



Sahar Kasiri

Project management, Product management, Strategy & business growth, Business Development Head

📍 London, UK

[View profile on Dweet](#)

Languages

English (Native)

About

Tenacious Senior Buying Leader and Fashion Innovator with over 20 years of international experience and a deep awareness of global fashion influences, making a lasting impact on major brands such as Jaeger, Miss Selfridge, River Island and Wallis, across menswear and womenswear. A creative trailblazer who explores current trends and how best to proposition offerings to each market. Demonstrates strategic thinking and balances creativity and business. Enjoys a challenge and thinks outside the box, sharing her love of fashion with others to develop the next generation of buyers that inspire greatness. Well connected with an extensive network that extends across Europe, Asia and the Far East, looking at business through a global lens, fuelling growth opportunities and significantly boosting margin. Captivating communicator, exuding positivity and energy that brings people together, promotes inclusive and valued culture, believing collaboration is the key to success. Mentors others and shares insights, delivers talent passionate about brands. Stimulates operational efficiencies, formulates new critical paths aligned with brand vision, and oversees product range development tailored to new cultures and markets. Analyses buying cycle and identifies areas for change. Outlines innovative buying and supply strategies. Brings in newness, with extensive global trading experience, strategic thinker who engages with stakeholders to optimise the brand. Spearheads operational efficiencies and cost savings, increases margin gain and explores international growth opportunities. Consolidates supplier base, optimises production mix and accesses new regions for sourcing and sustainability.

BRANDS WORKED WITH

Debenhams

Elari Events Ltd

Evans

Jaeger

Miss Selfridge

River Island

Pretty Lavish

Specsavers

Ginger Ray

Experience

● Co-founder and project manager, product manager

Elari Events Ltd | Nov 2017 - Sep 2021

Identified potential market opportunity for innovative décor design house in London that specialises in bespoke event planning and styling. Applied great eye for fashion with decades of trend and buying expertise to private high-net worth clients, luxury venues and global brands, gaining recognition and turning concept into a viable enterprise.

Built new venture into thriving business with >176K followers on Instagram, considered #1 choice for event innovation and creativity by celebrities and brands; set out strategic vision and commercialised services. – Managed buying and sourcing of best quality materials, props, florals and mixed media based on themes. – Negotiated procurement contracts and cultivated trusting relationships with suppliers to gain best terms. – Organised all marketing, brand awareness, social media, website development and content creation. – Owned project lifecycle and client relationship management from initial engagement to completion.

Shared knowledge and insights globally; delivered Elari Experience masterclass online and in-person.

Promoted female empowerment in creative industries; motivational speaker on panels at Facebook, Google, River Island and London College of Fashion and in publications and podcast

Featured in publications such as Vogue, Elle and Grazia as well as appearing on ITV's This Morning to talk trends and colour palettes.

● Head of Buying

Miss Selfridge | Feb 2016 - Nov 2019

Reported to Buying Director with six direct reports. Headhunted as one of two heads of buying covering £65M t/o across 2,200 options to turn-around and transform Miss Selfridge's buying capability, experiencing cultural and commercial issues, and fuel sustainable growth and market share. Managed clothing, lifestyle, shoes, bags and accessories.

Breathed new life into sales and options mix centred on latest market trends and trade performance; seized opportunity to roll out brand new

product strategy across key departments.

Pushed newness to marketing, PR and wholesale functions for exposure, acquired additional £1.6M of free publicity through promoting new products and making samples available for photo shoots.

Reshaped buying strategic approach; formulated new company critical path aligned with brand strategy. Evaluated current mode of operation and implemented future mode of operation.

Instigated customer profiling; engaged external market research companies.

Dramatically improved ways of working, margin growth and deliveries, and recorded 2-3% margin growth by sharing fabric and yarns across departments, orchestrated consolidation of departments supplier base.

Adjusted sourcing balance using trial and trade that enabled departments to bank key units and margins further afield; conducted intensive review and enhancement of sourcing that was reliant on short lead time suppliers.

