

**MKTG 8604**

**New Frontiers in Retailing: Magic and Logic**

**The Evolving Role of Brick-and-Mortar in Retail**

Cara Placentra  
Cristina Rodriguez  
Karen Grunbaum  
Nikita Gulati

May 2022

**Columbia Business School**

Advised by: Prof. Oliver Chen and Prof. Kinshuk Jerath

## **Executive Summary**

The importance of the physical store has been reconfirmed post-pandemic. Despite the rise in ecommerce as a product of the pandemic, customers are now rapidly returning to out-of-home experiences like shopping and travel. Physical retail stores are the perfect combination of magic and logic, and retailers are just starting to really zoom in on what this means for their brand.

Interestingly firms that started off with a strong foothold exclusively as DTC brands have now opened physical stores to create an inhouse experience. Simultaneously, legacy retailers, such as Nordstrom, have invested in launching new store concepts, “Nordstrom Local,” which are hyper-localized neighborhood hubs in target markets. The message is clear and consistent: physical stores can add new dimensions in this era. The takeaway is that regardless of the roots of a brand being either DTC or retailer at inception, brick and mortar clearly stands as an opportunity to invest in developing physical experiences that customers can share via social media or try in the Metaverse.

First, we look at the increasing role of brick-and-mortar on social media. Brands aren’t just creating special experiences for their customers; they are creating these experiences and installations in the hopes that customers post them to their social channels. We highlight Glossier and the new Showfields lifestyles stores as best in class examples of in-store experience driving social and online engagement. We also discuss the challenge that comes with this movement – if stores’ purposes are changing, what are the correct KPIs to use for store performance and is it a focus on engagement rather than sales.

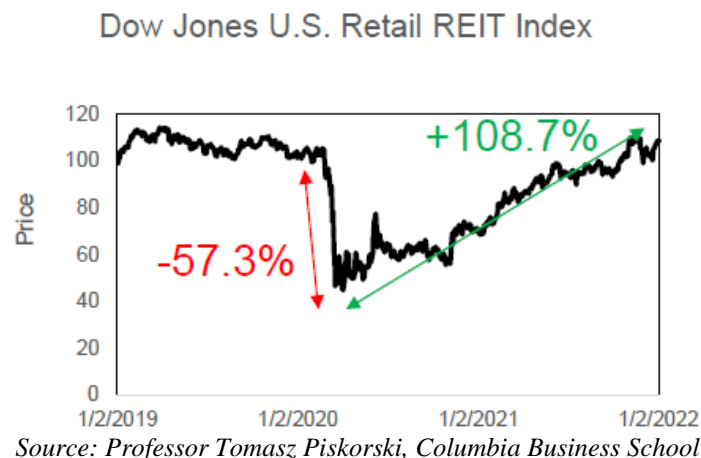
Next, we discuss that the metaverse will allow for a major transformation of the customer experience and not just online, but also via physical stores. Sensor-driven heatmaps can help businesses identify the most and least trafficked sections of stores. From there, businesses can quickly diagnose drivers of underperforming areas – whether that be traffic, product assortment, or overall conversion. The metaverse can also be used as a supplement for areas without a physical store or serve as an extension of smaller stores. The challenges posed by the Metaverse have not even been fully discovered yet, however, those that we have identified include customer privacy issues and the need to develop new KPIs for this new environment.

Lastly, we discuss that those who win in physical retail will be those who are also dedicated to the logic of retail via testing and iterating. We discuss Amazon’s new retail format for fashion & apparel showing how much they value brick-and-mortar despite their failures in bookstores and other formats.

## **Introduction**

For years, those critical of brick-and-mortar retail were unsure of the future of the physical store. As a larger percentage of sales moved online, it seemed it would become a thing of the past. However, in a (somewhat) post-COVID world, we now see what an important role physical stores will continue to play. McKinsey noted in December 2021 that consumer spend in stores continued to recover with 10% year-on-year growth. The same study noted that almost half of US consumers are engaging in out-of-home activity like shopping compared to 1/3 in February

2021.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, in the graph below, the Dow Jones US Retail REIT index saw an almost complete recovery in price, signaling that public sentiment for this sector has improved. All evidence that physical stores are the perfect combination of magic & logic to provide a special experience for customers. Nowadays, customers are dazzled by displays curated for their Instagram or TikTok feeds. Saks Fifth Avenue's newly renovated leather goods floor with iridescent escalators designed by Dutch architecture firm OMA begs to be featured in your next Instagram story. As we will discuss later, the metaverse will unlock new ways to drive the logic side of the equation through customer data collection in-store and the ways which personalization will play an important role in the customer experience.



