

PAST LIVES

**Past Lives: Evolution from
Fashion to Tech**



Past Lives: Evolution from Fashion to Tech

INTRODUCTION

Boasting a flourishing career that has spanned over twenty years in the ever-evolving world of fashion, I am now excited to embark on a new journey, delving into the realms of UX, service, and product design. This transition is not just a change in direction but an opportunity to highlight the adaptability and relevance of my skill set. My extensive background in fashion has equipped me with a wealth of soft skills that are perfectly suited to these dynamic and innovative fields.

In the following sections, I will share three key insights gleaned from my time in the fashion industry. These will not only demonstrate the transferability of my skills but will also provide a glimpse into some of the valuable lessons and experiences I have gathered along the way.





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H&M JOURNEY

Professional Growth at H&M

My professional journey began in the fashion industry at Hennes & Mauritz (H&M), where I made a significant shift from my previous roles in London and costume design. Initially joining as a trainee, I quickly progressed within the organization, eventually taking on the role of Product Designer and overseeing all product groups for H&M Man. During my time at H&M, I developed a deep understanding of the holistic business of fashion, from the selling process to manufacturing and delivering commercially successful products.

Growth and Learning: Embracing Structure at H&M

While at H&M, I embraced the structured approach to collection building and design management, utilizing tools such as the Boston Matrix to strategically create optimal assortments. This approach proved invaluable as I later transitioned into design management roles, where I successfully balanced creative freedom with defined parameters, allowing my design team to thrive.

Adaptability and Resilience at H&M

At H&M, I learned to embrace failure as a part of the learning process and developed resilience. Taking comprehensive notes during meetings became a valuable practice, providing a holistic view of the collection and facilitating seamless discussions throughout the fashion process.

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H&M JOURNEY

Professional Growth at H&M

Key Skills Developed at H&M

Business Acumen

- Deep understanding of the holistic business of fashion, including the selling process, manufacturing, and product delivery.
- Applied fundamental leadership principles and utilized tools like the Boston Matrix for strategic collection building.

Creative Adaptability

- Successfully transitioned from men's tailor alterations to a Product Designer, demonstrating adaptability and a diverse skill set.
- Balanced creative freedom with strategic constraints, fostering an environment for my design team to thrive.

Strategic Thinking

- Utilized the Boston Matrix to strategically build collections and optimize assortments.
- Developed a structured approach to design management, providing a constant overview of the collection.

Adaptability and Learning Agility

- Embraced failure as an essential part of growth and learning.
- Comprehensive notes during meetings aided in a big-picture view of the collection and facilitated discussions.

Resilience

- Developed resilience through experiences at H&M, preparing for challenges in subsequent roles.
- The Allover Foundation at H&M shaped me into a resilient and strategic designer.

Design Management

- Seamlessly transitioned from a creative role to design management, integrating creativity with a comprehensive understanding of the fashion industry dynamics.



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TIGER JOURNEY

Professional Journey: H&M to Tiger of Sweden

I transitioned my career from H&M, where I was a Product Designer, to Tiger of Sweden, where I became the Head of Menswear. Tiger needed a professional with expertise in Swedish fashion to rejuvenate the brand. My goal was to transform Tiger into a global fashion powerhouse while maintaining its focus on tailoring with a sleek minimalistic approach.

Understanding Tiger's Identity

To understand Tiger's identity and position in the industry, I conducted strategic meetings with key stakeholders. Through a series of questions, I unearthed phrases like 'A Different Cut' and 'Taking the Banker to the Street,' which represented the essence of Tiger. However, the existing collection didn't fully reflect these sentiments.

Aligning the Vision

I collaborated closely with the CEO and Marketing Director to introduce fresh elements like 'Urban Rebel,' 'Rock 'n Roll Attitude,' and 'Minimalism' while embracing existing slogans. We shifted our focus to a skinny silhouette to target a younger, professional demographic seeking a sharp suit with a twist. During this process, we also discovered that our suits lacked comfort when seated, so we innovatively incorporated 2% stretch to the wool.

