

Principles of Fashion

Unit

2

Unit 2

Principles of Fashion

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

- Explain how the elements of fashion appeal influence the purchaser
- Describe the classification of clothing according to their use and types
- Explain factors which affect the decision to buy in fashion
- Describe the process of the product development in fashion industry
- Explain the main areas of fashion wear production including an understanding of the key terms, concepts, facts and principles, rules and theories of the field, discipline or practice.

Fashion Design

One of the most important factors which differentiate humans from other animals is their use of clothing. It is used not simply to provide a micro-climate for the wearer's body, but also to conceal the body and reveal its wearer's status and personality to others. To satisfy this concealing and revealing process diverse kinds of clothing are used. One of the most mysterious aspects of clothing is fashion.

Clothing expresses status; social class is apparent in the boss's business suit and the worker's jeans at work, although this difference may disappear at the weekend. Clothing changes when the wearer leaves the cradle, enters primary school, secondary school or university, on starting work, on getting married, on gaining promotion. Even death has a special wardrobe, both for the dead and the mourners. Clothing establishes a person's identity; reflects the wearer's goals and moral principles; communicates self-assurance or the lack of it; and conveys the activity a person is about to engage in. Clothing may also be used as costume, to represent something a person is not; and as a uniform to denote a person's membership of a defined group.

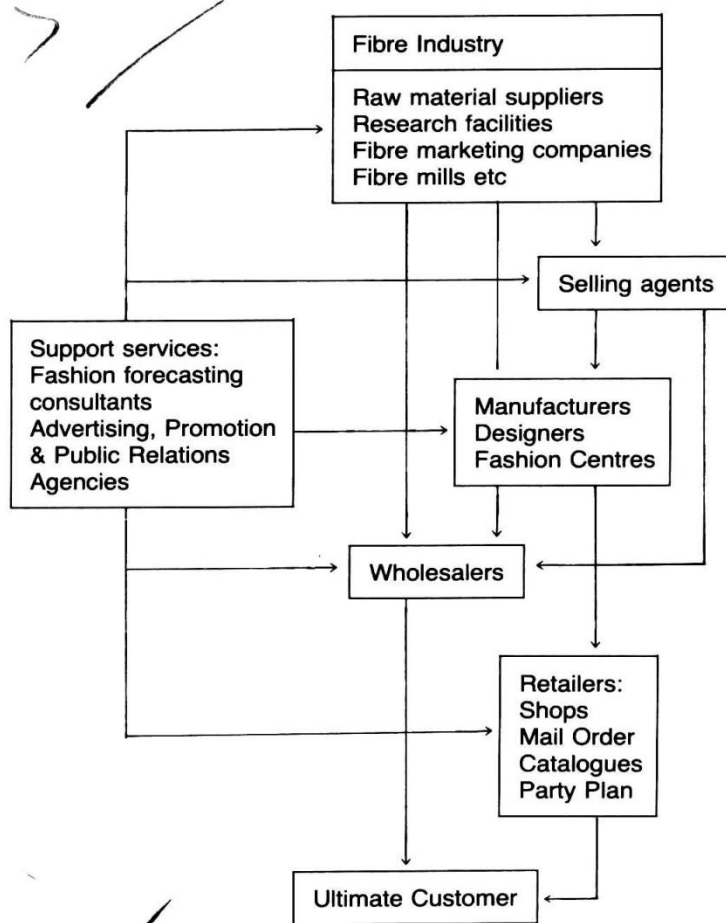
Fashion in the narrow sense of the word means the changing form of clothing. These originate from peoples need to be adorned and admired but also allow the opportunity to enhance personal style or indicate a position in society. Fashion is not the only consideration in developing a garment for a market. The overall appearance (style) as well as the utility value (fitness for purpose, aftercare).

Creating or styling the appearance of a person with reference to clothing, accessories and beauty in corresponding with the personality of any individual is fashion designing.

