

# CAROLINE H.S. HIPPLE

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## SUMMARY

Furniture and retail industry executive, experienced at leading successful organizations by building productive, cohesive management teams, profitable business strategies, and positive & productive workplace cultures. Innovator in multi-channel sales and marketing, including national retail chains, catalog and Web. Expert at global sourcing and logistics. Industry recognized leader in merchandising, customer service and employee development.

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

**HB2 Resources, Atlanta GA**

**2007 to Present**

- Established HB2 with two partners to investigate investment opportunities within the home furnishings industry, and to provide consultancy services to organizations looking for change management. Specializing in the creative and strategic alignment of sales, merchandising and marketing functions, HB2 has been engaged by clients like Jaclyn Smith Home, Hickory Hill Furniture Co., The Atlanta History Center, Domain Home Fashions, Bassett Mirror Company, Turning House Furniture, Guildmaster and Norwalk Furniture.

**STOREHOUSE FURNITURE COMPANY, Atlanta, GA**

**2000-2006**

### **PRESIDENT & COO**

- Reinvigorated 37-year-old lifestyle brand by establishing new vision, and building new management team and processes that reversed \$13 million operating loss and returned company to profitability from 2001 to 2004
- Grew sales from \$89 million to \$150 million, expanding chain from 42 to 72 stores with 850 employees
- Achieved 30 months of double-digit, same store sales
- Created and launched direct mail catalog with circulation of six million
- Launched transactional Web site that generated \$4 million in annual sales in 18 months with 250,000 unique impressions
- Developed an “execution” architecture, including a strategic plan, annual operating plan and innovative performance management system
- Instituted financial analysis and key performance indicators to drive continuous improvement and accountability for all departments
- Commissioned the team and participated in the creation of revolutionary sales training and management development programs that contributed to a strong and vibrant culture, signified by less than 15% annual turnover of retail and headquarters management
- Led a collaborative culture that emphasized teamwork and eliminated departmental silos
- Directed merchandise team to reinvent the product mix, replacing nearly 90% of chain product offerings

- Established visual merchandizing strategy with a textile and color-focused assortment
- Grew accessory business from \$2 million to \$12 million annual sales, accomplished with the distribution support of a new small package warehouse
- Traveled the world with buying teams to create a multi-national global-sourcing strategy
- Initiated advertising & PR strategy that included newspaper, Internet, catalog and shelter magazines

**THIS END UP FURNITURE CO., Richmond, VA****1977-2000**

**Highlights:** Directed strategic repositioning of 25 year-old vertically integrated furniture manufacturer and retailer, transforming the company from a single-product line to a total home-furnishings resource. Member of the original sales management team responsible for growing the company from 10 to 250 stores. P&L responsibility for opening and managing seven new districts with 100 stores. Redirected real estate strategy to fewer, larger and more profitable stores, doubling average sales volume per store. Part of the 12-member team that created the company's Shared Values, the first of its kind in the furniture industry.

**Executive Vice President-Sales, Marketing & Merchandising, This End Up Furniture Co. 1999-2000**

- Responsible for strategic planning, budgeting and staffing of \$160 million integrated furniture manufacturer and specialty retailer
- Managed operations of three departments and three sales channels: Marketing, Real Estate and Merchandising departments; and Store, Contract, and Catalog Sales and Operations
- Direct reports included: Vice President, Merchandising; Vice President and General Manager, Contract Sales Division; Vice President, Store Operations; Vice President, Marketing; Director Real Estate

**Vice President-Sales/Marketing, This End Up Furniture Co.****1995-1999**

- Responsible for store operations, sales, strategic marketing, advertising and promotion, and real estate for \$135 million, 150 store chain.
- Managed sales/marketing organization that included directors of marketing and real estate, three regional and 16 district sales managers, 150 store managers and 800 sales associates
- Developed and monitored annual, monthly, weekly and daily sales plans
- Created retention, recruiting and hiring strategies
- Planned and implemented sales and store operations training and development programs
- Designed and administered compensation plans
- Shared management responsibility with distribution team for home deliveries
- Grew net sales volume while closing 100 stores over a three-year period
- Opened 35,000 sq ft clearance center that grossed \$4 million annual sales and reduced inventory of returns and slightly-damaged product by 50%
- Managed marketing research, advertising, public relations, direct mail and sales promotion
- Created in-house ad agency for three distribution channels—stores, catalog and contract sales, which decreased advertising expenses 20% and increased timeliness
- Established cohesive management team across functions of retail sales, marketing, contract sales and catalog
- Led real estate strategy, site selection, store design and construction

