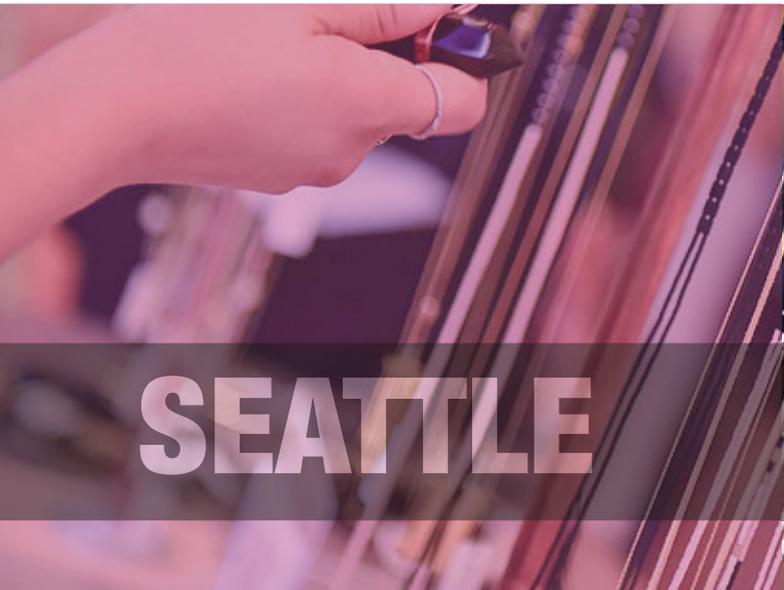


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# What Else Is New?

The latest and greatest brands on the market

*Keeping our ear to the apparel pavement, as usual, AI has found some of the most interesting young brands making their mark today.*

## 1 FAHERTY

**Launched:** Spring 2014

**Based in:** New York

**Showing at:** The Tents at Project (Booth #32252), the Westcoast Trend Show, the Southern Clothing Market

**Key Looks:** Lightweight layering polos and tees, French terry and wovens, including linen, rayon, Tencel, and cotton. There are also blends for increased comfort and wearability.

**Retail:** Barneys, Bloomingdale's, Nordstrom, Mr. Porter

**Retail Price Points:** \$98–\$398

**Brand Philosophy:** "To create clothing for life's great moments, whether that is long days spent by the water, family barbecues, or hanging around a bonfire with friends," says Faherty. "We've dreamt of creating this brand since we were kids on a never-ending search for high-quality clothes that matched our outdoor lifestyle. This brand is an extension of the casual, laid-back vibe we grew up with living in a small beach town combined with a high-quality product and an emphasis on a soft, lived-in feel."

**You Should Know:** Cofounder and Creative Director Mike Faherty formerly worked as a designer at Ralph Lauren. All of the company's swimwear and hybrid All Day Short are crafted in the brand's signature swim fabric made primarily of recycled polyester from plastic bottles blended with a touch of cotton for softness.

## 2 AMO

**Launched:** Spring 2015

**Based in:** Los Angeles

**Key Looks:** The Babe, inspired by a vintage 501 jean, features a high rise and button fly. Five-pocket styling is fitted through the waist, hips, and thighs, and the jean has a straight, cropped leg. The Twist features a slim, mid-rise fit and cropped length. Named for its subtly twisted-out seam, this jean is cropped above the ankle with a small slit detail at the hem. This signature style has just been granted a design patent. The Jane features a slim

fit, slightly higher rise, and cropped inseam that hits just above the ankle. The fitted leg gently eases into a subtle, cropped boot leg.

**Retail:** The Line, Elyse Walker, J.Crew, Shopbop, Nordstrom, Totokaelo, American Rag

**Retail Price Points:** \$238–\$282

**Brand Philosophy:** AMO, simply translated, is the Latin root word for love, and it is fittingly applied to how the label's founders and fashion-industry veterans Kelly Urban and Misty Zollars feel about denim. The label was born out of a fearless spirit and clear objective: to create the perfect pair of jeans designed by women who understand what women want. AMO's goal is to bring back the true purpose of denim—to offer jeans that feel real, that get better with each and every wear, and that are so comfortable you never want to take them off.

