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LOS ANGELES FASHION WEEK

IT'S A WRAP

Pedram Couture

Los Angeles Fashion Week wrapped up its run at The Reef in downtown Los Angeles, where Style Fashion Week hosted its slate of shows. For highlights from the events, see page 8.

IMPORT/EXPORT

Apparel Importers Hope to See Solutions to Local Port Congestion Problems

By Deborah Belgum Senior Editor

For nearly two weeks now, Ram Kundani has been waiting to receive seven cargo containers filled with tops, sweaters and dresses shipped from Bangladesh, China and Indonesia to the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach.

But some 10 days after their arrival, the containers on Oct. 21 were still stacked on container vessels as gridlocked docks made it difficult to unload the big metal boxes.

"The problem is, once they are off the boats, God knows when we will get them," he said, noting that after the goods are unloaded, they are difficult to extract from the docks because there are so many cargo containers stacked up, one behind the other.

Kundani said his retail clients, who are department stores and discount stores across the country, have been sympathetic because just about every apparel importer bringing goods through the West Coast ports is experiencing the same prob-

➔ Port page 3

INSIDE

Where fashion gets down to businessSM

Made in California: Groceries ... p. 6

Industry Voices: Made in California meets tech ... p. 7

Fashion Market Northern California ... p. 8

Made in California Resources ... p. 9

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American Rag to Open in Shanghai

By Andrew Asch Retail Editor

American Rag Cie is taking its show to the world.

The pioneering Los Angeles retailer announced that the company recently signed off on a licensing deal that will bring American Rag to Shanghai, possibly in the first half of 2015. A fleet of more than 30 stores will be opened in the next two years in China, said Larry Russ, a partner in the deal.

The announcement of a Shanghai store follows the recent debuts of a handful of other overseas projects for Mark Werts, American Rag's founder, and his business partners. During a recent event at the American Rag store in Los Angeles, Werts said that he was interested in expanding in emerging markets that are picking up great strength.

This summer, an American Rag store opened in Thailand. In the past year, Werts, Russ, Rudolphe Faulcon, Levi Strauss & Co. and a Turkish licensee introduced two **Industrie Denim** stores, a separate concept from American Rag, in Istanbul. There are two Industrie Denim stores

➔ American Rag page 2

Sears Holdings to Close Stores, Strikes Lease Deal with Primark

Sears Holdings is closing stores in the U.S., but the Hoffman Estates, Ill.-based retailer has yet to confirm the actual number of closures planned.

After financial news website *Seeking Alpha* reported liquidation notices for 46 **Kmart** stores, 30 Sears stores and 31 **Sears Auto Centers** had been sent, the retail giant confirmed to *USA Today* that there will be closures but not as many as had been reported.

The company, which whittled down its retail holdings earlier this year, currently operates about 800 Sears stores and 1,100 Kmart stores.

In the company's second-quarter earnings report, released Aug. 21, Sears Chief

Financial Officer Rob Schriesheim said the company continues to "reduce unprofitable stores as leases expire and in some cases will accelerate closings when it is economically prudent. We have already announced the closure of approximately 130 underperforming stores in fiscal 2014 and may close additional stores during the remainder of the year."

A firm count of the closures is scheduled to be announced later this year when Sears releases its third-quarter earnings report.

On Oct. 20, Sears announced the signing of seven lease agreements with Ireland-based **Primark**, which will lease approximately 520,000 gross square feet of retail space in mall-based stores in the Northeastern U.S.

Sears will continue to operate in six of the locations with "a streamlined store format of up to 100,000 selling square feet at each store."

"Partnering with a globally recognized brand such as Primark to help establish its store base in the Northeastern United States is testimony to both our attractive store locations and our focus on transforming Sears by working with other retailers, mall owners and brands," said Sears Holdings chairman and CEO Edward S. Lampert in a statement.

According to a Sears statement, Primark will open the first of these stores at **King of Prussia Mall** in King of Prussia, Penn., joining **Dick's Sporting Goods** as a subtenant of Sears. Primark will occupy a 100,000-square-foot space on the lower level. Dick's Sporting Goods already occupies a 75,000-square-foot space on the upper level. The Sears store and its auto center will no longer operate at the **Simon Properties**-owned mall. Sears is also expected to

downsize to the **General Growth Properties**-owned **Staten Island Mall**. The Sears store will occupy a 70,000-square-foot space adjacent to a 70,000-square-foot Primark store, which is scheduled to open in 2016. The location will also house a **Land's End** store. (Land's End was previously under the Sears Holdings umbrella, but the retail chain was spun off in April.)

"These lease agreements with Primark illustrate how Sears Holdings is strategically transforming one of the largest retail real estate portfolios in the United States over time while continuing to operate its existing stores in large but rationalized selling space," said Jeff Stollenwerck, president of real estate for Sears Holdings.

Primark was founded in 1969 in Dublin and currently operates more than 270 stores in nine European countries. Its first U.S. store is scheduled to open next year in Boston.

—Alison A. Nieder

Gap Expanding Old Navy in Middle East

San Francisco-based **Gap Inc.** signed deals to open **Old Navy** stores in six countries in the Middle East next year.

Franchisees **Fawaz A. Alhokair & Co.** and **Azadea** will open the new stores beginning in the U.A.E., Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. Gap has had Gap and **Banana Republic** stores in the region since 2007.

"Entering the Middle East is an important milestone in our strategy to share Old Navy with a broader, global customer base," said Robert Frank, executive vice president of Old Navy International, in a company statement. "Given the family-centered culture of the region, we believe Old Navy's iconic American apparel and focus on fashion, family and value will really resonate with customers."

Saudi Arabia-based Alhokair manages more than 80 brands, including Gap and Ba-

nana Republic.

"We are delighted to be opening Old Navy in Saudi Arabia," said Simon Marshall, Alhokair chief executive officer. "The first stores will open in the vibrant shopping districts of Riyadh and Dammam, with several more across the country planned for 2015."

Azadea has brought several brands to the Middle East, Northern Africa, Asia and Europe, including opening Gap stores in Lebanon and Cyprus.

"We are proud to announce our partnership with Old Navy and are extremely excited to be introducing this unique concept to the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman and Kuwait," stated Said G. Daher, Azadea CEO.

In March, the company opened of its first franchise-operated stores in the Philippines.—A.A.N.

Burberry to Receive the Rodeo Drive Walk of Style Award

Just in time for its new flagship store opening on Rodeo Drive, the iconic British luxury brand **Burberry** will receive this year's **Rodeo Drive Walk of Style Award**.