Engaging the Sales Team

Gaining buy-in from the sales team was a pivotal challenge. To address scepticism, I held individualized meetings with each salesperson, adopting a conscious leadership style. These meetings fostered trust and understanding, allowing us to align our goals and introduce Tiger's new direction to the market.

Success and Team Culture

Our collective belief in the new direction, combined with a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, propelled Tiger to international acclaim. We created an open and safe environment for continuous growth, making our team enthusiastic about our future prospects.



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TIGER JOURNEY

Professional Journey: H&M to Tiger of Sweden

Key Skills Developed at Tiger of Sweden

Strategic Thinking

- Conducted meetings to understand the brand's identity and industry standing.
- Leadership: Ascended to the position of Head of Menswear and collaborated closely with top executives.

Market Analysis

- Formulated questions to decipher Tiger's identity and standing.
- Brand Transformation: Led the transformation from a Scandinavian tailoring brand to a global powerhouse.

Product Design and Innovation

- Addressed comfort issues by adding 2% stretch to wool.
- Communication: Introduced new brand elements and aligned team opinions.

Problem-Solving

- Addressed skepticism through individual meetings and a conscious leadership style.

Project Management

- Implemented the Double-Diamond approach.

Cultural Competence

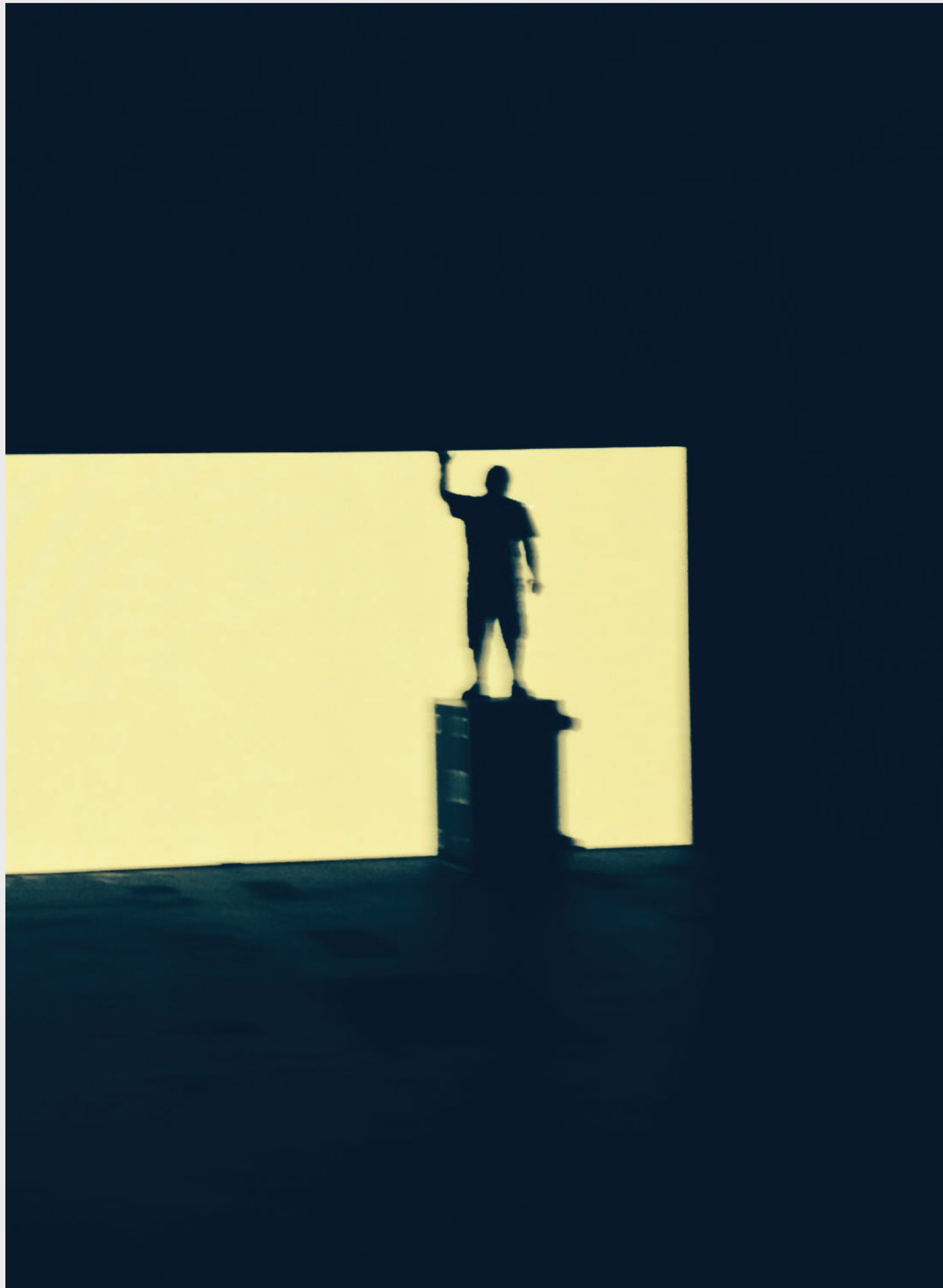
- Embraced diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.
- Empathy: Built trust and understanding through empathy.

