

Mark A. Cardinale

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Executive Retail Operator | \$200M+ P&L Oversight | Brand Growth, Store Expansion & Digital Integration
Freebird Stores Inc. | The North Face (VF Corporation) | Sprockets Retail | TJX Companies | Mervyns

Transformational retail executive with a 20+ year track record leading growth, reinvention, and operational excellence across national and global retail brands. Skilled in scaling multi-unit operations, launching omnichannel ecosystems, and driving double- and triple-digit revenue growth from both startups and established portfolios. Known for leading large, distributed teams through rapid expansion, digital evolution, and turnaround environments, delivering results under pressure while strengthening culture, systems, and brand equity. Brings deep cross-functional command spanning P&L oversight, merchandising, logistics, training, and global sourcing, with a leadership style rooted in clarity, momentum, and performance.

Core Competencies: Strategic Planning | Brand Management | Multi-Unit Leadership | Turnaround & Growth Strategy | Talent Development | Organizational Performance Optimization | Region & District Operations | Retail Expansion & Store Openings | Omni-Channel & Digital Integration | Learning & Development Strategy | Retail Technology & Systems | Vendor & Contract Negotiations | Strategic Partnerships | Merchandising Strategy | Process Improvement

Professional Experience

Freebird Stores Inc. | Vice President of Operations | Denver, CO | June 2022 – Present

A fashion-forward omnichannel footwear retailer known for handcrafted leather boots and accessories.

- **P&L Oversight:** Responsible for the financial performance of \$70M operations across retail and eCommerce channels.
- **Rapid Expansion:** Drove the planning and execution of 14 new store openings across 10 markets in 10 months, including flagship locations in Austin, TX and Nashville, TN. Other key markets included Charleston, NC; Fort Worth, TX; Alpharetta, GA; Houston, TX; and a second Austin location.
- **Strategic Planning:** Developed a three-year expansion roadmap integrating retail growth, warehouse optimization, and digital strategy, with flagship locations delivering strong performance and double-digit year-over-year gains.
- **Cross-Team Leadership:** Oversees all communications, fulfillment workflows, and operations policy across headquarters and store teams; with 100 employees and four direct reports.
- **Training Innovation:** Launched Freebird Academy to standardize and elevate training programs for both retail associates and corporate teams; training young talent into future Store Director roles.
- **Omni-Channel Growth:** Created a scalable omnichannel strategy to reach a \$100M eCommerce revenue milestone by end of 2025; utilizing Shopify and CEGID for sales and inventory management.
- **Logistics Oversight:** Leads end-to-end warehouse and shipping operations across two distribution centers and 22 stores, partnering with FedEx to improve fulfillment efficiency and reduce costs by 10%.

The North Face (VF Corporation) | Director of Store Operations | Denver, CO | February 2016 – June 2022

A global leader in outdoor apparel and gear, operating an extensive retail footprint and pioneering innovation in performance apparel.

- **Multi-Unit Oversight:** Directed store operations for 113 North American retail locations with full accountability for \$10M–\$50M operating budgets with eight direct reports and a 1000 person funnel.
- **New Store Execution:** Oversaw full lifecycle of new store openings from project planning to launch including flagship locations on Fifth Avenue in New York City and “urban” stores in Williamsburg, Brooklyn and San Francisco.
- **Performance Management:** Defined KPIs, set operational benchmarks, and led ongoing performance analysis against both internal targets and industry competitors.
- **Trend Anticipation:** Built deep market knowledge to anticipate evolving retail trends, consumer behavior shifts, and operational innovations.
- **Omni-Channel Rollout:** Spearheaded in-store omnichannel initiatives, resulting in \$10M+ in incremental revenue.
- **Pandemic Resilience:** Scaled order fulfillment from \$100K to \$6M in just six months during COVID-19 disruptions through operational agility and team alignment.
- **Supply Chain Integration:** Partnered with Supply Chain and Allocations teams to optimize product flow across retail and eComm channels.
- **Flagship Innovation:** Led roadmap and team development for four new flagship locations, including two next-gen Retail 2.0 concept stores.
- **High-Volume Success:** Opened the world’s highest-volume TNF store in New York City, generating \$15M+ annually.

- **Customer Experience Strategy:** Advocated for and developed a dedicated field training team to enhance in-store service and team culture.
- **Training & Communication:** Partnered with third-party providers and internal teams to create a centralized training and communications platform.
- **Platform Streamlining:** Consolidated training and communications into a "one-stop shop" to improve clarity and efficiency for retail teams.
- **Retention Impact:** Improved field leadership retention with a 20% drop in Store Manager turnover following onboarding enhancements. While most teams focused on NPS, we prioritized Customer Satisfaction scores, rated on a 1–5 scale, and successfully raised them from 2.5 to 4.0.

Sprockets (Preferred Secured Agents, Inc.) | President | Castro Valley, CA | October 2010 – January 2016

Sprockets relaunched the beloved children's apparel brand originally carried at Mervyns, scaling it into a modern retail, eCommerce, and wholesale business with global sourcing and national footprint.

