

Susan B. Simmons

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Operations Manager - Buyer - Business Development Manager

Proven top performer with start-up and Fortune 500 experience. Unique blend of purchasing, managerial and operational expertise with advanced skills in strategic planning, international negotiations, product development and resource allocation. Innovative inspirational leader of retail operations with a proven ability to drive business growth through aggressive sales initiatives, market trend analysis and market penetration. Talent for designing and launching programs that produce profitable product lines targeted to niche markets, delivering significant sales growth and profitability.

Experience and Accomplishments

W.A.I., Inc. – Reno, NV.

1996-2006

A leading manufacturer of women's apparel.

President/CEO

Directed all facets of the manufacturing, purchasing and sales initiatives for the company. Provided direction for trending product lines, sales strategies, and coordinated overseas manufacturing with domestic production. Traveled to the Orient to qualify factories for production, negotiate costs, develop partnerships and source new opportunities.

- Gathered worldwide color and trend information for product development, communicating seasonal trends.
- Identified private-label opportunities. Leading the development through product design, sourcing, merchandising, and the sales process.
- Customized and initiated the implementation of "AIMS", a sophisticated apparel software program to enhance production, improve customer service communication and upgrade inventory information.
- Successfully grew company to a \$10 million organization within a six year period.
- Recognized for two consecutive years as one of the 500 fastest growing companies by "INC. Magazine."
- Successfully established a strategic partnership with Neiman Marcus Stores, QVC, Harvey's Casinos, and Harrah's Entertainment.
- Spearheaded the development of the "Ica Designs" brand becoming one of the most recognizable names in the industry.

NEIMAN MARCUS – Las Vegas, NV.

1993-1996

Full line department store.

Senior Operations Manager

P & L responsibility for a 250,000 square foot store with sales of \$64 million. Improved operational efficiencies, managed financial resources and operating expenses while maintaining budgetary constraints to ensure profitability. Allocated management resources and sales associates to meet sales volumes, departmental requirements, and seasonal needs.

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NEIMAN MARCUS, Las Vegas, NV. continued

1993-1996

Senior Operations Manager

- Coordinated and led the Southwest Regional “Asset Protection Program”.
- Implemented the “Floor Ready” merchandise handling program to ensure maximum efficiency of selling and non-selling areas.
- Received the regional “Store of Excellence” award for achieving the highest percent increase in sales over plan.
- Achieved the second highest percentage increase in EBIT in the Southwest Region, with a 44 % increase.
- Motivated and led a productive customer service oriented team of support associates, many receiving continuous accolades and promotions for superior performance.
- Coordinated and supervised several capital projects to enhance and improve the physical plant.

NEIMAN MARCUS, Reno, NV.

1991-1993

Assistant Operations Manager

Maintained day-to-day operations of the physical plant including building maintenance and floor standards.

- Ensured merchandise receipts and delivery followed “Floor Ready” program.
- Monitored expenses for exceptions and irregularities.
- Led training and development of non-selling associates.

NEIMAN MARCUS, Phoenix, AZ.

1990-1991

Buyer Women’s Knitwear

Responsible for the buying and merchandising of a multi-million dollar Women’s Sportswear Department for the Southwest region.

- Analyzed sales trends to forecast product and store needs while working within departmental budget allocations.
- Developed strong relationships with vendors, negotiating costs to meet gross margin goals.
- Performed demographic and market analysis to identify markets and developed business plans to capitalize on potential growth areas.

NEIMAN MARCUS, Carson City, NV.

1985-1990

Divisional Merchandise Manager

- Supervised and ten Department Managers overseeing the development and training of sales personnel.
- Continuously exceeded sales goals and improved floor standards while scheduling sales associates for maximum productivity and floor coverage.
- Coordinated merchandising plans and sales objectives to achieve store goal initiatives.

