

**MKTG 8604**

**New Frontiers in Retailing: Magic and Logic**

**The Future of U.S. Department Stores**

*Reimagining Experiential Retail With First-Party Data*

Kanupriya Maheshwari

Yash Malkan

Thomas Marano

Cayla Plotch

Nini Rekhviashvili

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**Columbia Business School**

Advised by: Prof. Oliver Chen and Prof. Kinshuk Jerath<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> We would like to thank Keri Taub (Vice President, Strategy, Bloomingdale's) for insightful discussions.

## **Executive Summary**

Department stores today face the dual challenge of rising operational costs-exacerbated by tariffs and labor-and evolving customer expectations for seamless, personalized experiences. Their unique competitive advantage lies in **multi-brand first-party data**, enabling deep insights across product categories and shopping channels. This paper proposes a unified, **Spotify-like shopping app** that harnesses this data through advanced predictive algorithms to deliver personalized, cross-brand recommendations and an integrated online-to-offline experience.

The app complements-not replaces-the vital role of physical touchpoints. Consultants evolve into **style advisors and digital concierges**, assisting customers in-store and enhancing the fitting room experience. Inspired by insights shared by Sam's Club CEO Chris Nicholas, who emphasized the importance of human interaction alongside technology, this approach balances convenience with service.

Finally, the app drives experiential retail through exclusive pop-up events and community-building stylist sessions, transforming department stores into lifestyle hubs.

## **Key Takeaways:**

1. **First-party data is the foundation for personalized experiences and increased customer lifetime value (CLV).**  
*Cross-category data enables predictive recommendations that increase CLV by 3-5% and improve retention.*
2. **A Spotify-like app powered by machine learning bridges digital convenience and physical engagement.**  
*Customers scan a QR code at store entry to download the app, then navigate the store, scan products, receive personalized suggestions, and collaborate with friends-all aided by knowledgeable style advisors.*
3. **Experiential pop-ups and stylist sessions foster community and drive app adoption.**  
*These events create emotional connections, encouraging repeat visits and transforming stores into vibrant social destinations.*

## **Introduction and Problem Statement**

The U.S. department store sector is under pressure. Sales declined 2.53% year-over-year as of March 2025, while e-commerce grew 7.5% in 2024. Rising tariffs on imports and increasing labor costs further squeeze margins. Despite this, 78% of consumers still prefer shopping in-store, valuing tactile experiences and human interaction.

However, department stores face significant operational inefficiencies: overstaffing in low-value roles, siloed data systems, and inconsistent service quality. Customers experience frustration navigating large stores without reliable product information or objective recommendations.

Printemps' recent New York entry and European examples like Le Bon Marché demonstrate that customers seek more than products—they desire immersive experiences, including restaurants and wellness offerings. This signals a need to reimagine store space and service models.

**Goal:** Leverage department stores' unique first-party data to create a unified app that enhances operational efficiency, personalizes the shopping journey, and preserves the indispensable role of human consultants, all while enabling experiential retail.

## **Methodology**

Our analysis combines:

- **Data analysis** of department store sales, tariff impacts, and customer behavior (U.S. Census, RetailStat, WSJ).
- **Field research** including interviews with Keri Taub, VP Strategy at Bloomingdale's, emphasizing the blend of data and human intuition.
- **Insights from Sam's Club CEO Chris Nicholas**, who shared how Scan & Go technology complements—not replaces—consultant roles to improve customer satisfaction.
- **Benchmarking** of experiential retailers such as Printemps NYC and Le Bon Marché Paris.
- **Machine learning research** on predictive recommendation systems inspired by Spotify and Amazon.

## **Discussion**

### **Thesis I: First-Party Data as the Strategic Asset for Personalization and CLV Growth**

Department stores uniquely possess **multi-brand, cross-channel first-party data**-capturing purchase history, browsing, and in-store behavior across diverse product categories. This data is a powerful asset to:

- **Deliver hyper-personalized recommendations** through machine learning algorithms that analyze patterns and predict customer preferences. Similar to Spotify's AI-driven music suggestions, the app dynamically curates product bundles and style suggestions tailored to individual tastes and sizes.
- **Increase Customer Lifetime Value (CLV)** by 3-5% through timely, relevant offers and alerts that encourage repeat visits and larger baskets. App users demonstrate 1.8x longer lifespans due to personalized engagement.
- **Enhance operational efficiency** by reducing overstock and markdowns through real-time inventory insights and demand forecasting. This mitigates tariff-driven cost pressures by optimizing domestic vs. imported stock allocation.

