



# The Fashion Industry

AND ITS CAREERS

4th Edition

Michele M. Granger  
Sheryl A. Farnan

FAIRCHILD BOOKS

# **THE FASHION INDUSTRY**

## AND ITS CAREERS



# THE FASHION INDUSTRY AND ITS CAREERS

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FOURTH EDITION

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*To my mom and dad, Tom and Darlene Farnan, my first teachers,  
most truthful critics, and biggest cheerleaders. Thank you!*



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# PREFACE

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*The Fashion Industry and Its Careers: An Introduction*, fourth edition, provides an overview, or survey, of the global fashion industry with a focus on the career paths available within each level of the industry. It is written for the reader who is exploring career options, whether as a career change or as an entry-level position. It is designed to support introductory college or university courses in fashion design, fashion merchandising, product development, textiles, apparel, interior design, and career exploration. The fourth edition is fully updated with recent developments in technology, world economics and globalization, and effects on industry sectors and career opportunities. Through current, applied industry information and personal assessments throughout, students gain a critical understanding of what careers match their aptitudes, skill sets, and interests—and how to begin heading down a path toward a successful career in the fashion industry.

The book is based on the following four broad assumptions of postsecondary education and the fashion industry:

1. *People immerse themselves in studies they find personally and professionally relevant.* By examining the different levels or sectors of the fashion industry and exploring the career options that exist at each level, students have the opportunity to see themselves on career paths and, subsequently, define career goals to enhance and individualize their educational experiences.
2. *Fashion is a lifestyle that permeates many industry segments, from apparel and accessories to home fashions to beauty and wellness.* It includes all products and services that are influenced by changing trends in form, materials, theme, and color.
3. *The careers within the sectors of the fashion industry provide an ideal way to define and explain the industry and illustrate its various levels, from raw materials to ancillary services.* Exploring the industry by highlighting the careers in each industry segment provides a framework that allows students to see how the various levels work together.
4. *Effective career preparation requires across-the-board understanding of the following concepts:*
  - The apparel and textile industry operates in a global and high-tech market, making an understanding of cultural diversity, the world economy, and technological advances essential.
  - Activities of product development, manufacturing, and retailing are interrelated, from fiber and textiles to design and production to sourcing and merchandising.
  - Successful companies recognize that product decisions are consumer-driven.

## ORGANIZATION OF THE TEXT

*The Fashion Industry and Its Careers: An Introduction*, fourth edition, is organized into four units, or parts, beginning with the creators and providers of raw materials and the manufacturers of products, followed by the manufacturers' designers who develop the concepts that will be produced, to the retailers who create and/or sell the products to the consumer, and ending with the auxiliary industries that support the work done by the product creators and product retailers. The text is organized in the following sequence: Unit 1, Careers in Forecasting, Textiles, and Manufacturing; Unit 2, Careers in Fashion

Design, Product Development, and Fashion Promotion; Unit 3, Careers in Fashion Retailing; and Unit 4, Careers in the Ancillary Businesses: Digital Communications, Styling, Education, and Costume Design.

## **Unit 1: Careers in Forecasting, Textiles, and Manufacturing**

The primary level of the fashion industry begins with the people responsible for the inspiration and conception of the fashion product's parts and raw materials (e.g., the forecasters, designers, and sourcing personnel). Unit 1 starts at the beginning of fashion product development and production. It provides an overview of the firms that supply the information, components, production, and design of fashion products that manufacturers produce. In addition, the back office departments of manufacturing firms are examined, to include sales, accounting, finance, and human resources. Chapter 1, Trend Forecasting, presents the trend forecasters who research, interpret, inspire, and predict shifts in fashion preferences and influence both the raw materials and the actual outcomes of fashion production. Chapter 2, Textile Design and Development, examines the textile product developers and designers who use colors, textures, patterns, and finishes to create the foundation on which fashion products are built. In Chapter 3, Sourcing, the personnel who locate the components and manufacturers of products are explored in greater depth. Chapter 4, Production and Sales, presents production processes in which employees work together to manufacture and sell the final product, such as showroom and manufacturer's representatives. The section of this chapter that discusses trends affecting careers in production has been updated with information on career areas such as merchandise coordinator, sustainability officer, and transparency officer.

## **Unit 2: Careers in Fashion Design, Product Development, and Fashion Promotion**

Unit 2 is composed of three chapters, Chapters 5 through 7, which explore the design sector of the fashion industry in greater depth. In Chapter 5, Designing Apparel and

Accessories for the Manufacturer, careers related to designing apparel and accessories for the manufacturer are discussed, to include the fashion designer, assistant fashion designer, technical designer, specification technician, and pattern maker. Some retailers purchase finished fashion merchandise from manufacturers or wholesalers; others develop and manufacture products specifically for their clientele; many large retailers do both. Several large retail operations own a product development division that functions as a design and production source exclusively for them. In Chapter 6, Product Development by the Manufacturer and Retailer, the career tracks for director of product development, merchandiser, sourcing staff, product development designer, product manager, colorist, textile technical designer, product development patternmaker, and quality control manager are presented. Whether the fashion product is created and manufactured by the retailer or purchased from a manufacturer or wholesaler, it must be marketed to appeal to the consumer. In Chapter 7, Promotion for the Designer and Manufacturer, these marketing activities are explored through the career tracks of fashion stylist, public relations and social media directors, advertising research and promotion positions, and fashion event producer.

## **Unit 3: Careers in Fashion Retailing**

The third level of the fashion industry represents the retailers of fashion products, from apparel to home furnishings, and those involved with creating a desire in the consumer for the retailer's fashion goods. Unit 3 focuses on marketing, merchandising, and management for the brick-and-mortar and/or e-commerce fashion retailer. As shown in Chapter 8, Marketing for the Retailer, the marketing, or promotion, division of a retail operation does just that through such professionals as the marketing director; product, brand, digital, and Web site marketing managers; art director; and copywriter. Chapter 9, Merchandising for the Retailer, explores the merchandising division of the retail operation—the buying and marketing of products. General merchandising managers, divisional merchandising managers, buyers/fashion merchandisers, assistant buyers, planners, distribution managers/allocators, and merchandising trainees work on the selection, pricing, and placement of merchandise on retail sales floors.

In Chapter 10, Management for the Retailer, essential management careers in the retail sector are examined, to include those in stores—regional, store unit, associate, assistant, and department managers—as well as customer service managers. This chapter culminates in presenting the retail operation owners—all-in-one entrepreneurs who own and operate their retail businesses. Whether product or service—or brick-and-mortar, brick-and-click, or solely e-retailing—these entrepreneurs are rapidly contributing innovation and jobs to the fashion industry.

## **Unit 4: Careers in the Ancillary Businesses: Digital Communications, Styling, Education, and Costume Design**

Unit 4 presents a range of ancillary businesses that promote, educate, and provide support to the producers, retailers, and consumers of fashion goods. Whether working as freelancers or within a company, these ancillary business professionals frequently offer services, rather than tangible products. In a new Chapter 11, Digital Communication, the ever-growing careers in digital media are explored from the digital media director to the fashion journalist and blogger. In Chapter 12, Fashion Styling, Photography, and Costume Design, career options are discussed from the perspectives of company-employed and freelance positions. Fashion scholarship is discussed in its own chapter, Chapter 13, Fashion Curatorship and Scholarship, and includes coverage of museum and historical costume study, as well as teaching opportunities in high school and postsecondary education. Opportunities in the fashion or costume division of a museum discussed in this chapter include museum director, museum curator, assistant curator, collections manager, museum archivist, and museum conservator. The star of the fashion scholarship segment of the industry is the fashion educator, who instructs and/or conducts research in historical costume or many other facets of the fashion industry, from production to design and product development, to merchandising and entrepreneurship.

Chapter 14, Visual Merchandising and Retail Design, encompasses careers in visual merchandising, store planning, and mall management. Visual merchandising

has become an important component of not only manufacturers' showrooms and retailers' sales floors, but it is also integral to online sales, social media, branding, and promotion. Fashion producers, designers, Web site and store retailers, and stylists all hire visual merchandisers to create a setting or an environment that will attract consumers and visually sell the merchandise. The primary career tracks discussed in Chapter 14 include visual merchandising professional, store planning director, mall manager, and assistant mall manager.

Appendix A provides a list of key career areas and Web sites to research salaries by region. New online resources presented at the end of each chapter also provide current information on careers and industry trends. Appendix B features an assortment of résumé examples from several careers as well as suggestions for writing a résumé, researching employers, and interviewing. A glossary of key terms is also included at the end of the text.

Each chapter of *The Fashion Industry and Its Careers: An Introduction*, fourth edition, provides current visuals, online resources, discussion questions, and key terms—the terminology used in the industry. These text features are developed to help clarify concepts, stimulate class discussion, and encourage critical thinking with applications and illustrations. Relevant education, work experience, personal characteristics, and career challenges are examined for each career track.

## **New to This Edition**

- *Case Studies in Career Exploration* showcase profiles of companies, interviews with individuals, industry scenarios, and insider tips.
- *The Job Search* boxes feature sample advertisements for actual positions in fields discussed within each chapter.
- *Social Media Strikes* boxes in each chapter explore how social media trends are integrated into the various levels of the industry and describe the impact of Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, LinkedIn, and more. As new social media forces will continue to impact our lives and the fashion industry world, understanding the why and the how of social media today will help us anticipate the future.
- *In-depth job titles and descriptions* for a wide range of careers now include *Sustainability Officer* (Chapter 4) and *Transparency Officer* (Chapter 4), which help demonstrate industry shifts toward greater attention

to preservation of natural resources and consumer demand for more open communication regarding manufacturing practices of fashion goods.

- *Organizational changes* to the unit structure of this fourth edition align the content with current industry practice, emphasize career areas with the greatest growth potential, and provide specific focus to careers that benefit most directly from fashion education.
- *A fully updated photo program* contains more than seventy new photographs.

## Instructor's Resources

This edition includes an Instructor's Guide, Test Bank, and chapter PowerPoint presentations. The Instructor's Guide includes syllabi, class discussion topics, exercises/assignments, and guest speaker suggestions. The Test Bank includes a separate answer key and a mixture of true/false, multiple-choice, and open-ended questions.

Resources can be accessed via [www.fairchildbooks.com](http://www.fairchildbooks.com).

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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I welcome comments from students and instructors who use this book. You should feel free to send those through Fairchild Books.





# CAREERS IN FORECASTING, TEXTILES, AND MANUFACTURING

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## LINE 5 1

Unit 1 starts at the beginning of fashion product conception and production. It explores the firms and people supplying the information, components, production, and support needed to manufacture fashion products to bring them to the retailers. In addition, the departments of manufacturing firms that support the people and profitability of fashion lines are examined, to include sales, human resources, finance, and accounting. Chapter 1, “Trend Forecasting,” presents the trend forecasters who research, interpret, inspire, and predict shifts in fashion preferences. Trend forecasters have tremendous influence on both the raw materials and the actual fashions. Chapter 2, “Textile Design and Development,” looks at the textile designers and developers who use color, texture, pattern, and finishes to create the foundation on which fashion products are built. In Chapter 3, “Sourcing,” the careers of sourcing professionals, who locate the components of products, are explored. Sourcing involves locating the materials that become part of the fashion merchandise

and also finding factories, particularly overseas, to produce the merchandise. Chapter 4, “Production and Sales,” examines the careers of employees who work together to manufacture the final product.

When people who are interested in building a career in the fashion industry initially consider career tracks in the field, they often do not think about the primary level of the industry where fashion products begin. It is another world with a full range of job opportunities. The prospective fashion executive with a penchant for design can explore the world of textiles. Those with an interest in putting products together have vast opportunities in manufacturing. Others who have the skills and drive to sell fashion products are not limited to doing so in retailing; selling fashion lines to retail buyers provides both a new perspective and an array of new potential employers. It’s a world the fashion consumer often does not think about, but it’s one that you will next explore to broaden your career options and build your understanding of the fashion industry.





