

# Chris Edwards

407-625-5642 | chris.d.edwards@disney.com

## Career Summary

Skilled Leader with expertise in inspirational leadership, visual merchandising, brand identity, project management, budgeting, analytical problem solving, and process improvement. Highly effective at relationship development and improvement, while ensuring attention to detail, time, and organizational management.

## Career History

### Walt Disney World Resort

Lake Buena Vista, FL

#### *Merchandise Presentation Area Leader – Magic Kingdom*

April 2019 – Present

- Project managed rollout of 50<sup>th</sup> celebration across targeted Magic Kingdom locations. Collaborated with leadership for design and implementation of 50<sup>th</sup> décor
- Engage in relationship development with cross functional partners including Location Strategy, Allocation, Operations, WDI, Store Design, Retail Creative, Holiday Services, Decorating and Engineering
- Spear headed “Continuous Improvement Meetings” with Heart of House, Front of House, and Merchandise Presentation. Seeking ways to improve partnerships and efficiencies
- Lead and mentor 5 full time Cast Members. Providing 1:1 mentorship based on each Cast Members unique need. Encourage growth of Cast through location and project responsibilities
- Encourage Cast to develop leadership skills within their areas through day-to-day conversations, weekly meetings, and the ongoing improvement process
- Instrumental in creating monthly meetings for MP Cast to dialogue with Heart of House GEMS as they seek ways to improve efficiencies and partnerships
- Introduced new windows and visuals into The Emporium, creating relevant Guest engagement
- Led visual merchandising strategies for BBB, Star Traders, Confectionery, Memento Mori, and Space Mountain remodels

#### *Merchandise Presentation Area Leader – Animal Kingdom*

April 2018 – April 2019

- Responsible for supporting unique brand relevancy of Disney's Animal Kingdom
- Driving seasonal changes in product sets, collaborate with multiple partners to ensure presentations supported brand relevancy while driving financial results
- Led Cast to refocus merchandising to be Guest centric, capturing Guests as they flowed through the location. Introducing drive isles and focal points
- Introduced mannequins, visual platforms, and graphic apparel walls into Discovery Trading Post
- Drove 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary overlays in collaboration with Leadership and WDI

#### *Merchandise Presentation Area Leader – Disney's Hollywood Studios & Animal Kingdom* August 2011 – April 2018

- Area Leader for 2 Disney Parks
- Leading and inspiring 6 Merchandise Presentation Specialists
- Key collaborator with cross functional partners
- Driving seasonal changes in product sets, collaborate with multiple Partners to ensure presentations drove brand relevancy while driving financial results
- Supported expansion of Discovery Trading Post
- Supported new retail expansion with opening of Pandora
- Supported minor store remodels and strategic merchandising changes
- Supported opening of Shanghai Disney through pre-planning, leadership, and 5 months residential support

- Merchandise Presentation Area Leader – Downtown Disney* August 2008 – August 2011
- Area Leader for Disney Springs, Hotel Blvd, and Airport Locations
  - Leading and inspiring 6 full time Merchandise Presentation Cast Members supporting multiple locations from the largest to the small
  - Collaborated with Visual Leadership and Product Teams to drive product merchandising and relevancy
  - Partner with Location Planning, local Operational Teams and cross functional partners while driving results
- Merchandise Presentation Area Leader – World of Disney* August 2004 – August 2014
- Supported World of Disney's first major remodel since opening. Re-concepting spaces to drive brand relevancy while introducing the first Bippity Boppity Boutique.
  - Lead and inspired 3 full time Merchandise Presentation Cast Members for this unique, high-profile location
  - Collaborated with Visual Leadership and Product Teams to drive product positioning and relevancy
  - Partnered with Location Planning and local Operational Teams while driving results
- Merchandise Presentation Assistant Leader – Disney Hollywood Studios* August 1999 – August 2004
- Responsible for inspiring and guiding 3 full time Visual Specialists
  - Supported Area Leader through maintaining the yearly budget and being the "boots on the ground" leader for Specialists
  - Drove "100 Years of Magic" overlays celebrating 100 years of Walt Disney
  - Collaborating with key partners such as Location Planning, Product Development, and Visual Leadership to ensure brand integrity while ensuring profitability
  - Collaborated with individual Operational Partners to ensure optimum placement of merchandise and fixtures
  - Partnered with Store Design and WDI on several store remodels and upgrades, driving new and fresh concepts
  - Drove Diversity and Inclusion strategies for Merchandise Presentation Department
- Merchandise Presentation Specialist – Disney's Animal Kingdom* August 1997 – August 1999
- Collaborated closely with WDI, Store Design for opening of Walt Disney World's fourth theme park
  - Designed visual support items for opening of park
  - Partnered closely with Visual Manager and Location Planning to drive product positioning. Collaborated with Merchandising Trainer for roll out of new merchandising standards.
- Area Manager – Gayfers Department Store* August 1994 – August 1997
- Manager of 2 Pensacola Florida Stores
  - Manager of Jackson Mississippi Store
  - Led several Visual Merchandisers in Brand integrity for multiple locations
  - Supporting merchandising strategies for large scale department stores
  - Supported new openings and store remodels
- Visual Merchandiser – Sears* August 1989 – August 1994
- Visual Merchandiser supporting fashion, home, bath, appliances and automotive
  - Responsible for integrating corporate initiatives into local store
  - Collaborating with individual department leads and store General Manager to drive financial results

## Education

### Florida State University

Tallahassee, FL

- Bachelor of Fine Arts: Scenic Design

### Tallahassee Community College

Tallahassee, FL

- Associate Arts Degree

### North Florida Christian

Tallahassee, FL

- Diploma