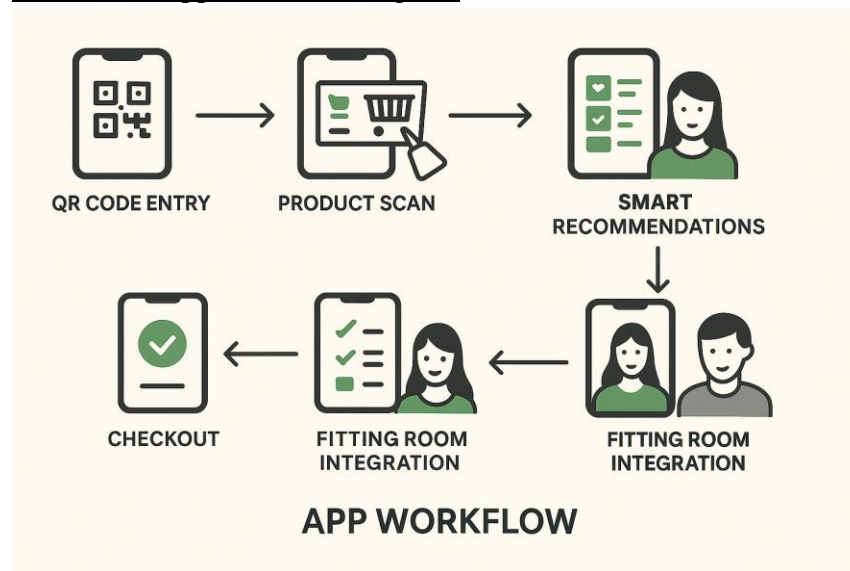
### **Thesis II: The Spotify-Like App – A Step-by-Step Seamless Experience**

The app offers a frictionless, integrated shopping journey that complements human service:

1. **QR-Code Entry:** Customers scan a code at store entrance to download and register within 90 seconds, enabling immediate access.
2. **Product Scanning:** Shoppers scan items to view real-time size, color availability, and cross-brand alternatives, reducing dependence on brand-tied consultants.
3. **Smart Recommendations:** Powered by predictive algorithms, the app suggests complementary items and personalized bundles, adapting dynamically to user behavior.
4. **Store Navigation:** Beacon-enabled maps guide customers efficiently to products, inspired by Dubai Mall's system, saving time and frustration.
5. **Collaborative Shopping:** Users create and share shopping lists with friends or family, facilitating remote approval and social engagement.
6. **Fitting Room Experience:** Consultants, freed from transactional tasks, act as style advisors-preparing personalized racks based on app data and assisting customers interactively in fitting rooms, preserving physical touch and human connection. This contrasts with non-interactive fitting rooms like Reformation's.
7. **Checkout:** Scan & Go functionality allows customers to pay via the app, with consultants available for styling advice or tech support.

Sam's Club CEO Chris Nicholas emphasized during his visit in class that technology must enhance-not replace-human interaction. Their Scan & Go system improved operational efficiency and customer satisfaction while retaining staff roles as service ambassadors. This balance informs our consultant role redesign.

Illustrative App workflow diagram



**Thesis III: Experiential Retail – Building Community Through Pop-Ups and Stylist Sessions**

To fully realize the promise of experiential retail, the app integrates exclusive events that foster community and emotional engagement:

- **Pop-Up Events:** App users gain access to rotating brand showcases, influencer meet-and-greets, and wellness experiences.
- **Stylist Sessions:** Personalized 1:1 appointments bookable via the app, creating intimate, memorable experiences that deepen customer loyalty.
- **Community Creation:** Events emphasize belonging and shared identity, with local collaborations and charitable initiatives enhancing social impact.
- **Space Reimagining:** By digitizing product discovery and checkout, stores can repurpose up to 15% of floor space for experiential zones without sacrificing sales area, addressing tariff-driven cost pressures.

## Conclusions

Department stores stand at a pivotal moment. Their unique advantage—the possession of rich, multi-brand first-party data—offers a path to reclaim relevance and profitability in an era of rising operational costs and evolving customer expectations. This paper has outlined a unified, Spotify-like app that harnesses this data through predictive algorithms to deliver personalized, seamless shopping experiences bridging online and offline worlds.

Crucially, the app does not replace the human touch but enhances it by redefining consultants as style advisors and digital concierges, inspired by insights from Sam’s Club CEO Chris Nicholas. The experiential dimension—pop-up events and stylist sessions—further transforms stores into vibrant community hubs.

Together, these elements promise to improve customer lifetime value, operational efficiency, and store traffic, positioning department stores as tech-enabled lifestyle destinations for the future.

## **Thesis I: First-Party Data as the Strategic Asset Driving Personalization and CLV Growth Takeaway:**

Department stores’ multi-brand first-party data is an untapped strategic asset that enables hyper-personalized experiences, increases customer lifetime value (CLV), and improves operational efficiency.

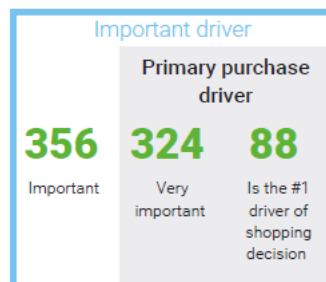
## **Supporting Arguments:**

The hypothesis is further reaffirmed based on survey results from AlixPartners’ Consumer Sentiment Index Report 2024:

**Question:** When it comes to shopping for apparel at department stores, how important is “ability to shop the brand/retailer no matter where I am” to you?

Number of respondents that selected each option for this question

|                      |                |            |
|----------------------|----------------|------------|
| <b>17</b>            | <b>55</b>      | <b>161</b> |
| Not at all important | Low importance | Neutral    |



Unlike single-brand retailers, department stores collect rich cross-category data from diverse brands and channels, including in-store and online behaviors. This data fuels advanced predictive algorithms—similar to Spotify’s music recommendations—that dynamically tailor product suggestions to individual preferences and sizes.