### **Hypothesis I: Brick-and-Mortar as a Social Engagement Driver**

Brick-and-Mortar retail is increasingly used as a social media and customer engagement tool: it is evolving to be an extension of a brand's purpose and remains an extremely emotional experience for consumers. Social media will propel brick and mortar to evolve particularly through its physical design as brick and mortar has become an avenue and tool for brands to interact with the consumer physically. It is quite literally the "theatre" of it all and in a more social world than ever before, consumers want to not just experience it, but show it off online. The numbers don't lie either: worldwide, social commerce generated ~\$475B USD in revenue in 2020 with an expected CAGR 28.5 from 2021-2028 (Statista). It all goes back to the magic and logic of it all – online shopping encompasses the convenience, the instant gratification, and the new way to shop, yet consumers now crave unique experiences. Social media just reinforces this all. Brick and mortar stores recognize this and are testing out technologies such as live streaming from stores and augmented reality to then incentivize customers to purchase online. It is this complementary framework and cycle: the brick-and-mortar store influencing the online consumer and vice versa.

A good example of experience being at the center is something the iconic Glossier brand has mastered. The multisensory experience has intentionally created an opportunity for customers to endorse their products online – a community coined the 'Glossier Girls'. This social sharing is propelled by its exquisitely designed showrooms filled with brand ambassadors, the on-brand

---

<sup>1</sup> [Consumer sentiment in the US during the coronavirus crisis | McKinsey](#)

pink, flowers and of course the perfect mirror for the perfect selfie. It has captured the desires of the Instagram era and teaches a valuable lesson – that social sharing will drive people to ultimately transact more. The proof is in the pudding too: the retailer’s physical locations drew more than 1 million visitors in 2019 with an average conversion rate of 50%. Their pop-ups also had high success rates, with an average conversion rate of 60% and Glossier Seattle reaching more than 70% <sup>2</sup>. An even more interesting example would be the invention of the Showfields stores (image below), a concept built completely around lifestyle discovery and on a mission to curate products, art and events that can be experienced in real life. Branded as the “most interesting stores in the world”, Showfields focuses on creating magic that activates all the senses and is reimagining the retail philosophy by marrying art and commerce and offering customers immersive experiences. They are capitalizing on the age of social media and on the human sensory experience – to bring to a life a never-before-seen retail experience with emphasis on experience.



*Source: Clockwise from top left: Art Display at Showfields: Showfields.com, Glossier’s new Miami showroom via ArchitecturalDigest.com*

## **Hypothesis II**

The metaverse presents a powerful opportunity for retailers to transform the customer experience. Estimated to be a trillion-dollar revenue opportunity, the metaverse provides the crucial middle-ground between the ease of online shopping and the immersive experience of physical browsing.

The benefits of the metaverse can be split into those available in physical stores specifically and those available online. For brick-and-mortar, one method of metaverse utilization involves capitalizing on the IoT (Internet of Things) to survey the physical stores itself. Sensor-driven

