

**MICHAEL LEVA**  
RESUME

# EXECUTIVE CREATIVE DIRECTOR

**25+ YEARS OF MULTI-CHANNEL LUXURY & MASS MARKET LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE: APPAREL, ACCESSORIES, FOOTWEAR, AND HOME.**

**LAUNCHED THREE NEW BRANDS, BUILT TWO DESIGN ORGANIZATIONS FROM THE GROUND UP & RESTYLED VASTLY UNDERPERFORMING BUSINESS TO RESTORE PROFITABILITY, TRIPLING BRAND'S VALUATION.**

Bring deep expertise in uncovering and capitalizing on unique brand essence, aesthetics and key differentiators to advance the business. Develop customer/product focused strategies, and optimize quality/value equation to shape/strategically position brand in the marketplace. Fully keyed into all aspects of the business and product lifecycle, from concept through in-store merchandising. Establish clear and inspired brand vision, and assemble highly talented teams to deliver on direction and manage execution consistency.

## CORE EXECUTIVE STRENGTHS

TOP LINE SALES &  
IMU GROWTH

CREATIVE/  
BUSINESS ALIGNMENT

BUILDS/REFRESHES/  
REINVENTIONS

BOLD DESIGN  
INNOVATION

TREND RESEARCH/  
FORECASTING

CONCEPT/COLOR/FABRIC/  
SILHOUETTE/FIT DIRECTION

ORGANIZATIONAL  
DESIGN

TEAM BUILD/  
DEVELOPMENT

CROSS-FUNCTIONAL  
COLLABORATION

## DESIGN/PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE & IMPACT

**SEA STAR BEACHWEAR | NEW YORK, NY | 2014-2019**

### CO-OWNER & CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER

Co-founded highly successful and exclusive brand-recognized accessories company developing and marketing ultra-chic, water-friendly resort and summer sport shoe online and in hand-picked U.S. and international retail locations. Created aspirational vision and singlehandedly developed brand identity for stylish beach shoe, executing brand strategy in unique market to position product as ultimate 'adventurer' lifestyle shoe for men, women and kids. Developed modern, visually stunning online platform—and digital marketing campaigns—attracting and engaging the company's ideal customer. Penetrated premier retailers, including Nordstrom, J. Crew, and Crew Cuts, achieving impressive sell through and consistent track record of doubling sales every quarter since inception.

- Led extensive product development, design, and engineering efforts to develop proprietary fabric, classic-inspired shoe noted for seamlessly combining aesthetics, utility, and quality.
- Harnessed and leveraged the power of social media, creating engaging, targeted campaigns to increase brand awareness, drive website traffic, and build customer loyalty; dedicated social media marketing efforts continue to notably increase followers and generate new, high-visibility retail accounts.
- Secured Nordstrom as first major affordable luxury retailer to represent modern lifestyle brand, rolling out to 9 locations from 6 initially, and achieving 70% sell through average in 5 weeks; achieved 75% sell through in 2 weeks upon Crew Cuts launch; since premiering product in Everything But Water swimwear boutiques in December, expanded from 3 to 30 locations throughout U.S.
- Oversee sales teams dedicated to expanding brand's international reach—currently in Australia, Italy, and Scandinavia—with efforts focused on luxury vacation destinations, including the South of France.
- Spearheaded PR efforts, garnering product and company coverage in premier publications, including *The New York Times*, *Town & Country*, and *InStyle*.

**VICTORIA'S SECRET BEAUTY AND PINK | FRAGRANCES, COSMETICS & SCENTED BODY CARE**  
NEW YORK, NY | 2013-2014

**SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, CREATIVE & CONCEPT**

TREND, CONCEPT, PACKAGING, GRAPHIC DESIGN & PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT | 42-MEMBER TEAM

**RETAINED BY PRESIDENT AS A CONSULTANT IN JANUARY 2013 AND APPOINTED TO FULL-TIME EXECUTIVE AFTER 6 MONTHS. RECRUITED TO ESTABLISH A CLEAR, COMPELLING BRAND VISION, REVITALIZE STAGNANT AND UNDERPENETRATED BEAUTY DIVISION, POSITION BRAND AS A LUXURY, ASPIRATIONAL MARKET LEADER AND ACHIEVE GROWTH OF \$300M WITHIN 2 YEARS.**

