

MONTE CLARKE, GLOBAL OPERATIONS EXECUTIVE

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CATALYST FOR 6-FIGURE SALES & PROFIT GROWTH, & COST REDUCTIONS

Career-defining Brands: Big W, New Look, House of Fraser, Sainsbury's & Marks & Spencer | Market Insights: Australia & United Kingdom | P&L: \$550M (Sales) | Scope: 150+ Stores | People: 6K+

Retail Operations Executive, who spent the last 3 decades enabling multi-network retail brands to avoid collapse, tame operational chaos, create winning cultures, grow capability, and realise unparalleled profitability. Hatches rescue strategies and growth plans that not only save companies from the brink of failure—but energise stagnant, high-opportunity operations.

Transformational Change Enabler, who serves—instead of commands—and understands that an empowered, heard, valued, and engaged workforce—is key to achieving undisputed, all-in, team-driven, and long-lasting change. Creates cultures that challenge the "it's always been done this way" mindset, inspires innovation at all levels within organisations and considers every perspective when tasked with moving the needle forward. Leads with high visibility, transparency, integrity, and amity.

People and Capability Builder, who unlocks potential in individuals—and teams—via training platforms, 1:1 coaching and intensive leadership programs to maximise company performance, profits, competitive advantage, and customer acquisition. Designs operational systems, heads corporate trials/projects, implements best practice processes that save time/money, reduces waste, aligns output with core values, increases stakeholder confidence, and improves overall performance.

EXECUTIVE STRENGTHS, HIGHLIGHTS & FISCAL RESULTS

Multi-channel Retail Operations – Multi-million Dollar Turnarounds – Board Reporting & Advisory – Change Leadership
High-impact Process Improvement – Sales, Profit & Growth Optimisation – Talent Empowerment & Succession Planning
Strategic Planning & Execution – Culture Change (Safety & Operations) – Workforce Management – Visual Merchandising
Customer-driven Operations – Leadership Coaching & Programs – Financial Performance Management – Loss Prevention



GROWTH MANAGEMENT: Propelled Sydney Metro's eCommerce sales 200%+ (\$55M) on the previous year through COVID-19 government-mandated lockdown—with 6-month online sales surpassing the entire 12-month results in the preceding year.

MILLIONS IN SAVINGS: Saved \$10.5M in wages over 24 months while assuring adequate resourcing in-store, boosting overall efficiency, and reducing the wages to sales ratio to <9%—for the first time in Big W's 25-year history.

OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE: A leader of leaders—established 9 "Regional Stores of Learning" as "Centres of Excellence" across the Division. Launched 12-month HiPo (high-potential) programs that provided intense, targeted training for rising-star employees.

CAREER -IN-ACTION

Big W | Sydney, NSW | 2014–2021

A leading department store chain owned by Woolworths and part of Australian retail conglomerate Wesfarmers, with (AUD) \$3B revenue, 14K+ staff, and 280+ apparel and homewares department stores across Australia.

State Manager, Victoria and Tasmania (2018–2021)

Turned the lowest-performing state into a #1 performer and Big W's "best practice" standard by focussing on the company's most valuable resource—its people!

Accountability: \$850K Turnover & \$27M Profit | Reports: 7 Direct, 6 Indirect & 4.2K Team Members | Stores: 82 across VIC & TAS
Change Leadership – Culture Building – Opportunity Spotting – Disaster Strategies – Cost Reductions – Staff Engagement

Commissioned by MD to turn around Big W's worst-performing region (13 leaders, 4.2K+ staff, 80+ stores across VIC/TAS), operational and safety compliance, service delivery and leadership resources—for the lowest ranking region companywide.

Galvanised store leaders to deliver business-as-usual through major change—merging Big W and Woolworths under Big W brand, churning 2 Managing Directors in 18 months, directive to cut Big W's footprint by more than 50% from 290 to 125 stores and enduring the significant impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on sales, supply, brand building and customer relations.

Built a solid multi-level network to drive much-needed change to deep-rooted, ineffective ways of working.

Grew eCommerce to \$55M | Cut TRIFR from 30% to 9.2% | Saved \$10.5M | Raised Staff Engagement to 71%

Selected Highlights:

- **Reversed the state's excessive 3-year TRIFR (total recordable injury frequency rates)**—peaking at 30%—the highest of 5 states—and en route towards Big W's 14.1% goal. Powered a shift in staff mindset from "safety laxity to safety vigilance." Facilitated due diligence training for leaders, instituted "state-first" incident reporting, investigation, and resolution practices, and spearheaded quarterly data- and management-led safety briefings to mitigate store-level safety risks.
 - In just 12 months, achieved a 42% reduction in team member injuries from 50 to 29.
 - In 24 months, realised a 38% fall in TRIFR on the previous year at 9.2%.

