

# AHMED HAMDI

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## FASHION DESIGN & MERCHANDISING PROFESSIONAL Design & Development ♦ Color Story ♦ Forecasting ♦ Concept Execution

- Creative innovator with an exceptional talent to develop and execute creative designs that command visibility, drive consumer engagement and deliver bottom-line revenue growth.
- A high-performing talent with broad experience in full-scope fashion design and merchandising, consistently demonstrating excellence in product line campaigns from concept development to fabric selection and pattern creation, sketching, color and story boards, sewing, fitting and design team direction.
- Well-rounded design training and hands-on experience with retail, wholesale, private label, and development environments, delivering design, merchandising strategies, brand development and product line portfolio growth; serves critical role as liaison among merchant and marketing business units to execute campaigns with integrity, reliability and loyalty

### KEY STRENGTHS:

Design Direction | Trend Analyses | Concept Development | New Line Launches | Visual Merchandising | Fabric & Trim Selection | Market Research | High-Impact Presentations | Sample Creation & Development | Product Positioning | Collaborative Design Campaigns | Team Mentoring | Computer: Photoshop, Illustrator, CAD Nedgraphics, U4ia, Color Matters, Lectra, Powerpoint, Web PDM/PLM, Filemaker, Sketching, Patternmaking.

## PROFESSIONAL HISTORY

### 03/2020 - Present - Freelance Apparel Design Manager

• Worked on different Design and Product Development projects for various companies, including Walt Disney (Parks and Cruise Lines), Starboard Cruise, Faherty Brands, Star Ride Kids, Shenda Shanghai...

- Concept, design, sketch, prototype (including managing art-to-product, sample creation, fit sessions, and electronic breadboards, where applicable), deliver and present trend-right consumer centric product lines that feature market-leading innovation and great price/value for each tier of the value pyramid.
- Execute product approvals through online systems and collaborative approval meetings, ensuring high quality standards in character execution, in-depth storytelling, color, material, form and function while maximizing profitability, as well as onboard new partners.
- Develop and help design product mock-ups, compile line sheets for line reviews, layout creative presentations, and retail pitch decks.
- Collaborate with internal partners (Creative Design, Brand Merchandising, Licensing Commercialization, Sourcing and Tech Design, Global Product Design teams, BERGs, CBM, Legal, Business Affairs, Product Integrity, Integrated Retail, BPM, Public Affairs, D&I teams, Cultural Consultants) and external partners (Studios & Disney Channel Content Providers, Games, Publishing, WDI, Licensees, DTR Partners) to design and approve all products.
- Monitor competitors, product innovation and market dynamics Research Initial seasonal trends by category.
- Multi-task and prioritize multiple design projects within deadline



