

# CALIFORNIA ApparelNews

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## LOOK WEST

Directives West presented its Trends of the Season runway show—featuring Spring/Summer 2017 looks for the contemporary, updated, juniors and girls' markets—on Sept. 27 in the California Market Center Fashion Theater during LA Majors Market. For more from the show, see page 12.

C/MEO Collective romper, Rehab jacket

## UCLA Anderson Forecast Predicts Moderate Economic Growth and Rising Housing Prices in California

By Deborah Belgum *Senior Editor*

If you're expecting the economy to go gangbusters in the near future, forget about it.

According to the recently released UCLA Anderson Forecast's quarterly update, the next two years will be pretty much a repeat of the past several years—moderate growth with job gains. But future job gains won't be quite as robust as in previous years.

UCLA Anderson Senior Economist David Shulman,   
 ➔ **Quarterly Report** page 2

### TRADE SHOW REPORT

## Parking Lots Full, At-Once Orders at LA Majors Market

By Andrew Asch *Retail Editor*

The Sept. 26–28 Spring '17 edition of the **LA Majors Market** ran at the same time as the **LA Textile** show, and it brought in a crowd to the **California Market Center**.

"The [California Market Center] parking lot was full. I can't remember the last time that happened," said Christian Wicks, executive vice president of sales and marketing for the **Blank Slate** showroom. The overlapping crowds created opportunities for crossover traffic for buyers, he said. However, the Majors Market was mostly an appointment.   
 ➔ **Majors Market** page 9

### TRADE SHOW REPORT

## LA Textile Show Draws Mix of LA Brands, NY Manufacturers and International Attendees

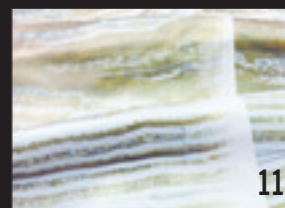
By Alison A. Nieder *Executive Editor*

The Sept. 26–28 run of the **Los Angeles International Textile Show** drew a diverse crowd. Among the attendees shopping the show at the **California Market Center** were representatives from **Karen Kane**, **Trina Turk**, **Joie**, **Halston**, **BCBG**, **Bailey44**, **Black Halo**, **Guess**, **Calvin Rucker**, **Current/Elliott**, **David Meister**, **Alo Yoga**, **Beyond Yoga** and **Bebe**; designers **Raquel Allegra**, **Kevan Hall**, **Peter Cohen**, **Corey Lynn Calter**, **Estevan Ramos** and **Anna Kinney**; and manufacturer **Dov Charney**. In addition   
 ➔ **LA Textile Show** page 10

## INSIDE

Where fashion gets down to business<sup>SM</sup>

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## Quarterly Report

Continued from page 1

who authored part of the forecast, predicts that the U.S. economy will grow 2 percent in 2017 and 2.5 percent in 2018, which is pretty much on par with this year.

"The problem is productivity. The growth in productivity has collapsed. That is the key thing," said Shulman, who noted we are almost at full employment. "If you are operating at full employment, the economy can only grow as fast as the workforce grows and then there is growth in productivity."

He noted that productivity gains are not something that happen overnight. Productivity improvements could be made by better educating the nation's workforce, improving roads and transportation systems to deliver goods more quickly or implementing some kind of new technology such as self-driving cars. "Nobody has a magic wand to do that," Shulman said.

The economy over the next two years will be buoyed by consumer spending and the housing industry along with a rebound in capital spending as the oil industry starts to slowly recover.

In the United States, more houses will be built in the next two years, increasing from 1.19 million units this year to 1.38 million units in 2017 and 1.41 million units in 2018. This is a vast contrast from the recession years of 2009–2011, when barely 600,000 units were built during those years. But housing prices will remain at a premium in California as supply doesn't quite keep up with demand and as more renters decide to shift to home ownership.

One drag on the economy will be the auto industry, which is expected to be riding on cruise control as light-vehicle sales peak this year at 17.5 million units and then stay

there for 2017 and 2018.

"There has been an increase in defaults in auto loans, which is tightening up credit, and that pent-up demand for cars after the recession has been filled," Shulman said.

After hefty increases in recent years in the nation's employment numbers, which have added on average 200,000 new jobs a month since 2011, job gains will taper off to about 150,000 jobs a month in 2017 and 125,000 jobs a month in 2018. That will bring down the U.S. unemployment rate to 4.8 percent to 5 percent over the next two years, pretty much sitting where it does right now at 4.9 percent because many people will be encouraged to re-enter the market after losing their jobs.

In California, employment is at record levels. There are now 16.5 million payroll jobs, which is 6.7 percent above the state's previous peak. The number of people employed, including farm labor and the self-employed, has hit a record 18.2 million and is 7 percent above the previous peak. Still, since 2007, California's population has grown by 9.5 percent, putting it at around 39 million, so there is room to add people to the workforce. Currently, the state's unemployment rate stands at 5.5 percent.

Of course, the wild card in the economy is what happens with the presidential elections. Shulman said Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump are making all kinds of promises they believe will improve the economy, but both will add to the federal deficit.

Trump wants to substantially reduce taxes on businesses and individuals, increase tariffs, deport at least 5 million people and increase spending on immigration control, infrastructure and defense. "Needless to say," Shulman wrote in his forecast, "the federal deficit would explode should all of his ideas be enacted."

On the other hand, Clinton's aim to increase taxes on high-income individuals, expand Social Security, increase healthcare spending, refinance or forgive student debt while increasing infrastructure spending would modestly increase the deficit. "Of course, whether any or all of these proposals get through Congress remains an open question," Shulman noted.

When it comes to interest rates, the UCLA Anderson Forecast predicts that the Federal Reserve Bank will raise its key interest rate once before the end of the year and then make a few small increases next year, raising the rate by the end of 2017 to 1.5 percent.

### California up in smoke

While California's economy will continue to grow on par with the U.S. economy, two ballot measures could have different effects on the state's growth.

Proposition 64, which would legalize the recreational use of marijuana in California, would give the economy a bit of a boost but nothing that would have state coffers over-

flowing with money.

UCLA Anderson Senior Economist Jerry Nickelsburg examined what happened in Colorado after it legalized the recreational use of marijuana two years ago. He concluded that Proposition 64 would probably add \$501 million in sales tax to the state's revenues, which is a mere 0.4 percent of the state's general fund.