Launched in 2003, the award honors the best of the best when it comes to fashion and style. The first recipient of the award was Giorgio Armani, who flew in from Europe for an evening of cocktails and mingling among the well heeled.

This year's award will be presented on Nov. 19 in an event to be held at Via Rodeo, located at the base of the famous shopping boulevard that is home to boutiques such as **Louis Vuitton**, **Bottega Veneta**, **Gucci**, **Guess**, **BCBG Max Azria**, **Fendi**, **Giorgio Armani**, **Ralph Lauren**, **Prada** and **La Perla Boutique**.

The award will be accepted by Burberry Chief Creative and Chief Executive Officer Christopher Bailey. It will be a celebration of Burberry's new three-story flagship store on Rodeo Drive that will offer more shopping space than its current store on Wilshire Boulevard, which will close. After the private cer-

emony, attendees will be able to walk across the street to 301 N. Rodeo Drive and see the new outpost, which will have lots of big-screen TVs showcasing Burberry's latest looks.

Burberry, founded in 1856, will be honored with a permanent bronze plaque on the sidewalk, joining the other bronze plaques honoring past recipients such as Tom Ford, Gianni and Donatella Versace, costume designer Edith Head, and *Vogue* Editor Diana Vreeland.

Last February, **Academy Award**-winning costume designer Catherine Martin was the 21st recipient of the honor.

Burberry is being honored for its decades of high-end fashion that has been worn by explorers, athletes and celebrities. "The iconic Burberry trench has evolved over 100 years to become the must-have item in stylish wardrobes," said Peri Ellen Berne, chairwoman of the Rodeo Drive Walk of Style. "It is only fitting that the next Rodeo Drive Walk of Style Award be given to such an influential global brand like Burberry."

—Deborah Belqum



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American Rag Continued from page 1

stateside. One is located in San Francisco and another is in Scottsdale, Ariz. The stores opened when the concept was introduced in 2011.

This summer, Werts opened its first American Rag in Bangkok. It is located in Bangkok's **CentralWorld**, which calls itself the sixth-largest mall in the world. The mall is owned by a division of **Central Marketing Group**, which is also Werts' partner in opening American Rag in the Southeast Asian country. No schedule has been set for opening upcoming American Rag stores in the Bangkok area.

American Rag in Bangkok carries many of the same brands that it does in Los Angeles. Some of the brands on the American Rag Bangkok's **Instagram** site were **Shades of Grey** by **Micah Cohen**, **Apolis**, **Black Fleece**, **Kill City** and **PRPS**. Faulcon, a partner in the venture, designed the look of the store. He was a set designer in his native France and crafted the look for American Rag and Industrie Denim stores, Russ said.

A bloodless coup d'etat in Thailand in May postponed the opening of the American Rag in Bangkok by three months, but the post-coup milieu was deemed to be secure

enough to launch a new business.

Werts is not the only American specialty retailer to run stores in Bangkok. David Engel formerly owned the now-defunct **Villains SF** boutiques in San Francisco. He currently runs three Villains SF footwear stores in Bangkok, including one at Central World.

Earlier this year, American Rag introduced its own brand **Fadeless** in its U.S. and overseas stores. Eventually, it may be wholesaled, Russ said. The limited collection includes button-down shirts for men, which retail for \$130, along with sweaters and hoodies. In the future, it will offer women's looks and denim pants, Russ said.

American Rag started business in 1984 in San Francisco but later opened its most high-marquee store on Los Angeles' La Brea Avenue. It gained renown for breaking new brands, novel merchandising of music and homewares as well as for also being a retailer of unique and sometimes exotic jeans labels in its World Denim Bar department. Some 110 brands are offered there. American Rag licenses an American Rag juniors brand to **Macy's Inc.** American Rag also runs a location at the **Fashion Island** retail center in Newport Beach, Calif., as well as 14 stores in Japan. ●

Active: New President, Plan For Growth

Rick Mina, former chief executive officer and president of **Foot Locker North America**, was named president of **Active Ride Shop**, a 21-store chain headquartered in Rancho Cucamonga, Calif., that is devoted to action-sports brands.

Former president Esmail Mawjee will remain as an adviser to the company. He and Issa Ladha acquired the company in 2009 and helped stabilize it after a period of turbulence. An Active statement said that Mawjee hoped to spend more time with his family in Texas.

In July, Active announced that it had accepted an undisclosed investment from **Tengram Capital** that will help the retailer open more shops. The company plans to open 30 more doors in the next five years, Mina said.

"Active has a tremendous growth opportunity. Its culture, people and brand partnerships are key drivers to future growth and success. With the investment from Tengram Capital, we will more aggressively open new doors and invest in our systems, digital, social and e-commerce capabilities. We anticipate significant growth in the years to come," Mina said in a statement.

Tengram is headquartered in Westport, Conn. Tengram has recently invested in brands such as **Sequential Brands Group**, **Robert Graham** and **Joe Boxer**. On Oct. 14, Tengram also made the announcement that it had acquired a significant interest in the New York-based **Luciano Barbera** brand of luxury menswear.—*Andrew Asch*

Harnessing the Power of the Social Consumer

The intersection of social media and business—and the increasing power of the social consumer—was on the agenda at a recent informal discussion between Rachael Dickhute, principal of the fashion blog **Everything Hauler**, and Don Stephens, vice president of information technology for **Big Strike Inc.**

Robert M. McKee, **Infor**'s senior product director, global fashion-industry strategy, moderated the discussion, which was titled "Social Business and the Voice of the Consumer." The event was hosted by software solutions provider Infor and held on Oct. 15 at the **California Market Center** during **Los Angeles Fashion Market**.

Social media has given the consumer an undeniable voice, and, today, brands and retailers must listen to the consumer in order to succeed. In order to connect with consumers today, it's important to supply products they truly want. Brands should be leveraging social media—including **Facebook**, **Twitter**, **Instagram**—to not only engage with the consumer but to also apply what they learn to their business.

"We're in an industry [where] the objective is to seduce the consumer and control the supply chain," said McKee, who explained that the retail paradigm, which began to shift in late 2008, gave more control to the consumer. As a result, brands must now adapt.

"We think the paradigm has gone away from 'seduce the consumer' to 'listen to the consumer.' Instead of controlling the supply chain, it's 'collaborate with the supply chain,'" he said.

And more people are beginning to take note, McKee said. By listening to consumers and understanding what they want—whether it's a specific T-shirt design, a customized product or socially responsible practice—brands can become more efficient and more effective. As a result, their sales will increase, and they will develop loyal followers and avoid markdowns.