Fashion Design Terms

- A fashion designer conceives garment combinations of line, proportion, colour, and texture. He or she may or may not know how to sew or make patterns. Formal training is always essential, yet most fashion designers are formally trained (apprenticed) and schooled.
- A pattern maker drafts the shapes and sizes of a garment's pieces with paper and measuring tools, and, sometimes, an AutoCAD computer software programme, or by draping muslin on a dress form, the original way. The resulting pattern pieces must compose the intended design of the garment and they must fit the intended wearer. Formal training is essential for working as a pattern marker.
- A tailor makes custom designed garments made to the client's measure; suits (coat and trousers, jacket and skirt, etc).
- A textile designer designs fabric weaves and prints for clothes and furnishings. Most textile designers are formally trained as apprentices and in school.
- A stylist is the person who co-ordinates the clothes, jewellery, and accessories used in fashion photography and catwalk presentations of clothes collections. A stylist also is a designer whose designs are based upon extant things, trends, and the collections of other designers.
- A buyer orders stocks of clothes for shops, chain stores, and other types of stores. Most fashion buyers are trained in business studies.
- A teacher of fashion design teaches the art and craft of fashion in art schools and in fashion design school.
- A custom clothier makes custom- made garments to order, for a given customer.
- A dressmaker specializes in custom- made women's clothes: day, cocktail, and evening dresses, business clothes and suits, trousseaus, sports clothes, and lingerie.
- An illustrator draws and paints clothes for commercial use.
- A model wears and displays clothes at fashion shows and in photographs.
- A fashion journalist writes fashion articles describing the garments presented, for magazines or newspapers.
- An alterations specialist (alterationist) adjusts the fit of completed garments, usually ready-to-wear, and sometimes re-styles them. NOTE: despite tailors altering garments to fit the client, not all alterationists are tailors.
- A wardrobe consultant or fashion advisor recommends styles and colours that are flattering to the client.
- A photographer photographs the clothes on fashion models for use in magazines, newspapers, or adverts.

Fashion Flow Chart



Fashion flow chart.

Classification of Fashion

The duration of fashion's importance is a critical fashion designers or manufacturers concern. A fashion can be brief or of long duration. Once having identified this characteristic, a designer is in a position to assess a fashion's importance to the retail inventory.

Fashion is classified into many types, such as:

- Style
- Basic or classic
- Fad
- Fashion Forecasting
- Trends

a) Style

Style is always constant. It does not change whereas fashion changes. It is the modification of fashion. Style is the basic outline of any garment. When we use a different neckline and different sleeves with some trimming here and there over a basic garment then the basic garment is modified into a different look or a different outfit, this modification eventually will become fashion, when it is accepted by people.

The term style is a popular word in fashion and refers to a sub-division within fashion. By definition, it is that which has certain characteristics that distinguish it from other designs. For example, the fashion could be pleated skirt, yet the style is box pleat. It is a common fallacy to believe that the famous designers create fashions. They create styles which they hope will be accepted. When and if there is consumer support the style then becomes fashion. It is repetitious but important to stress that fashion is synonymous with acceptance.

b) Basic or Classics

When a fashion is constant or long lasting, such as, T shirt and skirt, it is called Basic or Classic. It is similar to a standard music. The T shirt and skirt are part of fashion scene. A customer has one or more in her wardrobe, to be worn to suit different occasions. In certain times, the basic becomes the most important promotable fashion, but, in or out, they remain as a part of the fashion scene. There are many outfits that fall into this classification, such as, shirt and trousers, plain or pleated skirts and denims, etc. there are general fashions that last for years, such as, the skirt, the single breasted men's suit

Basics or Classics are the outfits which stays in the fashion scene for a long period of time that is from past to present and even in future it stands

When we watch old movies as well as the new movies which are released just, we can see the skirts, or denims worn in it may be with a slight change or modification accordingly.

c) Fad

A Fad is something which can either make a designer's life more interesting or tenser. Very often something appears on the fashion scene that captures the imagination, only to fizzle out in short duration.