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## CHAPTER 1

# TREND FORECASTING

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Whenever you open a *Vogue* magazine, click on to HauteLook.com, or tune into *Project Runway*, you are introduced to the latest trends in fashion. From where do these concepts come? Who decided what the latest themes, colors, silhouettes, styling details, or fabrics would be? How far in advance of seeing these fashions on the runway (Figure 1.1), online, or in the fashion publication pages were these trends determined? What will next season's, or next year's, fashion trends be? No person or company uses a crystal ball to foresee the future of fashion. The people responsible for making these predictions are referred to as **trend forecasters**, *fashion forecasters*, or *creative directors*.

Customers are often unaware of the amount of lead time that fashion products require. **Lead time** refers to the number of days, weeks, months, or years needed for the intricate planning, purchasing, and production steps to be implemented before fashion products actually land on the sales floors or Web sites of the retail operations. Lead time includes the time fashion forecasters need to analyze and project colors, design themes, silhouettes, fabrics, patterns or prints, and styling details—often years in advance of the actual manufacturing of the products. Without that proverbial crystal ball, fashion forecasters must combine their knowledge of fashion design, marketing, current world trends, and history with consumer research and business information. When trend forecasters identify and market their visions of the fashion future effectively, designers, retailers, and manufacturers in the textiles, apparel, accessories, and home environment sectors who subscribe to the forecasters' ideas have an edge, and their lines will be on point for their specific target markets. They will have lower purchasing risks and greater opportunities to increase their customer following and, ultimately, their sales volume.

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**Figure 1.1**

The introduction of a designer's seasonal collection, as shown here at Valentino's Spring 2019 Haute Couture runway show in Paris, is an important time for fashion forecasters, because these industry leaders have a great influence on future fashion trends.



The position of trend forecaster is one of the most influential career options in the fashion industry. Most fashion consumers and many prospective fashion industry executives wonder where the latest and greatest fashion trends originate. Trend forecasters continually monitor consumers and the industry through traveling, reading, networking, listening, and, most important, observing. Trend forecasters attend trade shows, where they analyze the wholesale end of the business by looking at new products and fresh designs from established and new designers. They gather information from the media on population, design, manufacturing, and retail trends to determine what the new looks, silhouettes, colors, and fabrics will be for upcoming seasons. This career is illustrated in Box 1.1, an interview with fashion forecaster David Wolfe.

Many large corporations in all sectors—from agriculture to medicine—have research and development (R&D) departments. In the fashion sector, trend forecasters form the “R” component of the R&D departments in fashion businesses. They lead the research activities of the fashion industry and may also be involved in developmental functions. As researchers, trend forecasters (a) provide new knowledge to designers, buyers, and product developers; (b) assist in the development of new products; and (c) look for ways to update old products or to extend the life of popular products through modifications that rejuvenate them.

Forecasters search for consumer and business facts, as well as creative occurrences, and then analyze the findings to identify common threads that will become trends. Their goal is to isolate the major trends that will positively affect the amount and types of fashion products consumers will buy. Once the trends are classified, trend forecasters use words and images to communicate these to designers, buyers, product developers, and manufacturers in fashion. Images of the trend’s mood and key terms, fabrications and colors, and styling details are composed on a “board,” referred to as a **trend board**. In the past, these boards were created by hand; today, they are more likely created and disseminated to design and merchandising personnel digitally.

Technology is also impacting the way trend forecasters conduct research and development, market product concepts, and listen to the consumer. Box 1.2 provides more detail about the ever-changing world of trend forecasters by exploring how social media options reach out to creative people around the world.

Few career opportunities in fashion relate to all levels of the industry. Trend forecasting is one of the few. Population trends and interests, availability of raw materials, manufacturing capabilities, retail changes, merchandising and management developments, and entrepreneurial endeavors influence trend forecasting. This chapter introduces the world of trend forecasters, from those in color and textile forecasting to those in theme, style, and detail forecasting.

## THE JOB OF A TREND FORECASTER

### Types of Forecasters

In general, there are four primary types of trend forecasting firms: fiber and textiles, color, consumer population, and broad spectrum. First, there is the forecaster who works for a **fiber house**, or *fabric or textile house*, a company that represents a fiber source or a fabric. Examples include Cotton Incorporated or the Mohair Council of America. Second, there is the forecaster who specializes in color trends and is employed by a firm such as Color Association U.S. This forecaster provides information on color preferences and palettes for a wide variety of clients, from automobile manufacturers to flooring producers to apparel designers. Next, there is the forecaster who projects population trends and explores the social, economic, geographic, and technological changes in the world, as well as shifts in the population. The population trend forecaster tracks a population’s age shifts; residential and geographic preferences; changes in family sizes and structures; entertainment preferences; spending patterns; influences by celebrities, films, and art; as well as other people-related topics, such as values and beliefs. Finally, there is the forecaster who is employed by a **broad-spectrum firm**, a company that provides forecasting services for a wide range of target markets and product categories or industries.

The clients of broad-spectrum firms represent a variety of product categories, as illustrated by the following list of Li Edelkoort’s clientele: the paper industry, automobile manufacturers, the food and drink industry, beauty products, and high-tech firms from telecommunications to electronic devices.

## CASE STUDIES IN CAREER EXPLORATION

### BOX 1.1 Interview with David Wolfe, Creative Director of The Doneger Group

*Interviewed by Jared Bajkowski*

#### **Could you give us a little introduction?**

I'm a Creative Director at The Doneger Group. There are four of us with very different functions, but my position probably overlaps the most with all the others. My focus is the youth market, which includes kids up to tweens and juniors. I also cover accessories, intimate apparel, and beauty (which is my other specialty).

#### **What does an average day look like? What is the time frame for your work?**

There's really no typical day, especially when we have markets. Then, I could be doing ten to twenty presentations with clients. Other days, I could be analyzing runway shows, doing consultancy project meetings, or meeting with clients on more forecasting-driven stuff. Our publications are released eighteen to twenty-four months in advance. With the Internet, we can constantly post updates. We can say, "This trend has reached saturation, you should pull back on it," or "This is a color we saw turn up that we weren't anticipating, and you should get into it." We can definitely update and react more often.

#### **At what point did you realize that this was something you wanted to do?**

Similar to many students, I didn't even know this career existed. I knew I had an interest in fashion, but prior to that, I had interests in art, history, and writing, so those were probably my strengths. When I first got into FIT [Fashion Institute of Technology], I thought I wanted to be a buyer or a stylist. After taking some buying courses, I realized that math was probably not my strength. By exploring and getting out into the industry, I was lucky enough to do two internships at the same time. One of them was with Vogue-Butterick and the other was with JC Penney. The Vogue-Butterick was really *The Devil Wears Prada* type of fashion office with the fashion director coming in with the little dog in her bag every day. JC Penney was very down-to-earth and let me actually work with the fashion director on children's, men's, and women's wear.



**Figure Box 1.1** David Wolfe, Creative Director at The Doneger Group.

JC Penney hired me, and I moved to Plano, Texas, into a position they created in which I covered all the areas. When it moved its fashion office back and forth from New York to Plano a couple of times, I moved and, in between, worked at J. Crew in the fashion office. At the JC Penney fashion office in New York, I had an opportunity to see David Wolfe speak and Doneger was at the top of my list. Abbey [Doneger] came over to look at some video equipment, and that's when he asked me if I wanted to come over and talk. I was very fortunate that I was in the right place at the right time, and there was an opening for a Creative Director. I've been here for fourteen years.

*(continued on next page)*

## BOX 1.1 (continued)

### What kind of skills does somebody in your position need?

It's important to be very analytical and have strong editing and writing skills. You need to have a good eye, which you really can't teach somebody. Either you have it or you don't. We're all required to speak a lot. We give all sizes of presentations. Initially, that was something I had a problem with, and I probably still do. Normally, I'm a very shy person. I had a professor at FIT who said, "From your test scores you're probably the brightest person in the class, but if you don't learn how to speak up, you're never going to make it in this industry." From that point on, I just pushed myself.

### At what point in your career did you really get to hone those skills?

I would say here [at Doneger]. At JC Penney, I was making presentations to the buyers and product development people, but it was not until here that I could be thrown into an audience of 200 people—or working with two people. In China last summer, I had an audience of 800. You have to have a certain comfort level with working all of those types of audiences.

### What traits are really important for trend forecasters?

Flexibility. The people we've hired who go the furthest and stay the longest can be thrown into any kind of situation and rise to the occasion—you know, real team players. I think those are the people who get the most out of the experience. It just really helps to have a down-to-earth personality and always be willing to pitch in on anything. We could get a phone call from a client and have to turn around a project in a couple of days. We're a small team, so everyone has to be super flexible—and *nimble*.

### How do you get inspired?

Literally, being like a sponge. I'm that weirdo on the subway looking at everybody, from the person who's not interested in fashion to the fashionista. I'm really

interested in everybody. When I have time to travel and to open myself up to everything around me, that's when I get most inspired.

### What motivates you?

I never have a typical day. Every day is so different and so creative. I really have a great outlet for all of the things I love to do. To be able to write and do it creatively and feel like I'm helping my company, and to go out on the streets and photograph—I have no complaints.

### How do you think trend forecasting has changed over the years?

When I first started, we used to cut and paste trend images down on sheets. It was crazy. We had a slide library of the collections and put them in carousels and did literal slide shows of the collections. If David [Wolfe] said, "Everybody in San Tropez is wearing lilac this summer. Everybody has to go buy lilac for next summer," it would happen. It doesn't work that way anymore. Once the Internet came along, our jobs changed tremendously, not just because of online free resources and competition, but also because clients can't wait a year to react to something. Our processes are *completely* different.

### When did you realize that things were changing?

Once we subscribed to First View and then Style.com popped up, we were getting all these images. This drastically changed the way we did things as a department. I remember going to every fashion show and every party afterward—we would just be doing all-day-long shows. Then, suddenly, we were sitting at our desks, analyzing. Now, I really pick and choose which one of the shows I'm going to, because I see less when I'm at the shows and I see more when I'm sitting at my desk. It's definitely changed the way that we look and analyze, and for everybody else, too. Most of our clients can instantaneously access the materials. The way that we provide value is that the clients don't have time to look through that many images and come up with an informed opinion.



## **BOX 1.1 (continued)**

### **Do you think there's any kind of drawback to predicting what is going to happen?**

We always tell clients that we're making our best educated guess based on what we know now, and where we see things going. We're fortunate because of the way the office functions. Part of our office is merchandising, so they often hear back from stores firsthand what's happening in terms of sales results and what the customer is reacting to in terms of colors and hot items. They keep us grounded because, being creative people, we can make things very esoteric or kind of out-there. They bring us down to earth because they can say from experience that the customer is never going for that, or it's unrealistic. They keep us grounded and we push them.

### **Have you had any experiences where you were totally wrong or you left out something big from a report?**

There are times when a client will say we missed something. Early in my career, when I first went to Barcelona, I thought there was a red pant trend. It wasn't until I went to Barcelona a couple of times that I realized that they just like red pants (laughs). We make our best educated guess, and sometimes we say things that don't make our clients happy. Take flared jeans, for example. When I first talked about flared jeans (at least three years ago), a lot of the clients said, "That's never gonna happen; we just got them into skinny jeans. It took them a long time to accept the skinny jean. They just found the right fit." Then they started seeing the sales and went—(throws hands up). I ultimately have to be the person to push it.

### **What kinds of applications are there for forecasting beyond fashion?**

When I first started, I never anticipated we'd work with a lot of financial companies who have clients with investments in some of the designers and retailers that we're looking at. They ask, "Do you think it's a strong season for them?" They want to be able to tell their clients who have stock in the brand whether or not it's a strong season for that company.

