introduced 'best in class' workflow tooling
- Restructured the team, to deliver the studio's KPI's for the upcoming global expansion
- Worked cross functionally to deliver new languages and translation memory software; introduced third party for initial support
- Sourced additional photo studio location for new category expansion

● **Managing Director, Zalando Studios**

Zalando SE | Jul 2018 - Nov 2020

Zalando SE is Europe's leading online fashion and beauty platform and connects customers, brands and partners.

Reporting to the SVP Supply, responsible for providing the studio business with clear direction, infrastructure and resource, enabling the creative and operational teams (350 full-time and freelance employees) to efficiently deliver photography, video, styling, retouching, copy & translation and quality assurance for 400,000+ products a year.

Additionally leading teams of art directors and producers to create 100's of aspirational marketing website banners, social media and press imagery for internal departments and external brands, all launched on the Zalando websites and apps.

- Spearheaded the vision of turning existing ecommerce studio into a creative hub and gain further ROI for the business
- Led multi-functional teams to deliver creative aesthetic improvements to pdp content for the customer, that were inspiring, informative, accurate, consistent and on brand, while maintaining costs
- Implemented major overhaul of leadership and team structures to improve efficacy, creativity, communication and retention
- Delivered operational efficiencies, infrastructural expansion and appropriate resource to enable Zalando Studio to provide additional elevated pdp and omnichannel editorial imagery for Zalando platform and external brands
- Co-led the build of an additional PhotoStudio, working closely with key internal stakeholders and external third parties, to deliver state-of-the-art, fit-for-purpose, flexible studio space for omnichannel content production
- Introduced AB testing, data-informed insights and built a process excellence team into the creative and production operations
- Reduced Time-to-Online for PDP from 5.6 days to 1.3 days (inbound to upload)
- Worked 360 cross-functionally with key stakeholders to deliver new Beauty launch, refresh Kidswear, Footwear and Premium.
- Implemented changes in recruitment to improve diversity of workforce

● **Head of Content Creation**

Zalando SE | Aug 2017 - Jun 2018

● **Global Head of Studio Production**

NET-A-PORTER | Jun 2014 - May 2015

THE NET-A-PORTER GROUP is the world's leading online luxury fashion retailer, consisting of Net-A-Porter, Mr Porter and The Outnet.

Responsible for leading the UK and US Studio Production teams (280+ employees) to deliver the corporate targets and goals across all brands, aligned with critical objectives. Headed up a Global Studio Managers team of 6 and managed the production process involving photography, video, styling, retouch and copy & translation for 2200 products to be launched on websites weekly, controlled a £15m annual budget.

- Led the US based Studio team to deliver 300% growth within nine months, in response to challenging demands and enabled an increase in volume, from 400 to 1000 products per week
- Led the Copy team to bring translations in-house

● **Interim Head of Studio Production**

NET-A-PORTER | Jan 2014 - Jun 2014





- **Head of Creative Production**

The White Company | Feb 2011 - Dec 2013

The White Company has been making impeccably stylish, beautifully designed interiors, fashion, fragrance and beauty products, for over 25 years.

Managed the creative content production teams, from initial conception and graphic design through to shoot production, art direction, photography, copy, digital image upload, final design artwork and print of seasonal design communications. Controlled a £3m annual photographic budget and led all image production for the multi-channel, fashion & interiors retailer.

- Working cross functionally, spearheaded exploration and implementation of new critical path and processes, for all stages of the supply chain from product sourced through to creative concept, product photography and publication into multiple channels (Social, Brochure, InStore, Website, Press), that is still being used today.



- **Creative Operations & Shoot Production Manager**

The White Company | Jan 2009 - Feb 2011



- **Head of Creative & Production**

OTTO GmbH & Co KG | Mar 2007 - Dec 2008

Oli is part of the Otto UK group providing womens designer and high street fashion. Held full accountability for the creative development of this new online & offline fashion and interiors proposition.

Directed three external creative agencies to build the branding, website and brochure. Defined creative strategies and working processes with internal and external teams to deliver brand vision. Built creative production and photo shoot schedules for each channel, built team structure and forecast budgets, ready for implementation by external publishing house.



- **Art Director | Creative & Shoot Production Manager**

OTTO GmbH & Co KG | Oct 1999 - Dec 2008

Otto Group is a worldwide operating retail trust and contractor with business activity in over 20 countries.

Rapidly progressed into a management position, responsible for the creative production of multiple fashion catalogues from the initial concept through to art direction of product photography, final design artwork and print. Directed a team of five art directors and graphic designers to deliver image content on brand and on time. Managed the entire fashion shoot production process, schedules, budgets, casting talent, sourcing studio and global locations, for up to 12 photo shoots per season.



- **Senior Art Director | Graphic Designer**

Freemans | May 1997 - Oct 1999

Primarily responsible for the design and production of the fashion pages from conceptual design and content management, through to final printing & publication, in addition to conceptualisation and art direction for photo shoots of womenswear, menswear, sportswear, kidswear, footwear and accessories products.

Education & Training

- **University of Portsmouth**

Bachelor's Degree,