Overall, Fad can be defined as short lived fashion, lasting for a very little time or period, acceptable by only a certain group of people for example, hippies – their clothing, accessories, hairstyles, etc. As Fad is short lived fashion, it stays for a very short period, because they are very costly and every one cannot afford to buy it.

d) Fashion Forecasting

Fashion Forecasting is a global career that focuses on upcoming trends. A fashion forecaster predicts the colours, fabrics and styles that will be presented on the runway and in the stores for the upcoming seasons. The concept applies to not one, but all levels of the fashion industry including haute couture, ready-to-wear, mass market, and street wear. Trend forecasting is an overall process that focuses on other industries such as automobiles, medicine, food and beverages, literature, and home furnishings. Fashion forecasters are responsible for attracting consumers and helping retail business's and designers sell their brands. Today, fashion industry workers rely on the Internet to retrieve information on new looks, hot colours, celebrity wardrobes, and designer collections.

Fashion Forecasting is done through many communicating media, such as, cinema, fashion shows, press, magazines, newspapers and window display.

It includes:

- Market research
- Consumer research
- Surveys
- Consumer focus groups
- In-store informal interviews
- Shopping
- Sales Records
- Evaluating the collections
- Fashion Trends

- Trend for Target Markets

e) Trends

Fashion trends are the styling ideas that major collections have in common. They indicate the direction in which fashion is moving. Fashion forecasters look for the styles they think are prophetic, ideas that capture the mood of the times and signal a new fashion trend.

Several designers may use a similar fashion idea because they have been inspired by common sources. The trend may appear in a fabrication, a silhouette, or another design element that appears in several collections. Very often, a new trend appears in small doses until it spreads to other collections. As the press notices similarities between collections and highlights them, the media exposure also helps establish the trends.

Evaluating the collections becomes one way a designer, working for a mainstream manufacturer, can research fashion direction. As designers are not invited to the shows, they must evaluate by shopping in major fashion capitals or using design services, magazines, and newspapers.

For retail buyers, it is becoming a huge challenge to figure out which trends will become fashion basics, like capris, and which are only fads, such as pony prints. Buyers have to become very flexible in their buying patterns and cautious about inventory management. If the market becomes flooded with a new trend, consumers may react negatively to the overexposure.

Empowered by the Internet and television, global trends are moving at an accelerating pace. The life-span of a trend is now about five months instead of a year. For the junior market, the span is only three months.

Chic

Chic is a French word, established in English since at least the 1870s, that has come to mean smart or stylish. Over the years "chic" has been applied to, among other things, social events, situations, individuals, and modes or styles of dress. Recurring generic terms included designer chic (associated with the styles of particular couturiers - the 1980s became known as the "designer decade") and retro-chic (adopting elements of fashion from the past: e.g. "Victorian chic", "sixties chic", "Georgian chic", "1920s Riviera chic")

Collection

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: the term '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.

Fashion shows

Fashion shows are special events that communicate a fashion story. The selection and organization of the fashions and model bookings may be done by the fashion office, whereas invitations and other arrangements may be handled by the special events department. There are four possible ways to organize these presentations: formal shows, department shows, designer trunk shows, or informal modelling.

a) Formal Fashion Shows

Formal fashion shows take a great deal of advance planning involving booking models and fittings and arranging for a runway, scenery, lighting, microphones, music, seating, and assistants. Clothes are generally grouped according to styling, colour, or other visual criteria. Models and music are selected to complement the clothes and set a mood.

b) Designer Trunk Shows

Designer trunk shows are done in cooperation with a single vendor and are a popular way to sell expensive collections. Invitations are sent to the best customers according to records kept by sales associates. The designer or a representative travels from store to store with the collection, which is usually shown on models in the designer collections department. Customers get to see the entire collection unedited by a buyer and may order from the samples in their size. Although some designers and retailers do 50 percent of their total business through trunk shows, others find them time-consuming, exhausting work, and have given them up.

c) Department Fashion Shows

Department fashion shows, on a much smaller scale, are produced in store to generate immediate sales. Usually, a platform is set up directly in the department that carries the clothes.

d) Informal Fashion Shows

Informal fashion shows are the easiest to produce. A few models walk through the store showing the fashions that they are wearing to customers who are shopping or having lunch in the store's restaurant. The models can take their time, and customers enjoy asking them questions. This is often done in conjunction with a trunk show or special promotion.