But there would be a boost in marijuana tourism as international and U.S. visitors would probably flock to California to take advantage of the freedom to buy recreational marijuana without fear of being arrested.

Proposition 55 would extend until 2030 the temporary income tax enacted under Proposition 30 on higher-wage earners. Nickelsburg said the impact of extending the proposition is unclear because, during slow economic times or a recession, the wealthy see their income decline because they are dependent on the profitability of their businesses or the value of their business's shares.

No one is predicting an imminent recession, but one will eventually occur as part of the traditional economic cycle, the report said. ●

## TRENDS

# Fields Forecasts Spring '17 Favorites to Include Camo, Bomber Jackets

Spring '17 styles might have a feeling of déjà vu since perennially popular looks such as camouflage fabric and distressed jeans will be among the season's prominent styles.

Other styles that have been popular for a while, such as leggings and T-shirts with humorous slogans, will be big sellers in the juniors market in the upcoming year, said Barbara Fields, founder of the **Barbara Fields Buying Office**. It was the message of her Spring 2017 Trend Presentation, which she gave at her showroom at the **California Market Center** building in downtown Los Angeles during the **LA Majors Market** the week of Sept. 26.

Don't count novelty out, though. Fields said that there will be plenty of new styles to attract juniors to stores. Top looks also will include bodysuits with screen-foil graphics, which Fields said has not been widely available or seen before. More new looks: a blueberry color wash on jeans as well as jeans and jeans shorts bearing stenciled doodles.

The season's unique styles also will include tops and dresses bearing knots in the front, tank tops made out of metallic fabrics and tops with sequins.

Contemporary styles will be a big influence on juniors looks. Bomber jackets have been highly popular at contemporary bou-

tiques. Juniors vendors have been stocking the market with bomber jackets. At least 70 of the vendors that Fields covers manufactured bomber jackets for the season. Many were made in an olive color. It's one reason why camouflage also is popular for Spring 2017. Camouflage complements olive.

Other contemporary looks for juniors include the "off-shoulder," or strapless, tops, bodysuits and camisole tops and "butt-lifter" leggings, made with seams that lift the wearer's seat. Oversize denim jackets and T-shirts and jackets bearing patches also should be making prominent appearances on shop floors during the upcoming season, Fields said.

Fields has been producing juniors trends presentations since the 1980s. She researches the market through shopping at the leading boutiques and department stores in Los Angeles, New York, London and Barcelona. She also makes frequent trips to Tokyo, Seoul and other fashion cities around the globe.—*Andrew Asch*



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## New Off-Price Discount Show Debuts at the California Market Center

A new trade event that helps vendors get rid of old inventory or overstock got a small start at the same time buyers were flocking to downtown Los Angeles for the **LA Majors Market**.

Surplus at Majors, held Sept. 26–28, carved out a tiny space with only five exhibitors participating in the first show.

The **California Market Center** advertised the show as an event that would cater to major department stores, chain stores and discount retailers. But traffic was almost nonexistent in the no-frills exhibit area, located behind some eighth-floor showrooms.

Three shoe exhibitors, one apparel company and one handbag vendor had a lot of time on their hands to get office work done and catch up on emails.

“We have had a few customers but not a lot,” said Ed Goetz, the West Coast sales executive for **Mia Shoes**, based in Miami. “We have seen four or five customers in two days.”

But Goetz had landed a few orders.

Todd Home, the West Coast territory manager for three shoes brands—**Coolway**, **Freestyle** and **Musse & Cloud**—had seen only two retailers in two days. He called his time at the show a “good office day,” but he hadn’t written any orders.

He decided to do the event because he was offered a free display area.

Brett Peters, an account executive for the

a couple of orders for “decent amounts.”

Peters realizes that the show still needs a lot of tweaking to improve the idea, but she will be back. “I always try a show three times before I make a decision,” she noted. “It’s new and they [the organizers] are trying to assess what happens.”

The only apparel exhibitor at the show was **Focus**, a 27-year-old womenswear brand based in Vernon, Calif.

Susan Pomponi, the West Coast sales executive for Focus, said the company decided to participate because the apparel manufacturer was updating its line and wanted to get



Ed Goetz

rid of some old inventory that doesn’t fit in with the company’s future plans.

She had seen about four buyers in two days but written no orders. However, Pomponi was optimistic about some appointments she had made for the third day of the show. The organizers did advertise that this was an appointment-driven venue.

Vegan handbag maker **Melie Bianco**, based in Pico Rivera, Calif., decided to participate in the show when it was offered free booth space, said Lizbet Quiroz, who was at the Melie Bianco booth. She said it was a very quiet show with little traffic.

While all five participants thought the show concept was “awesome,” they all agreed that it needed to be better planned.

Signage on the eighth floor to direct buyers to the exhibit area wasn’t very good and exhibitors felt there had to be more marketing to attract more people. “It was put together rather quickly,” Pomponi said.

—Deborah Belgium



Susan Pomponi

past four years with **Rocket Dog**, was a little more upbeat about the event. Plus she didn’t have to travel far for the show. Rocket Dog’s headquarters are located one block away.

By the second day, she had seen four to six mid-size West Coast retailers and placed

## Calendar

### Sept. 29

**Los Angeles Fashion Week**  
Hollywood Athletic Club  
Los Angeles  
Through Oct. 2

**“Pack It Up! Building a Tech Pack” webinar by Fashion Business Inc.**  
online

### Oct. 5

**DG Expo Fabric and Trim Show**

**Miami Airport Convention Center**  
Miami  
Through Oct. 6

### Oct. 6

**Atlanta Apparel Market**  
AmericasMart  
Atlanta  
Through Oct. 10

### Oct. 8

**Art Hearts Fashion**  
Beverly Hilton

**Beverly Hills, Calif.**  
Through Oct. 14

There's more  
on [ApparelNews.net](http://ApparelNews.net).

For calendar details and contact information, visit [ApparelNews.net/calendar](http://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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## Mergers, Acquisitions and Bankruptcies: What's in the Cards for the Apparel and Retail Sectors?

By Deborah Belgum Senior Editor

Nobody would disagree that it has been a challenging year for clothing manufacturers and the retailers they supply.

Shoppers are flocking to online sites to snap up purchases while spending more money on dining out and traveling. This has left tried-and-true retailers and manufacturers in a quandary.

