



## SUMMARY

With his extensive experience, visionary leadership and passion for the customer experience, James Damian empowers brand owners to transform their thinking. He is able to offer a new perspective using the untapped power of design thinking, effectively introducing the power of design to the C-suite. It is no longer enough to differentiate. To truly be successful, brands must actually become distinctive.

Following his twelve years as Chief Design Officer at Best Buy where he revolutionized the customer experience, James is now offering his expertise via his new venture, James Damian Brand Integration Services.

James was inducted into the In-Store Marketing Institute's Hall of Fame in 2010. In 2005 he received the Markopoulos Award, the industry's highest, for his many contributions to the design industry. James also received Best Buy's Culture of Innovation Award in recognition of his leadership and vision in concept development and execution. His insights and experience have been sought at countless speaking engagements around the globe.

## EXPERIENCE

### **Principal at James Damian Brand Integration Services**

November 2010 - Present

James Damian Brand Integration Services guides leaders to leverage the power of design thinking as a new business strategy platform. It allows clients to utilize James' invaluable experience so that their own brands can shed old restraints and progress into new levels of performance.

### **Chairman of the Board at Buffalo Wild Wings**

2005 - Present

### **Member, Board of Directors at Minnesota Orchestra**

2003 - Present

The Minnesota Orchestra, now in its second century and led by Music Director Osmo Vänskä, ranks among America's top symphonic ensembles.

### **Member, Editorial Advisory Board at DDI Magazine**

2001 - Present

DDI Magazine offers solutions to help retailers and designers create dynamic, effective store environments.

### **Member, John F Kennedy Library Foundation**

1999 - Present

The John F. Kennedy Library Foundation is a non-profit organization that provides financial support, staffing, and creative resources for the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum.

**Member, Advisory Board at Fashion Institute of Technology**

1989 - Present

New York City's internationally recognized college for design, fashion, art, communications, and business.

**Senior Vice President, Chief Design Officer at Best Buy**

1998 - 2010

James infused design thinking into a \$50 billion electronics retailer. He commenced his work with Best Buy at a time when the retail giant had 275 stores trading \$7 billion and netting only \$1 million. He revolutionized the customer experience, building a visual merchandising and store design capability from the ground up. Here James considered himself a right-brain ambassador for the value of design within the left-brain world of big-box retail.

His strategic insight and acute knowledge of consumer behavior evolved the store experience into an inviting, women-friendly space that encouraged optimal consumer engagement. In 2004, James led the design of Best Buy's first concept stores out of the big box. Designed to get closer to the female and young male customer, with Studio D and Escape in Chicago, these breakthroughs enabled the innovation methodology, and developed the company's "new store experience", through an R&D capability.

Essentially, James' work at Best Buy changed the game in consumer electronics retail. James is all too aware of the dangers of segregating visual merchandising and design from the rest of the organization, and hence integrated these capabilities with the others across the organization including space management, marketing and communications to create unity and consistency.

This vision and skilled execution helped Best Buy become the powerful enterprise it is today, consisting of 4000 storefronts through multiple brands, trading over \$50 billion. James received Best Buy's Culture of Innovation Award in recognition of his leadership and vision in concept development and execution.

**President, CEO at Damian Randd Inc. / Resources Advancing New Design Directions**

1995 - 1998

Damian Randd was a design consultancy and production company that brought new concepts to market for retailers and real estate property developers worldwide. Here James worked with his esteemed mentor, Gene Moore, creator of the famous Tiffany blue box and brand image from 1955 to 1994.

**Vice President Visual Merchandising and Store Design at R.H. Macy Department Stores**

1983 - 1998

James helped lead the merging all divisions of the company under the Macy nameplate. He is proud to have developed the private label business that is still strong today, as well as designing the new store concepts.

**President, USA Subsidiary at Hindsgaul Mannequins Worldwide**

1988 - 1994

At Hindsgaul Mannequins Worldwide, James was responsible for developing new product offerings for retail companies throughout the world. He successfully built a unified brand identity creating relevance and style through quality and service for an 80 year old Danish company.

### **Vice President Visual Merchandising and Store Design at Gimbels Department Store**

1980 - 1983

At Gimbels James was responsible for the restoration of the flagship store, as well as merging the Pennsylvania Division with New York as one design and merchandising capability.

### **Director of Visual Merchandising at Abraham and Strauss Department Stores**

1977 - 1980

James led the Visual Merchandising capability to become an all store chain practice for Abraham and Strauss (a division of Federated Department Stores). During his time there, he worked under the extraordinary leadership of Mickey Drexler as the Chief Merchant, who later led Gap and is now at the helm of J Crew.

### **EDUCATION**

Fashion Institute of Technology: Visual Presentation and Exhibition Design, History of Art Architecture and Fashion, Sight Planning, Store Design and Corporate Identity

### **HONORS AND AWARDS**

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### **CONTACT**

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