### **Could you walk us through a case study of a past trend on which you worked?**

There are several trends that we keep renaming and recycling. We're going to make a bigger deal out of the whole aspect of comfort going forward. I think it is related to the whole athletic sport idea. I can't tell you how many clients were asking, "Can we have a resource like Birkenstock?" When we first started talking about that, everybody said, "Nobody's going to want to wear Birkenstocks." It's so funny that the impact of the ugly shoe went upward. It was one of the few trends that I've seen that started with the feet and then worked its way up. Now, apparel is sort of matching, as is the whole attitude and the lifestyle. It's a big umbrella trend in every area—the idea of comfort.

### **Any advice for anybody who is aspiring to become a forecaster?**

There are so few trend companies left, but I don't like to discourage anybody. I think that the best step is to pursue something in product development. I'm working with a retailer now that has as much access to the fashion services and the shows and all of the research tools that I do but has an even bigger budget. It would be useful to do something for a retailer in its product development department. It's also important to have retail background to understand the psychology and lingo.

Courtesy of Henry Doneger Associates, Inc.

## SOCIAL MEDIA STRIKES

### BOX 1.2 Consumer Behavior and Trend Forecasting

Consumers of every age, race, geographic, social and economic background provide limitless data about themselves every single day, and on a plethora of topics through text, photos, and videos. If only there were a way for researchers to break all of this information down and use it to learn more about how customers live with the products that brands manufacture and market . . .

Ah, but there is! Technology companies continue to develop a wide range of tools to collect, examine, and define social media to help brands better understand and relate to their consumers. Social Native uses artificial intelligence (AI) and robotic process automation to survey social media content and organize information for client brands. Heuritech, partnering with Louis Vuitton and Christian Dior, also use AI to mine information about their brands on social media to learn more about how people use products to develop personal identity and to find potential emerging trends. IBM has developed software to search on specific styles, cuts, and fabrics and can use the information to identify trends and even design uniquely proprietary patterns. Epytom created a Facebook Messenger bot that takes stock of one's personal wardrobe, proposes outfit choices based on highly localized factors like weather or planned calendar events, and, with enough information, can even make suggestions of items for

the potential shopper to add to their wardrobe. GAN is an AI company that provides wardrobe suggestions based on body measurements submitted by the customer.

And all of this data is considered in some respects way better than a focus group or a survey in learning authentic information about consumers, their lives, and how they interact with brands. Analyzing social data is considered by some researchers to be more organic and authentic, eliminating the "Hawthorn Effect," also known as the observer effect, which is a reactivity of individuals to modify their behavior in response to their awareness of being watched or observed.

These data miners can help brands ask and answer questions: Who is using my brand? What do these users say about my brand or products? What advice do consumers give to others who are considering buying our product? And, very importantly, what are the demographics of those who use the product, or who are engaged with that platform?

#### Sources:

Shadpour, D. "How social media can serve as the new focus group for your brand," *Forbes*, March 21, 2018, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesagency-council/2018/03/21/how-social-media-can-serve-as-the-new-focus-group-for-your-brand/#71d210743d7b>

The Next Brick, "The crystal ball of fashion is in your hands," January 3, 2019, <https://www.thenextbrick.com/retail-trends/predict-fashion-trends>

Companies like Trend Union, The Doneger Group, and Promostyl provide information on all of the trend areas for many target markets and product categories, including color, fabrications, silhouettes, fashion influences, design themes, and population trends. In essence, they offer a one-stop trend forecasting and strategy planning service, as illustrated in Box 1.3, an interview with Trend Forecaster, Li Edelkoort.

## Sources of Information

Where do forecasters go for information? It depends on the market sector in which they specialize (e.g., color, demographics, apparel, or home) or consumer segment they are investigating (e.g., contemporary women, preteens, or men). There is, however, a range of information sources that most trend forecasters find to be valuable. Following is a list of popular trend forecasting resources:

- *Market research firms.* These companies provide specific information on consumer market segments for a fee. Population changes that can be quantified are referred to as **demographic data**, such as age, education, residence, family size, occupation, income, and expenditures. Additionally, more general government data on demographics is available on similar subjects at no cost through resources such as the U.S. Census Bureau ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)).
- *The couture collections.* Dior, Chanel, Celine, Gucci, Armani, Prada, Issey Miyake—the list of prominent and influential designers is a long one. The introductions of their seasonal collections are important times for trend forecasters, because these industry leaders have a great influence on future ready-to-wear and home trends.
- *New designers.* Trend forecasters often view the collections of up-and-coming designers with as much enthusiasm and interest as those of the established



**Figure 1.2**

Trend forecasters often view the collections of innovative designers, such as Moon Choi, with as much enthusiasm and interest as those of time-honored couturiers.



couturiers (Figure 1.2). Trend forecasters are often seeking new places for design talent, such as prestigious fashion schools around the world, or in countries providing government support and new opportunities for fashion entrepreneurial businesses, such as India, Canada, and Hong Kong.

- *Other fashion services.* Apparel and accessories forecasters may subscribe to other services, such as color forecasting services. Some subscribe to competitors' services to stay on top of what the competition is doing. The primary tangible product of a trend forecasting firm is referred to as a **trend book**, or *look book*, which features the recommendations and predictions of the company for the upcoming seasons.
- *Trade shows.* International fiber and fabric markets, such as International Textile Fair in Dubai and Premiere Vision in Paris (Figure 1.3), are primary information sources for forecasters who are researching color and textile trends. There are apparel and accessories trade shows at the markets in New York City, Dallas, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, and Chicago, to name a few. High Point, North Carolina, offers markets in home textiles and furnishings.
- *Communication with peers.* Networking is a key activity for trend forecasters. Updates from designers, buyers, and manufacturers can provide significant information on what is selling and what is not. Communication



**Figure 1.3**

Premiere Vision in Paris is among the world's premiere international fabric trade shows.

## CASE STUDIES IN CAREER EXPLORATION

### BOX 1.3 Trend Forecaster Li Edelkoort

*Interviewed by Jared Bajkowski*

#### **Could you give us a brief introduction?**

As Strategic Director of New Business, I help The Doneger Group as a company to realize new projects and new assignments that will take us into branding and marketing worlds. The second role I have is Men's Fashion Director. As a retail and merchandising organization, we have found that menswear is a growing and opportunistic category, so it makes some natural sense to use my skills and background in menswear to leverage it and market it to the menswear community.

#### **Does strategy apply to everything you approach?**

I think strategy is at the root of so many organizations and marketplace opportunities—and especially in our world of fashion today. Being strategic allows a business to bloom and grow. I think any successful organization today is more balanced between strategy and creativity, which means left-brain to right-brain, and I really try to balance that out. I think that's important.

#### **What kind of recurring actions fill your time here?**

Well, I think there's always recurring seasons, retail concepts, and marketplace shifts. At one time, you only worried about seasons four times a year and how they affected the consumer or the store. I think today we operate on 365 days a year. It is: You're living for today, you're worried about tomorrow, you're looking to next year, but you understand what last year was about as well. Right now, we are still talking about this season and researching the same season a year from now, but as a company we are past that and beyond. And we have to deal with every day.

#### **What kind of skills does an aspiring trend, branding, or strategic executive need to develop?**

I think you have to be a generalist, not a specialist. You have to be left-brain and right-brain. You have to be very cognizant that, even if you are in the merchandising



**Figure Box 1.3** Li Edelkoort of Trend Union.

world, you have to interface with the marketing and retail worlds. It all connects, and, therefore, you have to find out what the connectors are and what your role is in each and every part of it. I have always found that the most successful efforts and programs are those where corporate and marketing come to the table, interface with product, and then deliver the right thing in the right way. I will say the most important skillset for every executive at every level is a digital knowledge bank and project experience, and a consumer connection to it.

### **BOX 1.3 (continued)**

#### **What inspires you?**

I'm still inspired by the worlds that are in front of me every day, no matter what city I'm in. Culture, consumer, and experience. I've always prided myself on saying, "Give me 24 hours in a city and I will know the downtown area, the suburban area, the hot alternative destination area, the collegiate area, and the typical shopping area. Once I see that I will have a very good perspective on what is going on. Even if I go on a vacation, I can see it from that level. It's just how I'm wired.

#### **What's so important about what you're doing?**

Every time I get involved with something, I say the bottom line of the business is so important. No matter how great a program, if it doesn't move the needle, it's not considered successful in corporate measurement style. One of my biggest challenges day in and day out in advertising and marketing was making sure that I was relevant and that the projects delivered. You have to show the results. You have to merchandise it; you have to sell it. I always say, "Show me. Don't tell me." Show the results in order to get the embrace.

#### **Do you think the public is becoming more aware of marketing?**

The consumer is very aware of everything today, and the consumer has a role and a voice. You can't ignore it. Ten years ago, the consumer would take anything that came out of fashion. Now, the consumer wants to see something that they've contributed to. It's true participation, and that is an ingredient that changes everything.

#### **What have been the toughest challenges you've had to face in your career?**

I've learned that you may not get the reward that is due you. You may have to look for other ways to get achievements. The entrepreneurial, start-up thing was not available to my generation because we were so traditionally schooled. Being a Pittsburgher brought up in a hard-working middle class, I wanted to work and work with passion.

I wanted to believe in what I worked in and for. The hardest thing for me was to leave my emotion at the door. At the end of the day, it's either about the client or the product. Yes, you can be excited, but that can't be the only driver. As a young person, you have to realize that sometimes your passion has to stop for the reality of what the business is or what the opportunity can be. That's hard when you're truly impassioned by it.

#### **Is there any last advice to anybody with an aspiring fashion mind?**

I keep hearing from industry executives that, in this virtual world, everything is transparent. Marketing executives will say about job candidates, "I want to see what they're doing and how they're doing it." If I see they are a part of a student group that's impacting the world, I know that is real and relevant. If they are online and they're making a difference with their message on Facebook, Instagram, or Tumblr, that's a very credible way for me to gauge them. If I see that they're self-promoters, and all they're doing is their pics of them and their friends in the coolest way, I'm not getting that they're hard-working individuals. Consider that whatever you put out there has to represent you and your brand, and it has to reinforce what you are going to contribute to the organization, because it is very accessible to anyone. I had a communications company say, "We will only hire a young person who has 5,000 Facebook followers, runs his or her own blog, and is tweeting 20 times per day. Why? Because they're approaching social media as part of their own, and that can help my business as well." What I see in young people today that is so dynamic is that they've got a great base of education; they're more worldly or have some type of international experience; and they've all had great internship experiences. That's pretty great. If you don't have that equation today, you need to figure out how you're going to get it, because you're kind of behind the eight ball without it.

Courtesy of Henry Doneger Associates, Inc.



with representatives of key suppliers can assist the forecaster in identifying trends. Membership in professional organizations, such as the Fashion Group International, Inc. and the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID), also provides trend forecasters with the opportunity to network with others in the know in the fashion industry.

- *E-sources.* Web sites, blogs, online music programs, chat rooms, news sites, e-catalogs, and social networks are valuable resources that are easily accessible to trend forecasters. Also, forecasters may subscribe to specific online trend forecasting resources. Some of these sites are provided at the end of this chapter.
- *Design sources.* Reference books, historical costume collections and texts, vintage clothing shops, antique dealers, museums, bookstores, and libraries are excellent resources for forecasters who are exploring the influence of past eras on fashion, as in Figure 1.4. Videos and photographs of recent designer collections, fashion shows, trade show exhibitions, and fashion or art books are some examples of design resources that trend forecasters use for information on current designer and trend information.
- *Publications.* Trade journals and international consumer magazines are common, obvious sources for trend information. It is less apparent, however, that many apparel and accessories forecasters subscribe to home furnishings and home accessories magazines to identify color, fabric, and theme trends in the home. New colors in automobiles are often gleaned from successful hues in home furnishings and apparel. Auto, health, and celebrity magazines are also part of the trend forecaster's reading materials. Trend forecasters often read it all.
- *The arts.* Music concerts, visual art presentations, museum exhibits, dance performances, and theater plays can influence or interrelate with fashion trends. For example, a photography or apparel exhibit that travels internationally can influence fashion trends, as in Figures 1.5 and 1.6.
- *Entertainment headliners.* Celebrities greatly influence fashion trends. People in music and the news, on talk shows, on the red carpet, in videos, and on the big screen have the ability to set trends. For example, celebrity gowns are copied and made available to consumers in weeks (Figure 1.7). Forecasters often watch

**Figure 1.4**

Vintage clothing and antiques are excellent resources for forecasters who are exploring the influence of past eras on today's fashion.



up-and-coming celebrities and project which newcomers have the star quality and visibility that will make them future stars. Forecasters observe what they wear, who their favorite designers are, how they style their hair, and where they hang out with friends. Because forecasters have to anticipate the actual trends before they happen, identifying the people who will influence future trends is a critical part of the forecaster's job.