Criteria Consumers Use in Fashion Selection

To determine the acceptability of fashion, both manufacturers and consumers should consider the criteria used for its selection. Elements of fashion appeal draw the consumer's attention to a fashion. There are also practical considerations, including quality and price that the consumer usually evaluates before making a purchase.

Elements of Fashion Appeal

The elements of fashion appeal are basically the same as the elements of design, but here they are viewed by the purchaser rather than the creator:

a) Colour

Usually the first aspect of a garment or accessory to which consumers respond is, colour. People relate very personally to colour, usually selecting or rejecting a fashion because the colour does or does not appeal to them or flatter their own colouring.

Texture: The surface interest in the fabric of a garment or accessory is called texture. Consumers relate to texture because of its sensuous appeal.

b) Style

The elements that define a style include line, silhouette, and details. A garment's appearance is also affected by hanger appeal. Depending on the consumers' level of fashion consciousness, their judgment will be conditioned by their opinion of what is currently fashionable.

Practical Considerations

a) Price

Price is probably the most important practical consideration for the average consumer. The consumer evaluates the total worth of all the fashion appeal aspects of the garment or accessory and their relationship to its retail price.

b) Fit

The try-on is a crucial step in the consumer's selection of a garment because sizing is not a guarantee of fit. The Department of Commerce has tried to set sizing standards, but each company tends to vary somewhat. Each company tries its sample garments on models that are typical of the company's customers. However, it is difficult to set size ranges and grading rules to fit every figure. The fitting room try-on further enables the customer to judge if fashion-appeal elements are suitable to his or her figure type or general appearance.

c) Appropriateness

It is important that a fashion item be suitable or acceptable for a specific occasion or for the needs of the consumer's life-style. For example, life in a large city requires more formality in clothing than life in the country. Impulse shoppers do not consider appropriateness and therefore purchase any items that do not fit into their wardrobe.

d) Brand

Brands are a manufacturer's means of product identification. Some consumers buy on the basis of a particular brand's reputation, often as result of heavy advertising.

Consumer Demand**a) Fabric Performance and Care**

The durability of a garment or accessory and the ease or difficulty of caring for it, are often factors in selection. Most consumers prefer easy-care, wash-and-wear fabrics, although designer and contemporary customers may not mind paying for dry-cleaning the more delicate fabrics they prefer. Easy care and durability are of special concern in children's wear and work clothes. Government regulations now require fibre-content and care-instruction labels to be sewn into apparel.

b) Workmanship

This term refers to the quality of construction, stitching, and finishing. Quality standards have fallen as labour costs rise and managements favour more profitable balance sheets. Unfortunately, many consumers cannot and do not bother to evaluate workmanship. The generation born and raised since World War II has not been exposed to fine workmanship and therefore does not demand it. The junior customer cares little about quality; she is likely to throw away a garment before it wears out. The designer, contemporary, or missy customer, on the other hand, generally considers clothing an investment and may not mind spending more for the lasting qualities of fine detailing and workmanship.

Meeting Consumer Demand

To meet consumer demand and changes in consumer life-styles, manufacturers and retailers have developed various size and price ranges as well as categories for styling and clothing

a) Size Ranges

Each size range caters to a different figure type. **The junior** customer, sizes 3 to 15, has a less developed figure and a shorter back-waist length (a higher waistline) than the missy figure.