Change Management

- Successfully implemented a new direction for Tiger.

International Business Acumen

- Aligned the brand with global trends and preferences.



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PREMIUM BLACK AT BESTSELLER

Fashion to Tech Odyssey: Navigating the Bestseller Chapter

After a decade of achievements at Tiger of Sweden, I embarked on a new adventure as Bestseller's Creative Design Manager. My task was to breathe new life into the men's premium black brand, which had excellent products, premium materials, and competitive prices but lacked direction and coherence. My mission was to rebuild the brand's foundation while staying true to its core values.

Tackling Challenges through Collaboration

To tackle this challenge, I closely collaborated with the product design team, buyers, and key salespeople. I carefully analyzed their interactions to identify areas of friction and adopted an agile methodology to resolve issues gradually. One of the biggest hurdles was the divide between the design team, mainly composed of fresh graduates who didn't prioritize sketching, and the sales-focused buyers. To bridge this gap, I implemented a digital sketching requirement, enabling seamless discussions between designers, buyers, and myself. I also conducted individual meetings with both groups to address their shared frustrations and fostered an environment of trust and open communication.

Creating a Cohesive Collection

During routine check-ins, I discovered that the head of sales independently incorporated insights from retail and wholesale sectors into the collections, causing the thematic coherence to suffer. Taking an agile approach, I engaged with the head of sales to understand their motivations and frustrations. By guiding them towards a collaborative approach and establishing a structured funnel, I ensured that all insights flowed through me and the head of buying, resulting in a more cohesive and balanced collection that seamlessly aligned fashion, brand identity, and sales.

Building a Sustainable and Inclusive Future

Through this collaborative strategy, the brand found its red thread, telling a captivating story of transformation. It showcased my transition from the fashion realm to the dynamic intersection of fashion and technology at Bestseller. Throughout this journey, I upheld principles of diversity, conscious leadership, empathy, equity, inclusion, and belonging. By taking a holistic approach to challenges and focusing on every team member's voice and value, I created a workplace where everyone felt heard and appreciated.





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PREMIUM BLACK AT BESTSELLER

Fashion to Tech Odyssey: Navigating the Bestseller Chapter

Key Skills Developed at Bestseller

Strategic Leadership

- Revitalized the men's premium black brand at Bestseller while staying true to its core values.

Agile Methodology

- Utilized an agile methodology to address issues incrementally within the product design team.

Team Building and Cohesion

- Cultivated team cohesion within the design team through trust and transparent communication.
- Conducted one-on-one meetings to address frustrations and foster unity.

