

# The Process and Structure of Fashion Industry

# Unit 4

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#### Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this Unit the learner will be able to:

- Explain the main areas for fashion forecasting
- Analyse the fashion forecasting process
- Explain the different phases in fashion cycle

#### The Process



(the process of design and product development)

## The Process of Product Development

### Market research

Market information is gathered from a world-wide series of shows, the work of the most innovative designers; from fashion journals; from style and colour forecasting services; from the garments of competitors; and from the ideas of buyers in retail stores.

### The Design Concept

The design concept is developed by drawing, and a series of trials to refine the ideas of shape, colour and surface decoration.

### Market Screening

Checks the existence of a target population and what segment, of the market the concept aims at.

### Prototype Pattern

The creation of a prototype pattern is a design activity, based on the technology of block patterns or modelling.

The construction of a first sample by a skilled sample machinist explores by what means the garment can be constructed and adjusts the garment to achieve a satisfactory fit.

### The Range Meeting

The range meeting examines the design concept critically through the medium of a garment for the first time, against initial estimates of material and labour cost and possible contribution to overhead and profit. The range meeting also chooses those garments which are to progress to further development. This meeting is very often the key decision-making point in the whole process, and its members include representatives of marketing and production management as well as the design team.

### Pattern Adaptation

Following the decisions of the range meeting, makes alterations to the pattern to correct any fitting problems, to examine opportunities for cost reduction if required, and to resample in alternative fabrics.

The world of testing covers an enormous range of objectives: the physiology of 'comfort', resistance to attack by fluids and sunlight, resistance to wear and behaviour in washing and dry-cleaning.

## Production Patterns

Production patterns *include* seams, inlays and turn ups, grain lines and pattern identification.

## Grading

Grading, using information from sizing surveys, increases or decreases the dimensions of the pattern from the sample size until all the sizes in the range are covered. The size range depends on the target market.

## Marker Making

Marker Making is crucial because it brings the patterns to the fabric, confined in a rectangle whose width is the fabric width and whose length is as short as possible. Here further adaptations to the patterns may take place in order to make a more efficient marker and reduce the usage of fabric.

The designer finalises the specifications of the requirements of the design.

## Feedback from Manufacturers

Feedback from Manufacturers may be based initially on a test batch, if the style is radical enough to demand one, but of course is continuous throughout the life of the style.

## Feedback from Market Place

Similarly, feedback from the marketplace may also be based on test marketing and is continuous throughout the life of the style. Product development does not cease until the last garment is made and sold.

## Sources Of Information

In fashion forecasting, good merchandisers and designers draw on information from every available source. They then interpret this information in terms of the fashion preferences of their target customers. The process of design begins with market research and continues by originating new styles, developing samples, refining business objectives and achieving commercial garments. Feedback from both manufacturing and the market place continues until the last garment in a style has been sold.

## Market Research

It would be impossible to ask all consumers, what they will want two or three years from now.

Therefore, producers and manufacturers must- anticipate consumer wants and needs. Before they do any designing, manufacturing, or retailing: they under- take market studies to determine who current or potential customers are, what factors influence their buying

decisions, and ultimately what they will want. However, market research, with or without advertising can only guide  
It does not show how to fill consumer wants and needs.

Manufacturers and retailers shop the market to see what is selling well and why. They compare the styling, price, fit and quality of lines that compete with their own. They also analyse lines at higher price levels to get a price for directions that may soon affect their own price levels. Market information sources include analysis of new collections, sales records and consumer surveys.

The search for useful market segments nowadays, however, divides a population by income, social class, occupation and place in the family life cycle.