## Sr Designer - Men's & Boy's - Private Brands

Charlotte, NC

May, 2017 – March, 2020

- Responsible for all the designs of Men's & Boy's 8-20 for Belk Private Brands (Saddlebred, Crown & Ivy, Ocean & Coast, Zelos, True Craft and MADISON) Activewear, Sportswear, Dress shirts and Furnishing.
- Responsible for the design process of the most complex private apparel brands, with multiple product lines, categories of product and several target Activewear, Outdoor, Sportswear and Dress Shirts and Loungewear lifestyles.
- Lead the South and South East regional market research to identify trends and innovation, develop aspirational apparel and textile designs and articulate the vision for the upcoming season's assortment in alignment with each brands' aesthetic direction and responsible teams.
- Identify and interpreting trend for each brand's commercial success, with strong creative and design capabilities (in-depth knowledge of garment construction, fabric and trim while working with the Belk apparel design teams and the buyers).
- Align each season's design integrity with every brand's in Men's and trickle it down to Boy's 8 to 20 age group through collaboration with the Design team, Buyers, DMM, GMM, Product Managers, Merchants and Vendors, in order to drive differentiation in the marketplace and create assortments that expand the market share of each assigned brand, age group and pricing strategy.
- Own the brand aesthetic from concept to production for all product and assortment needs by owning the design and development process, leading the creation of product and driving the creative direction by executing innovative design solutions, incorporating technology, color, fabric/finish standards, print and pattern, trim and expression of fit for multiple products, demographic based on category.
- Develop monthly flow of Color stories, Textile patterns, Prints and Graphic artwork for each product classifications, within the framework and the stores fixtures of the assortments.
  - plan, to reflect a balance between fashion/trend as well as core and emerging businesses for presentation to and selection by the Merchants and Product Development teams.
  - Work in partnership with overseas vendors, the fabric sourcing and the development teams to achieve costing and aesthetic goals for the seasonal fabric palettes.
  - Independently present seasonal line review with Leadership across Buyers, Apparel Design Teams, Product Development and Merchandising to gain alignment on seasonal assortment.
  - Influence and lead any actions resulting from collaborative conversations throughout the feedback process.
  - Research emerging trends across silhouette, fabric, trim and fit/styling in order to act as a key influencer in driving brand image to strengthen and maintain competitive positioning in consumer market and design product for commercial success.
  - Research, establish, differentiate and communicate technology and fabric platforms for company business category.
  - Introduce new initiatives and innovative ways to update key item programs based on information and inspiration from trade shows, online research, meeting with vendors, conducting competitive and aspirational shopping.
  - Lead collaboration with the apparel design peers to establish solutions for department challenges and new growth opportunities.
  - Shop the market, including our stores, with product management and merchants to promote partnership and increase the understanding of each other's point of view.
  - Collaborate with product management and merchants on a consistent basis to ensure that product has a singular point of view.
  - Ensure teams adhere to the Time & Action calendar for product/category.
  - Manage projects, prioritizes, and delegates to my direct reports.

- Responsible for the capacity planning of my team, identifying roadblocks, while aiding other team in navigating through conflicting timelines and priorities.
- Serve as the project manager of my CAD design team.
- Responsible for identifying and executing opportunities within the product development process for continuous improvement.
- Supervise and provide guidance to my teammates on projects and deliverables, this includes organizing and monitoring workload to ensure priority deliverables are fast tracked.
- Provide direct reports with timely and regular feedback to support teammate development/ growth in role.

**2014 to 03/2017: Freelance Design Consultant. New York, NY**

Contribute expansive design experience and industry expertise to develop and implement private-label products for industry giants, including Nieman Marcus, Nordstrom and others.

- Designed, developed, and launched private label lines that included Nieman Marcus dress shirts, 4 disparate label dress shirts for Nordstrom, sports and kids-wear products.
  - Engaged in-depth research and trend analysis to effectively project consumer demand and develop designs in accordance with stakeholder expectations.
- Source, vet and collaborate with Far East fabric mills and factories to organize design, product development, manufacturing and sales, driving cost-effective measures through complex negotiations while maintaining quality expectations.
- Maintain accountability for all seasonal designs and developments across woven and knit categories, creating distinctive productions that deliver a competitive edge across a dynamic, highly-competitive industry.
- Drive consumer engagement and sales by demonstrating design and product presentations that incorporate customized design and product developments that align with customer ideals.
- Maximize product line and customer success by developing appropriate sales channels, marketing product lines through frequent travel to local and international trade and vendor shows.
- Designed and led a \$70M dress and sportswear division for The Apparel Group (TAG) that included woven and knit tops and bottoms for distribution to Nordstrom, Dillard's, Nieman Marcus, SAKS Off 5<sup>th</sup>, ...

*Ahmed's taste level in our current fashion market has been an asset in ensuring that we maintain our competitive position.*

**Bob S., Smart Apparel US**

**2013 to 2014: NDP/Decotex (Co-Best Group). New York, NY Director of Design, Sales and Business Development**

- Launched, managed and grew the U.S. operations for a China-based weaving mill and manufactory, developing sales channels with key customers, including PVH, Macy's, Joseph A. Bank, Calvin Klein, Tommy Hilfiger, Nordstrom, Target, Kohl's, GAP, A&F, J-Crew, ZARA, Talbot's, UNIQLO, Ralph Lauren, and others.
- Delivered comprehensive oversight and direction of a \$38M office operation, combining business development, operations oversight, marketing and industry expertise to drive growth and establish U.S. presence.
- Established and communicated sales goals and budgets across all U.S. operations, directing cross-functional teams through leadership of design, R&D, production, manufacturing, new product development and portfolio management.
- Collaborated with sales and factory productions to prepare appropriate products that met consumer demand through dynamic seasonal changes and in accordance with customization expectations.
- Fostered positive customer relations through timely and appropriate communication and follow-up, leading strategy meetings to identify roadblocks and customer requirements.

