

CALIFORNIA ApparelNews

THE VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY FOR 73 YEARS

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THE WONDER OF FASHION

During Long Beach City College's 38th biennial fashion show, students unveiled designs that captured influences from the classic tale of "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland." For more student designs from "The Wonderland: Mad Fashion Show," see p. 8.

LUCIANO PICAZO

Tuesday Lionelle

Wet Seal Plots Comeback for the Social-Media Age

By Andrew Asch *Retail Editor*

A comeback for **Wet Seal** is being assembled in a 1,800-square-foot industrial work loft in downtown Los Angeles.

It's much different from the retailer's former sprawling headquarters and distribution center in Foothill Ranch, Calif., 47 miles south of Los Angeles.

That office closed more than one year ago when Wet Seal's business model stopped working for the company, said Ramez Toubassy, the president of both Wet Seal and **Gordon Brothers Brands**, which is a division of **Gordon Brothers**, the investment firm acquiring Wet Seal's intellectual property. **Wet Seal** page 12

California Kills Assembly Bill 2379 as Similar Microfiber Initiatives Grow in Other States

By Dorothy Crouch *Associate Editor*

It might have led the charge for similar plastic microfiber bills in New York and Connecticut, but California's Assembly Bill 2379 is off the table—for now.

In February, California State Assembly Member Richard Bloom introduced the bill, which would require clothing that comprises more than 50 percent synthetic material to include an additional label instructing consumers to hand-wash the apparel instead of using a machine. The bill was introduced after different studies suggested that microfibers—many **Assembly Bill** page 10

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Where fashion gets down to businessSM



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COOPER
DESIGN
SPACE

Agenda Founder Levant Unveils New Project

Ntwrk, a video-commerce channel, was recently announced as the next project for Aaron Levant, the entrepreneur who founded the **Agenda** trade show.

"Walking away from that after 15 years was a big decision," Levant said of Agenda. More than 1,000 brands exhibit at the biannual trade shows in Long Beach, Calif., and Las Vegas. He also helped start hip-hop music festivals and pop-up markets **ComplexCon** and **Agenda Festival**.

"This is the most ambitious project that I'll lead. We are shooting for the stars," he said of the upcoming project, which is scheduled to go live later this year.

Ntwrk will feature content such as a daily shopping show, possibly a scripted show and videos from celebrities, sports stars, musicians and pop-culture VIPs. The channel will be viewed through mobile devices. Almost everything on the shows will be available for purchase. Unlike traditional media compa-

nies, Ntwrk will not gain revenue from advertisements. Partnerships and information about shows have not yet been announced.

Ntwrk will make money through the sale of products and partnerships with studios and brands. "We live between a content and e-commerce company," Levant said. "This is a blend of both of those business models." Ntwrk also will produce pop-up theme parks.

Ntwrk closed an initial financing round led by **Warner Bros. Digital Networks** and **MSA Enterprises**. It is a fund managed by **Main Street Advisors**. Its investors include music-industry giant Jimmy Iovine; basketball star LeBron James; James' agent, Maverick Carter, who also works as a businessman and media personality; movie star and former California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger; and Tom Werner. Werner's production company **The Carsey-Werner Company** was known for TV shows including "Roseanne" and "The Cosby Show."

During his tenure as a trade-show director, Levant was known for experimenting with formats and taking risks. Producing consumer days has been frequently suggested to add revenue to fashion-industry trade shows. But Levant was one of a few to produce a consumer day. About 15,000 people attended the Agenda Festival consumer day in 2017. About 50,000 people attended ComplexCon, which features musical performances, pop-up shops, art galleries and food shops. It takes place annually in November in Long Beach.

The announcement of Ntwrk comes at a time of great change and experimentation in retail. Video is considered an up-and-coming way to retail, Greg Selkoe said. He is the founder of **The Wanderset**, which mixes digital commerce and

video. He also was a founder of streetwear e-commerce company **Karmaloop**.

"Video commerce is the future! The younger generation expects to use video not only to make their buying decisions but increasingly to make purchases through video as well," Selkoe said. "Ntwrk will definitely will be a game changer just as Agenda and other things he [Levant] created were."