- *Fabrics.* Cotton Incorporated is a company that represents the cotton industry and provides trend information to designers and retailers. Fabric companies, such as Burlington Industries Group, also develop trend information, which is often available on their Web sites.



**Figure 1.5**

"Fashion is not something that exists in dresses only. Fashion is in the sky, in the street, fashion has to do with ideas, the way we live, what is happening."

—Coco Chanel

**Figure 1.6**

The 2013 Esprit Dior exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Shanghai presented nine themes, grouping collections together from 1947 to the present day, and displayed eight of China's emerging artists as an homage to the designer of Avenue Montaigne.



**Figure 1.7**

Jennifer Lopez attends the 91st Annual Academy Awards wearing a shimmering gown by designer Tom Ford.





**Figure 1.8**

Designer Dries Van Noten and his dog, Harry, on the rooftop of his Antwerp, Belgium headquarters. With its vacation appeal and fashion focus, Antwerp is an example of a travel destination where fashion trends develop.



- *Travel.* Vacation hot spots are often filled with people who influence fashion trends. Additionally, certain fashion trends develop in specific geographic locations. China and its fun fur fashions, Belgium with its deconstruction techniques in apparel, and Japan and its young and creative street fashions are all examples of the travel destinations where fashion trends have developed (Figure 1.8).
- *Consumer tracking.* **Consumer tracking information** refers to data that relates to customer spending, such as how much money is spent on clothing, entertainment, or food. It can also relate to how a customer makes a purchase—cash, Bitcoin, credit card, debit card, or (rarely) check. Purchases can be correlated with credit card data to examine who is actually buying what.
- *Lifestyle trends.* **Lifestyle trends** refer to a population segment's values, interests, attitudes, dreams, and goals. Think about the following lifestyle trends: an increasing interest in health and fitness, the baby boomers' desire to entertain at home, and couples deciding to have fewer children and to start their families at a later age than previous generations. Next, ask yourself how these lifestyle trends influence fashion. Workout wear sales have increased. Patio furniture, cookware, and tabletop accessories have received a renewed interest in the home furnishings and accessories industries. The number of pieces sold in children's wear has decreased, but sales in this merchandise classification have increased as a result of higher unit prices. Two working parents who have launched their careers and waited to have



**Figure 1.9**

Working parents, who have launched their careers and waited to have children, often have the finances and desire to provide their children with more. Celebrities have a tremendous impact on consumer preferences. Jennifer Lopez, working mother and celebrity, exemplifies both of these lifestyle trends.

children often have the finances and desire to provide their children with more. Lifestyle shifts influence what the customer wants to buy (Figure 1.9). **Psychographics** take this idea a step further: these include people's lifestyles and behaviors—where they like to vacation, the kinds of interests they have, the values they hold, and how they behave. Forecasters endeavor to become aware of these changes before they occur and identify the products that will meet consumer needs before customers know what they need.

- *Places where people gather.* Airports, concert stadiums, shopping malls, dance clubs, and Times Square on New Year's Eve are some of the locations where groups of people can be observed. Trend forecasters examine where these people are going, what they are wearing, and from whom and what they are buying.
- *Street scenes.* "I watch people anywhere and everywhere," one successful trend forecaster explains. "You never know where a trend will start." Worth Global Style Network (WGSN), a key forecasting resource discussed later in this chapter, recruits people from colleges and other locations worldwide to submit trend information from their various communities. Every street in every city of the world, from WGSN's perspective, has the potential for fashion leadership (Figure 1.10).

**Figure 1.10**

A young woman on the street during London Fashion Week February 2019.





**Figure 1.11**

When a particular sport or activity, such as cycling, gains consumer interest, its active sportswear is often imitated or modified for streetwear.



- **Sports.** When a particular sport or activity gains consumer interest, its active sportswear is often imitated or modified for street wear. High-top boxing boots, surfer shorts, and yoga pants illustrate the influence of sports trends on ready-to-wear. As Figure 1.11 depicts, cycling is one of the sports currently impacting active and streetwear fashions.

## THE CAREER PATH

Securing a position in trend forecasting does not happen quickly. Typically, many years of industry experience are required. Some successful forecasters have previously worked as designers or buyers before moving into the

trend forecasting career field. A few of the fortunate begin with internships or assistantship positions in forecasting firms to gain direct experience, exposure, and contacts in the forecasting world.

## Qualifications

Successful trend forecasters often meet or exceed the following qualifications:

- **Education.** At the very least, a bachelor's degree in one of a wide range of disciplines is required. These disciplines most frequently include business administration (e.g., marketing or consumer behavior), visual arts, fashion design, or fashion merchandising.
- **Experience.** Forecasters often begin in entry-level positions in the areas of retail, product development, design, merchandising, or fashion coordination. Some successful forecasters have held positions in several sectors of the industry, such as design, product development, and retailing.
- **Personal characteristics.** There are a few specific and unique qualities that trend forecasters display. Among them is an excellent understanding of people and human behavior, global population and industry shifts, and fashion trends. Successful trend forecasters have effective visual, written, and oral communication and presentation skills. They are often curious and creative people with superior networking abilities. Most important, they have an exceptional capability to analyze, synthesize, and organize observations into categories that are clearly communicated to clients. Think about viewing fifteen couture collection presentations in a five-day period and then identifying the consistent trends among them. Trend forecasters have the ability to find the common threads and, later, classify and describe these trends for designers, manufacturers, and retailers who use the trend services.

## The Trend Forecaster's Typical Career Path

Although the majority of college graduates prefer to start at the top, it is an essential advantage for a trend forecaster to understand all levels of the industry from a holistic perspective. Even the most entry-level retail sales positions provide valuable experience for future



forecasters. As a sales associate, one is directly exposed to the customers' preferences and dislikes. Effective sales associates endeavor to understand who the customers are and identify their buying habits. As future trend forecasters progress to higher positions within the industry (e.g., product development or merchandising), it is important that they always keep in mind who the customers are and how they are changing. The work experience trend forecasters have acquired through the years is used on a daily basis when assisting designers, manufacturers, or merchandisers with future designs and purchases for upcoming seasons.

## The Job Market for Trend Forecasters

The fashion industry has a limited number of trend forecasting positions in the areas of color, textile design, apparel and accessories design, and home furnishings. Because trend forecasting positions are limited, successful trend forecasters are well compensated for their knowledge and skills. Sometimes, a commission will be paid to trend forecasters based on how well their companies perform with their assistance.

## Career Challenges

The pros of a trend forecasting career have been discussed, but what about the challenges? Because there are a limited number of successful forecasting firms, there are only a few jobs for a few good men and women. The job of a trend forecaster requires a tremendous amount of intelligence, skill, and exposure and, perhaps, a sixth sense. Forecasters must be aware of all of the external influences that may affect consumer behavior. The ability to observe, organize, and prioritize these outside influences is a rare skill. Trend forecasters who consistently identify the right trends develop strong reputations. Many wannabes who provide the wrong information for a season or two are no longer hired by clients, who depend on accurate fashion direction to make a profit. It can be stressful for trend forecasters to identify significant fashion influences seasonally or annually. Additionally, trend forecasters must be able to market their companies, their ideas, and themselves. The forecaster's knowledge, intuition, and experience truly form the ultimate product.

## Examples of Trend Forecasting Companies

There are several successful trend forecasting companies around the world, with new firms constantly entering the mix. Some focus on a certain target market, such as teens or contemporary men, whereas others emphasize a specific fashion variable, such as color or fabric. Some offer a wide breadth of personal service, whereas others provide online reports. Whatever your fashion interest, there is a trend forecasting company to fill the bill.

### *Doneger Creative Services*

Doneger Creative Services ([doneger.com](http://doneger.com)), based in New York City, is the trend and color forecasting and analysis division of The Doneger Group. Doneger Creative Services offers a broad range of products and services, such as printed publications, online subscriptions, and live presentations. This division addresses the forecasting needs of retailers, manufacturers, and other style-related businesses. Doneger's creative directors and trend analysts cover the apparel, accessories, and lifestyle markets in the women's, men's, and youth merchandise classifications.

### *Promostyl*

Promostyl's ([promostyl.com](http://promostyl.com)) mission is to pinpoint fashion, design, and lifestyle trends and help companies adapt to changing trends. The company bases its work on the currents of society, cultures, and lifestyles, believing that society makes fashion. The company creates trend books, develops visual presentations, consults with companies, and maintains an international network of subsidiaries and agents. Three main offices are located in Paris, New York City, and Tokyo.

### *Worth Global Style Network (WGSN)*

Founders Julian and Marc Worth launched WGSN ([wgsn.com](http://wgsn.com)), based in London, in 1998. It is one of the most successful online forecasting services to emerge. WGSN offers research, trend analysis, and news to the fashion, design, and style industries. Members of the 100-person staff travel extensively around the world. The WGSN team includes experienced writers, photographers, researchers, analysts, and **trendspotters**. Trendspotters are people located at universities and other locations worldwide who

provide information to WGSN on the latest trends in each locale. The company tracks not only the latest fashion trends but also hot retail stores, new designers, emerging brands, and business innovations. WGSN maintains offices in London, New York City, Hong Kong, Seoul, Los Angeles, Melbourne, and Tokyo. Its client list is long and impressive and includes such designers and retailers as Giorgio Armani, Target, Mango, and Abercrombie & Fitch.

### ***SnapFashion***

To meet the needs of designers and manufacturers, members of SnapFashion (snapfashion.com) have access to its entire online archive of vector sketches and flats, based on thirty years of retail, street, and runway reporting from the fashion capitals of the world. The fashion library is updated with new details and silhouettes up to fourteen times per year. SnapFashion is a source for Los Angeles and European retail reporting, merchandising trends, and original design ideas. The firm monitors up-to-the-minute looks at top-selling items in trendsetting cities.

### ***Paris Trend Forecasters***

Several trend forecasting services and trade shows are based in Paris, France. Carlin Creative Trend Bureau is a forecasting and marketing firm dedicated to fashion trend information. The company's Web site (carlin-creative.com) is available in English and French. Peclers Paris (peclersparis.com) is a fashion trend forecasting service that specializes in textile design, fashion, beauty, consumer goods, and retailing. Première Vision (premier-evision.com) is the world's leading trade show in fabric forecasting, promoting fabric trends for designers and manufacturers in the fashion industry.

### ***Color Forecasters***

The Color Association of the United States is a color forecasting service. According to its Web site, colorassociation.com, it is the oldest such company in the United States. Since 1915, the Color Association has been issuing color reports in fabric-swatched booklets. A committee panel of eight to twelve industry professionals selects seasonal color palettes. Another player in the color forecasting business is Doneger Creative Services. The company's trend and color forecasting division is devoted to the apparel, accessories, beauty, and lifestyle markets.

### ***Cool Hunting***

Cool Hunting seeks out trends in the form of "all things cool." Founder Josh Rubin believes that there are no new ideas, just great executions. A self-proclaimed "interaction designer," he is always looking for both creative inspiration and an understanding of the way people do things. In 2003, he decided to start a catalog of what he found and haphazardly named it Cool Hunting. Today, Cool Hunting has a global team of editors and contributors sifting through innovations in design, technology, art, and culture, and then reporting on the coolest of these at coolhunting.com. Cool Hunting is synonymous with seeking inspiration—its stories and videos highlight creativity and innovation in design, technology, style, culture, food, and travel. With a global team of editors and contributors, the company creates an award-winning publication, consisting of daily updates and weekly mini-documentaries (videos). Started as a designer's personal reference, Cool Hunting now has an international audience of like-minded creative people, who find its content on its Web site, its iPad app, and on Vimeo, Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook.