This personalization translates into measurable business impact: app users demonstrate a 3-5% increase in CLV and 28% higher conversion rates compared to traditional shopping experiences. Moreover, real-time inventory insights reduce overstock and tariff-related costs by optimizing domestic versus imported product allocation.

## **Thesis II: The Spotify-Like App Bridges Digital Convenience and Physical Engagement Takeaway:**

The unified app offers a seamless, step-by-step shopping journey that integrates digital convenience with the indispensable human touch, transforming operational efficiency and customer experience.

### **Supporting Arguments:**

The experience component during shopping is almost as equally important as the assortment:

#### **How US shoppers rank retailers on key purchase criteria, by category**

| Department store rankings            |              | Assortment | Shopping experience | Value |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|------------|---------------------|-------|
| <b>Apparel</b><br>(Out of 37 stores) | Top rank     | 4          | 4                   | 7     |
|                                      | Average rank | 18         | 17                  | 17    |
| <b>Beauty</b><br>(Out of 16 stores)  | Top          | 2          | 6                   | 6     |
|                                      | Average      | 7          | 11                  | 8     |
| <b>Home</b><br>(Out of 23 stores)    | Top          | 9          | 7                   | 8     |
|                                      | Average      | 13         | 11                  | 12    |

Source: 2023 Bain Advocacy in Retail Study, conducted in partnership with ROI Rocket

Upon entering the store, customers scan a QR code to download the app within 90 seconds. They then scan products to access real-time availability and cross-brand alternatives. Beacon-enabled navigation guides them efficiently through the store, reducing search time by 41%. Collaborative shopping features allow users to share lists and receive approvals remotely.

Critically, consultants evolve from brand-specific sales associates to cross-brand style advisors. Freed from transactional tasks, they assist customers in using the app and provide personalized styling in fitting rooms-preserving physical touch and human interaction, unlike non-interactive fitting rooms such as those at Reformation.

Insights from Sam's Club CEO Chris Nicholas reinforce this balance: technology enhances but does not replace human service, improving customer satisfaction and operational outcomes.

### **Thesis III: Experiential Retail and Community-Building Drive Engagement and Loyalty Takeaway:**

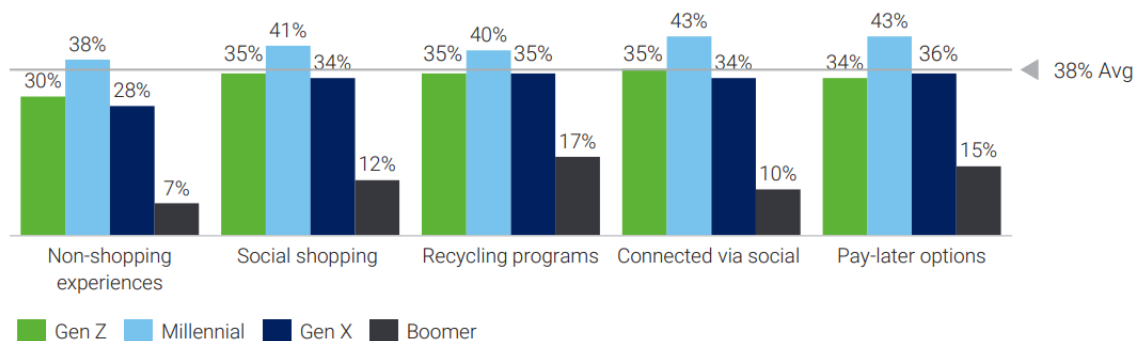
App-enabled experiential pop-up events and stylist sessions create emotional connections and community, increasing app adoption, store traffic, and customer loyalty.

#### **Supporting Arguments:**

Inspired by European department stores like Printemps and Le Bon Marché, which blend retail with hospitality and wellness, our model reimagines store space by allocating up to 15% of floor area for experiential zones. App users unlock access to exclusive events-such as influencer styling workshops and charity-driven pop-ups-that foster a sense of belonging and shared identity.

Consultants play a key role as event hosts and community builders, further deepening relationships. Pilot data shows users attending such events have 73% higher app retention and 27% increased store visits, offsetting tariff-driven cost pressures and enhancing the department store's lifestyle destination appeal.

% of respondents that answered "very important" or  
"#1 driver of purchase"



2

#### **Key Assumptions**

- Legacy IT systems can be integrated with real-time inventory and machine learning platforms.
- Customers will opt into data sharing for personalized benefits (pilot acceptance >68%).
- Staff will adopt new roles with appropriate training and incentives, following models like Sam's Club.
- Retailers will invest in experiential space redesign to maximize app-driven engagement.

