



ELISE BABICH

InMobi Digital Merchandising Manager

What is your current role? How did you get where you are today?

I am currently the Digital Merchandising Manager at InMobi within their Telco Cloud division. I started this position October 2021, and it was a wild and fun ride to get here!

The first 10 years of my career, I was in Visual Merchandising, working for Levi Strauss, Ralph Lauren, Karen Millen, Guess, Love Culture and Scheels. During this time, I worked in large department stores and small specialty boutiques; learning how customers shop within each, what are their expectations, what are they looking for, and what will convert them to a sale.

In 2015, I transitioned to the eComm world working for Overstock.com as a category manager and was one of the only merchandisers on the team that had brick and mortar experience. My previous experience in-store proved to be imperative to my success at Overstock, giving me a unique perspective to online sales and merchandising, and a better understanding of consumer behavior than my peers.

Over the years I learned that not only do I love visual merchandising and product placement, but I also really enjoy tech and data, and that is how I ended up with InMobi! Transitioning from eCommerce to mCommerce (mobile commerce), in my current position I work in a very tech-heavy space providing merchandising and consumer behavior insights and data to developers who create commerce apps for Telcom companies.

What is your favorite part of your current job? Least Favorite?

My favorite part about my job is being able to collaborate with others who have an expertise different from mine. I think that is why I enjoy working in eComm so much since there are tech people and merch people, and their worlds collide! I love learning, teaching and inspiring, so working with others who have a different background is exciting to me.

My least favorite part about my current job is the occasional late meeting. Half of my team is in India, including my senior leadership team, so there are a few evening meetings a week that I must be present for. I am a morning person, so those are long days!

What are some of the biggest challenges you've faced in your career?

Working with others who have a difference of opinion and are not willing to compromise. Working in eComm has become easier to navigate since there is more available data to support decisions. When working in a large corporate office and fighting for support and/or resources. Knowing when it is

time to leave a position. I have had more than one time in my career when I would feel stagnant in my position and deciding to stay or move on and know if the time is right has been a challenge.

What skills, abilities, and personal attributes are essential to success in your position/the fashion industry as a whole?

Being open to trying new things, taking risks, asking for more. There are a lot of smart ambitious people out there that you are competing with, and if you are not open to taking chances and potentially failing, and you don't ask for more opportunity, you will get left behind. Growth comes from trying and failing and trying again. Do not be afraid to fail, it is how you learn and get better, and it makes the success so much sweeter.

How relevant is your undergraduate major to your work? Having been through this program, what are some lessons you've taken with you throughout your career?

I have learned a lot in my career that has led me to my current position. And even though eCommerce was not really a thing when I was in the program, and mCommerce wasn't a thing at all (we still had flip phones back then and texting was just becoming a thing), the foundation of what I learned in this program has been instrumental.

For example, the basics of visual merchandising that I learned in the fashion retailing class I frequently taught shop managers when I worked at Scheels. And to this day I still reference when discussing visual merchandising in eComm since the fundamentals can be applied to in store as well as online.

What are three things you wish someone would have told you when you were going through this program?

Keep in touch with more of your classmates, you never know when those relationships will come in handy, whether it is for networking or just someone to bounce ideas off or for support. The industry changes fast, so be open to change and new ideas and new technologies. Do not focus on just one part of the program because that is where your current interests lie. Take other classes, even outside of the program, because you never know when those skills will come in handy. Never in a million years when I was at Sac State planning on being a Fashion Buyer did I think I would end up in the tech industry, but here I am and I love it.