**You Should Know:** With love as the root of the company's DNA and namesake, paired with relentless compassion for animals and the desire to help find homes for the many stray dogs in Los Angeles, AMO dedicates a portion of its profits to SNP LA.

## 3 Z SUPPLY MEN'S

**Launched:** Spring 2017

**Based in:** Irvine, California

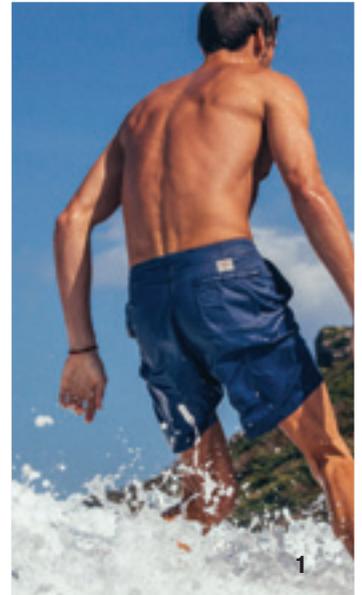
**Showing at:** Project Las Vegas, Coterie

**Key Looks:** The Spring '17 collection consists of a modern fit, which is slightly slimmer, and a regular fit, both offered in an array of silhouettes ranging from short sleeves to long sleeves. By combining various fabrications and washes, some of the standout pieces include a burnout jersey notch-neck pocket tee, a modern-fit classic V-neck in ultra-soft and durable MicroModal, and a classic crew slub stripe tee. The collection also offers a super-soft double-knit pullover with contrast sleeves and a continuous-front-zip hoodie.

**Retail:** Better specialty stores nationwide

**Retail Price Points:** \$32–\$64

**Brand Philosophy:** "Our team at Z Supply





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4



5



6

believes that simplicity, comfort, and style should coexist in every closet,” says Z Supply cofounder Greg Garrett. “After three years of creating that for women, it only made sense for us to offer that simple luxury to men as well. So our designers created a line of easygoing essentials to seamlessly intermix with any man’s wardrobe. Laid-back and relaxed, these basics hold the secret to looking modern and effortlessly stylish. With signature dyes and fabrics that are light and breathable, our pieces easily become closet staples.”

#### 4 THE NEW DESIGNERS PARIS

**Launched:** Spring/Summer 2016 in the U.S.

**Based in:** Paris

**Showing at:** Pitti Uomo, Capsule Paris, Bright Berlin, Liberty Fairs Las Vegas

**Key Looks:** The key looks are the America nylon bomber jackets in a range of six colors. There is also a bomber with multiple patches as well as a bomber with interchangeable patches. The interchangeable patches can also be purchased separately so the wearer can customize other jackets. There’s also an elongated bomber, caps and beanies with zippers, T-shirts, and sweatshirts with patches and sweatpants.

**Retail:** In Paris: Collette, Galleries Lafayette, Citadium Paris; in London, Top Man; in Italy, Coin; in Toronto, TNT; in New York, Atrium; in Miami, Shoe Gallery

**Retail Price Points:** Tees and sweats \$60–\$140;

sweatpants \$95–\$100; jackets \$155–\$225; caps \$50–\$75

**Brand Philosophy:** “The collection is built around our jackets,” says brand consultant Vince Gonzales, “with deliveries on fashion tops and bottoms that launch close to the season so there are always fresh products and great looks for quick deliveries and so the brand never looks stale at retail.”

**You Should Know:** There is currently a collaboration with Mattel on The New Designers Paris limited-edition Barbie and Ken dolls. There is also an exclusive clothing collaboration with Collette in Paris.