### ***Trend Union***

Trend Union (trendtablet.com), created by Lidewij Edelkoort, specializes in forecasting trends, consulting, and developing trend books for the fashion and textile industries, among others. With offices in Paris and New York, Edelkoort is assisted by a highly qualified team of creative professionals: graphic artists, designers, artists, and consultants. Every six months, Edelkoort personally designs the majority of the notebooks that become a collection of biannual trend forecasting books, setting forth the colors, materials, shapes, and lifestyles for seasons to come. These books are available to Trend Union's clients two years in advance of the major trends in the fields of fashion, textile, and consumption. Twice a year, Edelkoort creates a twenty-minute audiovisual presentation of images and music that portray the significant future trends featured in the books. This presentation is shown in Paris to the clients of Trend Union, with sessions in other major cities around the world.

## Summary

Trend forecasters are central to the fashion industry. Accurate forecasting can make or break a company. Every designer and merchandiser must be aware of trend predictions to ensure their lines will appeal to their specific target market. Trend forecasters may be employed by broad-spectrum firms, fiber or fabric houses, companies specializing in color trends, or businesses that project population trends. They gather information by examining market research firms, couture collections, new designers, trade shows, art, design, e-sources, travel trends, lifestyle trends, entertainment, and street styles. Fashion

forecasting is one of the few careers that encompasses all of the aspects of the industry; therefore, it is essential for trend forecasters to possess a strong understanding of the fashion industry, from creative product development to retail selling. Seldom does one gain a position in this field without a number of years of prior experience and education. As a trend forecaster, you may anticipate a challenging career that encourages you to create, read, listen, travel (online and off), observe, absorb, organize, and research always!

## Key Terms

broad-spectrum firm  
consumer tracking  
information  
demographic data  
fiber house  
lead time

lifestyle trends  
psychographics  
trend board  
trend book  
trend forecaster  
trendspotters

## Online Resources

bigthink.com  
businessoffashion.com  
coolhunting.com  
fashionising.com  
featureshoot.com  
inhabitat.com  
nowness.com

pantone.com  
reddit.com  
ssense.com  
trendhunter.com  
trendwatching.com  
wgsn.com

## Discussion Questions

1. How conscious are you of current trends? Identify current color, design, art, textile, entertainment, and sociocultural trends for this season and the next.
2. Spot trends within the current season and trace their sources. Did these trends originate from the streets, art exhibitions, new technology, couture collections, or some other source?
3. Analyze current fashion publications and Web sites and compare the trends with fashion six months ago. Describe three themes cited as next year's top fashion trends.
4. What are some examples of companies outside of the fashion industry that rely on trend forecasting? Why are trends important to these businesses?



  
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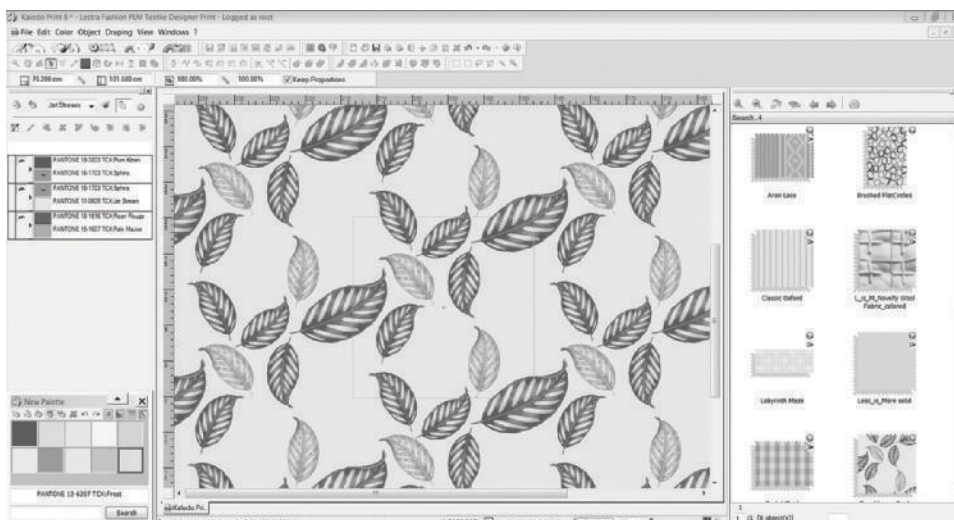
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# TEXTILE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

A **textile designer** creates original designs for the fabrics used in all sorts of industries. This person understands how to combine visual arts with technical and usage concerns. **Textile design** is the process of creating patterns, motifs, or surface interest for knitted, woven, or printed fabrics. Pattern and print designs are evaluated in terms of how they can be combined with printing, knitting, weaving, embossing, and embroidery processes.

These two creative positions are examples of the numerous career paths in the textile industry, which is a high-touch, high-tech industry. In the high-tech sector of the textile industry, there are several other career options, including textile engineering and textile production. A **textile engineer** works with designers to determine how designs can be applied to a fabric. A **textile technician** works with the issues that are directly related to the production of **piece goods**, such as finishing. Newly constructed knit or woven fabric must pass through various finishing



An example of a colorway for a woven print presented on Kaledo by Lectra.

processes to make it suitable for its intended purpose. **Finishing** enhances the appearance of fabric and also adds to its suitability for everyday wear or rugged use. Finishes can be solely mechanical, solely chemical, or a combination of the two. Finishes that simply prepare the fabric for further use, such as scouring and bleaching in blue jeans, are known as **general finishes**. **Functional finishes**, such as durable press treatments, impart special characteristics to the cloth, such as waterproofing or flocking.

Job opportunities in actual textile production have dramatically declined in recent years because of inexpensive labor costs overseas. About 650 textile plants closed between 1997 and 2009, draining thousands of jobs and depressing communities.<sup>1</sup> Textile manufacturing in the United States declined significantly in the 1990s and 2000s as cheaper labor pulled jobs overseas. In addition, automation and increased productivity of textile mills also cost jobs. More than 200,000 textile manufacturing jobs have been lost to automation in the last decade. However, things are changing overseas as well. Increasing wages in China and other countries, combined with higher transportation costs and tariffs, have prompted foreign and domestic companies to consider American manufacturing sites. The tide may eventually turn.

For now, a great number of U.S. fashion companies outsource much of their production work to companies in foreign countries. **Outsourcing** refers to having an aspect of a company's work performed by nonemployees in another company and, perhaps, in another country. Most outsourced jobs in the textile industry are low-paying production positions in countries with lower labor costs than those in the United States, such as those in the Pacific Rim, as well as South and Central America. The majority of American textile companies design domestically, but they outsource goods for production to take advantage of the free-trade agreements with low-wage countries. Despite the dramatic decline in U.S. jobs in the textile manufacturing industry, there is some light in that some job losses have been offset by creative and scientific tracks in design and product development.

In this chapter, the creative and scientific career opportunities in textile design and textile technology are examined. Whether one has a creative personality and an eye for pattern and color or a scientific mind that is interested in engineering and production, a job path in the textiles field can provide a fulfilling career.

## FASHION DIRECTOR

A **fashion director** for a textile company is responsible for determining the trends, colors, themes, and textures for piece goods or fabrics that the firm will feature for a specific season. Fashion directors are primarily interested in identifying the most important fashion trends for their companies and communicating these trends to textile designers, production managers, and customers. Fashion directors often work with trend forecasting firms to determine trend possibilities in color, form, theme, and fabric needs for each season.

### Qualifications

The following is a list of qualifications for a career as a fashion director for a major textile firm:

- *Education.* A bachelor's degree in textiles, fashion design, fashion merchandising, visual arts, or a related field is a minimum requirement for employment as a fashion director.
- *Experience.* The majority of fashion directors moved up the ladder from within the ranks. Many of them were textile designers, product developers, buyers, or assistant fashion directors before obtaining key positions as fashion directors.
- *Personal characteristics.* The fashion director often has similar characteristics to the trend forecaster: curiosity, strong communication skills, a strong visual sensibility, leadership abilities, a good understanding of who the customers actually are, and the ability to work with a variety of constituencies—from designers to production managers to technical assistants.

### Career Challenges

The challenges of the fashion director's career relate to two primary areas: securing the job and keeping it. Fashion directors are expected to have a strong foundation of work experience in the industry. It takes time, skill, and effort to be promoted through a variety of positions, for example, from technical textile designer to product developer to buyer. The best and the brightest climb quickly up the career ladder. Once in the position of fashion director, there is a great deal of pressure to be right—to be accurate about the color, pattern, style, and theme trends.

If, for example, a fashion director determines that olive green is the color for a season, and it bombs at the retail level, then the company may lose a great deal of money from a high investment in olive green fabrics. As a result of this error, this fashion director may be searching for a new job. Additionally, the fashion director must collaborate successfully with a wide variety of people—designers, production personnel, and clients. It takes a person with a solid educational foundation in textiles, a well-balanced personality, and excellent communication skills to work effectively with so many different people.

## TEXTILE DESIGNER

Textile designers create the images, patterns, colors, textures, weaves, and knits of the fabrics we wear and use, from our clothing and interiors to our automobiles and awnings (Figure 2.2). They can be classified as **surface designers**—knitters, weavers, or embroiderers for industries ranging from apparel to upholstery. To assist in textile design, there are **print services**, companies that sell art that becomes print designs to mills, wholesalers, product developers, and retailers. Many textile designers utilize **computer-aided design (CAD)**, which is the process of developing garments, prints, and patterns on a computer screen. This process has greatly influenced the field of textile design, as it provides faster, more varied, and more personalized design options in textiles than were possible in past years. Box 2.1 provides information on Lectra, one company that offers optimized processes to the fashion industry through integrated computer technologies.

Technological advances in CAD software and digital printing, several of which will be presented later in this chapter, offer unlimited creative opportunities to designers. For instance, a customer can now have a photograph of her pet pug transferred to canvas, which will then be used to create a handbag. An image of a Parisian street scene can be scanned and printed on fabric that will later become bedroom curtains. Once the print or pattern is developed, a strike-off is produced by the textile manufacturer. A **strike-off** is a test sample of printed fabric made to show and verify color and pattern before entering into production on larger quantities. Figure 2.3 shows a digitally printed textile design, and Box 2.2 provides information on the development of digital textile design and some of its designers.

**Figure 2.2**

Italian textile designer Donatella Ratti with fabric swatches of her work.



**Figure 2.3**

A model on the runway wearing a digitally printed textile design by Basso and Brooke.



## BOX 2.1

### PROFILE: Lectra and Its Impact on Textile Design and Development

With more than forty years' experience in fashion and apparel, Lectra's mission is to provide a complete spectrum of design, development, and production solutions to confront twenty-first-century challenges. From first creative spark to final product, Lectra addresses an end-to-end process, supporting the day-to-day operations of companies in more than 100 countries. From fast fashion to luxury to ready-to-wear, Lectra's 23,000 customers in markets as diverse as casual, sports, outdoor, denim, and lingerie represent every development and sourcing model imaginable.

#### Lectra Fashion PLM

Lectra Fashion PLM connects planning, design, development, and sourcing teams to help companies master the entire collection lifecycle from design to development to production. Specifically designed for the fashion and apparel industry, this collaborative environment combines collection creation and management, textile and fashion design, product specifications, and design-to-cost for real-time decision making.

#### Lectra's Fashion and Textile Design Solution

Lectra's collaborative design solution keeps fashion and textile design teams focused on creative activities, allowing them to do digitally what they could never do by hand. With sketching and boarding tools, knit, print and woven textile design, and color development, Lectra's design solution provides tools for fashion companies to create new designs and trends.