Further types of behaviour relate more closely to the decision to buy clothing:

- whether the purchase is for regular use or a specific occasion;
- whether the buyer is a regular wearer, a first time buyer, or an ex-wearer;
- how strong is the loyalty of the buyer to the retail outlet or the manufacturer on a scale from none to absolute loyalty;
- how ready is the buyer to buy - ignorant of the range, just aware of it, knowledgeable, interested or intending to buy;
- what benefits the buyer seeks from the purchase - prestige, economy, comfort or the urge to satisfy a particular clothing need such as sportswear;
- how responsive the buyer is to the various factors in the marketing mix - sales promotion and advertising, service, price and quality.

### Income

Hence one large factor which determines the behaviour of people towards clothing is the amount of their income available to buy clothing.

### Lifestyle

Assuming sufficient income to exercise choice, people wear clothing to suit their lifestyle.

A further type of segmentation stems from the use to which the wearer puts the clothing. The most obvious categories here are the many sports requiring specialised clothing: mountaineering and sailing, swimming, running and jogging, golf and cricket, snooker and others. Photography promotes individual clothing. Again stage costumes have their own market. In addition the number of occupations requiring a uniform grows, not only the traditional and formal military types but public service occupations of all kinds: airlines, public utilities, local authority services and even, lately, junior bank staff.

### Evaluating the Collections

Traditionally, both manufacturers and retailers turn first to Paris for an indication of the newest fashion ideas. Each year, the members of both the *prêt-à-porter* and the couture show their spring and fall collections. From all over the world, retail buyers and fashion

editors as well as designers and manufacturers invade Paris, Milan, London, Tokyo, and New York. When viewing the major collections, manufacturers, retailers, and the press try to analyse trend directions. Usually a few collections take similar directions because of common economic, technological, and social influences. Designers and buyers alike try to single out the styles they feel are prophetic. It is very helpful to be able to see and feel the actual garments and to examine styling details, construction techniques, and fit.

### Sales Records

Every manufacturer and retailer keeps records of all sales. Properly interpreted, this information indicates customer interest. It also shows what fashion trends are developing (rising sales) and what trends may have passed their peak (declining sales). This method of research is necessary especially at the moderate and lower price levels. Manufacturers who produce in volume cannot afford to take risks. They need the concrete proof of sales figures to show current trends. However, since fashion is constantly evolving at a rapid pace, sales statistics alone are not a reliable way to evaluate trends. Also, they do not show what merchandise is *lacking*.

### Consumer Surveys

Methods of questioning consumers can be formal or informal. Formal surveys such as mailed questionnaires and personal interviews are made by reporting services, publications, some manufacturers, and stores. Informally, researchers can obtain information by asking store customers what they would like to see on the market, what styles they like that are currently on the market, and what merchandise is *lacking*.

### Reporting Services

Design reporting services try to analyse collections and design trends for both manufacturers and retailers. They act as consultants to both those who can and those who cannot attend the collections. (The collections can be so overwhelming that even those who attend may need assistance in identifying major trends.)

Design reporting services work quickly, often writing up the previous collection while attending the next. For example, the staff at IM International writes up the Italian collections during evenings and weekends while attending the Paris shows a few days later. They produce approximately seventy-five camera-ready pages (pages from which printing plates can be made) in about five days, and the printed report is mailed to their clients eight days later. Without travelling to Europe or New York, a designer or buyer can learn about new trends from reporting services. Both newspapers and magazines rely on advertising to pay most of their production costs. As a result, the bulk of these publications is often paid advertising, and the editorial section is often influenced by paying advertisers. The reports provide varying viewpoints of fashion trends, using descriptions, sketches, photographs, fabric swatches, and colour samples, usually in twelve to sixteen issues a year. Some offer slides, original designs, and consulting services as well. Most offer information on both men's and women's wear.

## Fashion Publications

Fashion-trend research also depends on a variety of trade and consumer publications. *Trade magazines* and *newspapers* are intended for people working in the fashion industry; *consumer publications* are created for the general public. Both manufacturers and retailers must constantly read as many publications as possible, because each fashion journalist edits fashion trends from a different perspective.