Recently, **Delta Galil** bought three Los Angeles labels—**7 For All Mankind**, **Splendid** and **Ella Moss**—from **VF Corp.**, which had seen revenues from those three contemporary brands shrink over the last few years.

At the same time, a number of retailers and manufacturers have resorted to declaring bankruptcy as consumers shift their shopping patterns and tastes. Orange County, Calif.-based surfwear and skatewear retailer **Quiksilver** recently emerged from bankruptcy by restructuring its \$800 million debt and whittling down its retail landscape.

We caught up with several finance-industry executives to talk about the merger-and-acquisition scene and whether more bankruptcies are on the horizon.

**Recently, several Los Angeles apparel companies have been sold or are up for sale while major surfwear manufacturers/retailers have emerged from bankruptcy. What does the M&A and bankruptcy landscape look like for the rest of the year and why?**

**Mark Bienstock, Managing Director, Express Trade Capital**

Apparel has historically been a very unattractive industry for takeovers and for good reason. Hedge funds and other

buyout vehicles are interested in growth industries such as technology, life sciences, etc., that have a good underlying story to tell.

Apparel has very little growth prospects with the number of retailers that continue to close down. Generally, in the apparel business, sellers feel the company is worth much more than the equity on the balance sheet dictates.

It is a fact that the real value of most apparel companies is the talent of the key personnel and properly valuing that intangible is extremely difficult, making mergers a very unlikely outcome.

**Sydnee Breuer, Executive Vice President, Rosenthal & Rosenthal**

The retail landscape continues to remain extremely difficult with bricks-and-mortar stores' sales lagging, resulting in downward pressure on margins and the bottom line.

I believe we are going to see an increase in retail bankruptcies, store closings and liquidating businesses. This will obviously have a negative effect on the manufacturers and importers who supply the retailers, who will also experience a downturn in revenue, further exacerbating what is already a very challenging environment for them.

They will have limited options facing them. They may choose to close/liquidate or file for bankruptcy. Another alternative, however, would be to go through the mergers-and-acquisitions process, perhaps before the situation becomes so dire.

This may allow the manufacturer/importer to combine forces with a complementary or similar business to improve the sales and most likely streamline the operating expenses by taking advantage of economies of scale. M&A to a private-

equity firm affords the manufacturer/importer professional management and perhaps turnaround experience to assist with hopefully returning the company to profitability.

Additionally, private-equity firms continue to raise funds and need to find acquisitions to invest in.

So, yes, the M&A activity will continue throughout the rest of the year and for the foreseeable future.

**Gino Clark, Senior Vice President, Portfolio Manager, Western Region Capital Business Credit**

As the retail model continues to rapidly shift and expansion plans wane, so do the balance sheets of major retailers.

Combine this with a very polarizing presidential election, the Federal Reserve teasing interest rate increases off and on this year, and overall uncertain global economic landscape, this year has been anything but normal for the retail sector.

At Capital Business Credit, we continue to see a lot of volatility, particularly in the juniors apparel market, and wouldn't rule out seeing more bankruptcy activity this year or early into the first quarter of 2017 after holiday sales are tallied.

This volatility requires us to be extremely nimble when working with these retailers as things can shift dramatically within a single season.

When it comes to M&A activity for the remainder of the year, we believe investors are hunting for value and opportunistic buys over premium buys. We don't expect to see any more acquisitions like the purchase of *Jet.com* by **Walmart** but rather expect to see private equity and/or Asian investors looking to snatch up good deals from potentially struggling brands.




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**Rob Greenspan, President and Chief Executive, Greenspan Consult Inc.**

My clients and I are always watching and talking about the mergers-and-acquisitions market, as that is a strategic option for many of my clients.

The M&A market is still seeking viable, profitable and branded companies that can continue to grow and prosper. From my point of view, in the M&A market, there are still large amounts of money/cash available to purchase apparel companies.

The potential buyers are out there, but they have to be won over by the seller. The buyers seem to be more selective now, taking their time to review and analyze the prospective sellers. And with business conditions as they are, along with all of the consolidation over the past years, there appears to be fewer qualified sellers now than before.

Concerning the bankruptcy landscape, with poor retail conditions working against apparel manufacturers, no one should be surprised to see more business closures during the next 12 months.

Retail orders seem to be down overall as compared to 2015 and market conditions don't seem to be improving. This includes retailers as well.

Credit terms to retailers are tightening with some retail credit lines being eliminated completely.

Unfortunately, this will continue to sort itself out and the weakest will not survive.

**Sunnie Kim, President and Chief Executive, Hana Financial**

Bankruptcies are generally a function of the overall finan-



Mark Bienstock, Managing Director, Express Trade Capital



Sydnee Breuer, Executive Vice President, Rosenthal & Rosenthal



Gino Clark, Senior Vice President, Portfolio Manager, Western Region Capital Business Credit



Rob Greenspan, President and Chief Executive, Greenspan Consult Inc.



Sunnie Kim, Chief Executive and President, Hana Financial

Branded businesses, even the ones that may have lost market share, are seeing opportunities.

Financing markets remain in good shape, and the economy is faring well, which seems to have more people window shopping for opportunities.

**Robert Myers, Chief Commercial Officer, Republic Business Credit**

Stories surface weekly around various retail struggles throughout the country, whether it's **Macy's**, **Ralph Lauren**, **Aéropostale**, **Chico's**, **Sears** or the liquida-

tion of **Sports Authority**. Even successful retailers such as **Walmart** and **Walgreens** are scheduled to close more than 100 stores in 2016.

As future retail uncertainty remains, it will put greater pressure on traditional measurements when assessing value for M&A transactions. M&A valuations balance the cost of capital to run the business combined with future financial performance. As future cash flows become harder to predict, borrowing costs will increase and apparel-related firms will have fewer selling opportunities.

With retailers showing mixed results, manufacturers will experience decreased M&A activity for the remainder of 2016 and the first half of 2017.

Retailers are highly leveraged, forced to issue higher yielding bonds to maintain more-expensive working capital to evolve their struggling businesses. The greater borrowing rates do increase the likelihood of bankruptcy.

Despite several manufacturers and retailers emerging from bankruptcy in 2016, there are several more that will file as their debt obligations become due in the upcoming years.

While leverage isn't always an indicator of bankruptcy, increased distress and potential recessionary concerns will see ad-

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cial climate. Therefore, these trends seem to be cyclical.