**Figure Box 2.1a** Sketching tools that give the designer flexibility, creativity, and options while saving time and money.



Designers can easily share their creative work with other teams right from the beginning of the collection process, ensuring design quality and production feasibility. Better collaboration between designers and product development teams reduces the number of errors and supports early decision making to significantly accelerate the design process.

Sketching tools help designers stay on top of trends and reduce the time it takes to get products from the drawing board to development and sampling. Fashion-specific tools cut down the time needed to create new styles and carry over bestsellers. Range plans and quick sketches jump-start fast visual concept development by turning creative trends into product ideas quickly. Detailed specification and production instructions reduce the need for clarifications when communicating product ideas to teams and suppliers.

#### Collaborative Textile Design Modules

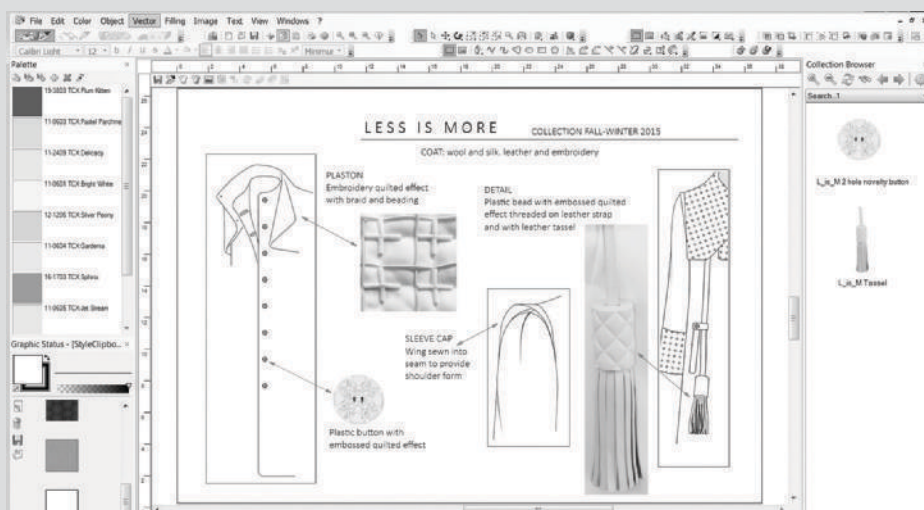
Lectra's textile designer modules help textile designers create original concepts or adapt existing ideas from a textile archive by supplying industry-specific tools for woven, knitted, and print design production. Creating these visuals helps deliver clear specifications and design proposals with essential color, pattern, repeat, and scale information.

- Lectra's collaborative print solution turns creative ideas into production-ready, cost-effective prints. Print-specific tools help designers change repeat ideas, overlap, and dimensions; respect color limitations; group colors for tonal prints; and





**Figure Box 2.1b** An example of a coat design completed in different colorways.



**Figure Box 2.1c** Coat details are illustrated on the Lectra screen.

recolor from a seasonal palette to create unlimited colorways.

- Lectra's collaborative weave solution contains visual libraries of industry-standard weaves for an easy start, as well as the tools to customize and build on existing patterns. A yarn creation tool encourages designers to explore the effects of fibers, twist, and diameter on weave and knit patterns.
- Lectra's collaborative knit solution is driven by a unique three-dimensional stitch simulator that generates realistic knit fabric simulations. Designers can preview and check complex combinations of multi-color yarns and structured knits to get designs right the first time. An extensive library of knit structures

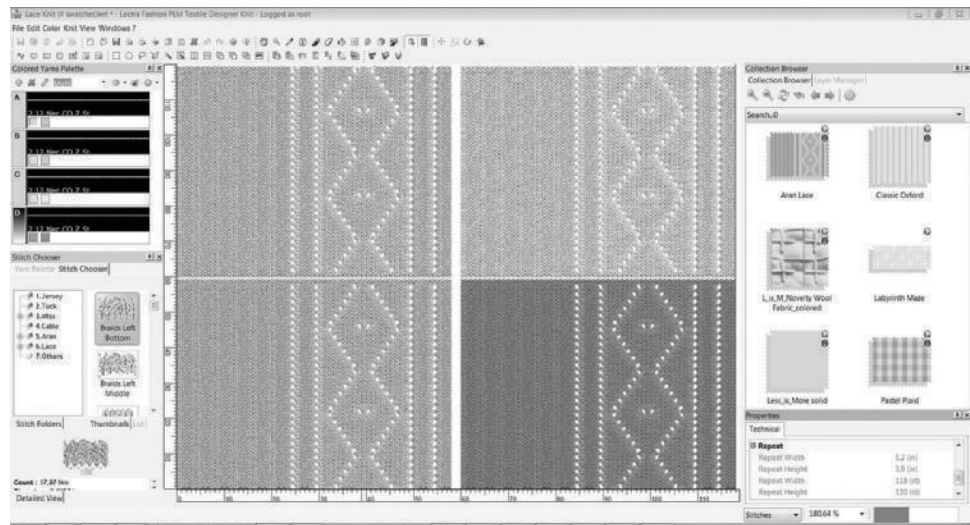
coupled with this unique three-dimensional stitch simulator reduces the designer's time and the need for costly samples.

From palette creation to the preparation of print specifications, Lectra supports designers in the key steps of the print design process: (1) combine artistic tools and scanned images to create new print designs; (2) reduce and recolor flat and tonal prints; (3) create and vary print repeats; and (4) prepare print specifications with callouts, color information, text, and images for accurate communication with design, product development, and production teams.

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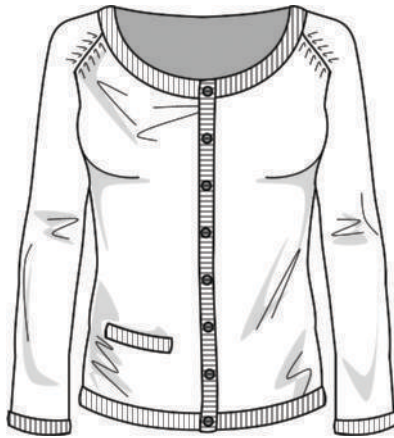
**Figure 2.4**

A knit design and its colorways are presented on Kaledo by Lectra.



**Figure 2.5**

Croquis of a sweater design developed using CAD software.



A textile designer using CAD likely knows how to paint and draw well, but works specifically on the computer to create designs. A textile designer can take several different specialized career paths, including working with wovens, knits, or prints. For example, a textile designer may choose to focus on fibers and processes that are commonly used for knit goods such as sweaters, as illustrated in Figure 2.4. Another textile designer may decide to specialize in creating textile prints for woven fabrics by painting or by using CAD to create a **croquis** (Figure 2.5), a rendering or miniature visual of a textile pattern or print for a garment or an accessory, such as a scarf or handbag. The **assistant textile designer** supports the textile designer in accomplishing all of these tasks. What is the most important personal trait needed to be a successful textile designer? The key characteristic is to possess a mind that is simultaneously creative, business-oriented, and technically savvy.

## TEXTILE STYLIST

A **textile stylist** is the creative person who modifies existing textile goods, altering patterns or prints that have been successful on the retail floor to turn them into fresh, new products. The textile stylist may resize the image or develop new colorways for the modified textile print or pattern, sometimes collaborating with a textile colorist to accomplish this task.

## TEXTILE COLORIST

A textile colorist chooses the color combinations that will be used in creating each textile design. Colorists frequently travel to fashion markets and belong to color forecasting organizations to stay on top of current and future color trends. There is a wide range of industries in which textile designers, stylists, and colorists are employed. They include the following:

- Knitted and woven textiles, used to make clothes and soft-good products, as well as upholstered products, such as home furnishings and automotive seats
- Rugs and carpets
- Prints for wallpapers, paper goods, flooring, or tiles

The responsibilities of textile designers, stylists, and colorists are as follows:

- Interacting with customers (e.g., apparel manufacturers or designers) to understand their needs and interpret their ideas accurately

- Collaborating with marketing, buying, and technical staff members, as well as design colleagues
- Understanding how textiles will be used, what properties textiles will need to function optimally, and how the addition of color dyes or surface treatments will affect these properties
- Conducting research for ideas and inspiration, from antique embroidery to modern architecture to children's storybooks
- Experimenting with texture and pattern as it relates to color
- Producing design or color ideas, sketches, and samples and presenting them to customers
- Producing designs or color options for designs using CAD software
- Checking and approving samples of completed items
- Working to meet deadlines
- Working within budgets
- Keeping up to date with new fashions and population trends—current and projected
- Staying on top of new design and production processes
- Attending trade and fashion shows

Textile designers, stylists, and colorists need to consider such factors as how the designs will be produced, how the finished articles will be used, the quality of the materials used, and the budgets. They work standard hours, but they need to be flexible to meet deadlines. They are based in studios or offices. Prospective employers require a strong and relevant portfolio of work for review. Employers include large manufacturing companies and small, exclusive design houses. Some textile designers, stylists, and colorists are self-employed.

## Qualifications

Requirements for employment in textile design, stylist, or colorist positions include the following:

- *Education.* A bachelor's degree in textiles, visual arts, computer-aided design, graphic design, fashion design, or a related discipline is a minimum requirement.
- *Experience.* Entry-level design positions provide the ideal starting place for college graduates. Additional experience in technical design (i.e., CAD) and color will assist the candidate in moving up the career ladder. Lectra's Kaledo Suite for textile design is becoming increasingly important in textile design, and experience in this program will give the job candidate an edge.
- *Personal characteristics.* Flexible computer skills; a strong visual sense for color, texture, and pattern; a creative personality; knowledge of how textiles are produced; effective business skills; an awareness of fashion trends; a practical understanding of skills such as sewing, knitting, weaving, and embroidery; and knowledge of the target consumer help make the textile designer, stylist, and colorist successful.

## Career Challenges

The challenges for textile designers, stylists, and colorists are similar. They must interpret the trends designated by the fashion director. Sometimes, converting the words of the fashion director into the fabrics the director has envisioned can be difficult. Textile designers, stylists, and colorists also must be aware of the technical requirements of fabric development, such as the printing requirements, durability, and application of finishes. Most important, they are often under pressure to meet quick deadlines and work within budget constraints.

## TEXTILE TECHNICIAN

A textile technician either supervises the production facilities of a company or oversees the production as it is done by a **contractor**, a firm that is hired to manufacture the product line, either domestically or abroad. If a textile company owns its manufacturing facility, then the textile technician is responsible for the smooth running of the equipment used in textile production to maximize production. If a textile company contracts its production out to another company, then the textile technician works with the contractor to accomplish these goals. The primary responsibilities of the textile technician are as follows:

- Overseeing the regular routine maintenance of equipment or the efficient production of the contractor
- Checking performance levels of equipment and/or contractors for optimal production
- Carrying out regular checks on production, spotting any difficulties, and dealing with them before they become problematic



## CASE STUDIES IN CAREER EXPLORATION

### BOX 2.2 The Fabric as the Designer's Canvas

Digital printing technologies continue to offer faster production and may grow to become the technology that provides the majority of the world's printed textiles.

Lights, cameras, fabrics . . . Digitally manipulated prints have become big news on the runways. Martin Margiela, Peter Pilotto, and Mary Katrantzou belong to a new generation of designers who are literally creating not only the designs but also the printed fabrics they envision. "My training is as a textile designer and in traditional screen printing, but because of the nature of what I was doing with trompe l'oeil, digital collages give greater plasticity," explains Mary Katrantzou, a Central Saint Martins graduate, speaking of digital design's benefits. "With a screen print, 10 or 15 color separations need great expertise. With digital, there is no limitation. You can print a photographic version of anything," she adds.

Previously an instructor at the Royal College of Art and now a fabric consultant for Louis Vuitton in Paris, Susannah Handley compares the difference between traditional and digitally printed textiles as being similar to that of painting and photography. She tells the *International Herald Tribune*: "Directly from computer to cloth is how many patterns are realized these days—it is a more clinical, faster method with the advantage that an instant result can be achieved."