<sup>2</sup> Source: [https://www.alixpartners.com/media/3pgbcffp/ap\\_consumer\\_sentiment\\_index\\_2024f.pdf](https://www.alixpartners.com/media/3pgbcffp/ap_consumer_sentiment_index_2024f.pdf)



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**Appendix**

1. Presentation
2. Resumes

# The Future of U.S. Department Stores

## Reimagining Experiential Retail With First-Party Data

### Problem statement

- Department stores face heightened customer expectations for seamless shopping experiences while **struggling with thin margins, staffing inefficiencies, and growing e-commerce competition.**
- Traditional models miss out on capturing and **leveraging first-party data**, resulting in lost opportunities for personalization and efficiencies

### Executive summary

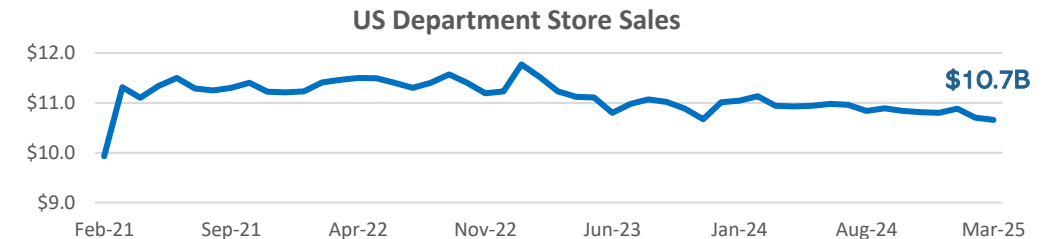
#### Our solution

- Our Unified “Spotify-like” shopping app leverages department stores’ **unique cross-brand first-party data** and merges digital convenience with physical retail advantages.

Reduced dependence on sales associates while improving customer experience across all segments, positioning department stores as **tech-enabled lifestyle hubs.**

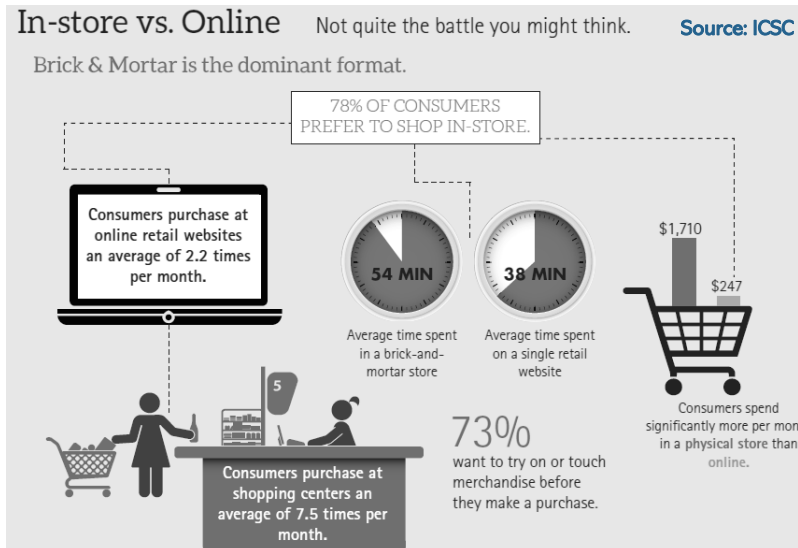
### Key data

U.S. department store sales fell 2.53% YoY to \$10.66B (March 2025). Meanwhile, e-commerce sales grew 7.5% in 2024 to \$1.19T



For every \$100 spent online, \$15 is returned, while only \$5 is returned for every \$100 spent in store.

However, pain points still have not been solved even with existing omnichannel strategies



### IN-STORE SHOPPER PAIN POINTS

Wasted time  
**DIFFICULTY FINDING ITEMS**  
**NEED CONSULTANT**  
 Lack of direction  
**ADVICE** Inefficient try-on  
 Consultants not directing  
**CHECK SIZE/COLOR** Language barriers

# Key Thesis

## Thesis

First-party data is department stores' untapped strategic asset for personalized, seamless experiences.

## Supporting Stats/Arguments

Department stores uniquely possess cross-brand, in-store and online first-party data, enabling deep insights into customer behavior and preferences. This supports advanced personalization, higher conversion rates, and loyalty.

A unified digital app bridges digital convenience with in-store engagement, unlocking operational efficiency.

Real-time product info, smart recommendations, and collaborative shopping reduce reliance on sales associates, cut costs, and improve service consistency.

Experiential Retail – Building Community Through Pop-Ups and Stylist Sessions

To fully realize the promise of experiential retail, the app integrates exclusive events that foster community and emotional engagement.

**EDUCATION****COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL****MBA**, Management and Strategy, May 2025*Honors*: Forte Fellow, Columbia Fellow*Leadership*: CMC Fellow; VP of International, Management Consulting Association; VP of Community, Retail and Luxury Goods Club; VP of Communications, Eastern European Community

New York, NY

2023-2025

**CAUCASUS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, CAUCASUS UNIVERSITY****BBA**, Finance, June 2014, GPA: 3.99/4.00*Honors*: 100% merit-based state funding; University Scholar; Distinction on Dean's List (No. 1 in class of ~200)*Study Abroad*: Exchange program at Georgia State University, J. Mack Robinson College of Business, Atlanta, GA (Fall 2012)