Unfortunately, the last 18 to 24 months have been extremely tough for apparel retailers as manifested by some very high-profile bankruptcies.

Is this current cycle over? I think it may depend largely on the upcoming elections. Whoever is the victor, their economic policies will have a tremendous impact on the apparel industry—especially through trade policies and tariffs.

I do think that more mergers-and-acquisitions activity is on the horizon, specifically by private-equity firms. The trend appears to be up as 2015 saw 93 acquisitions compared to 81 in 2014, according to **Meridian Capital**.

Although there still remains some uncertainty with respect to interest rates and other Fed policies, many private-equity firms are sitting on considerable cash reserves and are looking for solid investments at reasonable premiums—especially while interest rates remain relatively low, supporting debt-financing options.

**Louis Mastrianni, Managing Director and Head of Apparel Commercial Banking, JP Morgan Chase & Co.**

There continues to be interest in the apparel space on the acquisition front from both strategic and financial buyers.

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# INDUSTRY FOCUS: FINANCE

Continued from page 7

ditional bankruptcies. It is essential that apparel manufacturers and distributors work with their lenders to check the default and slow-payment risk of their retail customers. This is routinely offered by factoring and asset-based lenders.

## Dave Reza, Senior Vice President, Western Region, Milberg Factors

The environment in the apparel sector as a whole continues to be a challenging one for retailers, manufacturers and importers alike.

With few exceptions, retailers are reporting declining year-over-year operating results as consumers spend disposable income elsewhere. In addition, retailers are struggling to keep up with the pace of the transition from retail to online sales. Given these dynamics, it would not be a surprise to see some high-profile bankruptcies in the coming months. Case in point, vis-à-vis action sports, we have already seen the liquidation of two leading retailers—**Sports Authority** and **Sport Chalet**—along with the bankruptcy filing of retailer **PacSun**.

Ironically, there is still liquidity in the private-equity market, so investors are still looking for opportunities. With interest rates probably going up after the presidential election, there may be opportunities for both buyers and sellers to consummate deals despite the poor retail outlook.

The challenge before the M&A community is whether they are truly acquiring a “brand” with strategic impetus or if they are merely creating a liquidity event for a “label” and its principals.

## Ken Wengrod, President, FTC Commercial Corp.

As I predicted last year, I still foresee more consolidation in our industry. The larger retail players have been working on small margins with high debt, and they are rapidly losing their market shares. Consequently, those manufacturers with high-sales concentrations that have been selling to these large retail-



Robert Myers,  
Chief Commercial  
Officer, Republic  
Business Credit



Louis Mastrianni,  
Managing Director  
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Commercial Banking,  
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Dave Reza, Senior  
Vice President,  
Western Region,  
Milberg Factors



Ken Wengrod,  
President, FTC  
Commercial Corp.



Paul Zaffaroni,  
Managing Director,  
Roth Capital Partners

consumers. I believe that the power buyers will be looking to acquire these new companies, which would complement and expand their existing product lines.

## Paul Zaffaroni, Managing Director Roth Capital Partners

Retail apparel M&A and bankruptcies will continue in the fourth quarter of 2016 as clothing makers adjust to a rapidly changing landscape, where consumers are increasing their

ers share the same burden and the damages.

They have a higher chance of either self-liquidating or eventually filing for a bankruptcy because they were surviving only on a prayer. The leadership within these enterprises was only driven by short-term goals and failed to build a brand with a strong financial base and a strong consumer loyalty. Right now, it's all about cash. The companies (domestically and internationally) that successfully saved and accumulated cash have the power to drive the mergers-and-acquisitions markets in 2016, beyond what happened in 2015.

Previously, the focus on M&A was to cut the cost and to maximize profits, but today the nontraditional power buyers are being disruptive innovators by using new technology such as data mining and by finding ways to acquire strong consumer loyalty. The purpose of M&A has shifted to maximize customer networks and diversify platforms.

The economic atmosphere of a low-interest rate is driving these power buyers to buy out companies that have already created a strong consumer relationship.

The turmoil in the recent international markets and the divergence in economic and monetary policies will also push up the demand for M&A in the near future.

I noticed that there is a tremendous growth of nano-fabrics and a strong demand for athletic, leisure and outdoor wear by

spending online and allocating more of their budget to experiences, including dining out, travel and fitness.

Mall-based retailers are not going away, but many will need to rationalize their store base given the decline in mall foot traffic. **Aéropostale** recently emerged from bankruptcy under a unique structure and ownership group that includes **Authentic Brands Group**, **Simon Property Group**, **General Growth Properties**, **Gordon Brothers Retail Partners** and **Hilco Merchant Resources**.

The new **Aéropostale** will have a smaller store count of more than 200 stores (instead of more than 800 stores) but will have an increased focus on e-commerce and licensing, leveraging the expertise of brand-management firm **Authentic Brands**.

I expect to see a similar outcome with **American Apparel** with the ultimate buyer closing a significant number of stores and working with a brand-management firm to unlock brand value through a licensing program and expansion of e-commerce.

Direct-to-consumer brands that sell through the Internet, catalog or their own retail stores are one of the bright spots today in retail apparel M&A. Private-equity buyers are interested in this category given the “capital light” nature of these businesses and how quickly they can “scale” with the right digital strategy. ●

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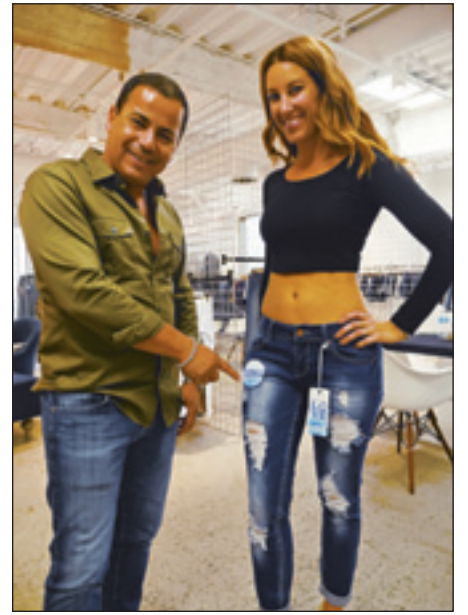




MARKET SCENES: The California Market Center lobby on the first day of market



Michael Godigian, vice president of YMI, standing, shows his brand's products.