The inkjet printing technology used in digital printing was first patented in 1968. In the 1990s, inkjet printers became widely available for paper-printing applications. You likely have one on your desk right now. The technology has continued to develop, and there are now specialized wide-format printers that can process a variety of substrates, everything from paper to canvas to vinyl and fabric. Although digital textile printing has been around for decades, it has only recently taken its place in the fashion industry. Digital textile printing provides the ability to print designs on fabric, directly from a PC or Mac. Inkjet printing is done on fabric in the same manner as it is completed on paper, and just as easily. This versatile technology is being used in many apparel and nonapparel markets. Digitally printed textiles can be used for a vast range of applications, including apparel, handbags, footwear, umbrellas, flags and banners, exhibition signage, furniture, curtains, drapes, bedding, towels, wall coverings, and carpets or other floor coverings.

Although digital textile printing has been around for decades, it has only recently taken its place in the fashion industry. Digital textile printing provides the ability to print designs on fabric directly from a PC or Mac. Inkjet printing is done on fabric in the same manner as it is completed on paper—and just as easily. This versatile technology is being



**Figure Box 2.2** Digital printing technologies continue to offer faster production and may grow to become the technology that provides the majority of the world's printed textiles.

used in many apparel and nonapparel markets. Digitally printed textiles can be used for a vast range of applications, including clothing, handbags, footwear, umbrellas, flags and banners, exhibition signage, furniture, curtains, drapes, bedding, towels, wall coverings, and carpets or other floor coverings.

For some companies and some products, digital textile printing can significantly reduce the costs associated with screen printing on textiles. Presently, the textile industry produces the majority of its printed textile fabric by screen printing, also referred to as analog textile printing. However, as we move through the digital age, developments in the digital printing of paper are increasingly being adapted for the textile market. Inkjet textile printing is growing, while growth in analog textile printing remains stagnant.

As digital print technologies continue to offer faster production and larger cost-effective print runs, digital printing may grow to become the technology that provides the majority of the world's printed textiles. Currently, digital printing on textiles has several advantages over traditional textile printing methods, as follows:

- Lower production costs for short runs
- High productivity because of shorter lead times
- Fast turnaround

The only special requirement is that the fabrics used must be pretreated to hold the ink better and reproduce a wider range of high-quality hues. There are various types of treatments applied, according to the fabrics and the inks being used.

Unlimited creative opportunities are often at the top of the designer's list when it comes to digital textile printing. Think about printing photographs on fabrics, using art as inspiration, creating a color palette that is unique to your design collection, and customizing products to meet an individual customer's desires. Digital printing on fabrics has also opened new opportunities for designers, manufacturers, merchandisers, and salespersons. For example, it is now possible to print a small piece of fabric, or just enough for a garment, to create a sample of a new design.

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In a large textile factory, a technician may specialize in one type of production technique, such as knitting or weaving; however, in a smaller company, the responsibilities of the technician may be more wide ranging. Technicians work approximately forty hours per week, sometimes on shifts.

## Qualifications

Requirements for employment as a textile technician include the following:

- **Education.** A bachelor's degree in textile technology, textile production, computer science, textile engineering, industrial technology, or a related field is required.
- **Experience.** Some textile technicians begin in entry-level technical design positions. They may move up into management of a team of technical designers that covers specific merchandise classifications, such as menswear or children's wear. Some technicians move

into management or into specialized areas, such as quality control and research.

- **Personal characteristics.** High levels of technical knowledge and computer skills are extremely important personal qualifications in this career path. Strong practical and problem-solving skills are also essential. A thorough understanding of textile applications and usage assists the textile technician in making decisions about product development.

The career challenges for a textile engineer and textile technician are similar and are presented after the following discussion of the textile engineer's position.

## TEXTILE ENGINEER

Manufacturers are merging textiles with technology to create new products for the market. For instance, instead of being just wrinkle-resistant, fabrics have become truly

**Figure 2.6**

An enlarged image of a crochet-look bioimplantable surgical patch.



wrinkle-free through a process patented by TAL Corporation of Hong Kong. The process involves baking a special coating onto the fabric, as well as innovative use of adhesives along the seams to prevent puckering. Other fabrics are coated with Teflon to resist stains. Materials have been developed to change color with body temperature changes, which is particularly appealing for hospital use. Figure 2.6 shows an additional example of innovative fiber technology. The career path that directly relates to these new products is that of textile engineer.

A textile engineer works with designers to determine how designs can be applied to a fabric while considering practical variables, such as durability, washability, and colorfastness. A person in this position will have a background in textile science that often includes chemistry and manufacturing, in addition to textile analysis.

## Qualifications

Requirements for employment as a textile engineer include the following:

- **Education.** A bachelor's degree in textiles, textile technology, textile production, computer science, textile engineering, industrial technology, or a related discipline is a minimum requirement.

- **Experience.** Many textile engineers working for companies that own and operate their own manufacturing facilities move up from the production line to this position. Textile engineers working with firms that contract out production may have a greater job emphasis on information technology in their positions. Some textile engineers begin in apprentice positions as assistant textile engineers.
- **Personal characteristics.** A textile engineer has a broad knowledge of how textiles are produced. In addition, this position requires an understanding of technical considerations as they relate to textile applications, an awareness of consumer wants and needs, and a comprehension of textile science.

## Career Challenges

Textile technicians and engineers face the challenge of understanding and anticipating the continually changing technologies in textile design and production. Deadlines are a constant potential source of stress. Communicating and problem solving with a variety of co-workers in different divisions, such as design and production, require a proactive approach, patience, and flexibility by textile technicians and engineers. The ability to identify a problem and solve it quickly is an ongoing task in these positions.

In addition to design, color, and technical positions in the textile industry, there are ancillary career paths. The resource room director or reference librarian and the account executive are two career paths that relate to the textile industry, yet require different sets of skills and backgrounds from those of the creative and scientific positions.

## RESOURCE ROOM DIRECTOR/ REFERENCE LIBRARIAN

Many large companies maintain a **resource room**, or *reference library*, of textile samples, source books and magazines, Internet resources, print and pattern images, and, possibly, actual garments constructed from the company's fabrics or those of competitors. As portrayed in Figure 2.7, these items are used by fashion directors, designers, technicians, and sales representatives for design inspiration and reference. The **resource room director** oversees the procurement, organization, and removal or replacement of these materials.





**Figure 2.7**

Bunny Williams' design resource room. Resource rooms, also called reference libraries, hold items that are used by fashion directors and designers for inspiration and reference.

Companies such as large apparel manufacturers, fashion publishers, and fiber/fabric houses maintain reference libraries. The **reference librarian** is responsible for managing the inventory of books and resources and procuring new ones.

## Qualifications

Requirements for employment as a resource room director or reference librarian include the following:

- *Education.* A bachelor's degree in textiles, fashion merchandising, fashion design, or a related discipline is a minimum requirement.
- *Experience.* For recent graduates with work experience in fashion retailing and textiles, strong academic performances, and impressive references, these can be entry-level positions. Some resource room directors or reference librarians later move into the design divisions of firms. Exposure to the references of a particular firm helps build the potential designer's background.
- *Personal characteristics.* Strong organizational skills, effective time management, first-rate communication skills, and attention to detail are personal qualities that fit the position of resource room director or reference librarian.

## Career Challenges

Managing a resource room or reference library can be a daunting task. There is a constant flow of new acquisitions that need to be inventoried, labeled, and stored, often in minimal space. There must be a high level of organization for the resource room director or reference librarian to be able to pull samples quickly for the fashion director or designer who needs them immediately.

## ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

An **account executive**, also referred to as *sales or manufacturer's representative*, sells to and manages the accounts, or clients, of textile manufacturers. The account executive is responsible for the sales of textiles and usually is assigned to a specific territory, such as the southern or midwestern United States. As illustrated in the classified advertisement of Figure 2.8, account executives can be paid in several ways: a salary, commission, quota, or a combination of these. This is a great career for someone who prefers working independently and enjoys business, budgets, and sales, as well as the textile, fashion, and home furnishing markets. Box 2.3 provides a look at how manufacturer's representatives are using social media to generate sales and build relationships with clients.

## SOCIAL MEDIA STRIKES

### BOX 2.3 How Manufacturer's Reps Can Use Social Media to Generate Sales

Social media is the perfect tool for manufacturer's reps of fashion brands to engage their customers online. A recent study found that salespeople using social media on the job outperformed their peers who were not using it by an incredible 73 percent. They also exceeded their quotas 23 percent more often than their counterparts who were not using social media. Both social media and fashion are all about self-expression. Customers recognize that the way they dress reflects their emotions, personality, and how they want to be viewed by others—just like their tweets or Instagram posts. Fashion and social media—it's a perfect fit. Here's a look at social media strategies that can be applied to any fashion rep's business:

- *Super-size your audience.* Connect with your retail buyers *and* their customers, your ultimate end users who buy your line from the retailers' store and wear the fashion items all over town. Be available and credible, because clients-to-be do research before they walk into a showroom or talk to a sales rep. Make initial connections on LinkedIn and create a link to the manufacturer's Web site to give them more content to peruse.
- *Keep the goods coming.* Social media users don't take nights and weekends off. Neither should a media director. Facebook pages that are frequently updated with captivating posts are much more likely to generate likes and attract new fans. To keep fresh content that is needed for regular posts and interactions, think about asking Facebook users to contribute new material with a special theme, such as stories of where they wore—and what they did while wearing—your fashion line. For example, Tiffany & Co.'s Facebook page asks fans to post their love stories with photos of their engagement and/or wedding rings. There's also a place for the story-telling strategy on Twitter.
- *Provide customer service extraordinaire.* Facebook and Twitter give your customers constant accessibility and *personalized service*. Delivering personalized service is nothing new to a seasoned salesperson, but scaling this with social media is key to building sales productivity and effectiveness. Today's customers expect reps to do their homework and to reach out at the right time with the right message. Successful salespeople

do not annoy prospects before they are ready to hear from them. There simply are not enough hours in the day to be in touch with everyone all the time, so the smart salesperson strives to provide immediate customer service when it is needed. The days of waiting "forever" for a representative to be available to take the buyer's calls are over. A tweet is much simpler and quicker. Do you offer your buyers Twitter or Facebook customer service?

- *Instagram and Pinterest are your two new best friends.* Both sites provide a visual experience for your clients. Every user can instantly post photos of his or her looks from your lines; you can post looks from your new line with the speed of light—well, the speed of fashion anyway. Bring your fashions to the masses.
- *Reach out to bloggers.* Contact bloggers who relate to your line and suggest a giveaway (that sample line can come in handy here) to boost blog visits and your line's visibility. The resulting positive press can mean a whole new crowd of customers—buyers and wearers.
- *You're too square to be hip?* Think about your target market and find someone who is like them to help you with your social media. Check out examples of a youthful approach at OscarPRGirl, a site that uses the persona of a PR girl who reports from inside the Oscar de la Renta fashion house as its moderator.
- *Social media is a way to start a conversation with your buyers and customers and to make new friends.* It is also key to getting ahead of your competition. Post on Facebook, tweet on Twitter, create a board on Pinterest, take an Instagram, and then tally up your sales. It is the power of social media.

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**Figure 2.8**

Classified advertisement for a textile company representative. As illustrated in this classified advertisement, sales executives are responsible for the sales of a company's textiles and the solicitation and maintenance of accounts.

### Fashion Sample Design Manager Coordinator

Saachistyle Fashion - White Plains, NY

Apply Now



Saachistyle is a fast-growing fashion accessories wholesale company in White Plains, NY near the Kensico Dam Plaza

See us at [www.saachistyle.com](http://www.saachistyle.com)

See us at [www.instagram.com/saachistyle/](https://www.instagram.com/saachistyle/)

#### Description

We are looking for a Sample Coordinator/Manager to **keep track of every sample and product that moves across our company.** The Sample Manager is responsible for the flow of samples in and out for each internal group (sales, manufacturing, marketing, photography). You will support and be a key part of the merchandising process.