- **Brand Relaunch:** Co-purchased the Sprockets brand and led its full reintroduction to market, including retail, wholesale, and digital strategies.
- **Executive Oversight:** Led VP-level leaders across Design, Stores, and Operations, and global production and sourcing.
- **Global Management:** Balanced leadership across New York, San Francisco, and Singapore while managing 100+ employees and a \$5M annual budget.
- **Functional Buildout:** Hired and structured teams for merchandising, real estate, logistics, design, and operations; rebuilding the former Mervyn's leadership team of VP and Director positions from the children's division based on brand recognition and team loyalty.
- **Growth Acceleration:** Surpassed first-year projections, generating \$20M+ in wholesale revenue over two years.
- **Retail Expansion:** Opened 10 stores in 6 states, launching with tailored promotions that drove strong sell-through and positive customer feedback.
- **Mass Retail Penetration:** Established wholesale relationships with retailers including Boscov's, Bealls Florida, VFO, Blain's, H-E-B, and Sears Holdings.
- **Major Contract Win:** Secured a \$32M, two-year wholesale contract with a national retailer.
- **Supply Chain Strategy:** Built sourcing partnerships across Singapore, Malaysia, China, and India to produce \$10M+ in product annually despite limited prior manufacturing experience.
- **Technology Enablement:** Partnered with ecVision and consulting providers to launch a B2B supplier collaboration portal for streamlined production oversight.
- **Systems Integration:** Led the development of a tech plan including packing list automation, production tracking, and warehouse integration.
- **Vendor Negotiations:** Delivered 10–12% cost savings and improved manufacturing reliability by developing a relationship with a sourcing agent and working closely with three key vendors. Conducted on-site factory visits in Malaysia and Indonesia to strengthen partnerships and streamline production.

TJX Companies | District Manager, **T.J. Maxx** | San Francisco, CA | February 2009 – October 2010

A leading off-price apparel and home fashions retailer with brands including **T.J. Maxx**, **Marshalls**, and **HomeGoods**.

- **District Turnaround:** Led the revitalization of a district marked by excessive turnover, sales declines, and inventory shrink.
- **Team Leadership:** Managed 10 stores, 40 exempt leaders, and over 1,000 associates across the region.
- **Revenue Growth:** Reversed double-digit sales losses, achieving a 9% sales increase in eight months, reaching \$75M in annual sales YOY.
- **Talent Development:** Trained and upskilled store management teams while hiring high-performing new candidates.
- **Succession Planning:** Built strong leadership pipelines and identified career pivot points for underperforming staff.
- **Leadership Promotion:** Mentored a manager who advanced into TJX's selective District Manager training program.
- **Cross-Functional Problem Solving:** Resolved operational, HR, and merchandising challenges by collaborating across departments.
- **Cultural Alignment:** Reinforced company culture and key initiatives consistently across all district stores.
- **Shrink Reduction:** Partnered with Loss Prevention to increase awareness, enforce best practices, and reduce inventory shrink. Within one year, over 75% of the company passed audits with scores above 90%.

Mervyns (Target Stores) | Senior District Manager | Hayward, CA | March 2006 – November 2008

Closed in 2008, a regional department store chain with over 175 locations and \$3B in annual sales.

- **Multi-Store Leadership:** Directed operations for 14 stores, representing \$210M of the company's \$3B annual revenue.
- **Large-Scale Team Management:** Oversaw 60 exempt leaders and more than 1,500 store associates across the district.

- **Shortage Reduction:** Decreased inventory shortage by \$2M, from #% to 2%, through a district-wide audit strategy focused on sales accountability and service standards.
- **Community Engagement:** Co-chaired the company's Volunteer Council and managed a \$1M outreach program supporting local nonprofit partnerships. Led impactful community events through Mervyn's, raising over \$20K for the local children's hospital in Fresno, CA, and earning recognition from United Way and March of Dimes, resulting in an invitation to serve on their boards.
- **Training Development:** Designed and implemented a six-week onboarding and development program for new District Managers in collaboration with HR and Store Ops.
- **Training Budget Oversight:** Managed a \$250K training budget, ensuring scalable, cost-effective onboarding for regional leadership.
- **Talent Pipeline:** Mentored and promoted two high-performing Store Managers into District Manager roles for a district ranked #1 in sales YOY and #2 in profitability.
- **Cultural Stewardship:** Fostered a performance-driven environment while upholding Mervyn's values of service, accessibility, and community connection.

Mervyns (Target Stores) | District Manager, Store Manager | California & Michigan | January 1991 – February 2006

- **District Oversight (1993–2006):** Managed multiple districts across California and Michigan, leading 10–14 stores and generating over \$150M in annual sales, building a strong team from the ground up, rebuilding challenge locations.
- **Store Leadership (1991–1993):** Served as Store Manager for three high-volume locations with sales from \$12M to \$23M.
- **Progressive Growth:** Promoted steadily from store-level leadership to senior district roles over 15-year tenure.
- **Regional Adaptability:** Operational flexibility and performance consistency across two distinct regional markets.

Education & Community Leadership

Arts Chico, Founder

Orange County Volunteer Center, Past Board Member

Chico Community Foundation, Past President/Chairman

March of Dimes Prematurity Research Center at Stanford, Past Board Member

March of Dimes, San Francisco Bay Area Division & Central Valley Division, Past Board Chair

- *March of Dimes Special Recognition Award (in honor of personally raising \$1.2M)*

- *Volunteer of the Year, March of Dimes Northern California*

University of Phoenix, Bachelor of Science, Business Management

California State University, Hayward, Coursework in Marketing