- **Marshalled state (80+ stores) through world-first COVID-19 health pandemic**, after designing, implementing, and leading VIC/TAS's inaugural COVIDSafe Plan—unanimously commended by Big W's Executive Board as best practice.
 - Achieved 100% compliance with Victoria's COVIDSafe regulations during restricted operations—tested repeatedly by 45 unannounced local authority visits across multiple stores—and zero ensuing recommendations/sanctions.
 - Propelled Sydney Metro's online sales 200%+ (\$55M) on the previous year through government-mandated lockdown—with 6-month online sales surpassing the entire previous year's results.
 - Piloted and scaled—Contactless Click and Collect initiative—rolled out across 32 Sydney metro stores—and ramped up home delivery with "pop-up picking stations" in-store throughout 18 stores.

- **Raised pick success rate for online orders from 17% to 96% (against company target of 95%)** and grew online sales 208% across 12 stores (later expanded to 23) by entirely transforming the existing and disparate in-store online order models.
 - Introduced standardised online order processes, fully resourced online store operations (staffing, training, and equipment) and empowered online order staff with support and consistency through appointing an online coach.

- **Resolved historic, 5-year wage blowouts** after inheriting the worst region companywide for wages to sales ratio. Introduced store-level-based wage forecasting, expenses/control, regional reviews, and triweekly state meetings to enable on-the-ground and in-the-moment revisions. Also leveraged learnings from top achievers to impact state success.
 - Maximised EBIT and delivered wages to sales ratio of 8.9% for FY20 saving \$7M on the previous year. Results recognised as the first time in Big W's 25-year history that the state had delivered a ratio below 9%.
 - Maintained record-low wages to sales ratio in FY21 with a saving of \$3.5M in wages—despite COVID-19 triggered, double-digit sales decline companywide.
 - Stemmed \$10.5M in avoidable wage bleed in the first 24 months alone (FY20/FY21)—while meeting store-level human capital resourcing needs, boosting store-level efficiency, and standardising store models and processes.
 - Trained and upskilled line managers through recruiting a Workforce Coach. Also aligned productivity and service requirements within VIC/TAS's top #30 opportunity stores with Big W benchmarks via a diversified workforce mix.

- **Raised VIC/TAS's staff engagement score from the poorest ranking (62%) of 5 states to the #1 top position (71%).** As a servant leader, built a winning culture across the region by embracing and encouraging diversity, generating a culture of trust and appreciation, fostering innovation and leadership in others—and leading with high visibility and transparency.
 - Cultivated a strong Employee Value Proposition (EVP) to retain high-potential employee (HiPo) talent for internal promotions—subsequently filling all 30 management vacant positions—75% through internal advancement. Also offered HiPo (high-potential) opportunities that provided intense, targeted training for "rising-star" employees.
 - Held "Breakfast/Tea with Monte" listening sessions throughout top #20 opportunity stores where team members shared ideas on making their store an even better place to work. Initiative was repeated via Regional Managers.
 - Brought in 1:1 coaching programs and training/upskilling for all staff via 12-month training programs.
 - Introduced a "Thank You" rewards and recognition scheme to celebrate individual and team success along with team building/enjoyment sessions throughout the year made possible by securing a sports and social budget.

State General Manager, South Australia, Northern Territory and Tasmania (2014–2018)

Stemmed business-critical cash flow bleed by replacing old and ineffective ways with new and innovative methods.

Accountability: \$475K Sales & \$5M Profit | Reports: 5 Direct, 4 Indirect & 2.3K Team Members | Stores: 39 across SA, NT & TAS
Sales Growth – Culture Change – Loss Prevention – Turnaround Strategies – Cost Reductions – Customer Satisfaction

Headhunted from the UK to revive the SA, NT and TAS business from a 6-year sales decline (plus negative EBIT) and deliver the MD's "new look" merchandise change strategy (including significant pivot after new MD appointment and customer merchandise differentiation proposition). Rapidly acquired insights into cross-border retail commerce to grow leadership capability, sales (in-store and eCommerce channels), achieve positive EBIT, improve customer experience, reduce cost blowouts—and influence Big W's future operational and commercial strategies.

Applied a roll-up-the-sleeves approach to guiding—and not just directing—teams towards the path of success.

Grew Sales by \$5.6M | Saved ~\$4.6M in 12 Months | Reduced Shrinkage by 7% | Raised Customer Satisfaction by 18%

Selected Highlights:

- **Avoided mass double-digit store closures and staff layoffs** by swiftly refocussing store leadership teams on sales generation and cost savings (wages, shrinkage, and operations) and providing 1:1 growth coaching (stock replenishment cycles/practices, resource optimisation, seasonal campaigns, catalogue, and range reviews/opportunities and more).
 - **Delivered a positive EBIT result of 1.9%+ to sales in the first year—an improvement of \$9M on the previous year.**
 - **Grew sales by 8%—from \$70M to \$75.6M).**
 - **Improved customer satisfaction by 18%—and achieved the #1 customer Net Promoter Score (NPS).**
- **Corrected wage overspends, lowered the cost per hour of labour, and balanced top-heavy store structures**, through reviewing and analysing existing systems against the company's model to achieve a right-fit workforce mix and cost.
 - **Saved \$4.7M in wages in the first 12 months.**
 - **Improved cost to sales ratio by 5% and cost per hour by 6%. Reduced permanent tenures by 14%, boosted productivity by 3.5% and removed 27 surplus management roles from the structure.**
- **Tackled the state's high shrinkage results—at over 2% against the company's overall result of 1.7%—**by instilling a "secure the assets" and "lock the box" mindset and culture at all levels within stores. Led radical improvement strategies across top #18 high-risk stores (coaching, audits, and compliance), reskilled all customer-facing staff in loss prevention, arranged shrink workshops, and redesigned layout and staffing in highest-risk departments (rolled out across 50 stores nationally).
 - **Delivered a stock loss result of 1.4%—an improvement of 7%—and saved \$2.3M in lost liquidity on the prior year.**
- **Saved \$2.3M annually in avoidable outflow** by eliminating X 5 offsite warehouse facilities, initiating direct-to-store distribution, and radically improving the time for stock to reach the selling floor. Redeployed 100% of staff into stores.