The missy figure, sizes 6 to 16 (or 4 to 14, or 8 to 18), is fully developed. In missy separates, some blouses and sweaters are sized 30 to 36 (8 to 14), or small, medium, and large. Sizing 30 to 36 was originally inches, but sizes have grown over the years. **Petite sizes** come in both junior and missy. Junior petite is meant for shorter junior figures; petite sizes in missy (2 and up) are for smaller proportioned missy figures. **Large** or **women's** sizes, used for sportswear, are 36 to 52 for uppers (jackets and shirts) and 30 to 40 for lowers (pants and skirts). (There is a current void of half-size sportswear.)

It is difficult to compare sizes from country to country. Particularly in France, the sizing is not always standard. Men's suits range in size from 36 to 44 (with additional large sizes to 50), based on chest measurements. Lengths are designated after the size number: R for regular, S for short, and L for long. European sizes are 46 to 54 (just add 10 to each American size). *Young men's* sizes, equivalent to junior sizes for women, have a narrower fit in the jacket and hip and a shorter rise in the trouser than regular men's sizes.

Dress shirts are sized by collar measurement (inches in America and centimetres in Europe) and sleeve length. Sport shirts are sized in small, medium, and large. Trousers are sized by waist and inseam measurements.

Children's wear is sized by age group. Infant sizes are based on age in months, usually 3, 6, 9, 12, and 18. However, since development varies so much from child to child, many manufacturers are now also identifying weight ranges on their labels.

b) Price Ranges

A garment should give good value for its price. There are many price ranges, each with a different level of customer expectations. As the price goes up, the customer expects higher quality in fashion, fabric, fit, and finish. Designer garments are becoming so expensive that the group of people who can afford them is shrinking. Therefore, many designers are adding less expensive lines. On the other hand, many retail stores are trading up. That is, stores with low-end (inexpensive) merchandise are now trying to give themselves a fashionable image.

Each garment manufacturer generally specializes in one price range. The designer and merchandiser must consider the cost of every fabric trim or construction detail that goes

into a garment. Costs must fit into a specific price range. In turn, each retail store has various departments, from budget to designer, again classified by price range.

c) Style Ranges

Both women's dresses and women's sportswear currently come in style ranges as well as size ranges. Some of the terms overlap because style ranges grew out of age groups. However, many women today cross the boundaries, dressing to fit their figure and personality rather than their age needs.

Designer: Formerly, *couture* would have been the classification for better, more expensive fashion. The decline in the couture business, however, gave rise to the general classification of *designer clothes*. Today even some of the designer ready-to-wear is as expensive as couture used to be.

Missy: These are more conservative adaptations of proven or accepted designer looks; they utilize less expensive fabrics and less extreme silhouettes.

Contemporary or updated: This is a sophisticated approach to styling based on the directions set by French, Italian, English, Japanese, and American ready-to-wear. Designers of expensive clothes are also marketing less expensive lines for contemporary departments.

Designer and contemporary styling has carried over to men's wear, although designer clothes for men tend to be more classic than those for women. Sportswear or *related separates* for men have followed almost the same trends as women's sportswear in the last ten years, especially since many designers are doing both.

Small children's styling is the only styling not aimed at the consumer who will wear the garment. The consumer in this case is a parent, grandparent, or other adult. Children's clothes of the past tended to be fussy, but now they are more functional. Older children today have more definite opinions on what they want to wear, partly because of advertising and television exposure and peer-group pressures. This development has had an effect on styling.

Areas of Fashion Design

Many professional fashion designers start off by specializing in a particular area of fashion. The smaller and the more specific the market, the more likely a company is to get the right look and feel to their clothes. It is also easier to establish oneself in the fashion industry if a company is known for one type of product, rather than several products. Once a fashion company becomes established (that is, has regular buyers and is well-known by both the trade and the public), it may decide to expand into a new area. It is usually safest for a company to expand into an area similar to the one it already knows. For example, a designer of women's sportswear might expand into men's sportswear.