#### 5 COOPH—COOPERATIVE OF PHOTOGRAPHY

**Launched:** COOPH was launched in late 2015 in Leica stores across America. Encouraged by the positive response to the brand, COOPH began its collaboration with Los Angeles–based showroom Money Ruins Everything in July 2016.

**Based in:** Salzburg, Austria, and Venice Beach, California

**Showing at:** Project Las Vegas (Booth #26100), Photokina Cologne

**Key Looks:** Key looks for Fall/Winter are the Field Jacket Original combined with an Original Raglan Hoodie, a Snapographer T-shirt, and a Gray Chart Cap.

**Retail:** Leica stores, photo retailers, museum stores

**Retail Price Points:** T-shirts starting at \$39;

beanies starting at \$43; hoodies starting at \$119; field jacket starting at \$398

**Brand Philosophy:** “Our purpose is to create the world’s first lifestyle apparel and accessory brand for people passionate about photography. How we dress is a way of identifying with a certain lifestyle and one of the strongest means of expression. We want to give photographers what they need—stylish clothing and accessories with advanced technological solutions that make photographers’ lives easier. Sustainability is one important factor for production.”

#### 6 PHLEMUNS

**Launched:** Fall/Winter 2015

**Based in:** Los Angeles

**Showing at:** The brand has never participated in a trade show.

**Key Looks:** Denim

**Retail:** SS16 at opening ceremony, Radd Lounge, and through *Phlemuns.com*

**Retail Price Points:** \$90–\$600

**Brand Philosophy:** The main philosophy is creating conceptual ideas that can appeal to anyone and possessing the idea of recycling, whether it be actual recycled denim or recycling ideas and feelings from the past with a modern approach.

**You Should Know:** Expect continual collaborations with Solange and Saint Heron, smaller creative projects, and more and more recycling.

# LEVEL 99



**Michelle Madsen**  
*of TAKE AIM*  
FALL 16

## FALL PREVIEW



**Kimi Suede Dress**  
Roselle



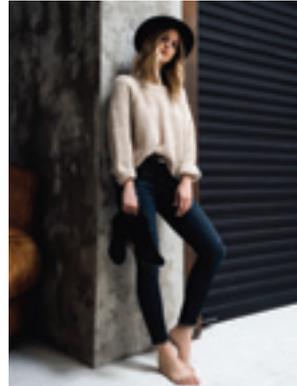
**Gwen Shirt Jacket**  
Ocean Beach



**Tracy High Waist Ultra Skinny**  
Scarlet



**Claire Denim Snap Dress**  
Lake Shore



**Jane High Rise Skinny**  
Monterey



**Amber Slouchy Skinny**  
Point Dume



# FASHION Cities

## America the Fashionable

*Americans, from New York to Los Angeles, are very trendy folks. The only problem is that fashion designers and magazines seem to only count those two cities.*

No one ever mentions Seattle, even though we all know it gave birth to a grunge look that's still pervasive today. There's little heard about Portland, Maine, even though there's an undeniable charm with its take on city-slicker denim.

Nashville has been quietly having its own fashion moment for a lot longer than a moment. And who would think that St. Louis has an of-the-moment fashion incubator for young design? The United States is more than simply two fashion cities. Take a look at the places we've rounded up, presented by some of the best fashion bloggers in the country.



## Nashville, Tennessee

By Rachel Clark

What once was a town built around honky tonks and cowboy boots now houses a thriving creative community filled with musicians, artists, and, most importantly, designers. It's no surprise that big names like Uber and Warby Parker have recently put down roots in our hip Southern city. The newly minted Nashville Fashion Alliance, a non-profit organization, is helping to build Nashville as a "sustainable and globally recognized fashion industry through advocacy, economic development, resources, and education," to quote the organization.