Tbilisi, Georgia

2010-2014

**EXPERIENCE****ALIXPARTNERS****MBA Summer Intern, Strategy & Analysis**

- Delivered over \$9m in inventory savings by running a Request For Proposal (RFP) for a national beauty retailer
- Built and owned RFP savings model, led sample review process, supported senior team members in vendor negotiations and in creating future-state vendor matrix that resulted in optimizing supply chain costs and maximizing vendor capabilities

New York (NY)

Summer 2024

**TBC CAPITAL (TBCC)***Top Georgian investment bank by Debt Capital Market transactions, subsidiary of largest Georgian Bank TBCG, FTSE 250 company***Vice President, M&A and Advisory Services**

- Developed strategy and built 7-person team, creating 50+ deal pipeline and scalable business model for newly launched M&A line
- Closed largest cross-border buy-side M&A deal from Georgia, advising Georgian bank to acquire fintech company in Uzbekistan
- Identified industry consolidation trends and researched gaps in customer acquisition strategy; pitched 100+ clients and won 40 sell-side and buy-side deals across 10 different industries and 3 countries (Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and Georgia)
- Reduced deal sourcing time by 50% to 3 weeks by redesigning internal processes: standardized pitchbooks and valuation models (utilizing DCF, Public Comps, Precedent Transactions) and established valuation committee review mechanism

Tbilisi, Georgia

2022-2023

**BLUEORCHARD FINANCE S.A.***Swiss-based global impact investment manager and member of Schroders Group***Senior Investment Officer, Private Debt Analytics, Eurasia Region**

- Led 2 due-diligence efforts in Sri Lanka and identified regulatory risks; devised solution by structuring \$20m contingent funding
- Orchestrated financial, regulatory, and ESG due diligence efforts of financial institutions (FIs) across Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, synthesizing investment proposals for 3 FIs for Credit Committee approval; closed all 3 deals (100% success rate)

Tbilisi, Georgia

2021-2022

**GEORGIA CAPITAL PLC (CGEO)***Largest PE platform investing in Georgia, listed on London Stock Exchange (formerly part of BGEO Group PLC)***Head of Investor Relations (IR) and Funding**

- Directed cross-functional teams, raising \$2.4bn capital on LSE and ISE from 100+ institutional US and UK investors
- Built and managed IR teams (20+ people) of CGEO, comprised of holding company and 9 subsidiaries operating in 12 industries
- Created transparent investor reporting; planned 200+ investor meetings, liaising with C-suite executives and Board of Directors
- Managed spin-off and subsequent IPO of CGEO (£1.3bn in total), resulting in first-ever LSE-listed PE platform from Georgia

Tbilisi, Georgia

2018-2021

**BGEO GROUP PLC***FTSE 250 company, holding largest bank in Georgia and investment business before demerger in 2018***International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) Advisory Services Manager**

- Advised management on structuring complex transactions under IFRS, resulting in 30% improvement of accounted EBITDA
- Collaborated in cross-functional team led by consulting firm to launch banking customer loyalty program (\$9.6m cashless value)

Tbilisi, Georgia

2016-2018

**EY****Audit Senior** (Fall 2016), **Advanced Audit Staff** (2015-2016), **Audit Staff** (2014-2015), **Audit Intern** (2013-2014)

- Spearheaded financial audit engagements for 9 clients in banking, oil & gas, non-profit and telecom sectors
- Conducted financial due diligence of Société Générale's Georgian subsidiary (Bank Republic) as part of its sale to local bank

Tbilisi, Georgia

2013-2016

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION***Work Authorization*: STEM MBA, three-year OPT eligible*Certifications*: ACCA Member since 2016; Leadership for High-Performance course at IEDC Bled School of Management, 2022*Volunteer Work*: Invited lecturer at Caucasus University in Financial Accounting; pro-bono consultant to women entrepreneurs*Languages*: Georgian (native), Russian (intermediate), German (conversational)*Interests*: Interior design (my first design was published in local magazine), cooking (passionate for modernizing Georgian cuisines)

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**EDUCATION****COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL****Master of Business Administration**, Strategy, May 2025

New York, NY

2023 - 2025

*Honors:* Chazen Leadership Fellow, Kravis Scholar; Small Business Consulting Case Competition 2022 Winner*Leadership:* VP of Marketing, Retail & Luxury Goods Club; VP of Treks, Columbia Beauty Club; VP of Events, South Asia Business Association; Student Leader, Global Immersion Program – Innovation in India*Membership:* Management Consulting Association, Small Business Consulting Program, CBS Spirits Club**BIRLA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENCE, PILANI (BITS)**

Hyderabad, India

**B.E. (Hons.)**, Chemical Engineering, Minors in Finance, June 2019

2015 - 2019

*Honors:* Top 5 in class of 70, merit-based scholarship recipient (awarded to top 9% students in class of 800+)*Leadership:* Scholarship coordinator, Alumni Association; Founder, Dramatics Society; Secretary, SANGAM - Affinity Group**EXPERIENCE****STRATEGY&**

