



Richa Kirpalani

Design & Product Development | R&D Development | Production | Atelier Management | People & Team Management

London, UK

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Links

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Languages

English (Fluent)

Hindi (Fluent)

About

A dynamic, professional and results focused Head of Product development, spanning a decade of successful track record specializing in womenswear and experience in menswear product development across RTW and couture brands. Developing from initial concept to pre-production stage, whilst managing the entire product lifecycle.

I am a consumer focused team player, with excellent communication skills who seeks to build supportive, inclusive working relationships for myself and my team. I can build strong relationships, with stakeholders and teams across all levels of an organisation and I am best known for my resilience and 'can do' attitude, great attention to detail and a strong drive to deliver.

As a process improvement evangelist, I continue to drive operational efficiencies across my line of business, evidenced by my innate ability to break down barriers, remove blockers and identify new and improved ways of working throughout the development lifecycle and wider production space.

A fashion enthusiast with a deep understanding on the importance of sustainability in the world of fashion.

Selected Key Achievements:

* Implemented a cost management reporting solution for Rebecca Taylor's Product Development Department, highlighting seasonal spending allocations across domestic and offshore suppliers, providing key insight and analytics for better decision making and future spending controls.

* Improved overall process and communication across Embellishment and Design teams at Rebecca Taylor which saw an 80% increase on embellishments completed on time with lower leakage costs.

* Introduced new SOP's for early development testing for fabric shrinkage, testing for interlinings and colorfastness.

* Developed approximately forty-five collections across Rebecca Taylor, Marchesa, Helmut Lang and Mira Mikati to date.

* Responsible for identifying and implementing a new team structure and roles across the atelier, driving creative freedom and demand management at Mira Mikati.

* Ensured price consistency across all collections resulting in continuous profit margin growth at Mira Mikati.

BRANDS WORKED WITH

- Clues Fashions
- HELMUT LANG
- Kaushik Velendra
- Marchesa
- Mira Mikati Full-Time
- NOUNIFORM
- Rebecca Taylor
- Sew4good Greenwich (Volunteer Group)

Experience



● Head of Operations

Kaushik Velendra | Dec 2021 - Now

Manage the day-to-day operations of the business across all areas such as Product Development, Production, VIP & Celebrity Clients, Atelier, PR, Sales, Events, E-commerce, Headquarters, Lifestyle & hospitality, and community.

Responsible for the development of AW22 collection from sketch

through to final sample, whilst sourcing and securing raw materials, special trim, and embroidery development.

Oversee the development and production calendar to ensure deadlines are being adhered to and provide additional support as necessary. Hired additional staff for the atelier during LFW and special projects.

Played a key role in private client appointments by supporting the sales team and facilitating fittings for bespoke made to measure orders. Worked on special VIP & Celebrity requests whilst adhering to budget, timeline, and requirements.

Successfully planned and executed major events for the brand i.e., Headquarters launch party, LFW show in February 2022, Saturday book club in partnership with BFC, and a cocktail evening for the South Asian Gallery, all within the allocated budget, timeline, and standards of the brand.

Played a key role in onboarding new hires, training and addressed day to day HR related queries.

● Co-Founder & Head of Product Development (Volunteering)

Sew4Good Greenwich (Volunteer Group) | Apr 2020 - Feb 2021

Sew4Good Greenwich is a volunteer led initiative underpinned by a team of 40 passionate volunteers who combine their skill, experience and passion for volunteering entrepreneurship amidst the current Covid-19 pandemic. Sew4Good Greenwich focuses on providing scrubs and other essential products to frontline workers across the Royal Borough of Greenwich, London and surrounding areas.

Product ranges include Scrubs, Non-Surgical Face Masks and Ear Saving Headbands.

Richa Kirpalani, with fellow co-founder and textiles evangelist Nicola Fleming recently started the volunteer led initiative on the back of increasing demand for scrubs and other items to support a wide array of facilities, including hospitals, local GP surgeries, GP practices, care homes and hospices.