### Imogene + Willie

This is the best denim and one of the most beautiful shops in town. I+W started with one idea: to "simply sew a good jean for both men and women that fits perfectly." Enough said. It did just that, and its gorgeous little gas station in the 12 South neighborhood has become the destination for lovers of denim, both for visitors and locals alike. Along with its denim, I+W carries Aesop skincare, amazing basics, and one-of-a-kind treasures. It also hosts wonderful events in its beautiful back patio. [imogeneandwillie.com](http://imogeneandwillie.com)

### Two Son

This is the other most beautiful shop in Nashville. Recently opened by Aubrey McCoy and his wife, James Kicinski-McCoy (of Bluebird Blog fame), and David Perry and Leigh Watson (of the Watson Twins), Two Son is a carefully curated multi-brand shop located in East Nashville. Carrying everything from Norse Project to Ace & Jig, the shop has something for everyone. It's the place I go for basically everything. Their (in-house branded) T-shirts are insanely soft and perfectly priced, and hard-to-find Ilana Kohn rompers and Norse Project pieces line the racks. Plus, they have the best gift items, it's

gorgeous, and the staff is amazingly nice. I could (and often do) hang out for hours. [twoson.com](http://twoson.com)

### Jamie + the Jones

"Simple, wearable art to live in." That's the goal of Jamie Frazier and Hannah Jones's Nashville Jamie + the Jones. It was born while Jones and Frazier attended O'More College of Design, and Nashville fashion (and the world) is a better place because of it. Their silk basics are insanely beautiful, everyday, any occasion pieces inspired by the "universal language of color" that I dream about owning in every one of their gorgeous colors. [www.jamieandthejones.com](http://www.jamieandthejones.com)

### Consider the Wldflwrs

Jewelry. A huge yet often overlooked part of the fashion industry. Emily Howard hits the nail on the head with her line. The gold and silver pieces are simple, classic, and just plain beautiful. I won't even tell you how much of the collection I own. Plus, 10 percent of her profits foster a growing community of craftswomen in Honduras. Classic and charity-focused. What more could you want? [considerthewldflwrs.com](http://considerthewldflwrs.com)

## St. Louis, Missouri

by Risk Castinado

Six fashion designers on the rise will be chosen on Aug. 24 to enter the Saint Louis Fashion Incubator, a two-year business and brand acceleration program occupying a 7,500-square-foot space. Chosen for their work's artistic merit and the ability of their brands to increase in scale, the entrepreneurs will be mentored by an accomplished advisory board with a national network of fashion-world contacts while the workspace itself will include individual design studios, on-site manufacturing resources providing the ability to make prototypes before designs go into full-run production, a photography studio, and the opportunity to sell in a chic retail store.

With a nod to that heritage, the Saint Louis Fashion Incubator will open on Washington in January with a dual purpose: making the city more fashionable and more prosperous. A primary project of the Saint Louis Fashion Fund, the incubator is also the recipient of \$300,000 from four city agencies. Executive Director Eric Johnson, originally from St. Louis, has an extensive résumé in fashion initiatives, including serving as VP for Fashion and Arts at the New York City Economic Development Corporation. He helped to seed the Council of Fashion Designers of



Two Son

America's fashion incubator, which graduated designers such as Public School and Prabal Gurung, and he developed a program with the Fashion Institute of Technology to bolster entrepreneurs' business skills. "Those two programs, in a lot of ways, are what we're modeled after. It's very hands-on assistance that we're giving these designers," says Johnson.

"In this industry you can be incredibly talented, but if the right people aren't seeing your work you can toil away without getting the results you deserve," Johnson notes. While the brands chosen have existed for two to five years, fashion designers typically "don't have MBAs. They've spent their entire educational careers honing their craft." Partnerships with Washington University in St. Louis or pairing designers with business school graduate students and professors will provide "a strong focus on the business of fashion," Johnson says.