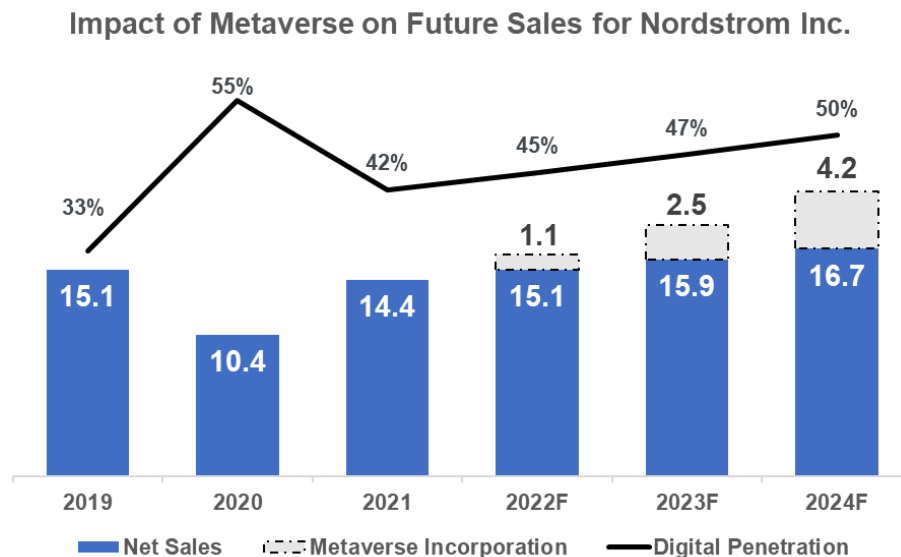
---

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.retailtouchpoints.com/topics/retail-store-design/glossier-returns-to-brick-and-mortar-with-seattle-flagship-4x-the-size-of-its-original-pop-up#:~:text=The%20retailer's%20physical%20locations%20drew,Seattle%20reaching%20more%20than%2070%25.>

heatmaps can help businesses identify the most and least trafficked sections of stores. From there, they can quickly diagnose drivers of underperforming areas – whether that be traffic, product assortment, or overall conversion.

Using the metaverse to build virtual stores can solve two critical challenges that have arisen as customers shift to a digital-first shopping model. The first is low online conversion rates and the second is the diminishing value of physical stores. Beginning with conversion - on average, retailers can convert 50% of store customers into sales. For ecommerce, only 3% of customers who visit a store's website make a purchase. In stores, customers engage with stylists and salespeople, try on products, and receive a personalized experience. Online, customers receive none of this. By building stores in the metaverse with expanded product assortment and providing visitors with virtual sales associates and “try on” options powered by artificial intelligence, retailers can improve online conversion and drive topline growth. In support of this argument, we build a financial model for Nordstrom Inc. (chosen as it has the highest digital penetration in the luxury department-store sector). Based on our analysis below, **Nordstrom can add 25% to its topline by 2024 by leveraging the metaverse to increase online conversion.**

The second benefit of virtual stores is that it will allow retailers to close unprofitable stores without sacrificing topline growth. A study by Harvard University found that successful retailers grow quickly in early years by opening new stores in strong markets. From there, retailers chase growth by increasing store presences in less attractive markets. These stores were less profitable even before the industry was impacted by rapid growth of e-commerce. Now, they negatively impact the bottom line. By investing in virtual stores, retailers can reduce their square footage while still providing customers in those markets an in-store shopping experience.



*Sales gained from metaverse incorporation driven by a 0.5% increase in conversion rates per year. 2022 – 2024 sales forecast assumes a 5% growth rate – in line with the company's guidance for 2022. Digital penetration is based on market trend analysis.*

### **Hypothesis III**

There has been a huge wave of digital-first companies such as Glossier, Warby Parker & Casper who started out as online DTC and opened physical stores to create an immersive experience. These success stories can be contrasted with the case of Amazon, who initially opened brick-and-mortar stores in 2015 (bookstores, 4stars, etc.) and is now closing them, and is now experimenting with opening digitally integrated fashion stores (Amazon Style). These success and failure stories pose the question: What is the gold standard in retail and the brick-and-mortar experience? How are future retailers integrating and relying on physical stores to combine the magic and the logic in their strategies? Our last hypothesis is therefore that the future retail leaders will use physical stores to add dimension to their brand. For the new brick and mortar stores to be successful, technology must be the main driver in delivering a personalized experience and the successful players will be those that focus on completely removing customer friction and who deliver an experience that will strengthen their customer loyalty.

When analyzing the successful cases where stores helped to generate traffic and a community with their brands and customer base, the first brand we think about is Glossier. The Glossier in-store experience offers tangible interactions and perks ecommerce could not include, such as product try-on options and advice opportunities from experienced store associates. The objective of the stores is to have “the photogenic new spaces are geared toward social content, brand awareness and community building.”<sup>3</sup> The brand had to opportunity to try opening physical stores, then closed them in August 2020 due to the pandemic and decided to reopen them shortly after. In terms of stats, Emily Wiess the Founder and CEO of Glossier remarked “one of the New York showrooms generates more sales revenue per square foot than the average Apple store”<sup>4</sup>. This former experience and numbers proof themselves and reinforce the idea of the importance these stores have been for the company.

Another example of personalization seamlessly integrating physical and online activities is the case of Sephora whose Beauty Insider loyalty program allows them to fully synchronize all customers’ interactions with the brand. From receiving customizable recommendations, track items that were sampled, get early access to product launches or invitations to events tied into the purchase history no matter which platform this was done in. With 80% of Sephora’s transactions connected through their loyalty program<sup>5</sup>, a seamless online and offline integration proves personalization and omnichannel combination will be the golden standard going forward.

With an average of 19.1% of sales being online and growing 14.2%, but still having 14%<sup>6</sup> of sales growth in physical stores, we can make sense of why Amazon keeps experimenting with physical stores. The answer is clear: even though online retail sales are growing there is a crucial opportunity to use technology and personalization to create omnichannel experiences that surpass

---

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.glossy.co/beauty/glossier-is-betting-big-on-experiential-retail-again/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://us.bouncepad.com/blogs/news/what-can-we-learn-from-glossier-opening-its-first-physical-store>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/personalizing-the-customer-experience-driving-differentiation-in-retail>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.digitalcommerce360.com/article/us-ecommerce-sales/>

the digital only strategy. Their test and learn approach will be one to watch, as this customer-obsessed brands paves their way into the omnichannel experience.

### **Risks and Challenges**

The first risk that these new strategies pose is the capital outlay that comes with many of these initiatives. In order to adapt to this new landscape, companies must renovate stores, create engaging installations, hire individuals with the talent necessary to build out stores and the digital infrastructure of their stores within the metaverse, and innovate with new technology in store. With all these new initiatives comes the need to invest in capital expenditures, higher salaries and more. Additionally with new technology, companies must hire new personnel who have the skills necessary to adapt to this new tech-centric world while still understanding the needs of a brick-and-mortar world.

Another challenge facing retailers who are executing on the above hypotheses is how to measure the success of these new in-store initiatives – what is the ROI? Do you shift focus completely when the goal is online engagement and digital sales tied to in-store initiatives? Companies are looking to Multi-Touch Attribution and Media-Mix-Modeling to understand the effects of social media on in-store sales and vice versa. If companies do not have these models in place, it can be very costly to implement and requires years of data and benchmarks to truly understand performance. However, if the goal is also engagement – what are the metrics that stores should be looking at? Retailers lean on sales per square foot or comp sales, however, should companies be more focused on KPI's such as number of tags on social media if they have a new installation in-store that they're hoping will garner more attention, or what the % of digital sales are tied to an in-store experience. We believe they will need to shift their attention in this direction if the purpose of stores is truly changing.

Lastly, the metaverse presents many new challenges that retailers have been unable to yet quantify, such as privacy issues, understanding how to use new data from metaverse experiences and finally the effect of the metaverse on all aspects of business. This new frontier is certainly a bigger “what if” than the other theses presented in this paper, however, as more companies dip their toes into the metaverse, we believe that it will be the ultimate combination of magic & logic and will transform the retail landscape as we know it.

## The Evolving Role of Brick & Mortar in Retail

By reimagining the role of physical stores in a digital-first landscape, retailers can build strategic assets that stimulate customer acquisition and drive increased retention.

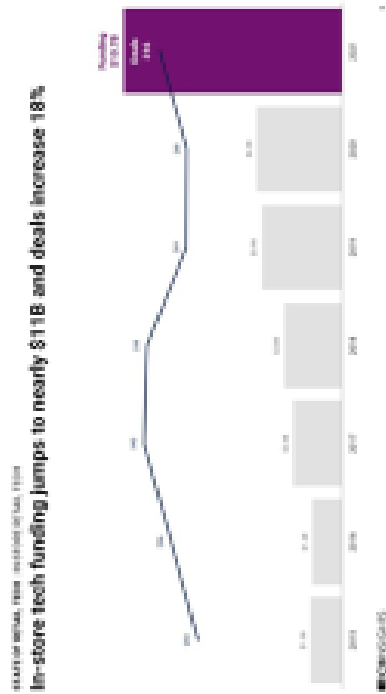
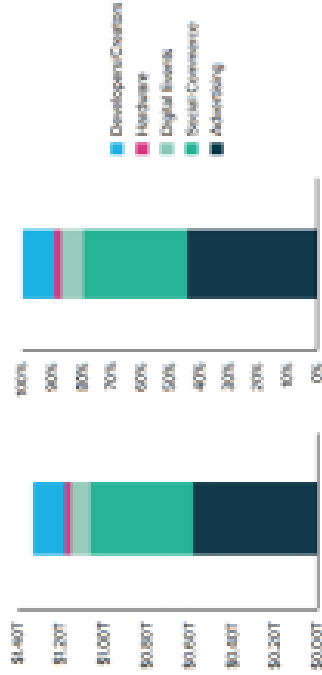


FIGURE 6: GLOBAL METAVERSE POTENTIAL TOTAL ADDRESSABLE MARKET\*



Investment in **technology** focused on **social media** and the **metaverse** will be the main allies in this process



## Transformation Required to Meet Consumer Demand

<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>Supporting Statements</i>	<i>Risks/Challenges</i>
<b>Brick and mortar as a social media tool for customer engagement</b>	<p>Worldwide, social commerce generated ~\$475B USD in revenue in 2020 with expected CAGR of 28.4% from 2021-2028 (Statista)</p> <p>Younger customers love digital shopping but also love unique experiences and human connection (reinforced by their use of social media)</p> <p>Tailored in-app purchase journeys and test opportunities in technology such as live streaming from stores and augmented reality try-on will tap into the surge of engagement for e-commerce</p>	<p>Achieving an omnichannel, where every consumer touchpoint is aligned to the brand purpose</p> <p>Restructure existing compensation formats for sales associates in order to maximize their incentives to support digital growth</p> <p>Redink store KPI's in order to achieve engagement goals</p>
<b>Social media will impact physical store design</b>	<p>Glossier, Warby Parker &amp; Casper - started out as online DTC and opened physical stores to create an inhouse experience</p> <p>Legacy retailers launching new store concepts (e.g., Nordstrom Locals) that provide customers with curated experiences easily shared via social media</p> <p>Retailers have started to add "Instagrammable moments" in-store to drive online engagement</p>	<p>Customer expectations and investment</p> <p>PSR sales becomes a less relevant metric, as more square footage is dedicated to cultivating the brand versus space for inventory and selling</p>
<b>Stores to merge with the metaverse</b>	<p>The Metaverse is expected to be a trillion-dollar revenue opportunity across advertising, social commerce, digital events, hardware, and developer/creator monetization (Greyscale)</p> <p>Large retailers can leverage IoT to survey stores use gathered analytics to identify underperforming businesses and adjust improve shopping experience by optimizing cost, energy, and space utilization</p> <p>Small retailers can create virtual marketplaces with expanded product assortment to offset limited square footage</p>	<p>Legacy retailers must hire the talent required to expand to non fungible tokens, gaming, and virtual fashion - all of which offer fresh routes to creativity, community building, and commerce</p> <p>Upfront and continued investment costs, most retailers have not yet heavily invested in technology (e.g., RFID)</p>

## EDUCATION

### COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL

MBA, May 2023

New York, NY

2021-Present

*Leadership: Cluster F'23 Chair, Founder & President – Cannabis Business Association,  
VP of Marketing – Venture Capital Club*

### BOSTON COLLEGE

BS, Management, Concentration in Marketing, May 2012

Chestnut Hill, MA

2008-2012

## EXPERIENCE

### PLUG AND PLAY TECH CENTER

MBA Venture Investment Intern (June 2022-August 2022)

New York, NY

2022-Present

### ARCVIEW VENTURES

MBA Venture Investment Associate (February 2022-Present)

New York, NY

2022-Present

### HOMEcomings

*Homecomings, a startup, is a developer of a digital companion app for psychedelic therapy.*

New York, NY

2022

MBA Business Development Intern (February 2022-May 2022)

### PLACE VENTURES LLC

*Place Ventures LLC/Enso Sciences LLC is a family-owned start-up company focused on institutionalizing and implementing a scientific approach to the cannabis industry. Operates in germplasm development, cultivation, formulation and acquiring and restructuring distressed cannabis assets.*

Montclair, NJ

2019 - Present

**Head of Marketing & Branding** (2019-Present)

- Develops all marketing and ecommerce endeavors for the start-up across digital and traditional channels including display, social, partnerships, and more
- Conducts, writes, and presents extensive qualitative investment research on various topics for investment partners including cannabis branding environment, biosynthesis and chemical synthesis of cannabinoids, FDA regulation of the CBD market, cannabis digital marketing strategies, and the nascent psychedelics marketplace
- Participates in conferences on behalf of Place Ventures, engaging with founders, meeting and researching new cannabis companies for potential investments, joint venture opportunities, and partnerships

### SAKS FIFTH AVENUE – HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY

New York, NY

**Senior Manager, Digital Content** (2019 – 2019)

2014 - 2019

- Strategically redesigned new Saks.com Homepage, resulted in a 15% lift in revenue
- Selected out of 20+ employees to lead a newly developed team of four focused on improving and innovating all Saks digital content, including site content, email, and external marketing including display, and social media
- Strategically and methodically planned all site and email content based on past performance and merchant (buyer) priorities
- Maintained and improved key partnerships with cross-functional teams including integrated marketing, email, acquisition marketing, buying, merchandising, social media, project management, creative, development, UX, and analytics

**Manager, Digital Marketing – Site Content, Mobile & CO-OP** (2017-2019)

- Managed digital CO-OP portfolio of \$12MM+ with over 460 vendors and 650 programs per year - largest volume on a team of five, with budgets ranging from \$5k to \$500k+
- Generated 111% YoY digital CO-OP revenue growth in 2018 vs. 81% growth in 2017 across owned categories
- Sold, planned, and executed CO-OP programs across Saks owned channels in addition to display, SEM, affiliates and social
- Implemented new and innovative CO-OP programs focused on influencers driving an additional \$200K+ in CO-OP revenue
- Managed team of two across digital CO-OP, site content, mobile/SMS

**Specialist, Digital Marketing** (2016 - 2017); **Senior Coordinator, Digital Marketing** (2015 - 2016); **Coordinator, Digital Marketing** (2014 - 2015), other previous positions in sales & operations at Marchesa Holdings LLC (2012-2014)

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

*Volunteer Work:* Braven Professional Mentor

*Languages:* Conversant in French

*Interests:* Fashion, neuroscience, 20th Century Art, skiing, drawing, reading science fiction books and traveling

## EDUCATION

### COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL

MBA, May 2023

*Honors:* Columbia Fellow Merit Scholarship

*Member:* Technology & Data Analytics Association; Latin American Business Association; Health & Wellness Club; Wine Society; Harlem Tutorial Program

New York, NY  
2021-2023

### UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES

BA, Communication Studies, June 2017; GPA 3.69

*Minor:* Global Studies

*Honors:* Dean's Honor Roll

*Leadership:* Chi Omega Risk Management Chair; Bearing Witness Holocaust Survivor Program; UCLA Spring Sing

Los Angeles, CA  
2013-2017

## EXPERIENCE

### DISTINTO CELLARS

*Family Wine Label*

**Business Development & Strategy**

- **Pricing & Budget Initiatives:** Forecasted cost and price per bottle to find optimal profit margins; drove down cost per bottle 12% resulting in 9% boost in profit margins
- **Go-to-market strategy:** Analyzed oversaturated wine market in order to segment market; identified niche customer base by developing unique value-proposition to differentiate each wine
- **Regulatory Strategist:** Spearheaded research within complex regulatory alcohol system to identify and acquire federal and state licenses; partnered with local regulatory agency to ensure compliancy and built trust with key government stakeholders

New York, NY  
2020-present

### WELLS FARGO – TECHNOLOGY, TELECOM & MEDIA GROUP

Senior Treasury Analyst, AVP (*Analyst I, 2018 – 2019; Analyst II, 2019 – 2021*)

- **Client Engagement Revamp:** Implemented a nationwide revamp of client strategy reviews. More than 250 client reviews conducted in the first 3 months. Saved 800 person-hours of labor per year while strengthening client engagement
- **Sales Performance:** Managed a pipeline of 250+ high-growth technology clients; booked \$2.2M in cumulative revenue. Ranked #1 treasury team firmwide for three consecutive years
- **Bank-Wide Digital Transformation:** Selected by management to advise companywide digital and product strategy team to streamline WF processes and reimagine the customer experience
- **Re-pricing Initiative:** Led price increase initiative for 600+ customers, raising more than \$1.2 million in annual revenue
- **Contract Negotiations:** Negotiated pricing structure for 150+ customer contracts; saved top client from leaving Wells Fargo
- **Major Sales Proposals:** Secured \$500k in annual revenue (more than 15X average contract size) from pricing proposal built in 72 hours for portfolio's largest client
- **Cross-Functional Project Management:** Spearheaded a cross-departmental data management project to improve customer automation with Wells Fargo, leading to increased sales and improved customer satisfaction
- **Customer Cost Savings:** Proactively identified \$300k fee increase for a customer and conducted training to better utilize banking products; reduced customer's fees by 66%

San Francisco, CA  
2017-2021

### Leadership Pipeline Associate, Treasury Management – TMT Group (2017-2018)

- **Customer Success Strategist:** Assessed customer's banking structures and strategically presented advice to aid tech companies. Leveraged internal KPI tools to build business cases for customers to invest in a specific suite of products
- **Fraud Mitigation:** Identified fraud exposure for high-profile customer experiencing recurring impostor fraud. Pitched three fraud tools and eradicated unauthorized ACH debits across accounts

### Leadership Pipeline Associate, Treasury Management Intern (June-Aug 2016)

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

*Volunteer Work:* Wells Fargo Mentorship Program, VEOLEO (designed & filmed bilingual soccer series program for kids)

*Languages:* Spanish (fluent)

*Interests:* Latinas in Tech, SWEATCON Rally team lead, Kaiut Yoga member, all things health/wellness/lifestyle



## **EDUCATION**

### **COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL**

**MBA**, May 2023

New York, NY

2021-2023

*Leadership:* AVP of Company Relations & Events – General Management Association and

AVP of Academics & Admissions – Retail & Luxury Goods Club

*Member:* Technology & Data Analytics Association, General Management Association, Retail & Luxury Goods, Marketing Association, Women in Business, European Society, Latin American Association

### **UNIVERSIDAD DE SAN ANDRÉS**

**BA**, Economics, September 2016

Buenos Aires, Argentina

2012-2016

*Honors:* Graduated cum laude (Top 15%, Economics); Received academic merit scholarship

## **EXPERIENCE**

### **CENCOSUD S.A.**

*Third largest retail conglomerate in Latin America, with Supermarket Division comprised of 240 grocery stores and 20,000+ employees in Argentina*

Buenos Aires, Argentina

2015-2021

#### **Sales Development Manager, Supermarket Division (2019-2021)**

- Defined commercial strategy for \$700MM Buenos Aires region accounting for 50% of Supermarket Division sales across 168 stores nationwide; managed team of 6 sales analysts
- Led sales forecasting and subsequently executed sales activities to achieve target margin; exceeded KPI sale objectives in 2019 and 2020 by 4.1% and 9.7%, respectively
- Constructed strategy for 3 premier supermarket chains (Jumbo, Disco and Vea) with differentiated market segments, contributing to +1% share and +2% revenues participation for Jumbo in 2020 by targeting high-end consumers during pandemic
- Identified sales opportunities, market trends and developed specific action plans for low-performing areas, ensuring consistent market share increases and innovation (i.e. targeted younger segments by partnering with Ualá financial technology app)
- Secured profit stream with \$1.2MM potential via new deal with AB InBev Argentina to partner on employment benefits
- Developed go-to-market strategy of an app providing cloud computing solutions to returnable packaging with ZX Ventures
- Facilitated 20% operational efficiency gains by implementing automatized sales data entry process and increased communications internally by developing online connection platform for internal teams

#### **Commercial Planning Coordinator, Supermarket Division (2018-2019)**

- Coordinated \$200MM inventory budget with emphasis on maximizing margin contribution from supplier incentives and stock optimization – developed visualization dashboards for data analysis
- Contributed to defining division strategy that resulted in consistent inventory decreases aligned with objectives, specifically achieving 1 day decrease and allowing cash flow optimization
- Planned annual and rolling forecasts all P&L variables for Argentina's supermarket unit; exceeded KPI margins by 1.6% in 2018

#### **Senior Category Planner, Supermarket Division (2017-2018)**

- Developed sales forecasting, purchasing and commercial plans and stock optimization strategies for assigned categories
- Executed category management for textiles with increases in 56% of units sold and 41% margin contribution by identifying new points of sale and increasing assortment availability
- Led household electronics appliances category management with 24% sale increase and stock optimization through the organization of promotional fairs for slow-moving items within supermarkets

