

# Introduction to the fashion industry report

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In this report I am going to give an introduction to the fashion industry by introducing several different areas of the industry.

I aim to develop a critical perspective of organizations within the fashion industry, To introduce organizational behavior, structures, roles, and how the production process works. I am going to examine Industry dynamics and their relationship to other sectors and examine the industry in the context of broader, cultural, social, economic and technological factors. Designers usually work in one of three main fields- Couture, designer, ready-to-wear, or high street fashion. They may also specialise in various types of clothing- Underwear, Sports wear, swimwear, knitwear or theatrical costume. The majority work in clothing, but some specialise in hats and other accessories.

Couture involves designing garments for individual consumers, who pay for individual clothes. They attend the designer's workroom to have clothes fitted that are made to measure. Most designers also design ready-to-wear clothes. These can be produced in relatively small numbers and sold under the designer's label. Mass-market work involves designing clothes and accessories where price is a major factor for items selling in large quantities through shops.

Most fashion designers work as part of a team for wholesale companies who will either retail their products direct or sell them through fashion fairs and shows. Ranges are designed and produced by wholesale manufacturers who sell them to retailers for resale. Designs are produced well in advance of clothes appearing in the shops- often a year ahead. Designers do not work alone on this, but in close co-operation with fashion buyers from retail

companies and fashion forecasters, whose job is to predict what customers will want two seasons ahead. The first design stage is to make sketches by hand or by using a computer.

Fabrics and trimmings are then selected. At this stage, designers usually try out their ideas by making toiles. Then comes the making-up stage. In small companies, designers and their assistants make patterns and cut sample garments. They note the number of different operations needed to make the garment and take steps to reduce them if they needed to keep in line with budgeting costs.

In large companies, professional pattern cutters and garment technicians are responsible for these technicalities. Some designers cut the patterns themselves and make up the samples. Large manufacturers normally employ specialist pattern cutters and sample machinists. When the garment goes in to production, the designer remains on hand to help with any problems that arise. Fashion designers spend some of their time working alone, or with one or two other people, in studios.

They also attend meetings with textile designers, fashion buyers, production managers and individual clients. Most also have to work closely with sample machinists and pattern cutters. They may travel extensively in this country and abroad to attend shows, sell their work and keep up to date with international trends. Paul rider works in international industry in Australia for a small retail unit. He works for a company called Country road I have been on the internet and visited the Country Road web site, I have enclosed copies

of these to look at featuring descriptions and photos of garments that he has designed.

Fashion designers must be artistic, creative and know how to use textiles effectively. They need an eye for tone and colour. Poor colour vision could be a handicap but this can be overcome by teaching. They should be able to explain their ideas through sketches, but do not need outstanding drawing ability. In developing a design, computer-aided techniques may be used. Communication and persuasive skills are important.

Much of their time may be spent persuading buyers from large retailers to accept their ideas. Designers need a thorough understanding of how garments are made and should have a sound training in hand and machine sewing and in pattern cutting. They must be able to calculate the costs of producing garments. Fashion designers need to be aware of social trends to predict consumer behavior. Design can also involve taking risks to lead rather than follow fashion.

Freelance designers need business and marketing skills. They must be prepared to take their portfolios to potential clients and negotiate contracts and fees. Lastly, they also need to be able to accept criticism and rejection of their ideas. For people who want to set up their own label, they can get help from people called creative industries or development agencies. These people give individuals the help they need to understand the business and process they need to take to set up their own business.

The creative industries specialise in helping individuals in creative areas, such as theatre, art, fashion, photography, performing arts and craft.

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Development agencies tend to be broader in their areas of subjects.? A good business plan is needed if funding is going to be sourced. The creative industries help people with the construction of their business plan by running short courses and by continual assessment. Short courses may also be run on business and finance for those who feel less confident in these areas. I have included some information in my report about The North Stand.

The North Stand is run by Lisa Harding and is a creative industry. I also found some other information on the Internet about development agencies. Design Trend and ForecastingThe process of design trend and forecasting all starts at European trade shows. The first of these show are yarn and knitwear shows that happen in December and July leave enough time to let the forecasters predict for the following season and for the collection to be finalized and produced. The main Yarn and knit wear shows are called Piti Filati-, which is held in Milan, and Expofil- held in Paris. At these shows you can get the feel for what sort of yarns and knitwear are going to be available for the following season.