### Fashion Editing

Ideally, the role of the fashion editor is to educate: to provide fashion information from all phases of the industry in all parts of the world to make the industry and the consumer aware of all that is available and to help them make wise and suitable styling and buying decisions. Fashion editors, together with journalists, stylists and photographers, thus act as the eyes and ears of the consumers. They let the nation or the community know where to find the fashions that are currently on the market, and report on how new fashions should be worn and accessorised.

The fashion editors of prominent newspapers and fashion magazines attend the collections, taking notes on what they like best. They then request sketches or photographs of their favourite garments to keep on file. Fashion editors try to sift through all the news releases that come into their offices, do their own investigating by attending the markets, and report on what they feel is important. When they are ready to write an article on coats, for instance, they pull out the coat file, find suitable styles that would look good together, and ask to borrow samples from the manufacturers. After planning a layout for both the visual and the written part of the article, they do the production.

### Trade Publications

Trade publications offer information not only on fashion trends but on developments in the textile industry, fashion industry, and retailing business as well. Some specialize in a particular branch of the industry.

### Consumer Fashion Magazines

Of the most helpful international fashion magazines, some come out only two or four times a year to report on the collections; others are monthly or semi-monthly. It is not necessary to read the text of the foreign language magazines; the ideas come from the photographs.

## Sources of Creative Design

What makes a textile or fashion designer's line special is his or her unique interpretation of fashion trends. Ideas do not simply materialise out of thin air. Many influences combine in a designer's personal style.

A designer who develops and is recognised for a particular style attracts buyers who come back year after year.

## Printed Sources

Textile and fashion designers use printed sources (magazines, trade papers, and design reports) to analyse trends because they want their designs to fit into the mainstream of fashion. But in addition to supplying trend information, these publications are good sources of ideas. Designers collect pictures showing appealing ideas for colour, line, fabric, and trimmings. One idea may inspire a whole line. For example, California designer Barbara Colvin once based a whole group on a photograph in a European fashion magazine of Persian-rug factory workers in their colourful costumes.

## Historic Costume

A designer often turns to the past for line and silhouette ideas that can be used in a new way for contemporary times. Designers must become sensitive to the combinations of colours, motifs, lines, shapes, and spaces of design in each historical period of art and costume. These elements can be modified for use in modern clothing.

Designers search for ideas from costumes in museums, books, and flea markets. Costume falls into two categories: *historic costume*, the fashion of a certain historical period, and *folk costume*, traditional national or regional dress (ethnic). Both are inspirational sources of design.

## Films, Theatre, and Television

Film costume designs do not set fashion trends as much today as they used to. However, films do occasionally influence style. *Dr. Zhivago* popularised the Russian look, *Bonnie and Clyde* revived 1930s fashions, *Annie Hall* popularized a look of vests and baggy pants, *Grease* created a rage for 1950s clothes, and *Star Wars* inspired some designers to create futuristic coats and jackets. Consequently, the costume looks of stars such as Cindi Lauper, Boy George, and Michael Jackson are being seen in junior fashion. Even soap operas have an influence. There is now a *Dynasty* fashion collection reflecting the glamorous look appearing on that series.

## The Importance of Awareness

Designers surround themselves with photographs of ideas, fabric swatches, and anything else that will stimulate creativity. They leave their studios to shop, visit museums, study nature, attend the theatre, or people-watch. Designers usually carry sketchbooks, jotting down ideas whenever and wherever they find them. They hunger for information, letting ideas mingle and shape themselves into new forms.

Awareness is the key to developing good design. Designers must learn most of all to keep their eyes open, to absorb visual ideas, and to translate them into clothes their customers will like. Some people are more sensitive to good composition than others, but practice and observation make a person more aware, sensitive, and confident. Design direction comes from many sources. A designer needs to study almost constantly to capture the subtle nuances of the environment.