Ntwrk also announced a roster of executives who will work at the new venture. Gaston D Letelier will serve as vice president of licensing, and Jamie Iovine will work as its vice president of talent relations. Shanon Kelley will work

as chief revenue officer. She will direct partnerships at Ntwrk. Before Ntwrk, she served as vice president of experiential partnerships for **Vice Media**.—Andrew Asch



Aaron Levant

Activewear Brand Hylete Acquires GracedByGrit

For years, activewear brands **Hylete** and **GracedByGrit** were headquartered a couple of miles away from each other in Solana Beach, Calif., but now they are on the same team.

Hylete acquired GracedByGrit for an undisclosed amount, according to a company statement.

Kate Nowlan, GracedByGrit's cofounder, will join Hylete as the company's vice president of brand experience. Hylete started its business as a men's performance line in

2012. It later introduced women's styles. GracedByGrit took a bow in 2013 making activewear for women. Hylete's cofounder and chief executive officer, Ron Wilson, said that his company was looking for a female-driven brand to help increase sales for its women's division.

GracedByGrit also runs a nonprofit called **GrittyGirls**. The organization produces self-esteem-building workshops and seminars for girls and young women. Wilson said that he wanted to continue GracedByGrit's work with

the nonprofit.

"One of the most powerful drivers that made this deal so appealing was the fact that GracedByGrit started the nonprofit GrittyGirls. We envision the message of this foundation to be the golden thread that ties together the true spirit of what we want our female line to embody," Wilson said in a statement.

The deal comes at a time when Hylete is looking to raise more than \$6.2 million. It plans

to close the offering by June 15 and is selling up to 5 million Class B Common Stock shares. The offering is being run by **WealthForge Securities LLC**, a Richmond, Va.-based company that focuses on raising private capital. Hylete earned a net revenue of more than \$2.4 million in the first quarter of 2018, which is a 28.6 percent increase over the same quarter in the previous year, when it earned more than \$1.9 million.—A.A.



GracedByGrit founders Kimberly Caccavo (left) and Kate Nowlan



Looks from Hylete

PARADISE RANCH
designs

A beach-to-street lifestyle brand

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310-420-0125
evelinem@emblemshowroom.com
New Mart Building Ste. 707
127 E. 9th St.
LA, CA 90015

MEDIA PLAYGROUND PR
Kim 323-687-3360
kim@mediaplaygroundpr.com
845 S. Los Angeles St.
LA, CA 90014

RETAIL SALES

May Sales Beat Forecasts

May retail sales results beat forecasts, said Ken Perkins of **Retail Metrics**, a market-research firm.

U.S. retail sales increased 10.9 percent, according to Retail Metrics. He forecasted that it would increase 7.1 percent.

"May comparable-store sales advanced a better-than-expected 10.9 percent, aided by much better weather conditions and a robust labor market that released pent-up demand for seasonal merchandise and fueled consumer spending," Perkins wrote in a June 7 note.

Retailers followed by *California Apparel News* reported solid sales increases across the board. Long-suffering retailers such as **The Buckle Inc.** and **Cato Corp** posted gains. The Buckle reported a 3.6 percent increase in same-store sales. Cato reported a 9 percent increase, said John Cato, the company's chairman, president and chief executive officer.

"May same-store stores significantly exceeded our expectations," Cato said.

L Brands Inc., the parent company for **Victoria's Secret**, posted a 5 percent gain in same-store sales. **Zumiez Inc.**, a mall retailer for action-sports brands, posted same-store sales that increased 7.5 percent.

Consumers felt more bullish about the economy in May, said Lynn Franco, the direc-

May Retail Sales

	\$Sales (in millions)	% Change from yr. ago	Same-store sales % change
The Buckle	\$62.20	+1.2%	+3.6%
Cato Corp.	\$77.30	+4.0%	+9.0%
L Brands Inc.	\$851.90	+10.0%	+5.0%
Zumiez Inc.	\$59.70	+12.2%	+7.5%

Information from company reports

tor of economic indicators at **The Conference Board**. The nonprofit research group charts movement in consumer sentiment.