The forecaster will get an idea of the hues, texture and feel of the season. In March and October there are Fashion fabric shows held. The most important one of these is PV Premiere Vision- which is held in Paris, other shows include, Interest Off and Idea Como. These shows are equally as important as the yarns and knit wear shows to give the forecaster an insight in to the whole feel of the season. These shows are at the top end of the market and can give a very strong idea of trends of mainstream merchandise. Next the process is taken to mens wear trade shows in February and September such as Uomo, Sehm and Igedo.

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In June and January Haute couture houses have shows in Paris and Milan. These are very important to the forecaster as they will get the biggest idea here to what will be on the cat walk and be able to imagine the type of garment when filtered down to high street level. The Couture is then filtered down to ready to wear shows in February to March and September to October. These shows are Pret A-Porter, Salon Lingerie and Igedo Dessou. These Ready-to-Wear collections will be exhibited at fashion weeks 40degrees and pure in London to promote them to national and international buyers.

Other fashion weeks will take place in fashion capitals Milan, Paris, New York, Australia and other world destinations. By this time the forecaster would have all ready had a big insight in to that season. After the fashion shows the garments will be yet again filtered down in to high street fashion. I have visited [fashioninformation.com](http://fashioninformation.com) to get more research on the shows. I have included these in my file; they contain colour forecasts and reviews of the shows including yarn shows and Pure in London.

To help make an accurate prediction the forecaster has to consider what was popular last season, as the basic shapes does not change that much from season to season. What sold well and in what stores? What didn't sell well? The forecaster would analyze last season's products by looking at colour, styles, fabric and detail. Outside influences should also be considered such as the market, the economy, politics, current affairs and technology. There are other possible influences such as media, TV shows, music and celebrities' styles that must be considered also. Magazines are also very relevant to the

work of a forecaster, including trade magazines, trade directories, newspapers and consumer magazines.

These magazines will state what is in fashion that season and what is popular at that time. The newspapers will display current affairs, which may effect people's emotions, which will most certainly effect the fashion industry. Retail buying and quality Buyers are powerful people who decide which styles we will have access to in the shops. Buyers and merchandisers work together to achieve profits for a retail organization and to satisfy customer demands. The buyer's job is to acquire the right products. To do this the buyer has to- research the market, fashion trends and new suppliers, Maintain a reliable and appropriate supplier base, make forecasts of stock and budget requirements, select and buy in products that is appropriate for the customer and is with in budget. They must negotiate with suppliers to agree the best price and maintain an acceptable quality though out.

To be able to be a successful buyer you need to have initiative, enthusiasm, have fore sight and planning skills, be a good leader and determined. The buyer also has to have a good under standing of finance. There are different types of buying, depending on the type of retail organizations. Multiples tend to buy centrally while department stores generally merge buying with the management of selling and operate local buying systems. However, the House of Fraser, John Lewis and others centralise some buying.

Co-operatives diversify by buying from the co-operative wholesale society, or from local societies. Independent stores will usually buy locally but, if there are a few branches, some lines may be brought in centrally. The main aim of

a retail company is to meet and satisfy the changing needs of customers and to provide merchandise that the customer wants to buy, at a cost, which makes maximum profit. To be a successful buyer they must aim to provide- the right product, At the right price, In the right quantity, Of the right quality, In the right place, At the right time with in fashion seasons. Central buying The advantages of central buying are that discounts can be obtained for bulk buying, The buyer has better knowledge of the product, the buyer has a broader awareness of the market, Merchandise can be moved centrally which makes it more flexible and that the stores and there managers can concentrate on selling, to achieve a higher rate of stock turn over.

There are also disadvantages of buying centrally which include- The customers needs in any locality may be ignored, Warehouse costs increase and local managers have less influence over the type of stock they carry.

Local Buying The advantages of local buying are that the buyer knows the customer base well, that the buyer has direct control over the stock in their department store and that the stock can be held in store to easily stock up. There are disadvantages of this type of buying also such as- Smaller orders may get less discount, The buyer has less specific product knowledge and that there are more demands on the buyers managers time which may cause decreased efficiency. Often the buyers will visit trade shows and exhibitions such as the shows visited by the fashion forecaster, for confirmation of forward trends and not always to buy.