## Developing a Sample Garment

### Sketching

Ideas sometimes originate on the drawing board. Starting with an idea for a silhouette or a neckline, the designer may experiment, sketching alternate ways to complete the design. On paper, the designer can see two-dimensionally which design elements might enhance one another. (The designer must also be able to imagine how the garment will look three dimensionally, when made up in a fabric.) The first rough sketch, a working sketch, is very simple. However, it must be accurate so that the patternmaker can interpret it correctly. The designer must think out the garment's construction in relation to the sketch, which must be drawn in proportion to the body, showing exact details of seam line and trimmings. The working sketch usually includes notes on construction and measurements.

Designers often develop a unique sketching style that reflects the type of apparel they design. A couture design sketch would probably reflect the sophisticated, elegant image of the company; a sportswear designer might use a crisp, carefree style. Computers are being programmed to sketch designs and automatically make the first pattern from the sketch.

### The First Pattern

The next step in the design procedure is the development of the first pattern, the pattern used to cut and sew the sample garment. The pattern is made in a *sample size*, the one used for testing and selling purposes. Examples are size 7 for juniors, 10 for missy, 34 for men's trousers, and 38 for men's suits. The patternmaker can use either of two methods for making patterns: draping or flat-pattern.

The draping method (working with muslin on a dress form) is like fabric sculpture; it is ideal for soft, flowing designs. The patternmaker (sometimes the assistant designer) cuts and shapes the fabric to a dress form. This enables the designer to see the proportions and lines of the design exactly as they will look three-dimensionally, on the wearer. The design is often altered as it develops on the form. Everything must be carefully marked: centre front, shoulder line, seams, armholes, buttonholes, and so on. When the designer is satisfied with the look and fit the muslin is taken off the form and *trueed up*; the sketched lines are corrected with drafting curves, angles, and rulers; and the pattern is redrawn on heavy paper.

The flat pattern method is necessary for areas like sleeves and pant legs, which would be difficult to drape on a figure. Basic shapes, such as bodices, sleeves, pants, or skirts, are draped or drafted. *Drafting* is blocking out on pattern paper a set of prescribed measurements for each piece. These patterns, after being tested for accuracy, become "blocks" or "slopers" that can be changed or adapted to each new style by moving darts and seams. Most pattern makers combine the two methods, depending on the dictates of the design, as well as on their technical training and preference.



### The Sample Garment

After the pattern is made in Manila paper or tag board, it is laid out on the fabric, traced, and cut out by the assistant designer or the sample cutter to be sewn into the first sample or prototype.

The prototype is made by a sample maker, the best of the factory sewers. He or she must not only know factory sewing methods but also know how to put an entire garment together. The design staff works closely with the sample maker to solve construction problems. Factory construction methods must be tested as the garment is sewn. The next step is to test the sample for fit and total effect. It is very important to see how the garment fits not only on a dress form but also on a model in motion. The model walks in the garment to learn whether it is comfortable and looks good. The designer, as his or her own best critic, must be objective in judging the design. Often the design must be altered as it is translated from a two-dimensional sketch into a three-dimensional garment.

## The Designer Work Sheet

Records are kept on all styles as they develop. Each designer fills out a work sheet containing information that guides the production department in figuring costs and in ordering *piece goods* (the factory term for fabrics) and trimmings. The work sheet becomes an adoption sheet when the final line is selected. The work sheet includes the following information:

1. The *date* the garment was designed.
2. The selling *season* for which the garment is designed.
3. The *sizes* in which the design will be made.
4. The *style number* assigned to the design. Each manufacturer has a code of numbers representing season, fabric, and pattern. In a series of four numbers, the first number usually stands for the selling season or release date, the second number for the fabric group, and the last two numbers for the pattern or pattern type.
5. A short *description* of the garment.
6. A *working sketch* of the design, to make it easy to identify the garment.
7. The *colours* or colour combinations in which the design is offered.
8. *Fabric swatches* of what is used in the garment.
9. *Material descriptions*, including each fabric type and source, width, and price per yard. Ten percent is usually added to the price to cover freight charges for delivery of the piece goods. Linings and interlinings are included as well.
10. Marker *width*, usually one inch narrower than the fabric.
11. Trimmings information: the kinds, sources, sizes, and prices of buttons, zippers, braids, lace, belts, elastic, and so on. Special fabric treatments done by outside contractors, such as pleating, spaghetti straps, and ties, are also included.
12. Labour costs for grading, marking, cutting, and sewing. These may be listed either on the designer work sheet or on a separate cost sheet figured by the costing department.