"Because of social media there's this newfound sense of individuality," said Dickhute, emphasizing the importance of customization. "It's almost like [the consumer] knows they have the power. They are aware now. They have their own way of expressing themselves via social media and through their clothing. It's why people like me exist." Dickhute's more than 10 years of experience in fashion public relations, marketing, wholesale and consulting have made her savvy in the blogosphere. She stresses the importance of listening to her followers and utilizing analytics to grow her business, and, she said, the same theory applies to brands.

"I have a direct link with the consumer, and they're telling me what

they want to pay for clothes, where they want to shop for them, how they want to shop for them and who they want to see them on," she said. "I get a lot of honest feedback from my following."

Dickhute advised brands to stop spinning their wheels.

"Use your analytics," she said. "If you're going to collect your numbers—because we all know that you are—then do something with it."

Newer companies who have grown from their inception as an offshoot of social media may be in a better position to take advantage of social interaction. However, today all companies—from large department stores to small designer brands—should recognize the growing importance of it.



SOCIAL IQ: Social media's role in business communication—both internally and with customers—was discussed at the seminar moderated by Infor's Robert M. McKee and featuring Big Strike's Don Stephens and Everything Hauler's Rachael Dickhute.

Big Strike, an approximately \$150 million company according to Stephens—with brands including **Cynthia Vincent**, **Workshop** and **Urban Hearts**—is largely focused on wholesale business. But Stephens says listening to the consumer is indeed becoming increasingly important. While many companies, including Big Strike, are utilizing social media and communicate internally through social collaboration, many still have much to improve, including communicating directly with customers. Brands would have a huge advantage if they were to begin the process as early as the product-development stage.

"Companies need to do a better job. There's no question about that," Stephens said. "Some are doing an excellent job, but I think it's the mid-tier companies that have the most to do—and we're part of that. I think that the hope on the consumer side is more and more companies are going to listen."—*N. Jayne Seward*

IMPORT/EXPORT

Port *Continued from page 1*

lem. But as the holiday shopping season approaches, retailers are getting nervous and will start to discount goods to clear them out before the season ends.

The discounted price, called markdown money, chips away at the total price apparel manufacturers ultimately are paid for their goods. "The majority of my things were to be delivered by Sept. 30," said Kundani, who has worked for nearly 40 years at Los Angeles-based **B. Boston & Associates**, where he is now the vice president. He estimates he could lose at least \$2 million or more. "By now the retailers should have these goods in their warehouses because it takes a month to get them from the warehouse to the stores. This is the worst I have ever seen it."

The congestion problem at the ports has been going on for at least two months, but no one expected it to last this long. And no one anticipates an immediate fix.

As of Oct. 22, there were 10 vessels anchored outside the Los Angeles/Long Beach breakwater, waiting to move into berths. Five of those were cargo containers, which is very unusual, said Capt. Kip Louttit, executive director of the **Marine Exchange of Southern California**, which acts as a sort of traffic controller for ships. "It is extremely odd to have this many ships anchored beyond the breakwater or any cargo-container ships at all. There should be zero container ships there," Louttit said.

Some shipping carriers are now rerouting their vessels through the Panama Canal to ports on the East Coast, where the problem isn't quite as acute. But until its expansion is completed in mid-2015, the Panama Canal can't handle ships that carry more than 8,000 20-foot cargo containers. Bigger and bigger ships carrying 12,000 and 13,000 containers are now becoming the norm on the Trans-Pacific route from Asia to the West Coast, which is contributing to the congestion problem.

Other carriers are diverting their ships from Southeast Asia through the Suez Canal and then on to the East Coast. "Virtually every importer and exporter in this country is looking for alternatives to the West Coast," said Peter Friedmann, counsel to the **Pacific Coast Council of Customs Brokers and Freight Forwarders Association**.

Some shipping lines are having their vessels sail at a slower speed, known as slow steaming, to stagger the ships' arrivals and hopefully encounter a less frenzied situation upon docking.

"Ocean carriers will begin to slow steam to stagger vessels

into the port due to congestion," said a **DHL Logistics** spotlight newsletter distributed on Oct. 8. "These [congestion] conditions have a direct impact on [truck] driver productivity in a market that is critically short of truck capacity. While there are variations by terminal, truckers routinely incur four- to six-hour turn times. The delays in local cargo availability average three to 10 days or longer, depending on the marine terminal and the appointment availability. Delays in retail departures due to rail car and labor shortages vary widely by carrier and terminal, ranging from four to 20 days, due to congestion."

Several steps are being taken to increase the chassis pool,



CLEAR CRUISING: A cargo-container ship piled with imports sails into the Port of Long Beach.

which is one of the primary reasons cargo is so backed up. Ever since many of the shipping lines got out of the chassis business to save money, chassis distribution at the terminals has been uneven. Chassis, which are the wheels attached to containers to move them, are now provided by independent companies.

Even so, chassis distribution is unpredictable. Some terminals have too many chassis. Others have too few, which means that truckers scheduled to pick up cargo at one terminal often have to race off to another terminal to find a chassis. When they return, they sometimes find the container is blocked behind other cargo containers.

On Oct. 10, it was announced that two truck chassis providers, **DCLI** and **TRAC**, would add 3,000 chassis to the local fleet

over the next few weeks to help with the congestion problem.

A few days later, the **Port of Long Beach** Board of Harbor Commissioners directed its staff to develop plans for buying and providing thousands of truck chassis for congestion relief during peak periods, which is probably a first. Ports aren't normally in the chassis business. But the Long Beach port's new executive director, Jon Slingerup, who previously was president of **FedEx Canada**, believes the port needs to be more in the logistic coordination business.

Meanwhile, to clear back-logged containers, the **Port of Los Angeles** has zeroed in on extra space to store containers outside the docks while they await pick up. Spokesman Phillip Sanfield said the Port of Los Angeles has identified a 14-acre site on Terminal Island as well as another spot there for temporary extra storage space. And many terminals have set up extra "hoot owl" shifts with temporary laborers earning overtime pay to work between 3 and 8 a.m., when most gates are closed. The workers are moving containers around for easier access, said John Cushing, president of **PierPass**, set up in 2005 by marine terminal operators to alleviate daytime congestion and encourage more truckers and importers to pick up their cargo containers between 6 p.m. and 3 a.m. and not incur a daytime-pickup fee that is as much as \$133 for a 40-foot container.