During the initial stages of development, Sew4Good Greenwich received donations of bedding linen which were up-cycled and turned into scrubs and ear saving headbands. As demand increased, Sew4Good Greenwich then received further donations of fabric rolls from the wider community, including friends and neighbors to help fulfill additional requests.

To date, we have produced 1500 units and continue to support our local community in the fight against COVID-19.
[see less](#)

● Head of Product Development and Collections

Mira Mikati Full-Time | May 2019 - Jun 2021

Spearheaded product development and collection management across four core collections. Managing a team of two full-time designers, and multiple freelancers to achieve on time delivery.

Creation and maintenance of critical path for main collections and capsule collaboration including Swarovski, Superga, Dabs Myla and Javier Calleja.

Managed Product Development lifecycle from initial sketch through to preproduction working in partnership with multiple stakeholders.

Attended fabric textile fairs in support of research and development for upcoming collections.

Launched seasonal prints, embroideries, appliques and patches, aligning these with price targets.

Continuous evaluation throughout entire lifecycle of raw materials, new developments and designs to ensure best quality and price targets are met.

Successfully implemented sustainability initiatives across knitwear, denim and cut & sew jersey, resulting in 30% of the collection being eco-friendly over a one-year period.

Responsible for pre-pricing the entire collection prior to production pricing and working alongside production, sales and creative director to ensure optimum pricing across all collections.



● Product Development Manager

HELMUT LANG | Feb 2017 - Nov 2017

Played a key role, collaborating within the seasonal development for woven, tailoring and cut & sew categories from initial conception through to delivery for women's and men's wear, this encompassed developing and implementing new testing methods to ensure a high standard of quality as well as ensuring efficient delivery in-line with time scales and SLAs.

Successfully managed multidisciplinary teams of 7 pattern makers and 10 sample makers, overseeing productivity and prioritisation of workloads as well as the cutting room, resolving pattern and fabric issues through to resolution.

Oversaw the Product Development team, providing training and guidance to upskill the team, ensuring all daily targets met to achieve a 100% punctuality rate.

Reported directly to the SVP, planning and developing weekly roadmaps with teams and cutting room supervisors to assist design needs and driving overall productivity to provide direction.

Developed and implemented strategies, throughout the product and sample development phases, implementing new processes for early development testing for fabric shrinkage, testing for fusible, trim quality and fabric testing for colourfastness, achieving a reduction 40% in costs.

Introduced new style adoption processes during development of collections, whilst also driving all cross-functional teams to produce and deliver more accurately, ensuring costs were available much earlier for sales and merchandising team.

Liaised with all cross-functional teams during the early stages of development to plan overall activities and introduced new production monitoring methods, collaborating with production team for special techniques, placed prints, special wash trials, pleating trials and patchwork.

Coordinated with overseas production factories for the special program development from prototype to Showroom Samples (SMS) for line opening, monitoring sample packages to ensure on time delivery.

Managed pre-fit schedules with patternmakers to amend any necessary changes and coordinated weekly development and production fit schedules.

Liaised with trim and fabric departments regarding replenishment of materials through development and post-development stages.

Managed studio hours and weekly schedules, tracking approvals for all holidays, from SVP and handoff to design director assistant for record keeping.

Oversaw special collections as well as standard production as well as resource and capacity management, liaising with SVP and HR teams to ensure optimal resources available.



● Atelier Manager

Marchesa | May 2016 - Aug 2016

Played a key role developing and implementing strategies to ensure optimum productivity of the atelier, effectively managing resources to ensure smooth operations of couture, note, bridal and special orders.

Effectively managed atelier work schedules including project assignments, pattern rotation, staff timetabling, vacation cover, absenteeism and overtime.

Provided key support within product development, liaising with patternmakers and the design team, ensuring delivery of all first pieces in house and sending duplicates out to local factories.

Collaborated with patternmakers to ensure effective production with detailed sewing instructions and yields for costing purposes.

Attended development fittings across multiple collections and special orders, advising on production concerns, style changes, continuity and sizing, effectively managing and mitigating risks.



