

**Cathal McAteer**  
on what sets his  
Folk brand apart  
from its rivals **p48**

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**JUST THE JOB**

# Anabelle Blumenthal

*Sales manager UK, Oska*

**What does your job involve?**

I work closely with our head of design to develop new colour schemes and a strong collection for the new season, and I ensure all staff are fully trained on the brand. Building strong relationships with the customers and getting to know what they want is key, as is analysing sales figures. I also manage and organise the buying season, including showing at [womenswear trade show] Pure London. Travel is a huge part of my role and at the moment I'm also styling the lookbook shoots.

**What skills do you need?** You need to be aware of the customer's individual needs. Having a strong sense of up-and-coming trends and colours is a must, as is confident communication with the design team and a strong relationship with the head of design. Time management and organisation are also important.

**What do you like and dislike about your job?** I love the opportunity for travel and the customer interaction that comes with the job. I've been with the company for 10 years now, so it's nice to have such loyal relationships with those who've supported the brand since the beginning, as well as working on new relationships when meeting new customers. I also

**CV**

- 2000** Sales manager, UK, Oska
- 1999** Costume designer, Capitol Event, Düsseldorf, Germany
- 1998** Work placement, MCM
- 1996** Diploma in Fashion Design, École Supérieure de la Mode, Munich, Germany

love the opportunity to meet new and interesting people who have the same passion for fashion as I do. There's nothing I dislike about my job.

**How did you get to where you are today?** When I started, the company was only one year old and the concept of 'easy dressing' didn't exist then. I dreamt of establishing the brand in a new country [Oska is based in Germany], so I travelled the UK to convince people of a new way to dress and achieved this through focus and a willingness to listen to the customers. I also have a background in fashion design which gave me the skills to be able to sell at wholesale, as I'm more aware of what styles go together within the collection.

**What is your proudest career achievement to date?**

Establishing Oska in the UK. **What is your ambition?** My ambition is to keep our customers excited about the collection and to continue to work on future collections so they offer something different each time. I also have ambitions to further expand the brand and, in doing so, to continue to spread the philosophy of the label, which successfully combines easy dressing with fashion.

**How do you intend to get there?** Through the Oska evenings I organise, during which I'm able to talk [to our customers] about how to combine the different pieces of the collection. I want to also focus on staff training to ensure they have as much understanding of the collection as possible.

**What three words sum you up?** Original, sensitive and positive.

**What advice would you give to someone wanting to follow in your footsteps?** Listen to your customers and understand the feedback you receive. It's also helpful to study fashion design and to learn as many languages as possible, as travel is a must. Travelling worldwide serves a double purpose as it provides inspiration and opens [your eyes] up to so many different cultures. ●

**How to be a...**

*Sales manager for a brand*



**Kara Heward**  
Consultant for  
wholesale, design  
and technology,  
CVUK

To be a successful sales manager, a fashion degree is not necessarily important. Sales managers often have a general business degree or come via the shopfloor.

What you do need are great people skills and a passion for product, and these skills are often developed on the job. You'll need to have drive and be very self-motivated too, as you may be expected to get on the road and sell. A thick skin is also important as you'll often find yourself in negative situations.

You'll need to influence people to buy your product so you'll often need to live and breathe the brand. Brand fit is therefore key – not only wearing the product, but understanding and believing in the brand, is crucial to selling it.

The path generally starts from a wholesale administration assistant or a showroom assistant and progresses to a sales executive, generally for a region, before becoming a key account manager and then a sales manager.

A prospective employer would be looking for excellent management and budgeting skills, knowledge of the brand and a vast client list.

The salary for a UK sales manager can range from a basic of £35,000 up to £55,000 plus a car and performance-related bonus.

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