New York, NY

**Senior Associate Intern, Enterprise Strategy and Valuation (ESV) Group, Consumer Market**

Jun 2024 – Aug 2024

- Analyzed savings levers and implementation considerations across functions for a Fortune 500 CPG client, helping team identify \$360M in SG&A savings opportunities
- Led comprehensive analysis of communication spending (~\$100M budget), benchmarking against top-performing peers to identify 8-10% in efficiency opportunities and cost-reduction strategies

**J.P. MORGAN (JPM)**

Mumbai, India; New York, NY

**Investment Banking Analyst, Regional Investment Banking (RIB) (2021 - 2023)**

2019 - 2023

- Researched and analyzed an untapped opportunity for JPM in beauty sector and pitched it to Director, securing buy-in; facilitated JPM's foray in \$500B North American beauty industry by creating a pipeline of deals worth \$15B
- Pioneered expansion of Beauty industry team in London & Singapore by tracing synergies with North America initiative and devising region-specific client outreach playbooks; efforts yielded \$200M revenue in first 6 months
- Launched first-of-its-kind global beauty newsletter featuring "What's new in the industry" insights, differentiating JPM from competitors and helping win mandates worth \$800M in 3 months
- Spearheaded digital automation initiative to build first-ever automated pitch generator tool for beauty sector, reducing turnaround time for marketing pitches by 80%
- Drove IPO roadshow pitch for a \$15B luxury hair care client emphasizing its unique positioning, boosting investor interest; positioning client as the largest US consumer IPO to re-file and helping raise ~\$600M above the target
- Identified market-entry strategy for a US-based marine client in technology-enabled services, helping it negotiate a \$1B buy-side deal for a Norway-based marine electronics business, marking JPM's biggest marine transaction
- Identified market-entry strategy for a US-based marine client in technology-enabled services, helping it negotiate a \$1B buy-side deal for a Norway-based marine electronics business, marking JPM's biggest marine transaction
- Evaluated market expansion opportunity for \$1.2B packaging client, helping drive cost synergies through merger with legacy US-based paper firm, making client #1 in specialty materials
- Co-led flagship internship program for 150+ interns annually and managed trainings for RIB India team analyst class of 2021-2022
- Awarded highest performance rating among class of 50 analysts across all review cycles

**Investment Banking Junior Analyst, Regional Investment Banking (RIB) (2019 - 2021)**

- Strategized expansion of RIB to marine sector, fostering cross-functional efficiencies among Industrials, M&A, and RIB teams; advocated client outreach strategies, helping JPM win first mandate from the largest marine player globally
- Devised a negotiation pitch for a US-based equipment rental client for its acquisition of sector's second-largest player, propelling it to #1 in specialized equipment rentals globally and generating \$10M in revenue for JPM
- Co-founded CSR team for Investment Banking division and partnered with 5+ NGOs to organize 40+ events; awarded firm-wide recognition for extensive contributions in volunteering services for two years
- Youngest analyst handpicked to lead JPM's Diversity & Inclusion initiative "Women in banking" aimed at improving gender ratio, bringing-in 30+ junior analysts over two years through recruitment drives

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION***Volunteering:* **Leader, Josh initiative:** Managed a team of 1,000 volunteers for beach clean-up drive, cleaning 8 tons of trash**Coordinator, Dr. Reddy's Foundation:** Led 80 training sessions to help 1,300+ COVID-19 affected students secure jobs*Interests:* Dancing (Certified Kathak dancer - trained for 6 years), landscape painting, Cooking Indian delicacies

# THOMAS MARANO

332 257 6412, [thomas.marano2@gmail.com](mailto:thomas.marano2@gmail.com), [LinkedIn](#)

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## EDUCATION

### COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL

**MBA Candidate**, *GMAT: 770/800, Member: Venture Capital Club, Gourmet Club, Soccer Club*

New York, NY

2023 - 2025

### YALE UNIVERSITY

**Bachelor of Arts**, History, *Distinction in Major, GPA: 3.73*

New Haven, CT

2012 - 2016

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## EXPERIENCE

### RTP GLOBAL

*\$1B Series A venture capital firm focused on B2B SaaS*

New York, NY

October 2024 – Present

#### MBA Venture Associate

- Conduct investment research and due diligence on early-stage developer tools and vertical SaaS startups by analyzing open-source communities, interviewing domain experts, and assessing adoption patterns
- Led cohort and financial analyses for a logistics software follow-on investment, culminating in a Series A extension
- Researched and evaluated emerging AI solutions (AI copilot for CTOs), producing investment recommendations leading to investment
- Authored investment memos and participated in discussions for various investments.