David Vered, YMI Jeans president, left. Kelly Wilson models jeans.

## Majors Market *Continued from page 1*

ment-driven show at Blank Slate. European brands such as **Closet London**, **Maac London** and **Boo Hoo** were represented in the showroom. Boo Hoo is sold online-only. A focus of the recent Majors Market was to introduce the brand to physical stores, said Mark Hackney, chief executive officer of Blank Slate.

The biannual Majors Market is focused on department stores, chain-store business and those running big-box stores. It has been a tough season for these retailers. On Aug. 11, **Macy's Inc.** announced that it would close 100 of its stores. On Sept. 19, **Kmart** announced that it would close 64 stores. For more than a year, the major growth vehicle for **Nordstrom Inc.** has been its off-price **Nordstrom Rack** stores, not its full-price stores.

Some vendors said that the market was reflected in the pace of business at the show. "The buyers are very cautious. They're

picky. They have to see if it checks," said Sherwin Ross, who represents **Unique Garments Co. Ltd.**, a Chinese company that makes private-label clothing for the large retailers who typically shop the Majors Market.

Most vendors interviewed for this article reported success at Majors, but they also noted that the show had its challenges. David Vered, president of **YMI Jeans**, the Los Angeles-headquartered company known for its figure-shaping Wanna Betta Butt jeans, forecast that his brand's sales would increase 10 percent to 20 percent over last year. However, he classified the recent market's pace as merely solid.

Working in the industry's favor was that brands were offering a lot more styles for Spring '17 compared with past seasons, Vered said. YMI expanded its tops categories to include new looks such as chambray and Tencel shirts and has been offering twill bottoms along with its denim bottoms.

However, Vered said that one trend could catapult sales. "People are talking about the

election, but weather is going to make the difference," he said. "You need the weather on your side. If we get a cold October, retail sales will jump. We need it to be in the 50s and 40s at night."

Success at Majors depended on a bet that many buyers were not going to make orders for the Spring '17 season, said Alison Budow of the **Alison Budow Sales** showroom.

"Positioning yourself as a 'wear now and buy now' vendor is key," Budow said. Her showroom took orders with an Oct. 30 delivery date. She promised many of her orders could be turned around in four weeks. The quick delivery dates were crucial for a market that was early, said Patricia Welman, division manager of the **Simply Ruby** brand, which was exhibiting at Alison Budow Sales.

In recent years, the Majors Market has been scheduled in early October, and many buyers were not prepared to buy Spring-season clothes at the recent show, Welman said. They didn't have their open-to-buy budgets ready for the market. More buyers

took notes, Budow said. "We're having to schedule more follow-up meetings. It's two times the amount of work," she said.

Some buyers also are ordering earlier because of the early Chinese New Year, which begins on Jan. 28. In the past two years, it started in early-to-mid February. Chinese factories typically close for a month in observance of the holiday.

"Everyone is trying to prepare earlier," Steve Cho said. A 17-year veteran of the clothing business, he started **Sketch Apparel** in February. "We're ordering in advance so we don't chase the items we need to buy before Chinese New Year."

Retailers seen at the Majors Market included **Dillard's**, **Nordstrom**, **Von Maur**, **Nasty Gal**, **TJ Maxx**, **Rue21**, **Stage Stores Inc.**, **Bealls**, **JCPenney** and **Gordmans**. ●

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## Textile Show *Continued from page 1*

to local attendees, visitors came from as far as New York and Canada.

“Who was here? Everybody,” said Phil Fox, owner of **Fox Fabrics**, which was showing an international assortment of fabrics from mills such as Italy-based **DBC Tessuti**, **Polistyle**, **SMI Tessuti**, **Efilan**, **Furpile SpA** and **Polo Tessuti**; Japan based **Debs Corp.**; India-based **Manuela**; China-based **Max Vogue**; and Taiwan-based **Wen Feng** as well as Fox’s newest mill, **Qualitex**, a manufacturer of knits and full-package production from Estonia.

“It was fantastic; we had a great two days,” Fox said at the end of the second day of the show. “We’re quite satisfied. Industrywide, it’s been hesitant—it’s an election year, there’s a lot of uncertainty. People are being cautious. However, the mood was positive. They’re looking forward to a successful 2017.”

It was a similar story at **Solid Stone Fabrics** for Jon Alba, vice president of sales for the company, which specializes in novelty knits for the swim and activewear market. “The turnout has been good,” Alba said, adding that in addition to swim and activewear accounts he had met with costume designers, dancewear makers, yoga brands and some tabletop companies.

“People will say they’re optimistic, but it’s a little cautious. They’re at least cautiously optimistic,” he said, adding that the company is trying to diversify to address the needs of a few different markets.

“We have an Italian spandex line; we do fabric printing in the U.S. and we [import] from China and Korea,” he said.

This was the first time in several years that **Tricot Liesse** was at the show. The Montreal company produces high-end knits for the upscale brands, including many in

the swim market.

Designer Nathalie Camier said the company recently hired a new Los Angeles-based sales representative, Leslie B. Lesh, and decided it was a good time to return to the textile show.

Camier said sourcing fabrics from Montreal could be a good fit for U.S. companies looking for faster deliveries than China. Surprisingly, she said, she also met with several companies from Vancouver at the show.

At the **Buhler Quality Yarns** booth, Vic-

tor Almeida, textile engineer, and P.J. McCord, director of sales for the Americas, said they were fielding a lot of questions about the Jefferson, Ga.-based yarn spinner’s products.

“Brands are asking where the fiber comes from—we’re getting more questions like that,” McCord said.

Buhler produces higher-end yarns made from premium fibers such as **Supima**, **Tencel** and **MicroModal**.

“A lot of the small brands look for something different—better quality,” Almeida said. “They’re looking for U.S.-made and they want to manufacture here.”

### Sourcing resources from LA, Korea

This season, the Korean fabric and manufacturing resources in the Korean Pavilion moved from the CMC’s Fashion Theater to the 13th floor, near the LA Textile show.

The Pavilion was organized by **KOTRA**, the Korean trade association, and featured a mix of returning exhibitors and companies showing for the first time.

Among the returning exhibitors was **Han Eun Tex Co., Ltd.**, a Korean mill that makes tricot and power-mesh fabrics.