Adding to this "perfect storm" of port problems is the fact that the **International Longshore and Warehouse Union**, which represents 13,600 longshore workers at 29 West Coast ports, and the **Pacific Maritime Association**, which represents the marine terminals and cargo carriers that employ them, are still negotiating a new six-year contract that expired July 1. Longshore workers remain on the job in Southern California, but there have been work slowdowns and walk-outs at the **Port of Portland** in Oregon and at the **Port of Oakland** near San Francisco.

There are many issues that need to be resolved quickly for cargo to flow through the two ports in Los Angeles and Long Beach. No one is sure if this will happen soon, but if the issues aren't resolved, experts warn that cargo will go elsewhere. "As the season starts to wind down a bit, it will be important for the carriers to get this problem under control," said Mark Hirzel, president of the **Los Angeles Customs Brokers and Freight Forwarders**. "They need to do this before the next peak season starts, which is right before Chinese New Year in February." ●

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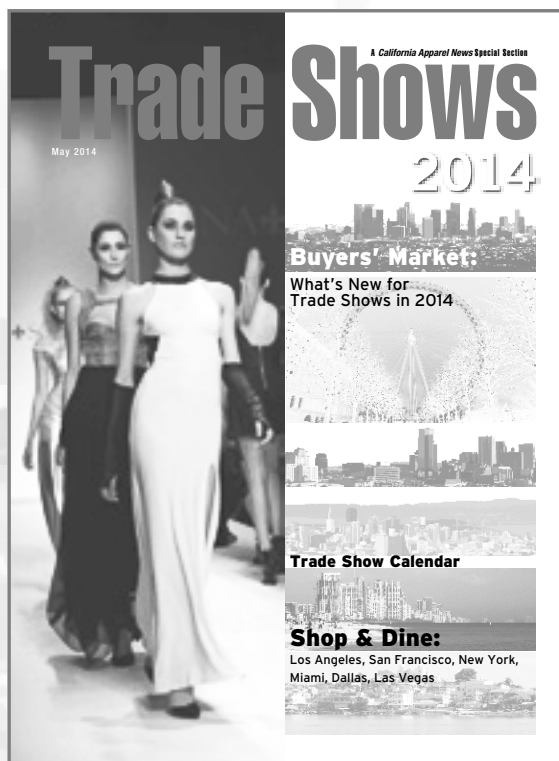


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NEWS

New Hires at Element

Element, the Costa Mesa, Calif.–based brand owned by **Billabong International Ltd.**, announced new hires recently.

Donavon Dartez was named vice president of sales. In the past, he served as a senior vice president of sales for **DC Shoes**.

Candice Betancourt-Scott was named director of lifestyle marketing. She will oversee lifestyle marketing and PR for the brand. Her résumé includes stints at **Nike**, **Coach** and **Tommy Hilfiger**.

Marc Falkenstien was named brands director. Falkenstien is an Element veteran. It will be his job to develop the Element and **Plan B** skate businesses.

Brian Erickson was named vice president of merchandise and design. After working at **O'Neill**, **Levi's** and **Quiksilver**, it will be Erickson's job to help shape the look of Element collections.

Scott Bredenkamp was named director of operations. He most recently worked at **Sole Technology**.



ELEMENT TEAM: Donavon Dartez, Candice Betancourt-Scott, Marc Falkenstien, Brian Erickson and Scott Bredenkamp

Frank Voit, Element's global GM, said that the new hires will focus on building Element's North American presence.

"Our number-one priority is evolving, editing and interpreting Element's DNA so that it resonates in all regions. Although our organization is embarking on a global brand perspective, we want to ensure that we have the best experts focused on regional market objectives. I am confident that the addition of these well-respected industry veterans to our team will accomplish this so that Element can continue to grow and prosper on a global level," Voit said in a company statement.—*Andrew Asch*

AAFA Joins Forces With Chinese Textile and Apparel Group

The **American Apparel & Footwear Association** and the **China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Textiles and Apparel** have signed a memorandum of understanding to better understand what is happening in the apparel and textile industries in China.

"Through this memorandum of understanding, we will amplify our voice and our global reach as we help our members and U.S. policy makers understand what is happening with our industry in China," noted Juanita D. Duggan, AAFA's president and chief executive officer. "It's a huge deal."

AAFA's chairman, Rick Helfenbein, who is also president of the sourcing company **Luen Thai USA**, said the U.S./China trade relationship will grow in importance in the coming years, with manufactured and design fashion products flowing in both directions. "This MOU ensures that we will be at the

center of that discussion," he said.

Jiang Hui, chairman of the CCCT, said his group looks forward to strengthening trade and investment ties with the United States through the AAFA partnership.

Signed during a half-day seminar on U.S./China trade relations at the **Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center** on Oct. 22 in Washington, D.C., the agreement will facilitate the exchange of trade and investment information between the AAFA and the CCCT. The AAFA said it will create a forum to address issues of concern including product safety, labeling, retail and intellectual property.

China is the top supplier of both footwear and apparel to the U.S. market. Forty percent of all apparel imported into the United States comes from China, and 80 percent of the footwear sold in U.S. stores is manufactured in China.—*Deborah Belgium*

Calendar

Oct. 27

Coast
Soho Studios
Miami
Through Oct. 28

Oct. 30

"EDI and Large Retailers: A Newbie's Guide" webinar by **Fashion Business Inc.**
online

Nov. 12

Designer & the Muse, presented by **FGI**
Mr. C hotel

Los Angeles

Nov. 13

"Negotiating Chargebacks" webinar by **Fashion Business Inc.**
online

Nov. 19

Rodeo Drive "Walk of Style" Ceremony for **Burberry**
Rodeo Drive
Beverly Hills, Calif.

Nov. 22

City of Hope's "Spirit of Life"

Gatsby Party Celebration

The W Hotel
Hollywood

"Techpacks in Excel" workshop by **Fashion Business Inc.**
California Market Center, A792
Los Angeles

There's more
on ApparelNews.net.

For calendar details and contact information, visit ApparelNews.net/calendar.

Submissions to the calendar should be faxed to the Calendar Editor at (213) 623-5707. Please include the event's name, date, time, location, admission price and contact information. The deadline for calendar submissions is the Tuesday prior to Friday publication. Inclusion in the calendar is subject to available space and the judgment of the editorial staff.

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A Showroom Building With That Wow Factor

Located in a renovated 1920s Art Deco building that was once a bank, Space 530 offers small California designers a presence in New York without, well, breaking the bank.

For up-and-coming California designers, a presence in New York can be a business game changer—and a potential minefield. Small showroom space is hard to find, the costs to lease and maintain a space are high, and the commitments demanded are significant.