New Look | London, UK | 2013–2014

A leading value fashion multi-channel retailer in the UK with an online business across key international markets. Boasts 500 UK stores and an online platform receiving 200M visits a year. £900M revenue, EBIT of £132M and ~30K staff.

Head of Retail, West Division

Rocketed sales, brand awareness/loyalty and customer experience after hiring 5 new future-ready Regional Managers to empower the 6K-strong team (150+ stores). Distinguished as the #2 UK Womenswear retailer in just 12 months.

Accountability: £300M Sales | Reports: 10 Direct, 2 Indirect & 6K Team Members | Stores: 153 across West England & Wales
Sales Growth – Change Strategies – Capital Investment Planning – Visual Merchandising Guidelines – Leadership Development

Brought into a newly created executive team (operations)—at a critical business crossroad—to build the West Division (West England and Wales) from scratch and turn around New Look's commercial performance after a relentless 3-year decline.

Led West Division out of the red and into the green by finding innovative solutions to old problems.

Realised £3M in Incremental Sales | Delivered £3.5M EBIT in 12 Months | Built 9 Centres of Excellence/Training Stores

Selected Highlights:

- **Saved the 40-year-old company from inevitable dissolution** after devising—and—powering 3- and 5-year rescue plans, recruiting and mentoring an elite team of leaders, and turning a "blank canvas" into a revenue-generating framework.
 - **Facilitated multi-session tactical planning workshops with Regional Managers (5) and Store Managers (153).**
 - **Realised £3.5M EBIT in year 1—the first time in 4 years—paving the way for significant future growth.**
- **Maximised West Division's capital investments** by developing the Division's first-ever property and investment roadmap. Partnered with Property Director to devise a future strategy for each store—fully endorsed by the New Look Board.
 - **Visited all 153 stores within the first 4 months to understand site conditions, local market insights, customer base, lease agreements and store viability (based on 3- and 5-year profit and loss/feasibility assessments). Also commissioned a complete maintenance review to better understand the investment needed.**
 - **Key outcomes: closed 8 loss-making stores, opened 4 new stores, and refreshed 65 stores.**
- **Turned around the Division's year-on-year sales decline while enhancing the customer experience** by launching non-negotiable visual merchandising guidelines, introducing weekly sales competitions, and conducting upskilling workshops.
 - **Delivered £3M in incremental sales attributed to increased customer conversions and units per transaction as a direct result of improved visual execution.**
 - **Won Board support for proposal to establish a VM leadership team to ensure brand consistency across all 150+ stores with the remit to grow customer conversions and units per transaction. Also managed hiring and training.**
 - **The 2014 Spring/Summer model store ranked #1 in the country (across 4 Divisions) at 96% with a 25% improvement on the previous result. 95% of the stores were rated green against 54% in the last appraisal.**
- **Instituted 12-month leadership development programs to meet existing and future business needs**, including career-path mapping, high-impact leadership challenges, multi-disciplinary rotation plans, rich performance feedback and mentoring.
 - **Established 9 "Regional Stores of Learning" were across the Division as "Centres of Excellence." Shifted internal resourcing of vacancies and opportunities to 75% from 10%.**

EARLY CAREER - CONSISTENT SUCCESS & PROFESSIONAL GROWTH WITH GLOBALLY RECOGNISED BRANDS

Regional Manager, House of Fraser

Regional Manager, Sainsbury's

Regional Manager & General Manager, Marks & Spencer

TESTIMONIALS FROM EXECUTIVES & DIRECT REPORTS

... "An executive with an outstanding career to date delivering significant improvement in top-line revenue, EBIT and Return on Capital—culminating in a recognised and sustainable level of career advancement."

... "He (Monte) constantly challenged me to reach higher, think more broadly and strategically, and build a greater circle of influence to deliver key outcomes for my team and the wider business."

... "Monte has an amazing ability to connect genuinely with his teams to inspire, coach and engage with energy and passion. A true leader always wanting to see the best from people, driving a culture of performance and growth of teams."

... "Monte has not only utilised his extensive retail experience in a difficult turnaround situation for the business, but also, and impressively, brought engagement, passion, and unity within his team as a new strategy was being adopted."

... "Monte has been an inspiring leader that demonstrates a great balance between people development and delivering results. Monte has always looked for ways to drive results through commercial analysis, challenging the current status quo and encouraging new ways to improve efficiencies."