Expanded international franchise and wholesale interest and options; demonstrated understanding of global markets and nuances. Tailored and delivered product presentations that optimised offerings to meet market needs.

Overhauled internal culture; invested in people, developing new generation of buyers at all levels.

Uplifted margin by extra 1.2%; delivered through new price architecture that adjusted Average Selling Price (ASP).

Supported product range development and product sourcing; provided insight into balanced mix, new and on trend fashions.

Worked collaboratively across functions both internally and externally – weekly meetings to work with design, merchandising, Marketing, PR, online and wholesale teams. As well as presenting to external clients and franchise/wholesale partners.

Creative thinker – encourage teams to think outside the box and push the boundaries with trend setting key items and fashion essentials.



● Buying Manager

Debenhams | Sep 2013 - Feb 2016

Appointed to head up £45M t/o business covering occasionwear, bridal wear and bridesmaids. Tasked with driving improvements while expanding offering through onboarding of renowned designers, and developing talent pool.

Raised profile and quality of Designers at Debenhams occasionwear and bridal wear with new designers such as Jenny Packham (£15M), Matthew Williamson, Edition Preen, Giles Deacon and Betty Jackson. – Gained audience with top designers, presented proposition and oversaw new range introduction across all channels.

Instilled passion for Brand within buying team; joined up with HR to develop bite-size courses for junior buying teams.

Resolved systemic and ingrained weaknesses in buying cycle; implemented new departmental critical path. Which in turn improved margins and intake of collections to work cohesively in store.

Boosted mix of China and India production mix for enhanced complex styling and gained 2-4% margin; rationalised supplier base from 23 down to just 9 to maximise buying power without compromising quality.

Realised notable decrease in markdown spend; instigated 'first price right price' architecture.

Instrumental in business growth across the Middle East; collaborated with Al shaya on developing special ranges. Attended dedicated press day in Dubai and presented new collection to global and regional press.

Elevated sales by 40% in two consecutive years; coordinated stand at National Wedding Show.

Doubled online and international options underpinning growth; changed mindsets and expanded product ranges online.

Omni-channel experience providing the right information, stock and support to all areas of the business.



● Buying Manager / Senior Buyer

River Island | Mar 2011 - Sep 2013

Entered fashion brand and retailer as Senior Buyer for largest cash value department, Jersey, worth £34-£38M, reporting to Head of Buying. Within one year, promoted to Buying Manager and developed buyers, driving growth and departmental strategy.

Grew department by £10M; conducted analysis of buying function, De-

vised a sourcing and supplier strategy and delivered trend led apparel that was the right product at the right price! Carried out lessons learnt and aligned critical path with sourcing resources. – Presented product strategy to senior directors and stakeholders, with realistic figures and projections.

Matured buying capability with two buyers promoted up to senior positions; coached and developed around 12 individuals, shared insights and offered shadowing opportunities. – Joined with HR on creating training materials for junior teams.

Acted as voice of the buying function and product lines; appointed as Product Press Liaison.

Removed historical silos and embedded collaborative culture; set out new buying calendar and triggered cost efficiencies through consolidation or shared use of fabric, freight and suppliers.

Launched refreshed supply / sourcing strategy; identified emerging factories and demonstrated margin improvements using longer lead times that involved negotiation and securing of downtime deals. Early Career Highlights Feb 2009 – Feb 2011

- **Buyer / Established Buyer**

Evans | Apr 2006 - Feb 2009

- **Assistant Buyer Menswear**

Jaeger | Oct 2001 - Apr 2003



- **Projects and product manager**

Pretty Lavish | Apr 2023 - Mar 2024

Start up to scale up strategy and system implementation, optimisation and rationalisation.

