

BUSINESS / WORKFORCE

Rising star of the week: Stephanie Ho, New Aim



(Source: Supplied)

By Jo-Anne Hui-Miller | September 15, 2022

Earlier this year, we launched our first Rising Stars of Retail report in the May issue of Inside Retail Australia's quarterly magazine, a special feature highlighting some of the great under-the-radar talent in the industry from a wide range of departments. Each week, we will publish interviews with the inspiring people listed in the feature, where they reveal what motivates them, the work that they're most proud of and the challenges that they've overcome.

This week, we chat with Stephanie Ho, head of marketplace at New Aim

What was your first job in retail?

New Aim was my first job straight out of university. I initially wanted to pursue journalism, and hadn't even considered a career in retail or e-commerce. I applied for a job with New Aim, which at the time was little more than a (big) little eBay store, and I got the role of marketing coordinator.

At the time, Magento and BigCommerce had only just launched, and Facebook ads weren't even a thing until several years later. I wrote and managed the listings for all our products on eBay, working very closely with our co-founder Fung Lam. I've been at New Aim ever since – I guess you could say that I'm part of the furniture now!

In 2011, we really turned the focus to our retail relationships and building out the dropshipping arm of New Aim. Looking back, it was then New Aim started our transition from trading to tech company. We were still such a small team. I helped set up the dropshipping division of New Aim, becoming the dedicated BDM for our key retail partners, but the role really called for so much more.

We were bringing the dropshipping model to Australia for the first time, so we had to build trust and educate our retail partners in a way that no one had done before. What we achieved here ultimately led to the creation of Dropshipzone, inspiring a vision to help more Aussie retailers, big and small, start and scale with e-commerce. Best of all, we did it without a roadmap – you couldn't just Google and find the road often travelled, or what was best practice, Fung provided us with direction and led us down a new path.

What are some of the best skills that you've brought to the retail industry?

My top skills are communication and relationship management, which is why I was a natural fit to move from the creative to commercial side of New Aim in the early days.

As the e-commerce industry continues to evolve, more Aussie retailers need more guidance coming online. I have a deep understanding of marketplaces and the e-commerce industry as a whole because I've set up all of New Aim's channels over the years.

I like to think I bring a sharp edge to soft skills because I've had the benefit of growing up with the Aussie e-commerce industry to develop a deep understanding of market trends and strong analytical skills. This is especially valuable to businesses newer to e-commerce, even (or especially) if they're already established in brick-and-mortar.

Who is your retail hero and why?

My retail hero is definitely New Aim's co-founder Fung Lam. If you know him, then you'll know he would hate me for saying this! Fung lets his work do the talking. It's unbelievable to think, let alone dream, that you could start out with an eBay store

dream too big.

I've learnt a lot from Fung in terms of how to assess the market, and not just New Aim's immediate market, but looking at the bigger picture and broader industry changes. Fung has taught me that competition doesn't have to be a bad thing, in fact quite the opposite, and in a young industry it's about working together to achieve positive outcomes for everyone. It's also because of this framework that I believe we've been able to scale up and push into so many other areas, from augmented reality to logistics tech.

If you could change anything about the retail industry, what would it be?

I'd encourage all Australian retailers to make last-mile logistics their first priority. Logistics truly is the backbone of modern retail.

Customers are demanding faster fulfilment and delivery, and retailers who don't meet customer expectations are about to be left behind. This isn't good for anyone. But we can innovate our way out of the biggest industry pains and make them the starting point for greater industry gains. It's up to the retail, e-commerce and logistics industries to come together and cooperate, not compete, in harnessing technologies that speed up turnaround times from fulfilment to dispatch and delivery. This is about mastering the last mile, which New Aim is focused on achieving with our Postage Optimiser technology.

I'm passionate about logistics because it's how we level the playing field in Australian retail. In the short term, logistics is a smart way for small retailers and Shopify stores, dropshipping with local service providers, to compete with traditional retailers, while they're building their brand over the long term.

New Aim Rising Stars of Retail

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