When Bob Savitt, founder and president of the New York commercial real estate firm Savitt Partners, debated what to do with one of the most prestigious fashion district buildings in Manhattan, the elegant 1929 Art Deco 530 Seventh, he decided to renovate its spectacular mezzanine floor, recently vacated by Danskin. A former bank space with vestiges of its steel vault still in place, 20-foot-high ceilings, and 16-foot-tall windows, “the space really was unique,” he says.

Savitt had been thinking about creating a co-working space, and when he received a timely phone call from a friend, creative space pioneer Debra Larsen, he knew he wanted to collaborate with her. In the late 1990s, Larsen had developed Techspace, a hugely successful, hip, shared-work environment targeted at start-up dotcoms who were having trouble finding affordable space in the city. Larsen saw the demand developing for similar environments for the apparel industry.

It was the right time, and certainly the right place, the pair decided. In 2011, Savitt opened Space 530, a high-end, high-style, full-service shared work and showroom environment dedicated to fashion. Clean and crisp in blizzard white with black, chrome, and steel accents—co-founder and creative consultant Larsen has described it as a “Chanel-esque cross between high-end art gallery and your coolest friend’s apartment”—the 30,000-square-foot bi-level space is a visual wow. “The energy throughout the space is always high,” Larsen says. “For some buyers, it’s like a one-stop shop.”

It’s the amenities, however, and the flexible rental format that have made it a draw not only for New York and international brands but especially for California designers looking to establish an impressive presence without breaking the bank.

In addition to its premier address, Space 530 boasts onsite staff who take care of all administrative headaches such as reception services, 24/7 technology and desktop support, cleaning, photocopying, and mailing. Other amenities include a café, bar lounge, main gallery, and several pantries, plus all utilities.

Showrooms, which range from 300 to 1,500 square feet and rent for \$3,300 to \$11,900, are turnkey, with no construction needed. There are three full-service conference rooms, including an impressive one entered through the old bank vault portal still in place. The gallery area is big enough to host events, and the environment is an impressive showcase for runway shows and photo shoots. Tenants also have access to the rooftop cocktail lounge, The Skylark, with its heady view of Manhattan.

Of particular importance to California

brands looking for a small outpost to test New York waters, Space 530 offers a variety of flexible rental plans. “It allows California companies to come in and try it for a short time; they don’t have to commit to a two- or three-year lease,” says Savitt.

For those companies not ready to commit to showroom space, Space 530 also offers memberships that give access to different amenities. The Basic membership, for \$300 per month, allows for a virtual office and the ability to rent conference rooms or showrooms on an hourly, daily, or weekly basis. The Premium membership, for \$650 per month, is an everyday working space that



Space 530 is located in a renovated 1920s Art Deco bank building.

includes access to a designated mobile work area during membership hours and three hours of conference room time. All memberships include the right to use the prestigious address as their “virtual” office, package and mail reception, printer and copier use, and coffee and tea service.

And, there are added bonuses, starting with the company they keep. With the building’s half-million square feet of space 90 percent filled with high-end design showrooms, “buyers are already coming into the building,” Savitt points out. Some of the designers have enjoyed the community spirit of the space, even collaborating or showing in tandem.

When Space 530 opened, “right off the bat we had California companies coming to us,” Larsen says. The benefits were immediately apparent. Sandro Risi, co-founder of Empire & Branch and former CFO of Gucci, says, “Space 530 has been our brand image and steppingstone for starting our New York City hub. The space has been our incubator and allows us to work and network all in one spot.”

“If you are a small or growing company,” says Larsen, “it makes good business sense. The look of the space is far more professional and high-end than what they might otherwise have found. They are rubbing shoulders with other great brands, and they benefit from all the foot traffic coming through. It gives them a foothold in New York and the New York markets. Heads of companies and others are seeing it as a good value proposition.”

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MADE IN CALIFORNIA

Groceries: Basics on a Local Mission

By Andrew Asch *Retail Editor*

When Robert Lohman and Matt Boelk started the Los Angeles-based **Groceries Apparel** brand in 2010, they were advised that they could not launch their type of business—a vertically manufactured eco-basics brand. Critics said it was too niche and too expensive to build. Just one mistake could cripple the whole venture. Their advisers were almost right.

In 2011, a fabric supplier sent Groceries \$100,000 in damaged goods at a time when the label was surviving from order to order. The garments made from the damaged fabric could not be sent

out to their retailers. Lohman and Boelk were unable to make payroll. Lohman remembers gathering his 15 employees and telling them that there were not going to be paychecks by the end of the day. He expected them to leave en masse.

But the next morning, all 15 employees were working at their stations, making the label’s basics fashions. They told him that they were glad to have their jobs and that they would sweat out a tough time with him. Boelk managed to sell \$100,000 in other goods, which was enough to make the next payroll, and the company survived.

Going into the 2014 winter season, the Groceries business is on a much more even keel. Lohman forecast that Groceries’ 2014 sales will increase 30 percent in a year-over-year comparison. Lohman and Boelk run the Groceries brand out of a 33,000-square-foot factory adjacent to the **American Apparel** compound in downtown Los Angeles. The company now employs 70 people at the factory.

High-marquee retailers such as **Kitson**, **Planet Blue** and **Nordstrom**’s eTail site sell Groceries T-shirts, sweaters and jackets for men and women, as well as dresses, rompers, tops and bandeaux for women. The clothes are made out of ecologically minded fabrics such as organic cotton, hemp, recycled fabrics and closed-loop Tencel fabrics.

In the next two to five years, Groceries might move to a bigger building and might open a retail store, Lohman said. The company is currently growing because it offers a quality product and because its business model worked better than anyone predicted, he said.

Lohman and Boelk also expect this model of manufacturing to have a social impact. They believe that vertically manufacturing clothes with a sustainable edge can clean up what they view as an industry with manufacturing practices that hurt the environment. “We’re creating demand for organic textiles, and we’re creating jobs in LA,” Lohman said.

“We are proving this business concept and showing other brands that using only environmentally friendly fabrics and manufacturing exclusively in the U.S. is a viable option to gain mainstream success,” Boelk said.

Groceries is among a handful of vertical manufacturers of clothes made with eco fabrics in Los Angeles County. Rancho Dominguez, Calif.-based **Nature USA** has been manufacturing apparel with a sustainable edge since 1997. The company makes T-shirts for Ventura, Calif.-based sustainable brand **Patagonia**. NatureUSA’s services include cut and sew, knitting, dyeing and finishing, and it is certified by the **Fair Labor Association**, an international labor-rights organization, which

has offices in Washington, D.C., Geneva, and Shanghai.

