



David Aquilina

Brand and Retail Consultant

London, UK

[View profile on Dweet](#)

Links

[LinkedIn](#)

Languages

English (Fluent)

About

A retail and brand development specialist with 20 year of experience within retail, buying, merchandising and production. Having experience managing multi million pound portfolios across both international luxury department store businesses and premium UK brands. Specialising in strategy and business development management for start up to medium sized retailers and lifestyle brands that are keen on elevation and sustainably escalating their business modules. Experience gained across B2B, B2C, physical and online.

BRANDS WORKED WITH

- Alexander McQueen
- Harrods
- HARVEY NICHOLS
- Kurt Geiger
- Lane Crawford
- Mallet London

Experience



CONSULTING COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR

Mallet London | Nov 2019 - Sep 2021

An exclusive consulting role where the initial objective was to assess the current operating module of Mallet and provide advice and guidance to the directors on how best to restructure and organise the business, while also elevating their brand within the global marketplace

- Business Transformation: Leading the change of processes across multiple functions of the business from merchandise management, production and logistics, design and planning, wholesale, marketing and customer communication which enabled the scaling of the business and a total GM growth in 2021-22 of +60%.
- Operations Management: Through this restructuring of the team, production critical path, assortment merchandising and partnership management, wholesale BTB revenue has maintained an average sea sonal increase of +40% since joining in AW20.
- People Management: Accountable for restructuring the team to manage growth, overseeing both internal team members and third party associates to deliver the goals of the business. Including external freelance designers, creative agencies, manufacturing agents, 3PL operators, sales agents and digital marketing teams.
- Product Strategy: Building out the seasonal road maps and providing directional input from design fundamentals and product sign off, to wholesale market, retail launch, sale planning and execution.
- Brand Elevation: 2021-22 a key objective was to enhance the brand recognition and international foot print which was delivered through the planning and management of a pop up space in Fred Segal LA, and securing key wholesale partners including SAKS in the US, Harry Rosen in Canada and David Jones in Australia
- Delivering the launch of the US.Mallet and EU.Mallet online retail sites and local 3PL operating hubs
- Locally, as part of the brand recognition strategy a Pop Up stores in Selfridges London was launched
- Retail Development: Oversaw the planning, design and construction of the first store launch for Mallet on Carnaby St, London which delivered +50% growth against target.
- Revenue: Through the DTC, sales channels an average growth year on year of +60% has been achieved through online and physical retail.



HEAD OF MENSWEAR BUYING

HARVEY NICHOLS | Jan 2017 - Oct 2018

Initially a discussion around a consulting role which developed into a full time 'head of mens buying' position. The objective was to galvanise the new team and drive the buying strategy across the UK stores and e-com

- Profits increasing in 2017-18 +8%, 2018-19 +13%
- Implementing the buying strategy across 7 Men's Departments with highlights including sales growth YTD at point of departure for International (+56%), Footwear (+26%) and accessories (+32%)
- Leading the brand and range planning for each store, subject to con-

sumer profile and store layouts

- Partnering with the merchandise planners to deliver seasonal OTB and budget plans to the Fashion Director and Board of Directors
- Working collaboratively with marketing, online and the retail teams to achieve targets
- Managing a team of 10, guiding them through the buying process across all categories to ensure curated edits that align with the Harvey Nichols core DNA
- Maintain strong relationships with a portfolio of +200 brands to ensure the best terms, deliveries and product assortments are negotiated for Harvey Nichols
- Reviewing and establishing new working procedures to positively impact the business including improvement of continuity range build and inventory management process



● Menswear Buying and Merchandising Consultant

Harrods | May 2016 - Dec 2016

Reporting into the GMM, liaising with both brands and Harrods management on the refurbishment planned for Jan 2017 across 6,500sq ft alongside of general trading
Key contributions to the business include managing all planning, range building and product selection across all categories for key shop in shops including Brioni, Brunello Cucinelli and Ralph Lauren
Manage the buying and trading cycle for the area, sales increasing from +2% to +17% during tenancy



● HEAD OF MENS FOOTWEAR

Kurt Geiger | Mar 2012 - May 2016

- Reporting into the C-Suite to maximise the business across the Mens Own Brand and External Multi Brand Concessionary businesses across the network, delivering sales growth of +6% 2015-16
- Driving the Mens External Buying strategy as Buying Manager from March 2012 until April 2015
- Delivering an increase in sales +18% 2012-13 and +5% 2013-14
- Accountable for the buying strategy and product assortments for the total Men's footwear business
- Leading an Own Bought product development team of 4 across buying and design, ensuring the team delivered relevant products while hitting key objectives such as target pricing and margin.
- Collaborating with the merchandisers on budget and range planning for the 150 option collection
- Ensuring the team respect the critical path, enabling an efficient sign off and production process
- Working with +15 own brand suppliers throughout Portugal, China and India and +90 external brands to obtain improved ongoing terms without sacrificing product integrity, service levels or relationships
- Maintain strong relationships with key retail teams for the multi-channelled men's business across Kurt Geiger own stores, concessionary businesses and all associated e-com sites across +60 points of sale
- Manage the buying cycle with the External Brand buying team of 5 to ensure our concessionary partners product and sales expectations are met alongside of achieving KG goals
- Developing strong brand partnerships, securing exclusive ranges, improved trading terms and appropriate support from vendors, highlights including an average annual returns value of +£2M
- Solidified partnerships with key concession host store teams both in-store and online, retail operations, PR and marketing teams with partners including Selfridges, Harrods, Liberty, Brown Thomas etc.
- Management of the events schedule for key store groups, securing exclusive ranges with key vendors and worked closely with store PR, marketing, architecture, design and retail operation teams
- Worked with property and design teams to successfully roll out refit programs at Selfridges, Liberty, Brown Thomas and Fenwicks groups. Highlight being the launch of the worlds' biggest shoe department at 12,000 sq ft in 2012 at Selfridges Oxford st, then rolling this concept out to regional stores including Manchester City which resulted in double digit growth year on year at each location.



● BUYER

Lane Crawford | Oct 2008 - Feb 2012

•Managed the designer and formalwear brand portfolio of +30 accounts and the buying cycle across all 6 doors including Hong Kong, Beijing and e.com stores

•Developing strong brand partnerships, working on exclusive programs and instillations across the net work of stores with highlights including working directly with Kim Jones on a Hong Kong instillation



● **Assistant Buyer**

Harrods | Feb 2007 - Oct 2008



● **Buyers Administrative Assistant**

Harrods | Jan 2006 - Jan 2007



● **Senior Omni channel merchandising manager**

Alexander McQueen | Feb 2022 - Now

Education & Training

2000 - 2002

● **East Sydney Fashion Design Studio**

Advanced Diploma, Advanced Diploma in Fashion Design

1999 - 1999

● **Enmore Design Centre**

Certificate, Certificate in Design Fundamentals