### BOWERY CAPITAL

*Early-stage (seed, pre-seed) venture capital firm focused on B2B SaaS*

New York, NY

June 2024 – October 2024

#### MBA Venture Associate

- Evaluated seed/pre-seed opportunities by assessing market size, product viability, financials and founder fit—leading to investments in Harmonyze and several other companies
- Produced five investment memos synthesizing market analysis, competitive landscape, product positioning and team evaluations
- Provided portfolio support: monitored board updates, synthesized key performance metrics, and advised on follow-on financing
- Led research on a potential London Stock Exchange listing for a portfolio company, engaging with C-suite executives, lawyers, and bankers
- Contributed to internal thought leadership by developing content for a comprehensive vertical SaaS playbook

### DUFFEL

*Airline aggregator backed by Benchmark and Index that enables businesses to sell flights to their users*

London, England

Nov. 2021 – Jun. 2023

#### Backend Software Engineer

- Led 6-person team to pitch, formulate and develop a plan to make adding new airlines easier; reduced time taken to add new airlines by 50%
- Spearheaded cross-functional project to add tracking to core product; increased number of customers selling bags by 20%
- Devised roadmap to increase revenue from existing customers; led project to unlock new ancillaries (meals, inflight Wi-Fi) for existing customers
- Generated comprehensive plan to remove key pain points for Ops in engineering hackathon
- Onboarded and mentored junior engineers new to the Elixir programming language, in addition to running interviews and feedback process for prospective engineering candidates

### FAREWILL

*Online provider of legal services required to deal with pre- and post-death paperwork*

London, England

Jan. 2020 – Nov. 2021

#### Software Engineer

- Received fastest promotion in company history from junior to mid-level engineer
- Proposed and led cross-team project to migrate codebase from JavaScript to TypeScript; reduced downtime on platform by ~15%
- Led 4 engineers as Engineering Team Lead to launch a new flagship product from ideation
- Conducted market and user research to expand our core product to a wider audience, resulting in a new telephone wills product
- Proposed and implemented internal tools that automated manual workflows, dramatically cutting developer time on Ops tasks

### INTERCOM

#### Business Development Representative

San Francisco, CA

Sep. 2017 – Sep. 2018

- Established new outbound business development function; created processes and cadences from scratch
- Gathered product insights from prospective customers to shape upmarket strategy and consistently exceeded sales targets

### CITIGROUP

#### Sales and Trading Analyst

New York, NY

Jun. 2016 – Aug. 2017

- Managed relationships with high-value hedge fund and asset management clients, advising on trade executions and market trends
- Streamlined daily coverage processes and introduced desk-level KPIs, improving efficiency in trade execution

## EDUCATION

### COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL

**MBA**, Strategy and Management, May 2026, **GMAT: 770** (99 percentile)

New York, NY

2024 - 2026

*Leadership*: Adam Smith Society (AVP of Speakers), South Asian Business Association (AVP of Events)

*Member*: Management Consulting Association, Retail and Luxury Goods Club, Gourmet Club, Microbrew Club

*Small Business Consulting Program*: Advising Verteel, a drone service provider, on identifying and evaluating dual-use opportunities across commercial and defense sectors

### MANIPAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

**BTech**, Information Technology, Minor: Business Management, May 2019

Manipal, India

2015 - 2019

*Leadership*: Exchange Head, IAESTE (non-profit for international STEM internships), facilitated 400+ student placements globally

*Member*: Literary & Debate Club (Parliamentary Debate semi-finalist); University Chess Team (3 inter-school competitions)

*Awards*: Best Delegate at Model UN Conferences across Indian universities (won 3 times)

*Internships*: Software Development Intern, Infox (Poland); Summer Analyst, Goldman Sachs (India)

## EXPERIENCE

### GOLDMAN SACHS

*Exotic Trade Review Team (Launch and review of bespoke structured product instruments)*

New York, NY | Bengaluru, India

2019 - 2024

**Senior Associate** (2023 - 2024)

- Earned accelerated promotion to Senior Associate and was hand-picked to relocate to New York (Nov 2022) to drive digital transformation and new product innovation for the Americas business by building out and functionally leading a team of 5
- Led a global team of 8 to drive cross-functional initiative to scale strategic automation platform across EMEA and US; extended coverage to 67% of global \$18B portfolio, reducing trade review times by 90% and improving risk mitigation by 30%
- Revitalized convertible bonds business by introducing bespoke features, like delisting protection, in collaboration with Structuring and Strategy teams; drove \$900M in issuances in 2023 (\$18M revenue), with \$2B projected for 2024
- Developed and presented annual structured products strategy to leadership, analyzing market dynamics and evolving product mix to identify high-growth opportunities; secured buy-in and funding for 2 new strategic hires to scale tech-enabled solutions

**Associate** (2022)

- Spearheaded the Japan market expansion strategy by identifying untapped segments through market gap analysis and competitor trade reviews; optimized product offerings, resulting in a 4x increase in client base and \$6M in incremental revenue
- Conceptualized and led development of first-of-its-kind strategic platform for automated trade review and risk management of \$4B Asia portfolio; partnered with Engineering head to build proof-of-concept and secure partner approval for implementation

**Senior Analyst** (2021)

- Drove client platform upgrade for structured product trades by integrating new products through automated booking templates, enabling quick, one-click trade quoting and booking, reducing errors by ~40%, and boosting client satisfaction
- Designed and implemented an automated issuance process for high-volume structured products, scaling to cover 70% of equity products within two years; drove ~180% volume growth, and delivered 5 FTEs in annual cost savings
- Overhauled onboarding for 30 global markets interns by establishing a structured training curriculum, introducing peer mentorship, and implementing continuous feedback; optimized onboarding time by 33% and improved feedback ratings by 12%