**Vice President-Marketing and Merchandising, This End Up Furniture 1990-1995**

- Led re-organization of marketing and merchandising function, combining two independent functions into one team
- Implemented comprehensive marketing and merchandising plan, including new product mix, new and award-winning store design, and the first new product lines in 15 years
- New product categories included: Home Fashion Collection of bedding, window treatments and other soft goods, and Lifestyle Collection of upholstered furniture
- Held P&L responsibility for accessory business; grew the business from \$4 million to \$10 million while reducing costs and improving inventory turns thru a new accessory fulfillment center
- Conducted pivotal national consumer research that led to chain's new marketing and merchandising concept
- Implemented new branding strategy that reinvigorated sales with existing customer base, achieving a 40% repeat customer rate and attracting new customers
- Created new catalog business and 800# call center
- Grew private label credit card business from \$25 million to \$55 million
- Created company's first promotional programs
- Created company's first national public relations campaign, obtaining media coverage in major shelter and women's magazines, and in newspapers

**Regional Sales Manager, West Coast Operations, Los Angeles, This End Up Furniture Co. 1985-1990**

- Executive in charge of building management team and West Coast sales operations, opening 50 stores in five years
- Achieved profitability one year ahead of plan
- Managed sales districts in Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle and Arizona

**District Manager, New England Operations, Boston, This End Up Furniture Co. 1982-1985**

- Built management team and marketing strategy for the New England District, opening 10 stores in three years
- Created #2 sales district in the company
- Received President's Award for Training

**District Manager, Philadelphia Operations, This End Up Furniture Co. 1979-1982**

- Responsible for opening and managing nine stores during three-year period
- Created the company's #1 sales district
- Served on the marketing and training committee
- Developed sales associate compensation plan that was adopted companywide

**Store Manager, Bethesda Square Mall & Georgetown, This End Up Furniture Co. 1978-1979****Sales Associate, Alex. Brown & Sons, Washington, DC 1977-1978****EDUCATION**

**Hollins College**, Hollins, VA, B.A.-Art History, 1977  
**University of Pennsylvania, Wharton Evening School**, management and  
 marketing course work 1979-1982

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## ADDENDUM

### **BUSINESS & PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES SELECTED AWARDS**

Wrap-Up Speaker, ART Education Conference, An Innovation CheckList, August 2008

Featured Speaker, Las Vegas Furniture Market, World Trade Center, Summer 2007, The Architecture of Change

Featured Home Furnishing presenter, Turkish Trade Conference, Istanbul Chamber of Commerce, Istanbul, Turkey, March 2007

- Keynote speaker, Furniture Today Leadership Conference, 2005; Panelist, 2006; Selected to present at the World Furniture Conference in Marbella, Spain, 2006
- Keynote speaker, Association for Corporate Growth, Richmond and Raleigh, 2005
- Featured speaker, Womankind Retreat, Episcopal Diocese of Virginia, 2005
- Featured speaker, WITHIT Educational Conference, 2004
- Named one of the industry's "Power 50" by Infurniture Magazine, 2004
- Named "Merchandising Magician" by Furniture Today, 2004
- National Retailer of the Year, ARTS "National Accessory Retailer of the Year" Award, 2005 & 2003
- Achievement of the Year, STORIS, 2004, "Successful merger of Storehouse & Home Elements"
- Educational Award, 2004, WITHIT (Women In The Home furnishings Industry Today)
- National Retailer of the Year, HOME Magazine, 2003
- Entrepreneur of the Year, 2003, Catalog Success Magazine, "Storehouse Catalog launch"
- Founding member, WITHIT (Women In The Home furnishings Industry Today), 1998
- President's Award for Excellence, 1998, This End Up Furniture, the company's top annual award, received for "Leadership in employee training and development"

### **PERSONAL**

- Active member of the Episcopal Cathedral of St.Philip, Atlanta, GA
- Married to J.R. Hipple for 23 years
- Enjoy golf, tennis, swimming, travel, and our two big dogs—Buster and Sam
- Member, Board of Governors, St. Catherine's School, Richmond, Virginia, 1999 – 2007
- Member of Board of Governors, American Furniture Hall of Fame Foundation, 2009 until present)
- Member , Board of Governors, Atlanta Girls School, 2008 to present
- Member, Board of Governors, WITHIT (Board of Directors, then Board of Governors..1998 to present)