



Guitar Center Appoints Karl Bracken as EVP of Merchandising and Private Brands, and Matt Allred as VP of Merchandising

Westlake Village, CA (October 2, 2019) – Guitar Center, the world’s largest musical instrument retailer, announces two new key appointments to its Merchandising team: Karl Bracken as Executive Vice President of Merchandising and Private Brands, and Matt Allred as Vice President of Merchandising. The announcement was made by Guitar Center’s CEO Ron Japinga yesterday.

“I’m pleased to welcome both Karl and Matt to the Guitar Center family as they both bring a wealth of sought-after assets to the organization,” said Ron Japinga, CEO of Guitar Center Inc. “Specifically, both of these individuals have a deep understanding of how to listen to our customers and turn that knowledge into the most effective merchandising strategy and product innovation that will help position us for elongated success.”

Karl Bracken, Guitar Center Executive Vice President of Merchandising and Private Brands

In his EVP role at Guitar Center, Bracken will lead the strategic direction of the merchandising and private brands teams across all Guitar Center Enterprise brands, focusing on the goals of delivering a customer-centric product and assortment strategy, driving product innovation and accelerating speed to market. Additionally, Bracken will serve as a member of Guitar Center’s Executive Management Committee.

Bracken has acquired more than 20 years of experience across Supply Chain, Merchandising and Finance. Prior to joining Guitar Center, Bracken served as Chief Operating Officer for Beach House Group, a brand incubator and consumer packaged goods company, where he led the operations, human resources and finance functions. Most notably, he spent more than 14 years at Target, where he held a variety of leadership positions with responsibilities for buying/merchandising, negotiations, vendor relationships, planning and allocation, supply chain and benefits and payroll. Among his many accomplishments at Target, he was the architect of the company’s omni-channel flex fulfillment strategy, including in-store pick up and ship from store.

Bracken earned his bachelor’s degree in History and Government from Claremont McKenna College and his MBA in Strategy, Economics and Marketing from Northwestern University’s Kellogg School of Management.

Matt Allred, Guitar Center Vice President of Merchandising

As VP of Merchandising, Allred will strategically lead and direct merchandising and product initiatives, emphasizing the technology segment. He will also be responsible for championing the omni-channel customer experience while managing all aspects of the company’s technology business.

Allred brings with him more than 16 years of merchandising omni-channel experience in retail. Prior to joining Guitar Center, he served as the Director of Fashion at eBay, helping transform their clothing and shoe businesses by utilizing heavy data analytics, strategic vision and focused partnerships. Most notably, Allred spent 14 years with Walmart, starting as a buyer and moving up the merchant ranks at Walmart Stores then moving to Walmart e-commerce where he oversaw the apparel portfolio as the Director/DMM of Apparel, Shoes, and Jewelry and upgraded the online shopping experience as Director, Digital Operations/Customer Experience. Allred earned his bachelor's degree in Finance from the Marriott School of Management at Brigham Young University.

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About Guitar Center:

Guitar Center is a leading retailer of musical instruments, lessons, repairs and rentals in the U.S. With nearly 300 stores across the U.S. and one of the top direct sales websites in the industry, Guitar Center has helped people make music for more than 50 years. Guitar Center also provides customers with various musician-based services, including Guitar Center Lessons, where musicians of all ages and skill levels can learn to play a variety of instruments in many music genres; GC Repairs, an on-site maintenance and repairs service; and GC Rentals, a program offering easy rentals of instruments and other sound reinforcement gear. Additionally, Guitar Center's sister brands include Music & Arts, which operates more than 200 stores specializing in band & orchestral instruments for sale and rental, serving teachers, band directors, college professors and students, and Musician's Friend, a leading direct marketer of musical instruments in the United States. For more information about Guitar Center, please visit www.guitarcenter.com.

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