**PATRICIA LEWIS**

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**PROFESSIONAL PROFILE**

A results-focused, quality driven professional Senior Buyer and Merchandise Planner with extensive experience in buying, merchandise planning with excellent forecasting and analysis skills. Advanced presentation skills at CEO and board level with relationship-building abilities with a track record of improving sales performance to ensure profit turnarounds. High level interpersonal and negotiation skills.

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**SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE**

**Buying**

* Responsible for purchasing all furniture supplies (over 500skus) for over 80 stores with an annual turnover of £25M
* Built and developed a group of six assistant buyers and junior buyers, conducting bi-annual performance reviews
* Launched ethnic range of furniture under my own initiative leading to an incremental £2M sales in 3-month period
* Led on the implementation of a new buying structure at Real Wood Furniture, involving substantial operational change, new systems and processes to implement best practise, receiving commendation from board level

**Negotiation skills**

* Negotiated licensing deal for an exclusive range of childrens’ wear, beating sales forecasts by 45%, resulting in further repeat orders – the range is on track to turnover £3.5M in international sales
* Chaired a committee that negotiated with the union representing shop-floor staff to enable more flexible working hours vital to attracting our target purchaser (Cute Kids)
* Successfully negotiated improved pricing from our two major suppliers which resulted in a 11% contribution to bottom-line profitability (Cute Kids)
* Negotiated no-returns discounts with top ten suppliers worth £200,000 profit (Real Wood Furniture)

**Merchandise Planning**

* Implemented strategic organisational goals by communicating financial strategies to vendors and departmental heads, resulting in increased cohesiveness and improved efficiency
* Increased annual profits by £2.4M by analysing merchandise performance within department and initiating adjustments to increase profitability for in-season sales, and inventory performance (Cute Kids)
* to monitor statistical objectives and increase sales volume resulting in cost-savings of £1.5M in first financial quarter
* Reviewed historical data and joined forces with the buying team to ensure the right collections were placed in store at the right time (Cute Kids)
* Created seasonal financial plans to guarantee optimal inventory investment, increase merchandise flow and reduce markdowns, resulting in ROI of 0.32 to 0.40

**Communication Skills**

* Moved a large proportion of the furniture business from using a UK agent to direct sourcing and developing close relationships with three key Indian vendors, leading to better quality products and more control over the final product – both cost and quality directly impacts our consumers
* Exceptional networking skills ensure that all our products receive appropriate promotional support in high profile publications (including ‘Home and Garden’ and ‘Ideal Home’) and in-store and external advertising campaigns
* Excellent relationship-building skills developed through working cross-functionally across different divisions (supply chain, trend and design, marketing) to ensure successful launches of product ranges and promotions

**CAREER HISTORY**

**REAL WOOD FURNITURE**  2009 - Present

**Senior Buyer**

* Forecasting consumer sales patterns based on sales trends and economic conditions
* Successful turnaround of a fragmented supplier base to established and loyal supplier relationships
* Sole responsibility in new buying areas and markets
* Developed and executed strategies for merchandise assortment and vendor relationships management
* 4 years’ of sourcing FOB and buying trips involving extensive travel to Far East, Europe and India
* Played integral role in recent major launch into the general merchandise category, boosting sales by 30%
* Recruited, trained and motivated new buyers in to the business

**CUTE KIDS** 2004 – 2009

**Senior Buyer and Merchandise Planner**

* Streamlined processes by creating a buying scale and leveraging the international business
* Established direct procurement from European manufacturers to facilitate delivery of direct sourcing strategy
* Responsible for £120M sales across the group with a team of buyers based in the UK, France and Italy
* Delivered increased product quality and reduced costs in accordance with customer expectations as a direct result of developing capability within the team and supply base
* Estimated and bought for each season ensuring season’s successful launch and exit
* Negotiated a reduction in prices of raw materials from our three major supplier
* Reduced the number of reject garments from our suppliers by tackling quality issues at source
* Oversaw five store openings in four months

2000 – 2004 A&B RETAIL, London, *Buyer*

1999 – 2001 C&D RETAIL, Hertfordshire, *Assistant Buyer*

1995 – 1998 E&F RETAIL, Hertfordshire, *Graduate Buyer*

**EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**Fashion Buying and Merchandising BSc (Hons),** Manchester University, 1995

**3 ‘A’ Levels, (History, Art, French),** West Herts Sixth Form, Hertfordshire,1991

**PROFESSIONAL TRAINING**

* Advanced Buying Diploma
* Advanced Negotiation & Relationship Strategies
* Ethical Buying
* Seven Stages of Selling
* Performance Management
* Presentation skills

**INTERESTS**

Photography (particular interest in wildlife and nature), competitive tennis in local tournaments