## Style Board

To chart the development of the line as a whole, the designer arranges working sketches of all the garments in fabric and colour groups on a large board, which is essentially a master plan. The board is posted on the wall of the design room. Styles are added and subtracted until the line is established. Later, the company may make notes on the plan to help keep track of production schedules.

## Line Selection

Designers develop many designs for each line, often two or three times as many as needed. From all of these samples, management and the designer choose the best for the line. Often the designer or merchandiser must actually present the line to management for approval. Many styles are weeded out, leaving only the most successful combinations of fabric, style,

and price. Even a good style may be discarded if it does not fit into one of the firm's price lines.

The designer or merchandiser must explain the line for the sales representatives, who can use this background information when showing the line to retail buyers. A consistent visual image created by a well-developed theme is a good selling tool on both the wholesale and the retail levels. Visual impact helps the line make a good impression compared with the competition in a store. The designer cannot be there to explain each style idea to the customer, so the garment design must speak for itself.

### Duplicates

Duplicates are copies of the original sample garments, sent to salespeople on the road and in showrooms across the country to show to buyers. Duplicates are also used as guides in production at the factory. Because they are often made in the factory, they offer a good test of production and quality control.

### The Couturier

Couture is simply the French word for fine, custom dress design, made to measure for a particular customer. A couturier is a make couture designer; a couturiere is his female counterpart.

The couturier Charles Frederick Worth (October 13, 1826– March 10, 1895) is widely considered the father of haute couture as it is known today. Although born in Bourne, Lincolnshire, England, Worth made his mark in the French fashion industry. While he created one-of-a-kind designs to please some of his titled or wealthy customers, he is best known for preparing a portfolio of designs that were shown on live models at the House of Worth. Clients selected one model, specified colours and fabrics, and had a duplicate garment tailor-made in Worth's workshop. Worth combined individual tailoring with standardization more characteristic of the ready-to-wear clothing industry, which was also developing during this period.

### Haute Couture

Haute couture the type of fashion design which predominated until the 1950s was "made-to-measure" or haute couture, (French for high needlework). The term made-to-measure may be used for any garment that is created for a specific client. A couture garment is made to order for an individual customer, and is usually made from high-quality, expensive fabric, sewn with extreme attention to detail and finish, often using time-consuming, hand-executed techniques. Look and fit take priority over the cost of materials and the time it takes to make. The term can refer to: The fashion houses or fashion designers that create exclusive and often trend-setting fashions.

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## Prêt-À-Porte

However, the term haute couture has been misused by successive ready-to-wear brands and high street labels since the late 1980s so that its true meaning has become blurred with that of prêt-à-porter (the French term for ready-to-wear fashion) in the public perception. Every haute couture house also markets prêt-à-porter collections, which typically deliver a higher return on investment than their custom clothing. In fact, much of the haute couture displayed at fashion shows today is rarely sold; it is created to enhance the prestige of the house. Falling revenues have forced a few couture houses to abandon their less profitable couture division and concentrate solely on the less prestigious prêt-à-porter. These houses, such as Italian designer Antonio Capucci, all of whom have their workshops in Italy, are no longer considered haute couture. Many top designer fashion houses also use the word for some of their collections.