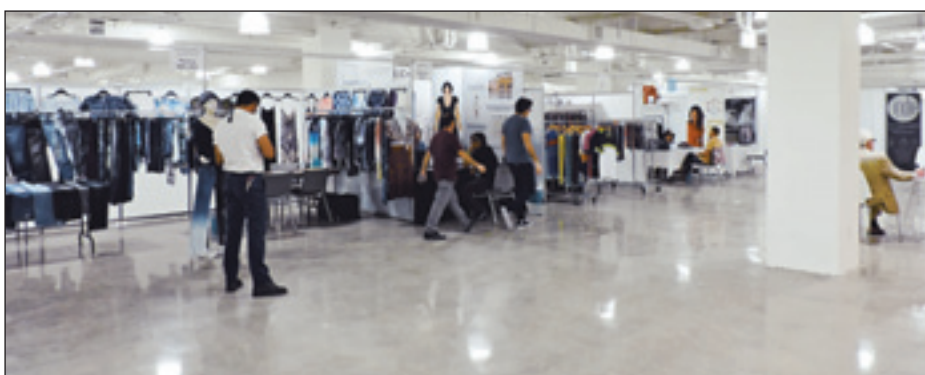
“This area is better than the first floor—even though some people didn’t know what this area was,” said Shin Wansu, Han Eun Tex assistant manager.

Han Eun Tex sells its fabrics in Korea, the U.S., China and Europe. In the U.S., California is its largest market, Wansu said.

“That’s why we’re here at this show,” he said.

**Visionland**—a vertical factory with facilities in Korea, Shanghai and Indonesia—was a first-time exhibitor, said Brian Chung, Visionland deputy general manager.

The company specializes in women’s





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# Factory Direct Returns With Focus on Sourcing Opportunities for Small- to Mid-Sized Companies

By Alison A. Nieder *Executive Editor*

Manufacturers looking for low-minimum sourcing and larger companies looking for domestic sourcing opportunities turned out at the Sept. 26–28 run of **Factory Direct** at **The New Mart** in Los Angeles.

The show, launched in 2015, featured a mix of local and international sourcing resources as well as technology companies and other resources that can work with the requirements of small- and mid-sized manufacturers.

“We have USA, Mexico, India and Nepal,” said show founder David Dea, ticking off the home countries of Factory Direct exhibitors.

Dea said in addition to local attendees, the show drew brands from San Francisco, Seattle, Houston and Nebraska.

**Pacific Sunwear** and **The Buckle** were among the attendees.

This was the first time exhibiting at Factory Direct for **Shol Textiles**, an 8-year-old company that produces interlining and fusibles made in China and shipped internationally.

Owner Shane Rabineau said he met with a large company on the first day.

“It’s been great,” he said. “We’ll do this again.”

Rabineau said he was encouraged to exhibit at Factory Direct by another first-time exhibitor, **Garment Alliance**. The Los Angeles-based company produces apparel domestically in one of three factories in Southern California as well as in Mexico.

“We can produce up to 15,000 units per week domestically between three factories. And all our factories are compliant,” said



**DIGITAL LEATHER:** Los Angeles-based digital print company CADfab can print on a range of fabrics, including natural fibers, polyester, nylon, cashmere and leather, pictured above.

company president Mike Reynoso. “In Mexico, it’s up to a million units per month.”

At Factory Direct, Reynoso said he saw some big potential clients as well as companies looking for smaller orders.

“A lot want to do 40 pieces per style, which is okay,” he said. “Domestically we can work with those customers. There aren’t a lot that can.”

Reynoso was touting the work of some of his partners, including cut-and-sew facilities **Body Basics** in Santa Ana, Calif., and **Alom Fashion** in Tijuana; screen printer **Ink Throwers** in Tijuana; and **Sunjistix**, a third-

party logistics company in Rancho Cucamonga, Calif.

“We work with a lot of bigger apparel manufacturers. They’re always looking for a 3PL that can work with the bigger retailers,” he said.

Los Angeles-based digital print company **CADfab** was another newcomer to the show.

Owner Maya Roth explained that the company can

digitally print on a range of fabrics from natural fibers to polyester, leather, nylon and cashmere.

“We do samples all the way to production,” she said.

Scott Wilson, vice president of sales for **JS Apparel**, has been showing at Factory Direct since the beginning, when he met with a company that turned into a good client for JS Apparel, a Los Angeles-based manufacturer of everything from cut-and-sew knits to more-tailored woven pieces.

“The show was excellent,” Wilson said. “We had quality buyers—a couple in particular who are pretty good players. If they work out, they would be big accounts. We’re pleased with the outcome.” ●

Spann said. “We’ve had decent traffic. A few people wanted to meet with us and they found us. It’s worth being here.”

**Fil & Needle**, a Los Angeles-based private-label manufacturer with no minimums, was also showing in the Sourcing section as well as within the LA Textile Show.

Fil & Needle’s Nekia Hattley said traffic seemed slow but said she talked to quite a few people during the show. Interestingly, Hattley said, even though there was more traffic on the LA Textile side of the show, her numbers in Sourcing were higher.

This was Jennifer Evans’ fifth time at the LA Textile show. Evans, who owns **TEG International**, a vertical factory in Los Angeles and San Francisco, said she wasn’t asked to be part of the new Sourcing show but had a prominent space within the center of LA Textile.

On the last day of the show, Evans was fielding a steady stream of inquiries, including one from a New York manufacturer who had spent three days shopping the show.

“We work with more and more people moving production from New York,” Evans said.

TEG provides a range of development services, including patterns, samples and small-volume production—“mostly for small designers, no minimums,” Evans said. “This is great for us. It generates good business.” ●

# BCBGMaxAzria Downsizing With Big Layoffs

**BCBGMaxAzriaGroup**, one of the longest-running contemporary brands in Los Angeles, is laying off 123 people from its company effective Nov. 1, according to filings with the state Employment Development Department.

The news follows pink slips issued weeks ago by three other well-known Los Angeles contemporary brands—**7 For All Mankind**, **Splendid** and **Ella Moss**. In early September, it was made public that 65 people were being let go. Since then, that has been updated to 105 layoffs. Fifty people were dismissed from 7 For All Mankind and 55 were laid off from the company’s sister labels of Splendid and Ella Moss. All three labels were recently bought by Israeli apparel company **Delta Galil**.

In addition, Los Angeles blue-jeans maker **J Brand** notified the state Employment Development Department in August that it was dismissing 27 people.