a) Women's Wear

Women's clothes have many classifications: lingerie, dresses, evening clothes, suits, outerwear, and sportswear. There are also specialty categories, such as bridal gowns and maternity clothes. In addition, there is a huge array of accessories within the general categories of wraps, head coverings, handbags, and footwear.

b) Lingerie

Lingerie includes undergarments, sleepwear, and loungewear. Interest in designing lingerie is increasing because women again desire pretty things and will spend the money to have them.

c) Dresses

Dresses range from the very tailored with crisp lines for wearing on the job, to the very softest with gathers and ruffles for dressy occasions.

d) Evening clothes

Evening clothes run the gamut from party pyjamas through long and short cocktail dresses to opulent gowns.

e) Suits are jackets and skirts

Suits are jackets and skirts (or pants) sold together as units. Suits also range from the soft "dressmaker" suit to the strictly tailored.

f) Outerwear

Outerwear has primarily a protective function: it covers us and keeps us warm or dry. Outerwear includes coats, capes, and heavy jackets. Its warmth may come from traditional wool or quilting; rainwear receives a water-repellent treatment.

g) Sportswear

Sportswear is the category that has grown the most over the years, as leisure time and discretionary income have increased. Sportswear can be classified as **active or spectator**.

h) Spectator

Spectator sportswear was intended for watching sports events, although the term now includes sportswear worn for day-to-day activities.

i) Active sportswear

Active sportswear is created for movement and worn for participation in sports. Sportswear lines are organized in two different ways: in *separates* such as skirts, pants, blouses, shirts, sweaters, and tops; or as *coordinateit sportswear*, pieces intended to be mixed and matched but priced separately.

j) Men's Wear

Men's Wear: There are now almost as many categories available to men as to women. Stores use elaborate promotions to lure their increasingly fashion-wise male customers.

k) Tailored clothing

Tailored clothing for men includes suits, overcoats, topcoats, sport coats, and separate trousers for both day and evening wear.

l) Furnishings include shirts, neckwear, sweaters, tops, underwear, socks, robes, and pyjamas

m) Sportswear is made up of related separates that fill the demand for more leisure and casual wear.

n) Active sportswear includes windbreakers, ski jackets, jogging suits, tennis shorts, and the like.

o) Work clothes include overalls, work shirts, and Pants required by labourers; they are now also worn by women.

Acceptance

Acceptance implies that consumers must buy and wear a style to make it a fashion. World-renowned designer Karl Lagerfeld remarked, there's no fashion if nobody buys it."

Acceptance by a large number of people makes a fashion important. However, different groups adopt different fashions. What appeals to a junior customer would probably not appeal to a missy customer. Designers plan styles to appeal to certain consumer groups-their particular customers.

It is then up to the public whether to make the offered style into a fashion by accepting it.

Timeliness

Timeliness indicates change: what is in fashion one year will be out the next. Many people criticize the 'fickleness of fashion. If fashion never changed, though, the public would not continue to buy clothing. Obviously, the senses become bored without variety. Change is what makes the fashion business exciting. Because fashion is a product of change, a sense of

timing-the ability to understand the speed of acceptance and change-is an important asset for anyone involved with product development or marketing in the fashion industry.

Fashion Advancement

Generally, fashion changes evolve gradually, giving consumers time to become accustomed to new combinations and looks. Designers arrive at new fashion looks by changing *design elements*, such as line, shape, colour, fabric, and details, and their relationship to one another. For instance, a change in skirt length might in turn affect the proportion of the skirt to the bodice of a dress. In men's suits, the narrowing of lapels tends to reduce the scale of other details and accessories, such as neckties.

Designing a Collection

- Planning a collection: Every collection is very carefully researched and planned so that all the items in it complement each other, and have the particular fashion look which the company is known for.
- Predicting trends: One of the hardest skills a fashion designer has to master is predicting future trends. To do this, they look at what the fashion directions have been in previous seasons, keep an eye on what others in the fashion business are doing, and read fashion forecasting magazines. They also rely on knowledge of their own customers to see which styles succeeded and which were less popular in past seasons. Perhaps most importantly, designers use their imaginations to come up with new ideas. They often choose a theme to provide inspiration.
- Choosing a theme: The theme of a collection can be a period in history, a foreign place, a range of colours, and a type of fabric - anything which has a strong visual impact.