While applications came from coast to coast, Johnson wanted "a place where the industry can find the best emerging designers in the middle of the country. When you talk about fashion, there are two center points in the U.S., New York and L.A., and all these other cities are left out of the conversation. So that's what this incubator is about: curating brands that may be coming from Minneapolis and Nashville and Detroit. To me that's very important—providing resources to these designers who may not have had the experience of being in New York or L.A."

In addition to the on-site store, clothing will be sold through e-commerce as well as regional trunk shows. "As we go back into the communities where our designers came from, you have that additional



Buki

client base that you wouldn't otherwise," Johnson explains. "For emerging designers, getting that revenue, sort of feeding the machine, is very important."

Noting that St. Louis has "a fashion community that is thirsting for new retail," Johnson is "hopeful that the incubator will provide something that the community is looking for. To have these six brands become part of the St. Louis scene with us will allow people more exposure to really creative fashion," he says.

"Obviously we're looking to understand the designer's aesthetic, and we're not looking for something commodified, that's not unique. But by the same token we want sales, we want to bring jobs to St. Louis. I'd be lying if I didn't say that's what we'd like to see, but in the same breath we will ultimately be judged on our ability to help grow and strengthen fashion companies."

## Washington, D.C.

By Christina McDowell

Everyone knows that our nation's capital is home to some of the most powerful figureheads in the world. It's a town not shaped by fashion per se but by intellect and presentation. It is important to look sharp, professional, and still maintain a sense of style. An industry town where politics is at its center, most people work more than a 9-to-5 day, so not many people have a lot of time nor want to spend the time thinking about their wardrobes. The most recent trend has been all about the entire shopping experience, whether it means working with a personal stylist at Trunk Club or going to downtown's newly built CityCenterDC for a nice meal before hitting some of the higher-end retail stores like Hermès, a first for the district. Yet for the more fashion-forward thinkers, women especially are pushing their comfort zones and opting out of the matching pantsuit for the mismatched blazer.

## Seattle, Washington

By Sydney Mintle

Seattle has long been a city best known for its bustling coffee shops and tech startups, but in recent years it has also become an oasis for global creatives looking for an under-the-radar destination to find inspiration and innovative design. Mainstream companies like Amazon, Expedia, Filson, and Nordstrom call the Emerald City home, and a new crop of companies including Facebook and Google are also opening offices in the city to tap into the region's imaginative energy. Add to that the growing culinary scene and thriving local boutiques that regularly stock indie designers and suddenly visitors have a fresh perspective on the Pacific Northwest.

### Must-Visit Stores

#### Pipe & Row

Seattle's newest boutique, located in Fremont, features a diverse mix of effortless urban pieces curated by owner and Pacific Northwest native Kayla Boehme. Designed to evoke individual style, this inclusive boutique carries everything Seattleites need to seize the day, from oversized sweaters by Achro to leather jackets by Just Female. This is where the cool kids are shopping, and you'll even find local indie brands like Fresh Tangerine.

611 N. 35th St., Fremont  
www.pipeandrow.com

#### Fresh Tangerine

Gold-plated stacking rings, delicate bracelets, and whisper-thin necklaces in geometric shapes are just a few of the coveted pieces that make up the Fresh Tangerine jewelry line. Each design is handcrafted in Seattle's historic Pioneer Square neighborhood, and the showroom is open to the public for guests to get a behind-the-scenes look at how each collection comes together.

82 Yesler Way, Pioneer Square  
www.freshtangerine.com

#### Moorea Seal

Located in Belltown, Moorea Seal is host to a beautiful selection of curated accessories and objects made by artists from around the globe. The aesthetic

is urban and fresh with a touch of rustic sensibility. Founded by designer and blogger Moorea Seal, the shop also stocks fashion-forward eyewear, statement jewelry, and even textiles like graphic-print tea towels. The store is literally an Etsy shop come to life, and 7 percent of all proceeds from the store benefit a rotating list of nonprofits.

