

SUSANA DE LA RIONDA

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BRAND PARTNERSHIPS, MERCHANDISE & PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT EXECUTIVE

Branded Merchandise | Collaborations | Product Sourcing | Retail & Go-to-Market

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Brand partnerships, merchandise, and product development executive with 20+ years of experience turning brand ideas into products, collaborations, assortments, and retail experiences. Managed \$25M+ in P&L responsibility, launched 60+ SKUs, created six cannabis brands sold statewide, led teams of up to 40, and helped drive revenue growth up to 72%. Combines strong creative judgment with hands-on expertise in sourcing, vendor management, production, merchandising, trade marketing, experiential programs, and go-to-market execution.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Brand, Partnerships & Experience: Brand Strategy, Collaborations, Creative Direction, Brand Ambassador Programs, Experiential Marketing, Retail Storytelling

Merchandise, Product & Commercialization: Branded Merchandise, Apparel & Accessories, Product Development, Sourcing, Vendor Negotiation, Production Oversight, Merchandising, Assortment Strategy, Buying & Procurement, Pricing & Margin, Wholesale, Trade Marketing, Go-to-Market

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Brand Partnerships & Merchandise Consultant

Selected Clients: Mermaid Labs and The Herondale Hotel | 2026 - Present

- Develop branded merchandise, promotional products, guest amenities, gift-shop concepts, and retail launch materials spanning apparel, totes, stickers, pins, coasters, optical products, and customer-facing collateral.
- Source products, blanks, vendors, production partners, and potential brand collaborators; evaluate brand fit, quality, pricing, minimums, margins, decoration methods, lead times, and production feasibility.
- Manage creative briefs, color direction, artwork revisions, proofs, quotes, approvals, vendor communication, and production follow-through from concept to final delivery.
- Build cohesive assortments and partnership or wholesale recommendations that translate each brand identity into wearable, useful, and commercially relevant products.

Vice President of People & Operations | Commercial Operations & Growth

Biotesting Inc. / Home Biotesting | Dec 2024 - Present

- Lead cross-functional operating systems and client-experience infrastructure, ensuring the brand promise translates into clear, consistent service delivery.
- Partner with executive leadership on budgets, resource allocation, vendor decisions, customer communication, workflows, and initiatives tied to growth and brand trust.

Vice President of Brand Development

Hyroad | Oct 2023 - Nov 2024

- Led brand development, portfolio strategy, partner relationships, and go-to-market planning for emerging cannabis, wellness, and accessory brands.
- Expanded the brand partner portfolio by 70% through strategic outreach, sharper positioning, founder relationships, and stronger sales and marketing alignment.
- Translated partner goals into retail-ready brand stories, assortment priorities, launch plans, sales narratives, retailer-facing materials, and field execution.

Vice President of Retail & Purchasing

Serra | Jun 2020 - Nov 2023

- Led retail strategy, buying, procurement, merchandising, assortment planning, vendor partnerships, and brand collaborations for a premium consumer retail group.
- Helped drive a 72% increase in retail revenue, supporting the store in becoming the top-performing location within a 26-dispensary network.
- Owned product sourcing and assortment decisions across core and emerging categories, balancing customer demand, brand fit, quality, margin, inventory, compliance, and trends.
- Built relationships with brands, distributors, and creative partners to improve product discovery, sell-through, in-store storytelling, retail collateral, and collaborative programming.

Senior Director of Trade Marketing & Brand Development

Event Horizon Technologies / Flow Kana | Oct 2017 - May 2020

- Led trade marketing, brand activation, product launches, retail education, and field execution for Flow Kana, California's largest sun-grown cannabis company, supporting \$25M+ in annual sales.
- Built and led a 40-person brand ambassador and field marketing organization responsible for hiring, training, performance, retail activations, events, market intelligence, and statewide execution.
- Owned company-wide brand expression outside product packaging, creating branded merchandise, apparel, event environments, retail and sales materials, trade-show tools, ambassador kits, and customer-facing brand assets.
- Expanded the team's remit to support third-party brands through distribution, trade marketing, retail education, and field execution; led California trade marketing for Willie's Reserve, Willie Nelson's cannabis brand.
- Helped generate 70% year-over-year revenue growth, increased market share by 35%, and launched 63 SKUs through brand strategy, distribution support, retail programming, product storytelling, and disciplined market execution.

Chief Marketing Officer & Co-Founder

Sloane & Tate | Jan 2006 - Oct 2017

- Co-founded and scaled a luxury women's apparel brand from concept to national retail placement with Barneys New York, Anthropologie, Wildfang, Free People, Shopbop, and NET-A-PORTER.
- Led end-to-end brand and product development, including seasonal collections, assortment planning, sourcing, production timelines, vendor relationships, pricing, merchandising, wholesale presentations, and go-to-market strategy.
- Directed creative campaigns, ecommerce, buyer relationships, press outreach, and customer experience; secured editorial recognition across Vogue, Teen Vogue, Women's Wear Daily, Glamour, Who What Wear, ESPN, and Rolling Stone.

Director of Retail Operations & Brand Development (Concurrent Role)

LAPCG | 2005 - 2017

- Developed, created, and launched six in-house cannabis brands, including The House Collection, taking them from concept and product development through packaging, merchandising, retail positioning, and statewide sales across California.
- Managed retail operations, product education, customer experience, vendor communication, and execution across marketing, PR, sales, and direct-to-consumer channels.

TOOLS & PLATFORMS

Shopify, Klaviyo, Salesforce, HubSpot, Insightly, Google Analytics, Looker, Canva, Asana, Monday.com, Notion, Slack, Google Workspace, Microsoft Office, QuickBooks, vendor and production trackers, launch calendars, budget and pricing tools

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies | California State University, San Bernardino