The BCBGMaxAzria layoffs come months after a new interim chief executive took over. Marty Staff came on board in April to help turn the company around. The company’s founder, Max Azria, was put on paid leave.

On his **LinkedIn** page, Staff said that he had been hired by the company’s majority shareholder, **Guggenheim Partners**, to stabilize the company and profitably grow the brand while managing a fast-growing e-commerce platform and an expansive international footprint.

Staff has an extensive resume, having worked at **JA Apparel** (Joseph Abboud Ap-

parel) for eight years as the president and chief executive and at other well-known labels such as **Hugo Boss**, **Calvin Klein** and **Polo Ralph Lauren**.

BCBGMaxAzria has been struggling for years with a heavy debt burden that in 2013 came to \$685 million. Of that debt, Guggenheim Partners owned \$475 million.

Last year, BCBG said it had restructured its debt and received a \$135 million cash infusion from investors.

But recent Web postings by ex-employees included one person complaining that because business was not that great right now, employees were working fewer hours.

Normally, the company is a tried-and-true presence at **New York Fashion Week**, with runway shows for BCBGMaxAzria and its high-end label **Hervé Leger by Max Azria**. But the company skipped the recent run of New York shows for Spring 2017.

Azria, who was born in Tunisia, came to Los Angeles and founded BCBG in 1989. The company’s name in French stands for “Bon Chic, Bon Genre,” a Parisian slang term that means “good style.”

—Deborah Belgun



Max Azria

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## Textiles *Continued from previous page*

woven tops and produces for large U.S. retailers such as **The Limited**.

Chung said business at the textile show was “okay.”

“We didn’t expect all of a sudden for business to come out,” he said, adding that he was hoping to meet with companies looking for better fabrics and large-quantity production.

“We want to work with wholesalers that bring big volume,” he said.

The Korean Pavilion was located across from a new area for the LA Textile show, the new Sourcing at LA Textile, which featured a small group of exhibitors including **HD Clothing**, **DJ Laundry**, **IndieSource**, **Tukatech** and **Jennifer Loel Designs**.

**Sustainable Source Studios** had a booth at the show, where Michael F. Spann Jr. was showcasing some of the new developments made from **Recover**, a long-staple yarn made from recycled cotton that has been “recovered” from cotton fabric scraps collected from apparel factories. The fiber is made by Spanish textile maker **Hilaturas Ferre**. Spann said new developments included an eco-friendly version of tri-blend made from 50 percent recycled polyester, 25 percent upcycled cotton and 25 percent Tencel.

“Everyone is interested in sustainability,”

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# Directives West: S/S '17 Trends of the Season

The key looks for Spring/Summer 2017 got the spotlight treatment when **Directives West** presented its runway show on Sept. 26 in the **California Market Center** Fashion Theater during **LA Majors Market**.

"We've always been the capital of cool, but now everyone is discovering it, too," said Shelda Hartwell-Hale, Directives West vice president.

Covering the contemporary, updated, juniors and girls' markets, the runway show featured five trend groups. California Chill was an ode to West Coast-inspired trends that blended street, surf, gypsy and active. Girl Code presented a retro California take on streetwear dressing inspired by '90s club kids and Goth mall style. In the Blue Jean Baby trend, Hartwell-Hale pointed to "all the newness in denim," which included key items such as the ankle jean, the denim jacket and the denim dress. Sugar & Spice was the girlie, sweet, feminine trend that includes important items such as the two-piece set, the soft short and the Victorian blouse. Hartwell-Hale described the "progressive and playful" Eccentrics trend as "our most forward theme." Blending feminine pieces with streetwear and active silhouettes, the trend group was meant to be mixed, matched and layered for a personalized look.—*Alison A. Nieder*

NORMAN ZELLER



Soprano top, Indigo Rein jean, Maxberry necklace, INZI handbag



Ashley by 26 International shirt, Angie skirt, Just Found bomber, The Carpet Bag handbag



Soprano top, Indigo Rein jean, Kool Konnections earrings, Be Mine NYC clutch



Just Found bralette, Jessica Simpson leggings, Ashley by 26 International bomber, Deb and Dave clutch



dRA romper, Something Special visor, Raj clutch



Crimson In Grace outfit, Something Special visor



A.G.B. outfit, Something Special hat



Trixxi top, Unionbay short, Be Mine NYC handbag



H.I.P. cami, Wallflower Denim short, Signature 8 jacket, Be Mine NYC tote



To The Way top, Sound Style by Beau Dawson jean, Crisara hat



Penelope Project top, Dollhouse short, OMG handbag



Love Tree blouse, Speechless romper, Ashley Mason jacket, Be Mine NYC hat, Maxberry pins, Deb and Dave handbag, Melie Bianco keychain



Sugar Lips top, Eden Society pant, Maxberry choker



NYTT bodysuit, Romeo+ Juliet pant, Vero Moda jacket, Maxberry choker



Status By Chenault top, Vintage America jean, Amma duster, Raj handbag



Cha Cha Vente tunic, Earl Jeans pant, Crisara hat, INZI clutch



Band Crush bralette and tee, Cloud Chaser/Freshman 1996 short, Unionbay jacket, Something Special cap, Wallflower socks



Hot-As-Hell dress and kimono, Makers of Dreams slip



WAYF top and short, Signature 8 jacket, Be Mine NYC clutch



Keepsake outfit



HYFVE maxi romper, Say What bomber, Kool Konnections choker, Something Special headband



Angie maxi, Maxberry dress, OMG handbag



Ashley Mason maxi romper, Amethyst vest, Maxberry necklace and anklets



Wyldeheart outfit, Wallflower necklace, Deb and Dave clutch



J.O.A. top, Hidden Jeans pant



River + Rose top, Stitch + Star jean, Supplies by Unionbay jacket, KC Creative handbag



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## Jobs Available

### ASSOCIATE DESIGNER

We are currently seeking an Associate Designer to join our design team for women's clothing. We do private label for major retailers. We are looking for a unique individual who is driven and confident. This position offers potential for growth within the company as the company itself grows, and if the designer continuously goes above and beyond what is asked. The designer should be passionate and continuously strive for quality of work with a positive attitude.

Responsibilities and duties:

- Work within the design team to bring collections to fruition.
- Bring ideas to the table that are on-brand, within cost and appropriate for demographic.
- Source fabrics and trims.
- Attend fittings when needed.
- Shop the market and keep up on trends.
- Track and follow up with suppliers and vendors.
- Meets independently with vendors when manager is absent.