● Product Development Associate

HELMUT LANG | Jan 2015 - May 2016

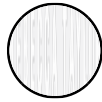
Oversaw a multidisciplinary team of 12 sample makers and 7 pattern makers, ensuring enhanced productivity through workload prioritisation and managing all cutting room activity and pattern/fabric issues through to resolution.

Responsible for outerwear and tailoring prototype development through to final sample, ensuring timely delivery of milestones and goals, working closely with design and domestic factories to deliver their needs for the season.

Developed packages for sample facilities, this encompassed raw material validation, evaluating samples with a critical eye for aesthetic details, communicating corrections to cross-functional teams.

Collaborated with the Development Technical Designer to develop new techniques and garment finishing and to identify improvement areas.

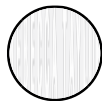
Successfully managed department PO's and invoices for all domestic vendors, this encompassed; monitoring and updating the tracker chart, ensuring all activity in line with budgeting.



● Sr. Product Development Coordinator

Rebecca Taylor | Apr 2014 - Dec 2014

Worked effectively as a member of a cross functional team to ensure development of all products across woven, cut & sew and knitwear, whilst specializing in embellishment development. Developed initial prototypes overseas and managed multiple sets of showroom samples by arranging all materials and trims to off shore and domestic factories. Responsible for creating cost sheets and generating pre-costings for each delivery for managements use. Implemented seasonal sample set budgets and annual budget report, highlighting development spending. Assisted in management of the atelier, prepped for weekly fittings and handled all administrative responsibilities for the team.



● Atelier & Product Development Coordinator

Rebecca Taylor | Aug 2011 - Oct 2014

Worked effectively as a member of a cross functional team to ensure development of all products across woven, cut & sew and knitwear.- Developed initial prototypes overseas and managed multiple sets of showroom samples by arranging all materials and trims to off shore and domestic factories. Responsible for creating cost sheets and generating pre-costings for each delivery for management use. Implemented seasonal sample set budgets and annual budget report, highlighting development spending. Assisted in management of the atelier, prepped for weekly fittings and handled all administrative responsibilities for the team.

● Assistant Designer

Clues Fashions | Feb 2011 - May 2011

Assisted in fabric and trim sourcing, trend research, building mood boards for current and new seasons. Designed two collections (Fall and Winter Holiday) whilst simultaneously working on special capsules for selective accounts. Volunteered to support production team with daily communication with overseas factories, mills and vendors, commercial invoicing, bill of landing and requesting approvals for all shipping samples



● Head of Product Development

NOUNIFORM | Oct 2022 - Now

Successfully set up entire Product Development function across the company, including hiring, training and development and operational processes for Product Development.

- Managed multiple critical paths across menswear, womenswear, accessories and shoes.
- Delivered 7 bespoke capsule collections to date for a range of luxury hotel clients across the UK and overseas.
- Advisory business consulting to drive optimisation across all departments, including design, production, finance and commercial.
- Responsibility to lead and drive forward the NO Uniform supply chain strategy during a period of significant international expansion.
- Work closely with factories across the supply chain and suggest solutions to enhance quality, value, and compliance.
- Responsible for all additional freelance staffing requirements, including pattern cutters, seamstresses, print designers and

fabric consulting and sourcing.

- Pricing strategy: Developed and implemented pricing strategies for products based on market analysis, competition, cost analysis, and target customer demographics.
- Budgeting: Creating and managing budgets for product development projects and ensuring that expenses are within the allocated budget.
- Pricing communication: Communicating pricing decisions and strategies to internal stakeholders, such as sales and marketing teams, and external stakeholders.
- Revenue management: Managing revenue streams and identifying opportunities to increase revenue through pricing strategies and product development initiatives.

Education & Training

- 2017 - 2017 ● **London College of Fashion, University of the Arts London**
Certification, Fashion Sustainability
- 2009 - 2010 ● **Wood Tobe Coburn**
Associate, Fashion Design
- 2006 - 2007 ● **Indiana University Bloomington**
Apparel Merchandising, Apparel Merchandising