## Line

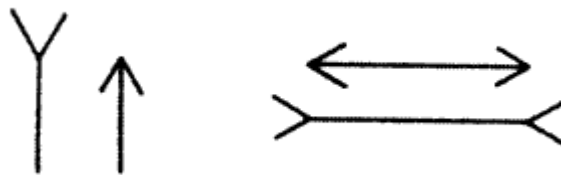


Fig 4.1

After selecting the fabric, the designer must consider the other elements of good design. In this section, the term line refers to the direction of visual interest in a garment created by construction details such as seams, openings, pleats, gathers, tucks, topstitching, and trims. (It is confusing that the apparel industry also uses the term line to refer to a collection of garments.) Line direction (Fig 4.1) should flow from one part of the garment to another and should not be meaninglessly cut up.

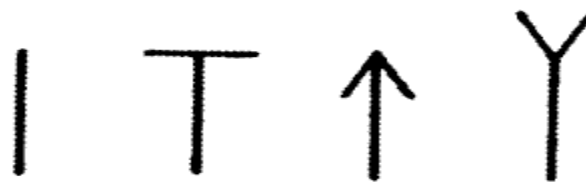


Fig 4.2

Straight lines (Fig 4.2) suggest crispness, such as that of tailored garments; curved lines imply fluidity. However, a garment designed with only straight lines is too severe; a garment with all curves is too unstable. For optimal beauty, the two should work together. Straight lines are softened by the curves of the body, and full curves must be restrained to be compatible with the human form.

## Knockoffs

A knockoff is a copy of someone else's design, usually a garment that is already a best-seller for another manufacturer. Knockoff companies simply buy a particular garment, make a

pattern from it, order large quantities of the same or similar fabric, and have the garment manufactured. Production and fabric costs are lower because of the huge quantities made.

The knockoff producer must have:

- (1) An acute awareness of what garments are selling well at the retail level,
- (2) Rapid production capabilities to capitalise on the success of the style while it lasts,
- (3) Lower prices. Now, in the age of instant global communications, copies often reach stores before the originals and at a fraction of the cost.

### Avant Grade

Some fashion leaders actually create fashion. They may be designers themselves or just want to express their own individual style. These fashion leaders constantly look for interesting new styles, colours, fabrics, and ways to accessorise their clothes. They try to find unique fashion in small boutiques or vintage clothing stores, or they design their own clothes. They are discerning shoppers who like to wear beautiful or unusual apparel. They may give impetus to a certain style by discovering and wearing it. They may be referred to as avant grade.

### Bridge

This styling and price range was created to give consumers a less expensive alternative to designer fashion. Bridge is simply a step down in price from designer, achieved by using less expensive fabric or different production methods. Some designers have secondary lines such as CK from Calvin Klein, Donna Karan's DKNY, Versus from Versace, or Emporio from Armani. Other collections, such as Ellen Tracy or Dana Buchman, cater specially to the bridge market.

## Fashion Management

### Fashion Direction

Fashion direction is established to maintain cohesive fashion merchandising in line with a distinctive store image. In single-unit stores, the owner usually acts as fashion director and buyer. In large stores or chains, management may employ a fashion director. The fashion director is the bridge between corporate marketing policy and actual merchandise-buying decisions. He or she works with merchandise managers, buyers, and promotion executives to suggest what merchandise to choose and how to present it.

Along with management and designer collection buyers, the fashion director may attend European and American collection openings to study fashion trends. These trends are analysed in relation to the store's image, and this information is passed on to buyers as a guide to merchandise planning and advertising. The fashion director may also work with buyers to select appropriate merchandise, to develop the store's private label, and to coordinate their buys with merchandise in other departments. A fashion director also prepares seasonal fashion presentations for sales associates so that they can understand

the new fashion concepts and the store's merchandising approach and, therefore, better help their customers.

### **Fashion Editors**

The role of the fashion editors is to educate the public, to provide fashion information from all phases of the industry in all parts of the world; to make the industry or the consumer aware of all that is available; and to help the consumer make wise and suitable styling and/or buying decisions.