2523 3rd Ave., Belltown  
www.mooreaseal.com

### Design Innovators: New, Hot, Next Schai

Launched in 2013, Schai (pronounced "shay") is the gorgeous brainchild of Seattle designer Suk Chai. Known for her eclectic mix of colors and textures, the fall 2016 collection includes "Ghianda Plush," an Italian woven fabric that makes for a beautiful and eco-friendly alternative to fur. Highlights from the line include the Kimono Tie poncho and the menswear-inspired Victoire belted blazer.

schaischai.com

#### Feller

Stylish protection from the elements is a must in a city like Seattle, which is why it's safe to say that Feller will do exceptionally well in the market when it launches this fall. The line features waxed-cotton outerwear for women in flattering silhouettes including parkas and traditional trench coats. Color pops can be found inside solid-color jackets via prints from Liberty of London.

www.feller.clothing

#### Buki

The idea of covert comfort will once again find itself elevated to new heights this fall with the launch of Buki, an innovative new line by designer Joey Rodolfo. The collection of knits for men and women is made from a proprietary blend of fabrics developed in Japan and designed to regulate body temperature. Supreme tailoring and architectural silhouettes make up the majority of styles in the line, adding a modern take on minimalism.

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www.bukibrand.com



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## Columbus, Ohio

By Candace Read

Columbus, Ohio, is a Midwestern city with an approximate population of 850,000. It's the home of some pretty major brands, including Abercrombie & Fitch, The Limited Brands, Express, and DSW. In addition to being the headquarter city for those well-known brands, Columbus is also a destination location for a number of fashion distribution houses and fulfillment centers. However, a great secret behind the Columbus fashion scene is the local fashion.

Columbus has a long list of emerging independent designers such as Kelli Martin, a *Project Runway* alum, as well as an outstanding list of locally curated clothing boutiques. Located in the heart of the city downtown, you will find some pretty wondtacular independently owned boutiques that nearly everyone in the city knows about.

For local fashion, your list should most definitely include a pit stop in the Short North Arts District for a quick visit to Rowe Boutique and Homage. After that, head over to Grandview.

### Rowe Boutique

This high-end, contemporary women's clothing and accessories boutique celebrates the fashion-conscious shopper. Rowe offers a collection of contemporary fashions that are on-trend, but there are also staples.

718 N. North High St.

[www.roweboutique.com](http://www.roweboutique.com)

### Homage

Established in 2007, Homage is the city's go-to for vintage-inspired apparel

and paraphernalia. With engagement and simplicity at its core, Homage is a cool spot that offers clothing that tells a unique story and cultivates a unique experience for shoppers. From men's to women's to kids', Homage has a little piece of retro memorabilia for everyone. In addition to its Short North location, it can also be found at Easton Town Center.

17 Brickel St.

[www.homage.com](http://www.homage.com)

### Vernacular

This is a super-cool apparel, accessory, and lifestyle boutique with an additional location in German Village. With its self-described style as "East Coast classic with a West Coast vibe," Vernacular has a relaxed atmosphere with the most laid-back staff. Vernacular offers a variety of trendy, quality pieces at a very comfortable price.

1392 Grandview Ave.

[www.shopvernacular.com](http://www.shopvernacular.com)

### Thread Boutique

Thread is a carefully curated lifestyle boutique that was recently named Columbus' 2016 Best Women's Fashion boutique. With the Big City in mind, Thread offers a uniquely exclusive assortment of fashion brands that are not likely to be found anywhere in the Midwest. From Rag & Bone, Figue, Veronica Beard, and others, Thread has a soft chic yet homey feel that is captivating, relaxing, and comfortable. Its primary location is in Grandview, but Thread has a secondary location in Dublin.