- Conducted in-depth brand assessment and competitive market analysis to create well-defined, differentiated brand positioning and product concepts. Capitalized on brand's market power, customer affinity and core essence, with an emphasis on sexy and confident, to create foundational brand pillars and customer mood spaces for renewed product direction—*Signature, Very Sexy* and *Angel*.
- Led transformation from product imitator to innovator and reversed oversaturated market strategy—with product launches every 6 months—to create sense of brand rarity and exclusivity.
- Focusing on luxury and quality at accessible price points, reimaged 4 tired products for market relaunch with new scents, bottles, packaging and gifting strategy and developed 3 new winning products. Elevated level of sexy and sophistication and partnered with European manufacturers to develop new glass technology as a point of distinction.
- With minimal advertising investment, introduced award-winning (2 Fragrance Foundation Awards) and now brand's #2 fragrance, "Victoria"—company's first tribute to its brand namesake—that delivered \$1M in sales within first month of launch and outperformed Estée Lauder's new "Modern Muse" and Tory Burch's fragrance premiere.
- Scheduled for Holiday 2014 launch and with a \$1B market potential, reimaged "Fantasies Collection" scented bodycare. Significantly edited line, reintroducing 10 customer favorites and 5 new scents along with stylish metallic color-coded packaging.
- Relunched "Very Sexy" fragrance, pairing with new "Night" fragrance and introducing summer version, "Beach Sexy." Successfully reimaged "Heavenly" to move to #1 revenue position.
- For the first time, leveraged Victoria's Secret Angels as beauty spokespersons and initiated beauty product integration at fashion shows and in marketing campaigns.

**C. WONDER | START-UP, SPECIALTY RETAIL BRAND APPAREL, ACCESSORIES & HOME DÉCOR/SMALL ELECTRICS | NEW YORK, NY**

**VICE PRESIDENT, CREATIVE DIRECTOR**

DESIGN & PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT 19-MEMBER TEAM | 2011-2013

**HIRED BY PRESIDENT TO DEFINE CORE AESTHETICS AND ESTABLISH CREATIVE VISION FOR NEW, BETTER PRICED BRAND LAUNCH.**

Designed new organizational structure and built team from the ground up. Developed concept, color, fabric, silhouette and fit direction across all product categories. Established clear point of market distinction through unique/compelling merchandise assortment, product packaging and store design. Created luxurious, exciting and cost-effective store environment to attract and engage customers, heightening the in-store shopping experience.

Pioneered exploitation of color across product mix, marketing and store design to create signature Brand identify. Initiated and developed key item strategy; reengineered fit and style of core, business driving categories; and partnered with merchant team to build productive assortments. Collaborated with Marketing to develop "big ideas", conceptualize and style web photo shoots and design direction for in-store collateral.

**J. JILL | \$480M BUSINESS | STORES, ECOMMERCE & CATALOG | APPAREL, ACCESSORIES & FOOTWEAR | QUINCY, MA**

**SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT**

DESIGN, TECHNICAL DESIGN & PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT 54-MEMBER TEAM | 2007-2011

**RECRUITED BY CEO TO LEAD BRAND CONCEPT AND MERCHANDISE DIRECTION, AND SERVE ON 4-MEMBER EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE TO REFRESH IMAGE AND RESTORE BUSINESS TO EARLIER PEAK PERFORMING YEARS.**

Within 2-year period, reversed \$32M profitability loss to realize profit gains of \$52M, delivered IMU growth of 6% to achieve margins of 78%, and tripled Company's valuation. Through introduction of refreshed and expanded assortments, new fabrics, silhouettes, fits and design details, returned Brand to original core aesthetics while updating relevance for modern customer. Reenergized and redirected teams to develop best-in-class design and product development organization. Drove significant improvements in design inspiration, product quality, work processes and employee engagement.

Turned around two underpenetrated business categories by reimagining collections, growing sales by \$54M+ - more than tripling combined volume. Launched 18-piece lifestyle collection focused on natural fabrics, comfort and wearability, introduced new complementary fitness collection, and modernized core, coordinating fashion assortment.