Designing a Garment

- The design: Different designers work in different ways. Some sketch their ideas on paper, others drape fabric on a dress stand, pinning, folding and tucking it until the idea for a garment emerges. A third method is to adapt their own patterns from previous seasons (this method can give continuity to a fashion studio's output).
- Making a toile or muslin: After making a rough paper pattern, or life-size 2-D plan, of the garment, a sample machinist (or skilled sewing machine operator) then makes a trial version of the garment from plain-colour calico. The toile (called muslin in the U.S.) is put on to a dress stand (or a model) to see how it fits and whether it hangs properly.
- Making a card pattern: When the designer is completely satisfied with the fit of the toile (or muslin), they show it to a professional pattern maker who then makes the finished, working version of the pattern out of card. The pattern maker's job is very precise and painstaking. The fit of the finished garment depends on their accuracy.
- The finished dress: Finally, a sample garment is made up in the proper fabric.

Areas of Work

There are three main ways in which designers can work:

- Working freelance: Freelance designers work for themselves. They sell their work to fashion houses, direct to shops, or to clothing manufacturers. The garments bear the buyer's label.
- Working In-house: In-house designers are employed full-time by one Fashion Company.
- Their designs are the property of that company, and cannot be sold to anyone else.
- Setting up a company: Fashion designers often set up their own companies. Many designers find this more satisfying than working for someone else, as their designs are sold under their own label.

Fashion Accessories

Fashion accessories and their jewellery counterpart referred to as costume jewellery, are items used as fashion's complementary. Accessories help to bring up the spot that one wants to highlight in a dress or apparel. They can also help to hide some weaknesses' part of a dress. Trends are continuously set by adding accessories to different outfits. Take belts for example, a few years ago girls all started wearing really thick belts that would never fit into belt loops, but this fashion accessory made it big time. Soon everyone was seen wearing them, today big is out, and maybe ribbon belts are in. But these things change an entire look, from handbags to shoes to chandelier earrings and dangle earrings to 80's leg warmers.

a) Footwear

Footwear, including shoes, sandals, and boots, is the largest category of accessories. More than seven billion pairs of shoes are produced worldwide each year. Both functional and fashionable, shoes come in assorted materials, including calf, kid, suede, and reptile skins; imitation leathers; and fabrics such as canvas or nylon.



Fig 2.1

Today the shoe industry caters to both dress and casual trends. As a result of the enormous popularity of sport shoes, comfort has become an important element of shoe design. A number of popular shoe brands, have tried to combine style with the comfort of athletic shoes.

Design and Product Development

Shoe designers study fashion trends so that their shoes will coordinate with apparel. Many shoe company designers or line builders (product managers) attend the shoe fairs in Dusseldorf, Germany, and Bologna and Milan, Italy, to get ideas for a new shoe collection. Like an apparel merchandiser, the line builder begins with concepts for groups and works with designers who develop individual shoe styles. Designers are primarily concerned with materials, colour, shape and proportion. They must consider the view of the shoe from all angles. Many shoe companies are using computer-aided design (CAD) systems that are capable of both two-dimensional design (design of uppers and size grading) and three-dimensional design (design of the last, a foot shaped form, and projection of the drawing on the last).