Digital Transformation

- Enforced a digital sketching requirement to facilitate seamless discussions.
- Implemented a collaborative digital collection review process for improved thematic coherence.

Empathy and Communication

- Fostered open dialogues and built trust within the team through empathetic check-ins and individual meetings.

Negotiation and Collaboration

- Engaged with the head of sales to understand their motivations and frustrations.
- Directed them towards a collaborative approach, establishing a structured funnel for insights.

Thematic Cohesion and Narrative Building

- Overcame power struggles to create a more balanced and cohesive collection.
- Developed a compelling narrative of transformation for the brand.

Technology Integration

- Navigated the intersection of fashion and technology at Bestseller through digital sketching and a structured digital collection review process.

Conscious Leadership

- Incorporated principles of conscious leadership to address team dynamics and challenges.
- Applied a holistic approach, promoting diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging within the team and workplace.

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CONCLUSION

My time in the fashion industry has been valuable, but the circumstances during the pandemic made me realize that it was time for a career change. I strongly believe that the fashion industry lacks serious attention to sustainability and instead promotes overconsumption and greenwashing. The industry tends to treat sustainability as a mere trend rather than addressing the underlying issues.

With this in mind, I am determined to shift my focus to the tech industry, where I believe my soft skills will be a perfect fit. I aim to utilize my problem-solving abilities to create sustainable and inclusive services and products. Moreover, I plan to utilize my newly acquired conscious leadership skills to cultivate teams that prioritize safety, trust, and empathy. Working in the tech industry will allow me to make a meaningful contribution to the pursuit of a more sustainable and equitable future.



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TESTIMONIALS

Robert Wilson

Sales Director, Commercial Product Manager - Tiger of Sweden 2004 - 2019

"I have worked with Ron during all the years he worked for Tiger of Sweden, In his leadership as chief designer, Ron was clear about his ability to create a trend for our existing and new customers in an excellent way. Being creative, commercial, and bold at the same time is one of many qualities Ron has, I have great respect for Ron's outstanding design qualities. It would be an honour to work with Ron again".

Anna Ritzen

Product manager - Tiger of Sweden

"Ron has been a big part of my professional life, and I am proud of the great things we achieved together. Weekly meetings, Sales Conferences, Factory visits and Fabric fairs... we always had a lot of fun no matter what we did, and for this I am grateful."

Hila Brodie

Fashion designer - Tiger of Sweden

"I had the opportunity to work with a creative and professional person and I learned a lot from him. Above all, it was fun coming to work every day. I became very connected with his Scottish accent and the special humour that Scots have!"

Paul Thompson

Design & Creative direction - Blue Arms Consultancy

"Ron is a real design professional with solid experience in contemporary men's tailoring. Someone who has the vision and skill to guide a brand and motivate a team".

Tine Grandahl

Head of Design - Tiger Women 2010 - 2016

"I have co-worked with Ron for 6 years, as we were each heading up our Design department at Tiger of Sweden. In my role as Head of the Women's line, it has always been fun, inspirational and not least, a cool pleasure to work with Ron. With a strong knowledge and fundament of the men's sartorial world of tailoring, I truly admire Ron's strong vision, passion and elevation of the TOS Men's signature. - The elevation of a sharp tailored masculine silhouette - The eye for refined details - The development and innovation of fabrics and textiles We have had many great inspirations- and work trips around the world. And on an everyday basis discussing ideas in our office, in the creation of an aligned TOS signature. Brainstorming for the initial concepts and ideas until the finalization at sales meetings, shows and PR presentations. Always a great Scottish laugh, a glint in the eye and plenty of dedication!"

Lea Gadegaard Jørgensen

Designer - Bestseller

"When I worked with Ron, I learned a lot. I developed as a designer and pushed to be creative. It was never boring to come to work, and every working day was with humour, laughter, and fun. It has been a privilege to work with a creative, fun, and professional person like Ron."