Grew denim business from \$3.8M to \$16M by readjusting fit and introducing fashionable styles to achieve greater alignment with customer profile. Restyled silhouettes and fit for key items, and established new strategic partnership with Italian yarn spinner to leverage higher quality materials for production in China.

**FEDERATED MERCHANDISING GROUP | \$350M ALFANI BRAND | 300+ MACY'S & BLOOMINGDALE'S STORES | NEW YORK, NY**

**VICE PRESIDENT**

DESIGN & PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT | 24-MEMBER TEAM | 1994-2007

**RECRUITED BY EVP, GMM OF PRIVATE LABEL DIVISION TO SERVE ON 3-MEMBER EXECUTIVE TEAM AND DEVELOP BRAND AESTHETICS, DESIGN CONCEPT AND ORGANIZATION FOR NEW ALFANI COLLECTION.**

Spearheaded launch of new, European inspired collection for the modern career woman that fueled business growth strategy and redefined private label benchmarks across competitive landscape. Within 5-year period, grew business to \$350M through groundbreaking introduction of stretch fabrics, minimalist color palettes, fresh silhouettes and streamlined fit. Initially launched apparel collection for men and women, and later introduced new and expanded merchandise categories to include accessories, footwear and intimate apparel.

## ADDITIONAL CREATIVE/ *DESIGN EXPERIENCE &* INDUSTRY RECOGNITION

**MICHAEL LEVA, LLC** | FOUNDER & OWNER | NEW YORK, NY & JAPAN ACCOMPLISHED & CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED DESIGNER | 1986-1994

EARLIER DESIGNER EXPERIENCE AT **BILL BLASS** IN NY AND **FRANCE ANDREVIE** IN PARIS INSPIRED LAUNCH OF INDEPENDENT FASHION LABEL FOR WOMEN'S MODERN & SOPHISTICATED LUXURY SPORTSWEAR.

Over 8-year period, achieved remarkable success, growing into widely recognizable brand in the luxury market and multi-million dollar business. Earned coveted position in luxury department stores: Barneys New York, Bergdorf Goodman, Saks Fifth Avenue and Nordstrom, and sold to 30+ specialty stores in major metropolitan cities across US. Gained regular media attention with features in fashion publication editorial spreads: *Vogue*, *Harpers Bazaar* and *The New York Times*. Commissioned by Miki Corporation in Japan to design exclusive bridge collection with modern and artistic flair for young career women, with line carried in 285 stores across Japan.

**CONTRIBUTING EDITOR** | MARTHA STEWART LIVING MAGAZINE | 1991-1992 DEVELOPED AND EXECUTED ORIGINAL CONCEPTS FOR COVERS AND FEATURE STORIES

**TALENTED & DISTINGUISHED HOME/GARDEN DESIGNER** | NYC & CT HOMES CELEBRATED ON COVERS, EDITORIALS & FEATURE STORIES IN FASHION BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

**ELLE DECOR** | OCTOBER 2012 FASHION ISSUE & OCTOBER 2004

**STYLE AND SUBSTANCE, THE BEST OF ELLE DECOR** | 2009 HEARST PUBLICATIONS WRITTEN BY MARGARET RUSSELL

**SO CHIC, GLAMOROUS LIVES, STYLISH SPACES** | 2007 HEARST PUBLICATIONS WRITTEN BY MARGARET RUSSELL

**HOUSE BEAUTIFUL** | MAY 1997

**GARDEN CONSERVANCY** | OPEN DAYS PROGRAM | SELECTED AMONG NATION'S TOP GARDENS TO SERVE AS ANNUAL HOST FOR GROUNDS TOUR

**PUBLISHED AUTHOR** | 10,000 COPIES SOLD INTERNATIONALLY. RECIPES FOR PARTIES: MENUS, FLOWERS, DECOR: EVERYTHING FOR PERFECT ENTERTAINING, 2012 A HIP, MODERN RECIPE BOOK ON MASTERING ESSENTIALS OF ENTERTAINING

## *EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL* ORGANIZATION AFFILIATIONS

**RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL OF DESIGN** | BACHELOR OF FINE ARTS, APPAREL DESIGN

**FASHION DESIGNERS OF AMERICA** | CFDA | 1987-PRESENT

MEMBER OF ADMISSIONS & SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEES