

ISABELLE HILLESTAD

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SUMMARY

Fashion merchandising graduate with hands-on experience in retail operations, visual merchandising, product flow, and brand presentation. Strong understanding of assortment planning, trend analysis, and in-store execution with a proven ability to support sales and margin through strategic merchandising decisions.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science in Fashion and Textile Technology, Concentration in Fashion Merchandising

SUNY Buffalo State University

GPA: 3.7+

Murial A. Howard Honors Program

SKILLS

Assortment planning, product flow, sell-through analysis, inventory optimization, floor set execution, trend analysis, KPI tracking, cross-functional collaboration, project coordination, seasonal transitions, Adobe Creative Suite, Microsoft Office

EXPERIENCE

Merchandise Team Leader, Part-Time Merchandise Lead, Senior Brand Ambassador

American Eagle, Buffalo NY

May 2024 - Present

- Executed visual merchandising and product placement strategies aligned with corporate floorsets and seasonal assortments.
- Analyzed selling performance and supported merchandising adjustments to improve sell-through and floor productivity.
- Led daily product flow, replenishment, and stockroom organization to maintain inventory accuracy and floor readiness.
- Lead, trained, and coached a team of up to 50 associates, supporting onboarding, daily execution, and performance development to ensure operational excellence and brand consistency.

Marketing and Productions Manager

Blueprint Fashion Organization, Buffalo NY

March 2025-Present

- Planned event assortments aligned with brand positioning, customer profile, and sales objectives.
- Collaborated with designers and stakeholders to curate assortments that supported show themes, sales goals, and audience engagement.
- Managed timelines, budgets, and vendor coordination to ensure on-time delivery and efficient use of resources.
- Supported events with 400+ attendees.

Creative Director

Buffalo Art Movement, Buffalo NY

March 2023 - April 2024

- Led product curation and visual presentation across digital platforms and physical exhibitions to drive engagement and sales.
- Managed e-commerce assortments, product uploads, and pricing to expand reach and improve conversion.
- Used trend awareness and customer response to inform future creative and merchandising decisions.

Backstage Assistant

FlyingSolo NYFW, New York NY

September 2023

- Helped models with quick changes to ensure smooth runway transitions.
- Assisted stylists in creating finalized looks before models went on stage.
- Prepared and organized garments, accessories, and lineup order for each segment.
- Supported backstage flow by keeping the area organized and assisting stage managers as needed.

Director, Marketing Director, Marketing Team Member

RUNWAY, SUNY Buffalo State University, Buffalo NY

February 2022 - May 2024

- Developed and executed multi-channel marketing strategies aligned with RUNWAY's fashion show objectives.
- Directed and styled photoshoots, video campaigns, and overall production, including VIP Lounge and Back of House operations.
- Coordinated designers, models, staff, and logistics while maintaining detailed schedules to ensure flawless execution under tight deadlines.
- Analyzed digital performance metrics to optimize marketing strategies and maximize audience engagement.

Team Lead, Key Holder, Sales Associate

Plato's Closet, Buffalo NY

September 2019 - October 2022

- Applied trend forecasting and resale analytics to support buying decisions and maintain a balanced, high-turn product mix.
- Executed floor sets and product rotations to optimize space and maximize sell-through.
- Supported inventory organization and pricing strategies to align with customer demand.