#### **Junior Commercial Planning Analyst, Supermarket Division (2015-2017)**

- Worked cross-functionally with supply chain, logistics and promotions teams to ensure optimal inventory levels in categories such as food, beverages, personal care, beauty, cleaning products and non-food items

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

*Work Authorization:* STEM MBA, three-year OPT eligible; European Union citizen

*Volunteer Work:* Mujeres 2000 NGO, provided entrepreneurial training, financial literacy and micro loans to low-income women

*Languages:* Spanish (native)

*Interests:* Passionate traveler (25 countries and counting), swimming (university games), beauty and skincare

*Technical skills:* R, Stata, Microstrategy BI, Power Query, SQL introductory course

## EDUCATION

### COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL

**MBA**, Technology and Finance, May 2023

New York, NY

2021 - 2023

*Leadership*: Retail & Luxury Goods Club AVP of Finance, Columbia Cluster Board, Hermes Society

*Member*: Technology & Data Analytics Association, Social Enterprise Club, Snow Sports Club

### UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON | FOSTER SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

**BA**, Finance and Information Systems, June 2017

Seattle, WA

2013 - 2017

*Honors*: Dean's List, Early-Decision admit to the Foster School of Business

*Leadership*: University of Washington Teaching Assistant, Alpha Gamma Delta Event Coordinator

*Study Abroad*: San Sebastian (Spring 2016)

## EXPERIENCE

### NORDSTROM INC.

Seattle, WA

**Senior Financial Analyst, Financial Planning & Analysis** (2020 - 2021)

2017 - 2021

- Developed multi-year capital strategy focused on creating a sustainable business model through expanded investment in stores, supply chain, and technology; presented plan to CFO and earned approval from Board of Directors
- Created 50+ KPIs that tied technology investments to business value; identified unprofitable projects and spearheaded the reallocation of 15% of capital spend to more profitable ventures
- Led preparation for Nordstrom's quarterly earnings calls with investors by partnering with leaders to identify emerging themes in the market, formulating prepared remarks for key executives, and building earnings presentations
- Organized finance-wide events to bolster team engagement; finance organization reported a 90% engagement satisfaction score for 2020, 10% higher than company average

**Financial Analyst II, Financial Planning & Analysis** (2019 - 2020)

- Drove \$180M (30%) reduction in capital expenditure in 2020 and informed critical cash flow management decisions during COVID-19 by building an investment model that increased visibility into project-level spend patterns
- Partnered cross-functionally with Data Analytics, Store Design, and Supply Chain teams to determine the most efficient store fleet count and optimize long-term profitability; created a market analysis and drove \$20M savings through July 2021
- Developed a mentorship program to pair interns with full-time employees by partnering with finance leaders; coached three interns through the program, all of whom received full-time offers

**Financial Analyst, Technology** (2018 - 2019); **Financial Analyst, Nordstrom Rack** (2017 - 2018)

- Collaborated with Merchandising and Store Operations teams to build a customer-demand forecast; drove a 5% increase in inventory turnover across all Nordstrom Rack stores and significantly reduced markdown pressure
- Designed automated labor dashboards to deliver consistent cost analyses across all regions, reduced monthly reporting time by 40 hours and provided leadership constant access to results for better informed and better-timed strategic decisions
- Built an expense model to solve gaps in the current forecasting process; improved planning accuracy by 20% in a single quarter

### GOLDMAN SACHS

Seattle, WA

**Summer Analyst, Investment Management Division**

2016

- Rotated between five teams in Private Wealth Management, working alongside investment professionals and advisors to optimize asset allocation by analyzing funds based on client risk aversion and target returns
- Created a standardized template for portfolio construction and quarterly client reviews to help streamline recurring deliverables, reducing reporting time by 25%

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

*Certifications*: Oracle and IBM Financial tools, Power Pivot, Macros, Tableau, SQL

*Volunteer Work*: Big Sister for Big Brothers Big Sisters, Foster School of Business Student Mentorship Program

*Languages*: Fluent in Hindi

*Interests*: Avid skier, expert samosas cook (hosted virtual cooking classes during COVID-19), adventurous hiker