128 Grandview Ave.

[www.shopthreadonline.com](http://www.shopthreadonline.com)

## Portland, Maine

By Ashley Jordan

When you hear Maine, you may immediately think of the ocean, lobster, and moose, but when you think of Portland, it is a whole other story. Portland is a mecca for creative types. Whether you are a maker, a designer, or a shop owner, people are making their mark on the city. Here is the inside scoop on where to go when in Portland:

If you are looking for designer clothing with a cult following, head over to Judith. Not only is the space beautiful but it is also filled with beautifully crafted clothing. Think Ulla Johnson, Ace and Jig, and Rachel Comey. Judith hosts many trunk shows and meets and greets with the designers carried in the store. It is a great place to meet interesting people and get lots of inspiration.

If you are in need of the perfect pair of jeans, Bliss is your place. The staff is so knowledgeable, and the denim is literally floor to ceiling. AG, Citizens of Humanity, Joe's Jeans, and Seven For All Mankind sit side by side with high-end basics like Velvet, Splendid, and Stateside. With a large collection of Frye, you can complete your whole look in one place. You can't miss a visit to sister store Little, which carries children's clothing, toys, and accessories from small brands all over the country and the world. Little ones need great clothes, too!

Want to find something made in Maine? There are plenty of spots that are local and stylish.

South Street Linen and Corey + Co. carry designs made right in their shops in Portland. South Street Linen specializes in, of course, linen, and is very much on point with all of its shapes and colors. Corey + Co.'s designs are understated, comfortable, and can easily become anyone's uniform.

Farrell and Company, also made in Maine, is a leather handbag company featuring a mix of modern and traditional pieces that are meant to stay in your collection for a very long time. They are pieces that will never go out of style and, as one can only imagine, will look even better over time.

Another shop that will bring out the creativity in everyone is More and Co. It has a rotating collection of clothing (much of which is made in-house), accessories, and home goods for each season. It closes shop between each collection and presents something new and exciting a few times a year. Much like the shops above, More and Co. also doubles as a studio and workshop. What fun it is to see a little of the behind-the-scenes.

For menswear, Portland Trading Company is not only a well-curated shop (think modern general store) but is owned by one of the most stylish men in town, Kazeem Lawal. Kazeem has an undeniable sense of style. He is always put together head to toe in a way that looks so effortless, just like his store.

Bliss

Thread





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# Welcome the Next Generation Brands

*From manufacturing through retail, a digital footprint is proving to be the only real way to move your business forward in the 21st century.*

*By Rebecca Cringean*

**F**or an industry dominated by ever-transforming trends, the apparel business, ironically, can be apprehensive about change. Until recently, for instance, handwritten orders at trade shows were the norm and shipments getting lost, delayed, or done incorrectly were actually written into the production cycle as hazards of the trade. Early attempts at digital tools to assess customer needs, vendors, inventory, and financials—many of which are still in use today—were clumsy and nonintuitive, leaving veterans to say they prefer the old, tried-and-true methods. But time marches on, and current wholesale and

everything is centralized and simple. “We are the first line of defense,” says Klein. “We are a foundation for an apparel brand to be able to manage their design process, prototypes, samples—to get it right and ready to go to either a trade show or retail floor.”

Backbone PLM also provides important marketing analytics. “We look at what’s working, what’s not, sales content, etc.,” says Klein. “It’s a digital footprint to create a dynamic company. It’s vital. A decade ago, it was okay to run your business however you wanted to, but now the consumer is so fast and a brand needs to keep up. We can now get samples back quickly and correct the first time around. Wholesale is getting faster. Direct-to-consumer is getting faster. Companies like Kith and Dyne automated their processes with huge wins and immediate ROI.”



retail methods need to shape up or ship out. The market will quickly see to that.

But a handful of next generation brands—young companies that are digitally focused and completely in tune with the millennial and generation Z buying habits—have sprung up to help startups affordably and effectively make it in the marketplace. They’re enthusiastic, savvy, and use technology to capture bigger brand territory faster. Product Lifecycle Management (PLM), Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), and a host of marketing and toy tools make doing business in the 21st century a virtual piece of cake.