**2011 to 2012: Smart Apparel US. New York, NY**

**• VP of Design & Merchandising – Menswear Woven Shirts and Bottoms**

Delivered fresh ideas and perspective to drive the NYC-based \$300M Menswear woven division of The Younger Group, creating impactful and successful designs, color and trend initiatives for Ralph Lauren, JCP, CLAIBORNE, Land's End, LLBean, Bloomingdales, Thomas Pink, Tommy Hilfiger, and other global houses and retailers.

- Created and launched seasonal concepts, colors and trend materials for collections spaced out to 4 annual campaigns.
- Researched and analyzed retail sources throughout the U.S. and Europe to form color, silhouette and fabric direction, developing comprehensive presentations of trend materials, merchandising concepts and development samples for customer review.

- Protected stakeholder interests by monitoring licensed and private label development calendars while initiating seasonal samples, blanket and handloom development to direct brand line development.
- Coordinated Fabric Mill research with Hong Kong and Ningbo teams, while directing the operations and support teams to develop a comprehensive Sample Library for each season.
- Managed and coordinated branding campaigns to ensure alignment with seasonal lines and unified messaging with headquarters.
- Trickle down labels/brands to value channels mass market accounts, and outlet stores by tweaking designs, fabric content, finishes, washes, etc... while maintaining brand DNA.
- **2007 to 2010: Phillips Van Heusen (IZOD Wholesale Division). New York, NY  
Sr. Designer IZOD Men's Woven Shirts**
- Directed the full line of IZOD men's sportswear collection that incorporated knits, sweaters and bottoms to deliver cohesive product campaigns, delivering approximately \$15M in annual revenues.
- Collaborated with VP of Design and sales teams to ensure product flow, production delivery and quality assurance across the SKU plan.
  - Worked closely with Associate Designer and Merchandiser to ensure all PDM information was conveyed clearly and accurately to reduce/eliminate roadblocks to delivery.
  - Created story boards, inspiration boards and color palettes to align cross-functional operations and ensure a cohesive approach to design and development.
- Partnered with merchandising, production, marketing and sourcing to design and product merchandise that fit within established costing parameters and delivered to the target customer profile and brand strategy.
- Contributed industry expertise and business acumen to drive operational efficiencies, coordinating calendars and SKU plan development to meet critical, hard deadlines.
- Drove sales by presenting brand line overviews to domestic and international licensees, communicating with Hong Kong, India and other global offices to solve production and product development issues.
- Tweaking design, fabrics, fabric content, finishes, washes, etc in order to serve mass market accounts, licensees, and outlet stores designs, ... while maintaining brand DNA.
- Instrumental in delivering 6% sales increases for assigned division.

*Ahmed's European and American upbringing gives him a strong eclectic eye that suits the type of product which is developed for a global taste level.*

**Malcolm R., Phillips-Van Heusen**

#### **Additional Career Experience:**

Creative Director: Epic Designers. Hong Kong, China Senior

Designer: Romax Apparel, Ltd. Hong Kong, China Menswear

Designer: B.J.D., Inc. Los Angeles, CA

Assistant Designer: Webers Holland. Amsterdam, Holland

## **EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Master of Exceptional Presentations | Baker Communications, Inc. New York, NY

Certificate in Computer Aided Design | California Design College. Los Angeles, CA

B.T.S in Fashion Design | Atelier Chardon Savard De La Mode. Paris, France

B.A in Fashion Design | Institut De Mode et De Design. Tunis, Tunisia