Fashion editors, together with journalists, stylists, and photographers, act as the eyes and ears of the consumer. They let the nation or the community know where to find the fashions that are currently on the market, and they report on how new fashions should be worn and accessorised.

The fashion editors of prominent newspapers and fashion magazines attend the collection openings, take notes on what they like best, and report on what directions they believe are important they may request sketches or photographs of their favourite garments to use in their articles. In between openings, fashion editors write articles on topics that they think are noteworthy. They sift through the news releases that come into their offices to help them write a story. Editors may ask to borrow samples for simply use a photo sent to them in a publicity release. Sometimes sketched illustrations are used, depending on the mood or effect to be achieved. Garment and fabric descriptions may be included as well as a list of stores that carry the merchandise described in the article.

### **Buying House**

Although the term buying house is still used in the industry, its role has greatly expanded to fill a wide variety of functions. The two primary type of buying houses are independent and store owned.

An associated buying house is jointly owned and operated by a group of stores. Member stores usually have similar sales volume, store policies, and target customers but are in no competing locations. Operating expenses are allocated to each member store on the basis of the store's sales volume and the amount of services rendered.

A corporate buying house is owned and operated by the parent organisation of a group or chain of stores. At Federated Department Stores, 70 percent of the buying for member stores is done centrally by the parent company, while the other 30 percent is done by individual member stores.

### **International Buying Houses**

Many large retail stores have their own buying house abroad or use foreign commissionaires, agents representing stores in foreign market centres. These offices are equipped to handle import-export transactions in the language of the country, check quality control, figure currency exchange rates, provide a consolidated centre for shipping, and wade through customs red tape.

## Merchandising

Merchandising is planning to have the right merchandise at the right time in the right quality and at the right price to meet the needs of the company's target customers. It is also the manner in which a group or line of garments is presented to the public; the way the line will look in the stores.

The merchandiser or product manager is basically a process manager, developing the blueprint of the line. Merchandising activities, which vary from company to company, usually include setting financial goals, budgets, and price points; making the merchandising plans; planning line size; planning fabric purchases; sourcing; scheduling production and deliveries; controlling product flow; presenting the finished line to the sales staff; and sometimes preplanning assortments for stores.

## Scheduling

Merchandising is responsible for integrating all the phases of product development, including design and production. The merchandiser, or product manager, sets up a schedule of deadlines for styling, finished samples, and production to meet the required shipping dates, these dates, of course, co-ordinate with the production department. Merchandisers meet regularly with designers, the sales staff, and production managers to discuss company goals, budget requirements, line size, delivery dates, sizes, and so on.

## Seasons

Each season, the design and merchandising departments of each division are responsible for creating a new line, the seasonal collection that the manufacturer will sell to retail store buyers. The terms are synonymous: 'Collection' is used primarily in Europe and for high-period apparel in the United States. 'Line' is used more often in the United States for moderately and popularly priced fashion.

Work on a new line begins approximately eight months before the selling season (a velvet dress to be worn in December must be designed in May).

Designers and merchandisers also work on two or more lines at once, designing a future collection while checking samples from one that is about to be produced. They are finished work on the spring line while beginning fabric research for summer. It is a continual process of creating new merchandise, a "seamless" product development.

## The Merchandise Plan

Each season, merchandisers have to develop a merchandise plan or business plan. They must decide how many apparel or accessory groups are needed to meet both the demands of retailers and consumers and the financial goals of the manufacturer. The previous year's actual sales are used as a basis for projected sales goals for each group. Spreadsheets are created to show what needs to be produced and sold per month to reach sales and profit goals. The merchandiser has to determine the number of groups, fabrics, and styles required to meet those sales goals.

**Suggested Further Readings:**

- **The Fundamentals of Fashion Management (By Susan Dilon)**
- **Basics Fashion Management (By Virginia Grose)**