At Groceries, employees perform all tasks in-house—from sales to design, pattern making, marker making with **Tukatech** CAD software, cutting, sewing and finishing.

The business started with seed money from Lohman’s family members, but Lohman and Boelk could not get financing during the

toughest days of the Great Recession or terms from fabric sellers, so Groceries got on a disciplined quick-turn schedule with delivery of selling and shipping made-to-order merchandise every month, with lead times of four to six weeks, Boelk said.

It was a schedule that fit well with post-recession business. Many retailers preferred to order merchandise with short lead times that could be fulfilled with a quick turnaround.

With money tight, Groceries had to do a lot of the work in-house, which the owners believe provides great cost savings. Since the brand is not sending out work to cutters and sewers, Groceries makes up a more than 30 percent margin on its goods, which gives it the funding to run the company without debt, Lohman said.

Companies such as **American Apparel** and **NatureUSA** have made an impact with vertical manufacturing models. But anyone trying out this model must be prepared, said Rob Greenspan, who consults on manufacturing with **Greenspan Consult Inc.**

“If the company has the expertise to be a vertical manufacturer—meaning they know how to cut, sew, trim, embellish and finish garments—then they have an opportunity to produce effectively for themselves,” Greenspan said. “But this does come at a cost to build and to maintain running a factory with equipment, technology and space rental and whatever else might be needed. The capital expenditures can be high to support the production piece of the business.”

Non-vertical manufacturing is sustainable and efficient, said Ilse Metchek, president of the **California Fashion Association**, a trade group based in Los Angeles. “The most efficient way is to let people do specialties. Leave it to the professionals,” she said.

She contends that the companies that have built an expertise in a certain field, such as cutting trim for T-shirts, have the most up-to-date machines and the most skilled staff, which efficiently makes a product that creates a lot of value.

Lohman and Boelk plan to continue finessing their business model. They met more than a decade ago at the **University of California, Santa Barbara**. They took geography classes, which offered an environmental perspective on the state of the world. They wanted to start a business in which they could make an environmental and a social impact, and they chose apparel.

In starting the business, they sometimes supported themselves with night jobs. They did a two-year stint of living at their factory and sometimes did not pay themselves to ensure that the kind of business they wanted to run had a chance at success. On their website (www.groceriesapparel.com), they posted a manifesto that contends that there’s a big future in vertical manufacturing with a sustainable edge. The manifesto reads:

“We are confident that our model and values are the future of apparel manufacturing, and we would rather go out of business than compromise.” ●



GROCERY MEN: Matthew Boelk, left, and Robert Lohman at their factory in downtown Los Angeles

INDUSTRY VOICES

Made in California: Managing Risks, Rewards With Fashion Technology

By Mark Goldberg, Director of Western Region, NGC

One of today's hottest fashion trends is as much a part of the West Coast as sand, surf and sunshine—apparel that wears the label “Made in California.”

While more than 97 percent of apparel sold in the U.S. is manufactured overseas, according to the **American Apparel and Footwear Association**, domestic production is vitally important to many West Coast companies. Higher Chinese labor costs, long lead times for overseas production, the rise of fast fashion and changes in consumer preferences have created new openings for California-made apparel.

Increased rewards, greater risks

But what exactly is Made in California, and how do the risks and rewards compare with overseas sourcing? Take a closer look and you'll find major differences. Most imported production is sourced as “full package,” in which a company cuts a single purchase order to the overseas vendor and submits the techpack. The factory takes over from there, absorbing any changes in cost due to schedule, delivery and material quality.

With Made in California, a company's responsibilities grow exponentially. Depending on the model, brands or retailers may be responsible for raw materials, in-transit goods and manufacturing processes, including cutting, screen-printing, embroidery, sewing and more. Instead of a single P.O., companies must manage multiple purchase orders and delivery dates. While production sourcing shifts the liabilities to vendors, Made in California assigns all the risks to the brand or retailer, from design through manufacturing. If the raw materials arrive late or damaged, production sched-

ules slip or labor costs increase, it's their responsibility.

The rewards of Made in California can be immense—rapid response to design trends, the flexibility to quickly change styles, more control over raw materials and components—but this increased complexity creates additional risks. After all, the higher the number of moving parts, the greater the chances of breakdown; and there are a lot more moving parts to manage when companies not only design but manufacture as well.



Mark Goldberg, Director of Western Region, NGC

Visibility is key

How can companies increase the rewards and minimize the risks in apparel manufacturing? In a word, it's *visibility*, from design all the way through the manufacturing process, at every point along the supply chain.

As an example, styles and production needs can change at any time, so immediate visibility to raw material and production status is required to help companies make the right decisions. This information must be visible to everyone in the supply chain that is impacted by a change. After all, when a customer wants a change, you can't afford to waste time getting answers—otherwise, the fabric may be cut, sewing is in progress and it will be too late. The ability to manage changes further into the manufacturing process is one of the key benefits of local production. Excess finished-goods inventory can be the downfall of a company, and local manufacturing helps minimize that problem.

The role of technology

Fashion technology systems such as PLM (product life-cycle management) and supply chain management (SCM)

have long proven their value in sourced production. Technology is even more important in a manufacturing environment due to all the additional moving parts that must be coordinated and managed.

What kinds of systems provide visibility in a manufacturing environment? Depending on the business model, a company may require solutions for:

PLM: To manage initial design and concepts, rapid design changes and bill of materials modifications. This is important regardless of where the manufacturing is done.

SCM: To track movement of raw materials from purchasing through delivery of finished goods at the distribution center. The closer to home these processes take place, the more your supply-chain requirements will change.

ERP [enterprise resource planning]: To manage supply and demand of raw materials. Purchasing raw materials is a critical part of Made in California. Controlling material costs means knowing what you need, when you need it and where it is—then being able to change material purchases as late in the cycle as possible.

Shop-floor control: With Made In California, it is critical to know the true cost of labor. A shop-floor system can measure operator efficiency and earnings, identify low productivity, manage work in process through the factory, manage materials, etc. Contractors and manufacturers alike can remain competitive only if they carefully control labor costs.

The good news is there are a number of choices available in fashion technology, with features that provide end-to-end visibility and help make local manufacturing a proactive, not reactive, business process. These systems can be ideal for helping companies manage the complexities of high-style, short-run, fast-fashion products that must be designed and delivered quickly.