Education

Master of Business Administration, Finance
Bachelor of Science, Finance

University of Nevada
University of Nevada

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SENIOR OPERATIONS / BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT EXECUTIVE

President / COO / Vice President / General Manager

Start-up Entrepreneurial Ventures / Turnaround Businesses / High-Growth Organizations

Performance-driven Senior Executive offering 20 years' comprehensive achievements across Manufacturing, Purchasing and Retail disciplines. Leverage business acumen across diverse cultures and economies. Develop performance-based, low-cost solutions through aggressive negotiations with new and existing suppliers. Recognized for ability to incorporate innovative management techniques that result in enhanced business practices, increased productivity, and profits. Proven success in sales and marketing through expertise in business development and strategic planning capabilities. MBA / BS in Finance. Available for travel.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP COMPETANCIES

- P&L Management / Improvement
- Budgeting / Cost Controls
- Strategic Planning & Growth
- Manufacturing & Operations
- New Business Development
- Purchasing Management
- Supplier / Vendor Relations
- Workflow Optimization
- Staff Management & Training
- Inventory Management
- Product / Brand Development
- Performance Improvement

TRACK RECORD OF SUCCESS

- Lead cross-functional teams that collaborate as a focused unit to achieve aggressive business goals and drive the evolution of concepts into achievable business strategies.
- Effectively manage manufacturing / production process with close attention to budgets, timeframes, quality, and product specifications.
- Identify and capitalize on new growth opportunities through market analysis, product / brand development expertise, and keen business instincts.
- Develop and implement strategies that increase product awareness, market share and profitability.
- Expert in building productive sourcing relationships across North America, South America and Asia.

CAREER BACKGROUND

WAI, INC., Reno, Nevada

1996 – 2006

Manufacturer of Women's Apparel serving the US and Caribbean Basin with \$10 million in annual revenue.

President

Directed overall operations and P&L management for 25,000 sq. ft. manufacturing facility comprised of 30 employees. Established performance indicators, operating goals, realignment initiatives, productivity improvements, and cost reduction programs that consistently improved product output, product quality and customer satisfaction. Functional areas of management involved strategic planning, human resources, business development, marketing, sales, product management, and finance. Traveled extensively across South America and Asia to form strategic alliances with new vendors.

Selected Achievements:

- Grew business from a \$300,000 per year "mom and pop" shop to a \$10 million per year company in 6 years.
- Conceived, designed, and implemented (AIMS) state of the art apparel software program resulting in 33% increase in production, 15% reduction in inventory levels, and improved customer service levels.
- Conceptualized and developed the "Ica Designs" brand, recognized as a leading name in women's apparel.

- Built key accounts with QVC, Neiman Marcus Stores, Harrah's Entertainment, and Harvey's Casinos, representing 55% of total sales revenues.
- Reengineered manufacturing processes, increasing production by 6,500 units per month.
- Recognized two consecutive years on the Inc. 500 list of the nation's fastest-growing private companies.

Neiman Marcus, Las Vegas, Nevada

1985 – 1996

A division of Federated Department Stores, the nation's largest department store operator with \$27 billion in annual revenue.

Senior Operations Manager (1993-1996)

Promoted to direct all business operations for 250,000 sq. ft. department store with \$64 million annual sales volume and 200+ employees. Managed all fiscal responsibilities; prepared and reviewed budgets. Developed and implemented sales programs. Analyzed market trends and oversaw merchandising and store layout. Controlled Payroll budget of \$12 million. Supervised three senior executives and two department managers.

Selected Achievements:

- Improved EBIT by 44%, achieving the second highest percentage of increase in the Southwest region.
- Ranked No. 2 in the company for Asset Protection Team Audits.
- Awarded regional "Store of Excellence", attaining the second highest percentage of increase in sales.
- Reduced overtime usage to the second lowest across the Southwest region.
- Managed capital improvement projects for store renovations in excess of \$150,000.
- Championed "Floor Ready" merchandising program to maximize efficiency of selling and non-selling areas.

1985 – 1993: Fast track promotions in earlier career at Neiman Marcus included positions as Assistant Operations Manager, Buyer, and Divisional Merchandising Manager with accountability for human resources, purchasing operations, vendor relations, merchandise planning, market/sales analyses, and customer service.

ACADEMIC PREPARATION

University of Nevada, Reno, Nevada

Master of Business Administration, Finance

Bachelor of Science, Finance