This is a tough fast-paced job that requires being hands-on with merchandise and having excellent organizational skills and a great memory of where everything is. Be prepared to work with multiple teams having fast turn-around asks all day and not get frustrated. Be prepared to be on your feet all the time.

If you are looking for a fun exciting fashion job and love to learn how it all works and are willing to put in the time - this is a great opportunity.

#### Responsibilities

This role will receive, organize, and maintain a physical and digital record for all samples and requests for those samples among the teams. Some idea of the parts of the job.

- Manage internal tracking system for real-time status of samples, from order to delivery across any group and through final archiving. Keep track at all times
- Apply organizational tools for tracking receipt - Create your own if you need to
- Check-in/out all physical samples out of the showroom. Create a system of checking in and checking out.
- Ship your sample packets for customers.
- Provide status on all samples
- Create SKU/take pictures for each new sample
- Archive and classify all samples.
- Maintain archive, storage rooms.
- Owner of all samples and merchandise lines.
- Process daily package deliveries/sample returns and put them back
- Communicate with the overseas office regarding estimated timelines of delivery.
- Track all master samples and predict the need for additional; samples for key items.

## Qualifications

Qualifications include the following:

- *Education.* A bachelor's degree in fashion merchandising, general business administration, or marketing is preferred.
- *Experience.* Retail or wholesale sales experience is most often required; however, an internship or employment as an assistant to an account executive is an excellent way to open the door to this career path.
- *Personal characteristics.* A strong understanding of accounting, effective sales skills, good communication abilities, and excellent follow-up skills are important attributes of successful account executives.

## Career Challenges

Account executives are challenged to continually beat last season's or last year's figures. For some people, it is difficult to work independently and motivate oneself, despite rejections during sales calls and a fluctuating economy. Monitoring income and expenses, including many costs related to generating sales, is a juggling act for many account representatives, who must ask themselves, "Will I make enough commission to earn a living and offset the costs of this travel to trade markets or to clients' offices?" Maintaining a positive outlook and a high energy level are requirements for the successful account executive.

## EXAMPLES OF COMPANIES EMPLOYING TEXTILE DESIGNERS AND PRODUCT DEVELOPERS

Several large companies employ textile personnel, from designers to resource room managers. Many of these firms are located in New York City and Los Angeles; some have satellite offices in Dallas, San Diego, and Atlanta, as well as cities abroad. In this section, eight of the top textile firms are examined, encompassing fur as a type of textile.

## Cotton Incorporated

Cotton Incorporated is a not-for-profit corporation established pursuant to the Cotton Research and Promotion Act of 1966. It provides fabric, color, and trend

**Figure 2.9**

Cotton Incorporated conducts research and promotion for cotton and cotton products, with the primary goals of increased demand and profitability.



information for textile manufacturers, soft goods, and soft-good products for manufacturers, designers, and retailers. Funded by U.S. growers of upland cotton and importers of cotton and cotton textile products, Cotton Incorporated conducts research and promotion for cotton and cotton products with the primary goal of increasing the demand for and profitability of U.S. cotton and cotton products; its logo is illustrated in Figure 2.9.

The company offers technical services, such as fiber processing, fabric development, dyeing and finishing, and cotton quality management assistance. Information services provide data on cotton supply and demand, fiber quality, and consumer research trends. To keep cotton on the runway, Cotton Incorporated's fashion trend analysis team provides color and trend forecasts for cotton apparel and home products, highlighting the company's trend research and supplier information. Cotton Incorporated World Headquarters is located in North Carolina. Offices are located worldwide, including New York, Mexico City, Osaka, and Shanghai. The company's Web site, [cottoninc.com](http://cottoninc.com), provides corporate information, research reports, and employment opportunity postings.

## Australian Wool Services Limited (The Woolmark Company)

With more than sixty years of expertise in the wool industry and textile innovation, Australian Wool Services Limited is the world's leading wool fiber textile organization. The company provides unique global endorsement through ownership and licensing of the Woolmark, Woolmark Blend, and Wool Blend brands. The Woolmark

**Figure 2.10**

If you check the label of any quality wool or blended wool item you own, you are likely to find the famous Woolmark symbol, as shown here.



Company, a subsidiary of Australian Wool Services, specializes in the commercialization of wool technologies and innovations, technical consulting, business information, and commercial testing of wool fabrics. If you check the label of any quality wool or blended wool item you own, you are likely to find one of the famous Woolmark symbols, as illustrated in Figure 2.10.

These brands and their corresponding brandmarks are protected by strict and extensive control checks to ensure product quality. Australian Wool Services Limited operates globally, working with textile processors, designers, and retailers in both the apparel and interior textile markets.

## Fur Council of Canada

The Fur Council of Canada is a national, nonprofit organization incorporated in 1964, representing people working in every sector of the Canadian fur trade. This includes fur producers, auction houses, processors, designers, craftspeople, and retail furriers. The goals of the Fur Council programs include the following:

- Encouraging linkages between designers and other sectors of the fashion industry
- Sponsorship of competitions for both professional designers and students in Canadian fashion colleges
- Promotion of the work of innovative Canadian fur designers through advertising in top national and international fashion publications
- Providing accurate information about the Canadian fur trade to consumers, educators, and the public to counter criticisms that the industry's practices are cruel to

**Figure 2.11**

The Fur Council of Canada can be further studied on its Web site at [www.furcouncil.com](http://www.furcouncil.com).



animals. For example, in Canada, trappers must pass a mandatory course in which they learn how to use new humane trapping methods and how to apply the principles of sustainable use established by wildlife officials and biologists.

The Fur Council of Canada can be further investigated on its Web site at [furcouncil.com](http://furcouncil.com); its logo is featured in Figure 2.11.

## International Luxury Outerwear Expo

Chicago is the site of a major luxury outerwear international expo. Launched in 2014, The International Luxury Outerwear Expo (ILOE) is a fur and outerwear fashion fair of attracting thousands of professional buyers from the world's finest specialty boutiques and department stores with its wide array of luxury furs, boutique furs, shearlings, leathers, cashmere, and accessories. In 2018, the show hosted eighty exhibitors representing designer labels and upscale women's and men's outerwear in fur and precious fabrics. The lines range from formal looks to casual wear, sportswear, and streetwear. Buyers come from the United States and abroad. Another area of the trade show features unique international accessory collections, including handbags, gloves, scarves, hats, wraps, and jewelry. The ILOE show can be investigated more by visiting the organization's Web site at [iloeshow.com](http://iloeshow.com).

## Mohair Council

The Mohair Council is an organization exclusively dedicated to mohair, the fleece of the Angora goat. Established in 1966, the Mohair Council concentrates on marketing, education, and research as it relates to the mohair industry. The Mohair Council was created for mohair producers and is still financially sustained primarily by producers. It is a nonprofit organization funded by interest and dividend dollars from the now-defunct Wool Act, a current voluntary producer mohair assessment program, and funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The council headquarters is located in San Angelo, Texas, on the edge of Edwards Plateau in the southwest part of the state. This rugged ranching region is prime goat country and has long been home to many of the finest Angora goat breeding flocks in the world. Ninety percent of the U.S. Angora goat population grazes within a 150-mile radius of the Mohair Council's national headquarters, making Texas the primary mohair region of the United States. The United States has developed into one of the three largest mohair-producing nations in the world, with an annual production in excess of 2.4 million pounds. The other principal mohair sources are South Africa and Turkey.

The main function of the Mohair Council is to promote American mohair and to find viable worldwide markets for this unique commodity. To market its product, the Mohair Council has a team of eleven professionals who travel the world in search of profitable foreign markets for American mohair. These individuals meet one on one with prospective buyers, discover their needs, and then work to put the mohair buyer and supplier together.

Another objective of the Mohair Council is to educate designers, manufacturers, retailers, and consumers about mohair and mohair products (logo illustrated in Figure 2.12). For example, did you know that, as a decorating fabric, mohair is valued for its flame resistance and high sound absorbency? It is ideal for public places such



**Figure 2.12**

A primary objective of the Mohair Council is to educate designers, manufacturers, retailers, and consumers about mohair and mohair products.

as theaters, hotel lobbies, and offices, as well as homes. In addition, mohair draperies are effective insulators, keeping heat in during cold weather and serving as a barrier against hot outdoor temperatures in the summer. The Mohair Council's Web site is [mohairusa.com](http://mohairusa.com).

## Cone Mills

Cone Mills, LLC, is one of America's leading textile manufacturers. Cone Mills is a privately held company owned by W. L. Ross and Company as part of the International Textile Group. It is headquartered in Greensboro, North Carolina, with three manufacturing facilities located in China and Mexico. The company operates regional sales offices in Greensboro, New York, Dallas, Los Angeles, Kansas City, and San Francisco. Established in 1891, Cone Mills aims to be the largest producer of denim fabrics in the world. It has been selling denim and casual sportswear fabrics internationally for more than 45 years, serves markets in more than 35 countries, and is the largest U.S. exporter of denim and apparel fabrics. Cone Industries has a strong interest in and commitment to safeguarding the environment. The company provides internship opportunities in textile production and environmental protection. Further information about the company and its job opportunities can be found at its Web site, [conedenim.com](http://conedenim.com).

## Springs Global

Founded in 1887, Springs Global supplies leading retailers with coordinated home furnishings. The company's U.S. headquarters is located in Fort Mill, South Carolina. Springs Global also produces and markets bed and bath products for institutional and hospitality customers, home sewing fabrics, and baby bedding and apparel products. This range of products is truly mind-boggling. Springs' bedding products include sheets and pillowcases, comforters and comforter accessories, bedspreads, blankets, bed skirts, quilts, duvet covers, pillow shams, decorative and bed pillows, and mattress pads. Its bath products include towels, bath and accent rugs, shower curtains, and ceramic and other bath accessories. Its window products include window hardware and decorative rods, blinds, shades, and soft window treatments, such as drapes, valances, and balloon shades.

Through licensing agreements, Springs Global has extended its product lines to include kitchen and table

accessories, flannel and knit sheets, blankets and throws, and lampshades. In 2001, the company merged with Brazilian firm Coteminas, forming the North American division of Springs Global. In 2019, the Springs Global North American division merged with private label producer Keeco. Keeco operates design offices in New York and San Francisco. Springs Global US Inc. is headquartered in Lancaster, South Carolina, with manufacturing sites throughout South Carolina in Rock Hill, Fort Mill, Fort Lawn, and Lyman. Springs Global's Web site is [ir.springs.com](http://ir.springs.com) and Keeco's Web site is [keecohome.com](http://keecohome.com).

## DuPont

When it was founded in 1802, E. I. du Pont de Nemours was primarily an explosives company. Today, it is a company that has shown explosive growth. DuPont offers a wide range of innovative products and services for numerous markets, including agriculture, food and beverage, electronics, chemicals, packaging and printing, safety and protection, home and construction, transportation, and apparel. DuPont operates in more than 90 countries and is a Fortune 500 company.

DuPont's mission includes research and development as high priorities. The company has more than forty research, development, and customer service labs in the United States and more than thirty-five labs in eleven other countries. The productive results of DuPont's research are illustrated by its products. DuPont's brands include Teflon coatings, Corian solid surfaces, Kevlar high-strength material, and Tyvek housing protective material. DuPont's innovative fabrics run the gamut of uses from hospital and medical care applications to firefighters' gear and sportswear. The company can be located online at [DuPont.com](http://DuPont.com).

## Summary

As fashion companies in the United States now, more than ever, outsource much of their production work to companies in foreign countries, domestic job opportunities in textile production have dramatically declined. The majority of American companies design domestically but outsource goods internationally to take advantage of the free-trade agreements with low-wage countries. Although there is a loss in U.S. production jobs in the textile industry, there is an increase in the creative and scientific track, such as design, product development, and textile technology. Some