Made in California has a definite place in the fashion world. While both the risks and rewards are greater, fashion technology can help companies minimize the risks and increase the rewards. ●

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TRADE SHOW REPORT

New Lines and Established Collections at Fashion Market Northern California

By Christina Aanestad Contributing Writer

SAN MATEO, CALIF.—Buyers at the Oct. 19–22 run of **Fashion Market Northern California** at the **San Mateo Event Center** shopped more than 250 exhibitors displaying everything from high-end formalwear to moderate styles and accessories at deliveries ranging from Immediate to Spring 2015.

Attendees praised the show's intimate setting and easy-to-shop pace.

"[FMNC] is a slower pace and has a lot to offer. You're not waiting in line to give your order to someone," said Tami Anderson, owner of the **Tapestry Boutique**, a moderate women's apparel shop in Winnemucca, Nev., which carries lines such as **Barry Pollock** and **Karen Hart**.

Anderson said although she also attends larger shows such as **MAGIC** in Las Vegas, she likes to travel out of state to FMNC for its convenience and intimate feel. "Here you can find what you're looking for, and you get one-on-one service," she said.

Louise Nunn who owns **Clothes Mine** in Sutter Creek, Calif., attended FMNC to meet her sales rep of 25 years, Jeff Smale. He represents seven different lines, including **Mon Cherie** and **Terani Couture**, two bridal and social-occasion lines.

Nunn, whose store is in a small tourist destination, estimated that 30 percent of the merchandise she carries is purchased at FMNC. Her store includes high-end formalwear and wedding gowns to moderate men's and women's attire, including sweaters, lingerie and outerwear.

Cissy Wechter, owner and designer of **Vintage Button Bling**, displayed for the second time at FMNC her line of

jewelry made from vintage buttons and old typewriter keys. Wechter's line of jewelry starts at \$15 wholesale for rings. The prices increase for necklaces and bracelets. She said her rings are made in the United States with sterling silver or a lead-free mixture of alloy metals.

"You would put it in the steampunk category," Wechter said, "It's nostalgic, and young buyers like it, too."

John Walter, a 35-year veteran sales representative from Danville, Calif., projected an increase in sales at this sea-

son's FMNC, especially for his Spring 2015 fashion lines. "The buyers are willing to spend more money than they were a few years ago," she said.

FMNC is the only trade show where Haukaas exhibits, and she shows four times per year. "Dedicated buyers come and see me here—it's in the middle of my territory," she explained.

Haukaas said she prefers the local turnout at FMNC over larger-scale trade shows because of the show's personable appeal. "You can spend more time with people," she said. "It has a more intimate appeal to cultivate longer customer relations."

It's that local, more personable feel that also attracted new exhibitors, which made up 10 percent of the booth space this season, according to Suzanne De Groot, executive director of FMNC.

"We continue to attract new exhibitors and buyers to the show," she said.

Barbara Dillon of **Landfill DZINE**, based in California's Central Valley, pre-

miered a line of handbags and totes made from recycled irrigation supplies. Wholesale prices start at \$89.

"People are interested," Dillon said. "The input I'm getting is they like the story and like the product; it's encouraging."

Oakland, Calif.-based designer Phyllis Emelda made her first-time appearance at FMNC after a colleague represented Emelda's self-titled line of womenswear at the August FMNC trade show.

"[FMNC] is local; it's a good start. I know my market is out there," said Emelda, whose moderate line is wholesale priced from \$28.50 for shirts to \$85 for jackets.

For Emelda, FMNC is already a tried-and-true market. At



Cissy Wechter of Vintage Button Bling



Sales rep Jeff Smale and his client of 25 years Louise Nunn, owner of Clothes Mine in Sutter Creek, Calif.



Phyllis Emelda and her line

son's FMNC, especially for his Spring 2015 fashion lines.

"[Retailers] didn't buy a lot last spring, but we had great weather, so they blew through their orders," said Walter, who has attended FMNC for the past 15 years. "Because they did so good this past spring, they're looking optimistic toward next spring."

Walter represents seven lines, including **Samuel Dong**, an upper moderate novelty line of jackets and coats that range from \$89 to \$159 wholesale and dresses that range from \$59 to \$79 wholesale. "[FMNC] is one place we always get new accounts," Walter said.

Stephanie Haukaas, a sales representative for **Suko Jeans** and **La Paris Petit**, a Los Angeles-made line of tie-dye and

FMNC *Continued from page 8*

her line's August debut, the **San Francisco Opera** boutique purchased an order of her jackets. "I call them ornamental jackets. They're easy to wear over basic tops and pants, and you're dressed up," she said.

Retailers such as Gloria Reed, owner of **I Cee Fashions** in Fresno, Calif., purchased three new lines for her women's boutique, specializes in high-end to moderate fashions for women over 40. Reed purchased an Italian line of blouses and silk skirts by **Baci** ranging from \$60 to \$79 wholesale. She also ordered jewelry from **Meridian**, an Oakland-based jewelry designer and maker. "It was the first time we had seen them. It was unique and nicely done," she said.

After a full day of browsing the open-booth format, Reed, like other retailers who stay the night at nearby hotels so they can make the most of their trip, wasn't done by closing time. The casual open-booth format and personal customer relations at FMNC make retailers want to take their time.

"We'll be back tomorrow," Reed said at the end of opening day. "We didn't finish up." ●

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Karen Kane

* 1st THRU PRODUCTION PATTERN MAKER

We are looking for an experienced 1st thru Prod. pattern maker. Must have experience in women's apparel. Strong communication and organizational skills. Gerber system a plus. Min 2 -3 yrs experience.

* WOMEN'S APPAREL PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Assist domestic & import production

Measure samples

Assemble tech packs

Min 1-3 years experience in the industry

AS400/VPS Software knowledge a plus

Strong communication skills, oral & written

Strong MS Office skills, especially Excel

Strong organizational skills

Production managers need not apply. This is an entry level position for someone who has 1-3 yrs apparel exp.

Email resume and salary history in Word/PDF format to: resumes@karenkane.com or fax to 323-277-6830

COSTING ASSISTANT

- Experience in garment pre-production
- Efficient in managing and creating tech packs
- Responsible for costing new styles, and creating cost sheets.
- Highly organized, detail oriented, team player and self-motivated
- Knowledge of fabrics and trims
- Computer literate, proficient in Excel
- Must be familiar with garment construction, have excellent communication skills & follow up ability
- Work closely with our import and domestic production teams making sure they have all info needed
- Strong sense of urgency

Send your resume to vitae101@gmail.com

Design Room Assistant

The Design Room Assistant will help document and tag the line each month. They are also responsible for keeping records of each garment from the line which they will then use to create tech packs when the style goes into production. This position can be fast passed as the tech packs need to be sent within 24-48 hours after the order is placed. Overtime may also be necessary when finishing up and sending the line and/or getting tech packs sent out for orders.