**Analyst** (2019 - 2020)

- Led trade document digitization efforts in APAC facilitating onboarding to UBS's third-party platform, a high-volume, low-ticket size revenue stream, boosting market share by 200bps and realizing operational savings of \$1.8M annually
- Collaborated with Sales, Trading, and Strategy teams to rapidly launch decrement index notes in the French market post-COVID, enhancing product portfolio in a competitive landscape and generating \$15M in annualized revenue

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

*Certifications and Technical Skills*: Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA), Alteryx Core Certified, SQL, Tableau

*Work Authorization*: STEM MBA, OPT eligible for three years

*Volunteer Work*: Conducted comprehensive vocational training for 70 individuals, teaching basic computer and Excel skills to enhance employability and job readiness

*Interests*: Open water scuba diver (9 dives), competitive chess player, exploring the NY dining scene



# CAYLA RENE PLOTCH

caylaplotch@gmail.com | (917) 699-9601

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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### **Tiger Global Management, New York, NY – Product Strategy, Investor Relations**

October 2021 – Present

- Product strategist for Tiger Global's investment products: long/short hedge fund, long-only fund, crossover fund, and venture capital business totaling ~\$50bn in assets under management focused on global technology businesses
- Top decile returns over the last 20+ years. Worked on fundraises for venture fund 15 (\$12.6bn) and venture fund 16 (\$2.2bn). Currently deploying capital out of venture fund 16

#### Select Experience:

- *Public Product Specialist:* Work in conjunction with Head of Investor Relations and CFO to position the three public funds externally. Developed weekly and monthly customized data outputs; build out tailored talking points and data-based insights about fund performance as content for our marketing team to use with investors
- *Quarterly Investor Letter Creation & Publication:* Collaborate with Head of Product Strategy and Founder/CIO to produce high-profile quarterly investor letter for public fund business. Oversee distribution of letter to 1,000+ investors quarterly
- *Execution Lead – \$1bn Debt Raise for Tiger Global's Management Company & Ongoing Investor Communication:* Spearheaded preparation for and execution of a strategic capital markets transaction alongside the firm's COO. Managed relationship with banking team, produced 30+ page deal memorandum, created 50+ page marketing presentation, and responded to 100+ investor diligence inquiries. Responsible for providing ongoing updates to bondholders and rating agency
- *Develop Macro and Artificial Intelligence-Focused Marketing Materials for Founder/CIO:* Leverage proprietary technical data analyses to create materials that illustrate the firm's market view. Ongoing creation of materials that articulate the firm's perspective on artificial intelligence and active research areas; necessitates partnership with senior investment professionals and commercialization of technical research for external consumption
- *LP Advisory Committee Meetings (LPACs):* Organize annual in-person LPAC for the firm's 20 most important external stakeholders. Multi-month preparation process entails bespoke material creation for a lineup of investment partner speakers as well as in-person event coordination including a meeting and a dinner
- *Regional Coverage for Australia, Middle East, and US West Coast:* Collaborate with three regional marketing leads to fundraise and build long-term client partnerships. Designed the go-to-market process for an Australian feeder fund
- Firm Leadership: Organize events for 15-person NY-based Investor Relations team to deepen team relations

### **Goldman Sachs, New York, NY – Investment Banking, Equity Capital Markets, Industrials**

July 2019 – September 2021

- Top-ranked associate and analyst; completed internship during Summer 2018 and accepted full-time offer
- Managed all workstreams and quarterbacked deal execution for three-person team; group P&L increased 3x+ during 2020 – 2021

#### Select Deal Experience: 20+ transactions (IPOs, follow-ons, block trades, corporate spin-offs)

- *Fortive Spin-Off of Vontier and Subsequent \$1.1bn Debt-for-Equity Exchange for Fortive's Remaining Stake in Vontier:* Led execution for 50+ investor meetings and conducted one-on-one diligence follow-ups with Fortive investors to minimize churn in Vontier's shareholder base post transaction close
- *\$1bn Sole Bookrunner Block Trade for Carnival Cruise Line:* Sub-24-hour transaction execution for significant P&L. Articulated transaction merits to approval committee and facilitated dialogue with an international strategic investor to de-risk execution
- *\$700mm Core & Main Initial Public Offering:* Analyzed and summarized comparable public company shareholder data to develop a data-driven investor targeting strategy used in 50+ investor meetings during the IPO roadshow

## EDUCATION

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### **Columbia Business School, New York, NY**

Expected May 2025

*Masters in Business Administration (Executive Program)*

### **Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH**

June 2019

*Bachelor of Arts in Economics; Phi Beta Kappa, Magna Cum Laude, Rufus Choate Scholar (top annual honor group)*

- The Dartmouth (2017 – 19): Head of Product Development (15+ person team, developed an alternative revenue stream for the newspaper); Chabad at Dartmouth (2015 – 19): Executive Board Member; DREAM Mentor (2015 – 19): Weekly three-hour commitment to supporting a local lower-income student through educational and recreational activities

### **The Dalton School, New York, NY**

June 2015

## PERSONAL

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- Interests: Jewish community engagement (Young Wall Street Ambassador for UJA-Federation of New York), travel, skiing, recreational boxing, yoga, cooking (recipe development), and baking