Sometimes the line builder will buy prototypes (sample shoes) from a modelista (model maker) at a studio or shoe fair. Or, the line builder might forward a designer's sketches to a modelista, who makes the first model. If the line builder and modelista live in different countries, ideas and samples must be sent back and forth by the Internet or via fax. The sample shoes are edited to form a balanced collection. Duplication is then made for the sales staff, showroom, and trade shows.

b) Handbags



Fig 2.2

Handbags must be both decorative and functional (Fig2.2); it must hold necessities conveniently as well as fit into the fashion picture. Large bags such as totes, satchels,

portfolios, or backpacks tend to be functional; smaller bags such as clutches or envelopes are usually decorative. Handbag styles range from classic, constructed types to soft shapes. Leather, including suede and reptile, still represents approximately half of handbag material; vinyl, fabric (tapestry, rug prints, needlepoint, silk, wool, nylon, and canvas), and straw make up the other half. Prada and Gucci are among the trendsetters in handbag design. Major trends include a wide variety of shapes in an array of colours, some with beading or embroidery.

Design and Product Development

The elements of fabrication (leather or fabric), silhouette, and colour, as well as current trends in ready-to wear and footwear, are the most important components of handbag design. From an initial sketch, a sample is made from muslin or imitation leather. A final sample is made up in leather or fabric with appropriate supportive stays (made of treated paper). Felt, foam, and fabric interlinings are layered around the stays to give the bag a nice hand and cushion. Ornaments, closures, and/or handles must be chosen to complement the shape and fabrication. Linings differ with each type of bag and each fabrication.

The product development team, designer, pattern-maker, sample-maker, production manager, and sales managers, critique the samples. The most successful are chosen for the collection. Within the collection, groups may be based on fabrications, silhouettes, or theme. Usually, a variety of silhouettes are included, perhaps in various fabrications (types of leather). Several groups create a well-rounded collection.



Fig 2.3

Handles, Zippers, Pockets, Frames and Tabs, a designer can select from hundreds of Pre-drawn elements to enhance any handbag design. In Fig 2.3 One basic silhouette can take on thousands of additional looks simply by adding fashion components.

c) Hats

In the past, the most important accessory was a hat. A woman bought a new hat to add a bright spot to her wardrobe; a businessman was never seen on the street without one. The trend toward more casual life-styles changed that, and the millinery industry suffered a severe setback. Of course, functional hats to protect against the cold weather remained a necessity.



Fig 2.4

Today, hats are enjoying somewhat of a comeback. Part of this rise in sales is caused by fashion, and the other is because of an increased demand for sun protection.

Design and Product Development

Hat manufacturers produce two seasonal collections per year. The spring collection is centered on a wide variety of straws and fabrics, such as cotton and linen. Fall collections are dominated by felt and fabrications of velvet, velveteen, fake fur, and corduroy.

Hat collections are usually divided into groups organized around fabrications, colour schemes, themes, or price ranges. Hat designers are aware of fashion trends, especially colour projections, and use many of the same design sources as apparel designers.

d) Ties

The tie is an accessory. It adds to the look, a tie can be the centre piece. It can be a 'piece of colour' in the centre or it can be short tie a piece of colour around the neck i.e. a short wide piece of colour. A tie is an accessory but it can be an accessory which aims to add colour



Ties are for men or for women (Fig 2.5) who want to dress like men. Women want to have the tailored sleek look so they wear ties. Sleek, skinny ties look good with the secretary look. It adds to the 'separates' i.e. the shirt/skirt or the shirt/trousers.

Computer Aided Design (CAD)

CAD in textiles is now highly sophisticated and precise, making the design process rapid and cheap because actual samples are not required as early or as frequently. CAD for clothing is much harder to achieve, but there are a growing number of systems which can contribute to the initial design, substantially in the case of very simple garments. In translating the initial design into two dimensional patterns much has been achieved, but much more remains to be done. Once a prototype pattern has been produced CAD has a much bigger role, in pattern adaptation and grading. Further, computerised marker planning systems have been in use for some years, providing markers for the cutting room more rapidly, more accurately and with more information. The sequence from initial design to marker planning is usually integrated, because one supplier provides all the equipment.

Suggested Further Readings:

- **Fashion Design Essentials: 100 Principles of Fashion Design (By Jay Calderin)**
- **Fashion Design Course: Principles, Practice and Techniques (By Caroline Tatham, Julian Seaman & Thames and Hudson)**