Requirements:

- Ability to work independently and as part of a team.
- Must have knowledge in fabrications, trims and embellishments.
- Must have experience working with prints and novelty, woven and knits.
- Pattern knowledge.
- In executing these responsibilities, time management skills to meet all deadlines.
- Ability to work well in a teamwork-oriented environment through strong communication and interpersonal skills.
- Comfortable in Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator to execute CAD flat sketches.
- Detail oriented, excellent follow up skills, organized.
- Understanding of garment construction, fit and finishes.

- Computer Proficiency in Microsoft Office Programs, Photoshop, Illustrator.

- Graduate with Design or Art - related degree

Please forward all resume to:

[amanda.j@bluprintcorp.com](mailto:amanda.j@bluprintcorp.com)

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Pls forward resume to: [Jordan@velvetheart.com](mailto:Jordan@velvetheart.com)

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### SALES EXEC - JRS FASHION TOPS

Highly motivated seller to join our Sales Team. Qualified candidates will have established relationships with national retailers—department specialty & big box—for brand & private label accts. Candidates must have a proven track record in successfully pioneering new business. 5+ yrs exp. in JRS Market. Travel is a must. Email to: [tlamantain@selfesteemclothing.com](mailto:tlamantain@selfesteemclothing.com)

## Jobs Available

### TEXTILE ARTWORK DESIGNER FOR PRINT/SURFACE/GRAPHIC/CAD/APPAREL

We are currently seeking a Graphic Designer to join our graphic design team for women's clothing. This designer must have a good eye for color and trends and knowledge of sublimation, silkscreen and textile printing. This position offers potential for growth within the company as the company itself grows, and if the designer continuously goes above and beyond what is asked. The designer should be passionate and continuously strive for quality of work with a positive attitude. Please NO Media/Advertisement graphics.

Responsibilities and duties:

- Assist design team in creation of the monthly print collections.
- Recolor artwork, color separation and index prints.
- Clean artwork and put into repeat.
- Make alternative placements and create sister prints.
- Work with the product development and design team to create exciting artwork year-round.

Qualifications:

- Must have a background in Art and Illustration.
- Excellent organizational, time management and detail-oriented skills.
- Ability to work well in a teamwork-oriented environment through strong communication and interpersonal skills.
- Must be able to prioritize and meet deadlines.
- No Media/Advertisement graphics.
- Must have an Associate's Degree
- Must be proficient in Adobe software suite (Photoshop, Illustrator).
- Must have significant CAD/Sublimation/Silkscreen related experience.

Please forward all resume to:

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  - Be proficient with Patternmaking software
- Email resume with salary history to: [hrdept@rewash.com](mailto:hrdept@rewash.com) or fax to (323) 657-5344

*KUT*

### SPEC ANALYST

Seeking team player to be responsible for writing specification sheets & creating line sheets. Candidates must have 1 to 2 yrs exp. & be proficient in PC applications. Must be detail-oriented & possess the ability to work well under pressure. Garment construction knowledge a must. Send resume to: [hr@swatfame.com](mailto:hr@swatfame.com)

## Jobs Available

### ASSISTANT DESIGNER

We are currently seeking an Assistant Designer/Illustrator to join our design team for women's clothing. We are looking for a unique individual who has an artistic background. We are hoping to expand our line of whimsical screen print t-shirts. Many of these are similar in imagery to the type you would find on greeting cards. The assistant designer will assist in any design area needed, but will also have the unique go-to talent to sketch or paint ideas for elements for these types of tops. Common elements we use are cute girls with fun wording, whimsical butterflies, conversational style fruit, sassy leopards, etc.

Responsibilities and duties:

- Design go-to for new artwork elements with a hand drawn approach (can be done in photo-shop but needs a whimsical, hand-drawn feel).
- CAD illustration for flat sketches.
- CAD illustration to show print placement.
- Comfortable in Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator to execute CAD drawings.
- Create and manage purchase orders.
- Track and follow up with suppliers and vendors.
- Assist design team in creation of the collection.

Requirements:

- Must have knowledge in fabrications and trims.
  - In executing these responsibilities, time management skills to meet all deadlines.
  - Ability to work well in a teamwork-oriented environment through strong communication and interpersonal skills.
  - Detail oriented, excellent follow up skills, organized.
  - Understanding of garment construction, fit and finishes.
  - Computer Proficiency in Microsoft Office Programs, Photoshop, Illustrator.
  - Graduate with Design or Art - related degree
- Please forward all resume to: [amanda.j@bluprintcorp.com](mailto:amanda.j@bluprintcorp.com)

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- Excellent communication skills- Communication between vendors, design team, and sales is extremely important

- Must have a design eye and strong technical background. Tracking and executing sample from the development through final stages of production.

- Excellent problem-solving, decision-making, and time- management skills.
  - Ability to juggle priorities and successfully meet deadlines
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- Please forward all resume to: [Susie.y@bluprintcorp.com](mailto:Susie.y@bluprintcorp.com)



## Jobs Available

### GRAPHIC ARTIST-GIRLS 7-16

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Submit PORTFOLIO with resume to: screengraphics2016@gmail.com

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### NYC OR LA BASED SELLER

"LA Based Kids Co. looking for either NYC or LA Based Seller. We are looking for an experienced & highly motivated seller to join our Sales Team. Qualified candidates will have established relationships with national retailers—department specialty & big box—for brand & private label accts. Candidates must have a proven track record in successfully pioneering new business. 5+ yrs exp. in Kids Market. Duties would include opening new accounts, managing current accounts & Travel is a must. Please email at ..... info@avaandyelly.com

### QUALITY CONTROL MANAGER

Men's apparel manufacturer seeking experienced field QC Manager. Must have experience with garment dye production as well as all product categories (tops, bottoms, outerwear, accessories, knits & woven's). Must be bilingual (english & spanish).

Please send resume to asolei@sbcglobal.net

## Jobs Available

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### PATTERNMAKER FOR WOMEN'S TOP

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### ACCT RECEIVABLE,CUSTOMER SERV.

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## Jobs Available

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### PRODUCTION COORDINATOR-COMMERCE

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EMAIL TO: UNIQUESTYLEHR@GMAIL.COM

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