Implementation of new PLM with Centric (Product Lifecycle Management), Snap, currently working on streamlining manual processes by upgrading of Zedonk system and Egnyte cloud transfer from one drive. Implementation of new Critical path for production, creating full life cycle of company sustainability roadmap. Onboarding new QA, buying and logistics team. Created a new more robust supplier, compliance and logistics manual. Onboarding new suppliers in Turkey, China and India and new product lines on both menswear and womenswear.

Established and maintained up to date delivery plans. Identifying and managing milestones, creating visibility of key decision points within central planning.

Responsible for creating all business documents and communications including business cases, project initiation document and status reporting.

Managed the central resourcing tool to set the strategy for resources needed for various projects depending on size and budget.

Delivered accurate and timely reporting documents to seniors and key decision makers.

Ensured risk mitigation measures were in place, change management and process assurance were in place and reviewed regularly.

Continuous engagement with wider team and delivery professionals to encourage best practice, building capabilities, working collaboratively and promoting continuous improvement and training where needed. Implemented new phasing and buying calendar and trained teams company wide.

Created new buying processes to streamline and overcome previous sourcing and delivery issues

Implemented new job role checklist for all levels within buying to identify development needs and motivate the team and align them with industry buying levels

Created sourcing strategy and conducted trips to India and Turkey to balance off and de-risk the reliance on FE

Collaboratively worked with other teams to implement new improved ways of working with merch, design, garment technologists, wholesale, logistics and marketing

Compiled SS24 Strategy with new add-in products that elevate and balance the range to offer newness, price point and choice to the customer Report on budget spend and prioritised what was needed internally and external clients.

Active role in Business development and new business proposals and tender, reaching out to new key accounts

Proactively problem solving and suggesting solutions for bottleneck and

project obstacles

Worked with merchandising and logistics on improving the intake and launch processes

Re-worked the company wide supplier manual

Reviewed and updated sustainability roadmap for the company

Defined new meeting guidelines for BMDT teams

Encouraged and implemented Strategy and planning process within buying, merch, design and garment technology

Enhanced the fabric quality and styling on SS24 whilst improving margins through strategic planning, re-sourcing and relationship building with suppliers

Commercially identified gaps in price point, product, marketing, and worked with the team through short lead time suppliers to deliver a more balanced range

Mentoring merchandising team whilst their senior manager is on maternity leave

Heading up returns project to ensure returns rates are investigated and actioned with the relevant teams bought returns rate down from 77% to 56% in 7 months

Negotiated new payment terms with all suppliers

Worked on ROI resource management and identified gaps in the business for new head count

Created company budgets for buying sourcing trips, head count and samples. Created robust budget management

Improved product handwriting on both mens and womenswear



● Projects and product manager

Ginger Ray | Jun 2022 - Apr 2023

Part of a very large programme of works to modernise store technology, replacing legacy Linux and iOS platforms to Windows 10.

Responsible for piloting new technology to pave the way for a scaled deployment. Planned, coordinated and executed 24 successful pilot store cutovers to new technology. Managed plans for executing store cutovers, management of risks, issues and dependencies. Coordination of teams and third party vendors.

Purposefully defined teams ensuring the right skills and experience mix for successful delivery. Management of senior stakeholders and project sponsors. Leading on agreement of scope, securing resources and funds. Developed delivery structure and assisted in recruiting team members who are part field based, part centralised.

Diligently delivered progress reporting and stakeholder management through the successful and diligent management of RAID logs and ran risk and issues workshops, programme reporting back to central PMO through weekly highlight reports.

Successfully executed delivery of 24 pilot stores recording lessons learnt and feeding this through to continual service improvement process.

Tailored support for the delivery of scaled store deployments and assessment of current functions within operations. Scaled up partners to support the scaled deployment (Fujitsu, Accenture, Pheonix47 + more)

● Projects and product manager

| Mar 2023 - Now

Product and project consultancy for brands of all sizes.

Change management

Product partnerships

Design, trend and creative projects

Sourcing and sustainability projects

Product lifecycle system implementation projects (PLM)

Process management

Seasonal strategy and lessons learnt

Competition and marketing