We are located in San Fernando Valley.

Email resume: robhirsh@johnpaulrichard.com and hspittler@johnpaulrichard.com

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Chargeback Specialist/Customer Service

To work with major stores & boutiques to reconcile & mediate charge backs. To work closely with prod, shipping, sales, cust. serv. & acctg in order to implement & monitor corrective measures. To assist cust serv with data entry, Factor credit check & approval. Must be proficient in Excel.

elizabeth.fernando@sanctuaryclothing.com

Jobs Available

Raquel Allegre

PRODUCTION PATTERNMAKER

Must have min. 10 yrs exp. Expertise in Advanced Contemporary construction. Exp. with garment dye, washes, shrinkages a must. Must be Gerber proficient. Must be able to keep to schedule, communicate well and work well with others.

Please send resumes w/work and salary history to: HR@Raquelallegre.com

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SAMPLE ROOM MANAGER

5+ years experience in the fashion industry and sample making. Responsible for managing sample room, cutters and sewers. Familiar garment construction and fabric dye. Responsible for communication between sample room and design and making sure deadlines are met. Knowledge in pattern making is a plus Email resume along with salary requirement to:

allison@sanctuaryclothing.com

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SALES EXECUTIVE * Seeking professional,

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email your resume to:

terry@apparelnews.net

SALES REP

New contemporary fashion T-shirt brand is seeking an energetic and seasoned independent sales rep with 3-5 years of current connections/relationships with established retail accounts to sell hip T-shirt line featuring original and unique designs. Looking for placement in upscale and/or trendy boutiques. Current relationships with boutiques and independent stores is preferred. Must show track record of success with both.

Email resume to amy@librecollecte.com.

Denim Designer

Well established premium denim brand and manufacturer with an ongoing pursuit to create innovative designs that emphasize fashionably modern denim products seeking experienced contemporary women's denim designer.

Position requires high level of creativity and understanding of denim industry and fashion. Designer must have sophisticated design aesthetics and passion for denim coupled with experience in the details and qualities associated with fit and wash development.

email: cindyc@phoenixla.com

TECHNICAL DESIGNER.

Young Men's & Women's Co. Min 5 year's experience in proto, fits, ad, lab samples and TOP's. Position will be responsible to approve PP samples and communicate corrections with factories. Must be able to identify fit issues and recommend solutions, possess excellent written and verbal skills. Knowledge of pattern making a plus. E-mail resume to paulr@blankgeneration.com

Jobs Available

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TECHNICAL DESIGNER

Must have at least 2 yrs. experience in creating initial tech packs, emphasis on flat sketches, proto specs & construction details. Assist in fittings, ability to communicate comments/changes in a timely manner. Create technical illustrator sketches where needed. Assist in developing newlines. Excellent attention to detail. Strong organizational and time management skills required to keep up in a fast paced environment.

Email resume along with salary requirement to: rosemary@sanctuaryclothing.com

SALES ASSISTANT

Design oriented textile/garment importer seeks an aggressive, motivated individual for Sales Assistant position. Experience in textile and garment industry a must. Extensive email correspondence with customers, in-house sales and in-house production.

Must be well organized, detail oriented and with impeccable follow up skills. Design background helpful.

Please send resume to: resume@meridiantex.com

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Assist Production Manager in all phases of production including issuing po's, follow-up with stores and factories, and logistics. Minimum 2-3 years Import experience preferred. Must be computer literate, team player and be able to understand the urgency of deadlines.

Email resume to jonathon@mikenclothing.com or fax to (323)-266-2580 Attn: Jonathon.

Data Entry and Chargeback Analyst

Apparel Co. Seeking to fill two positions:

Data Entry

Aims knowledge a must. Excel and Outlook a plus.

Chargeback Analyst

Aims and Quickbooks a must. Excel and Outlook a plus.

Applicants for either position must be able to complete tasks in a timely and accurate manner. Please do not send resume if you don't meet the requirements. E-mail resume

to Juliana@seksesdist.com.

SPORTSWEAR CUSTOMER SERVICE

Experienced in a Garment Industry. Dynamic and excellent verbal communications Duties includes customer and sales rep order processing and follow ups. Work closely with Production. Knowledge of AIMS a plus.

Email resume to: sion@expertbrand.com or fax to (323)-526-5866)

Sales force wanted

HAAMA group is building its sales force.

Join us for selling Pocket and Fusing linings to LA manufacturers. Ideal candidates must have good contacts in the LA manufacturers scene. Please submit your resume to: amit@haama.com

SALES REPRESENTATIVE JR/YOUNG CONTEMPORARY

Import JR. and Young Contemporary line specializing in woven is seeking IN-HOUSE sales rep. Ideal candidates must carry major accounts. Attractive salary/benefits. Please submit your resume to: mpak@chookachooka.com

To place a Classified Ad Call Jeffery 213-627-3737 Ext. 280 or jeffery@apparelnews.net

Jobs Available

Designer and Customer Service Position

Young Contemporary Line seeking to fill 2 positions. Designer-Must have garment dye and wash experience. Minimum 3 years. Customer Service-1 year experience working with accounts.

Please email resume to lisap@tina-jo.com

Entry Level Design Assistant

Strong needed for a CA based hosiery manufacturer. Candidate should be able to work independently, multi-task and have strong design skills, specifically illustrator. Interested candidates please submit resume and CAD examples for consideration: nancyw@legassi.com

PRODUCTION PATTERNMAKER Immediate opening for a first through production patternmaker for a growing vertical garment manuf. Great opportunity for a highly detailed, organized and self-motivated individual. Must know yields and have a complete knowledge of tech packs. Tukatech system preferred. Please send resume to wanda@lineapparellic.com

Swimwear Designer

RAJ Manufacturing seeks detail oriented experienced designer with 3-5 years experience to join our OC based team. Great work environment and benefits. Email resume and samples to jobs@rajman.com referencing "Designer" in the subject line.

Jobs Available



Candidate Open House on Thurs, Nov 6th at the Cooper Building - 860 S. Los Angeles Street, Mezzanine Suite 4, from 10am-6pm. This event is for new freelance & full time talent. Great opportunity for top talent with fashion industry experience! Bring your Resume, Portfolio, and 2 forms of ID. Visit us at fourthfloorfashion.com

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Call 213-627-3755

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Keryl Kris Reinke

kkreinke@mac.com

Cathy McCroskey

cathyv@pacbell.net

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