Matthew Klein runs Backbone PLM. There he helps brands including Swrve, Opening Ceremony, and Iron and Resin develop their product, including artwork, project files, revisions, and costing. Everything is stored on the cloud, easily accessible from any device, and, most important,

A brand’s digital footprint doesn’t stop there. Once the product is right, it becomes about the sell-through and customer relations. And that’s where next-generation brands turn to the cloud and ERP. Companies like NetSuite use the cloud to help apparel brands run their businesses in real time, “bringing together a single view of items, inventory, orders, customers, and financials,” says Matthew Rhodus, director and industry solutions principal for retail vertical at NetSuite. “There’s then less need for manual intervention so brands can be more confident and innovative. It’s future proofing, giving brands scalability to behave like a bigger brand.”

Of course, many of the bigger, older brands have already seen the light. “Lucky Brand was owned by Kate Spade,” says Rhodus. “They were spun off but viewed that as the slate wiped clean, a chance to reinvent and come to a cloud-based system. Billabong is another. They are really ten global companies. They were using six different systems, but with one system they no longer have to be ten completely different brands. They can now be ten flavors of the same experience with a unified back-end view of their consumers.” A company like Billabong can now be in Australia, for instance, where they’re huge, but, connecting into their back-end experience, they can start to push more of their popular U.S. brands like RVCA in real time. “It’s an

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über-modern platform, a connective footprint because,” says Rhodus, “past mistakes that retailers continue to make are no longer a valid option.”

For the most part it’s about keeping pace with today’s consumer, a consumer with an attention span of maybe two or three months rather than years, as in the past. “There are literally billions of online digital devices out there today. Even if the consumer is planning on going to a bricks-and-mortar store, they almost always browse online first,” says Alf Dagsvold, founder of the Norwegian company ItsMeSee, an interactive 3-D browsing platform for consumer fashion. “To survive, the wholesaler and retailer have to take this into consideration. It is not enough to have an online presence. It has to be much more consumer-centric and use the digital possibilities with all their potential.”

It seems a digital footprint is the only way to accurately ensure longevity for your brand. “Ten years ago, advertising had much stronger channels to the consumer than today,” continues Dagsvold. “Advertisements in magazines, on TV, and the Internet were largely unavoidable for the consumer. It is not so anymore as you can record programs and let the TV filter off all commercials before seeing them, and there is also streaming with no commercials at all. Pop-ups and ads can easily be blocked in browsers. Reach and impressions used to define how well an advertisement was going and how many eyeballs it got. Over the last few years this has changed drastically. Now it is about how much the consumer engages with the product that defines the success of marketing. Product presentation, in useful, engaging tools, where the consumer has all the control, is the only

way to be around the next 10 years.”

To this end, Dagsvold and his team put consumers in the central, primary position, allowing them to virtually try on any combination of apparel for look and fit. The combination of technology used makes the system smooth and user-friendly. “The digital representation with exact individual body shape and measurements creates a highly personal experience,” says Dagsvold. “This gives consumers an opportunity to freely create their own looks but also the option of receiving automatic styling suggestions from an evolving, adaptive system.”

Brands working within the system have a prototype showroom that allows them to see how consumers are engaging with their wares. Once that’s determined, they can move the product to the Web store. “What we offer is the opportunity to test products before starting large, costly production. Plus, they then have a captured audience waiting,” says Dagsvold. “Regardless of how good products are, getting to market is often extremely challenging for someone just starting up. There are buyers, wholesale agents, and store owners who are basically gatekeepers to existing infrastructure. Unless the emerging designer is already quite wealthy, it can take years and years to reach a broad audience. A personal Web store is often not a very good option as it is very difficult, time-consuming, and costly to generate traffic. We want to offer talent a real opportunity to prosper, without large upfront investment.”

It all comes back to Matthew Klein’s cloud-based PLM: “A digital footprint,” he says, “if you’re not doing it, guaranteed your competition is.”

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