"Consumer confidence increased in May after a modest decline in April," Franco said. "Consumers' assessment of current conditions increased to a 17-year high." The last time consumer sentiment was this high was in March 2001.

Those surveyed who claimed business conditions are "good" increased from 34.8 percent to 38.4 percent. Those claiming business conditions are "bad" decreased from 12.3 percent to 12 percent, Franco said.

On June 7, San Francisco-headquartered **Stitch Fix Inc.** announced results for the third quarter of its 2018 fiscal year. The online personal styling service earned a net revenue of \$316.7 million, which was a 29 percent increase over the same period in the previous year.—A.A.

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STITCH @ PROJECT WOMENS

Luxury to Lifestyle Better
Womenswear and Accessories

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for Men and Young Men

POOLTRADESHOW

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and Accessories for Men and Women

CURVE LAS VEGAS

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Resort for Women and Men

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Sustainability Goes Full Circle at The North Face

Maintaining its commitment to reduce waste, Alameda, Calif.-based activewear brand **The North Face** launched a pilot program that will promote a circular-fashion system through the sale of recycled products. The North Face Renewed collection features apparel sold by the outdoor brand that was returned to the company after use. Comprising returned, defective and damaged pieces, this campaign brings greater awareness to different sustainable shopping and manufacturing options.

After customers provide the previously worn apparel to the company, the pieces are then processed for resale. Following a thorough inspection, products are cleaned and refurbished during a process that ensures the items are repaired according to The North Face’s standards.

Building upon The North Face’s past environmentally conscientious practices, the Renewed line is meant to generate attention toward manufacturing and distribution that will reduce threats to the environment by using different methods of recycling. Through repairing and reselling secondhand items, The North Face hopes to fortify its presence as a vehicle for change toward greener practices in the apparel-manufacturing industry.



“At The North Face, we take a holistic approach to sustainability,” James Rogers, director of sustainability at The North Face, said in a statement. “As we address the impacts of our products over their entire life-cycle, ‘recommerce’ is an important next step in opening new markets and minimizing our impact on the planet. We are furthering our sustainability goals without sacrificing durability or technical standards. Ultimately, as we work to scale Renewed, we will be proving a larger, circular model for the industry.”

Through the Renewed line, The North Face will offer an array of pieces from different collections, including its Summit Series and Denali jackets. This opportunity also allows consumers an opportunity to purchase apparel from previous collections they might have missed and at a more affordable cost.

The current initiative is a pilot program that offers the collection exclusively online. While The North Face Renewed remains an e-commerce venture, the company is optimistic regarding the potential for the line’s growth. The collection can be found at www.thenorthfacerenewed.com.

—Dorothy Crouch

Calendar

June 10
Fame
Moda
AccessoriesTheShow
[Pre] Coterie
Javits Center
New York
Through June 12

June 11
LA Mode 2018
Barnum Hall, Santa Monica College
Santa Monica, Calif.

June 12
CALA
Fort Mason Center
San Francisco
Through June 13

June 13
Atlanta Apparel Market
AmericasMart
Atlanta
Through June 16

June 18
Los Angeles Fashion Market
California Market Center
The New Mart
Cooper Design Space

Gerry Building
Lady Liberty Building
Academy Awards Building
Primrose Design Building
824 Building
Los Angeles
Through June 20

Designers and Agents
The New Mart
Los Angeles
Through June 20

LA Kids’ Market Select
Transit
California Market Center
Los Angeles
Through June 20

June 23
Los Angeles Professional Services presents the Black & White Ball, benefiting National Jewish Health
The Langham Huntington
Pasadena, Calif.

June 24
Midwest Apparel Trade Show
Embassy Suites
Deerfield, Ill.
Through June 25

Fashion Market Northern California
San Mateo Event Center
San Mateo, Calif.
Through June 26

June 28
Agenda
Long Beach Convention Center
Long Beach, Calif.
Through June 29

Empower Breakfast, benefiting Dress for Success
Taglyan Cultural Complex
Los Angeles

June 30
Agenda Festival
Long Beach Convention Center
Long Beach, Calif.

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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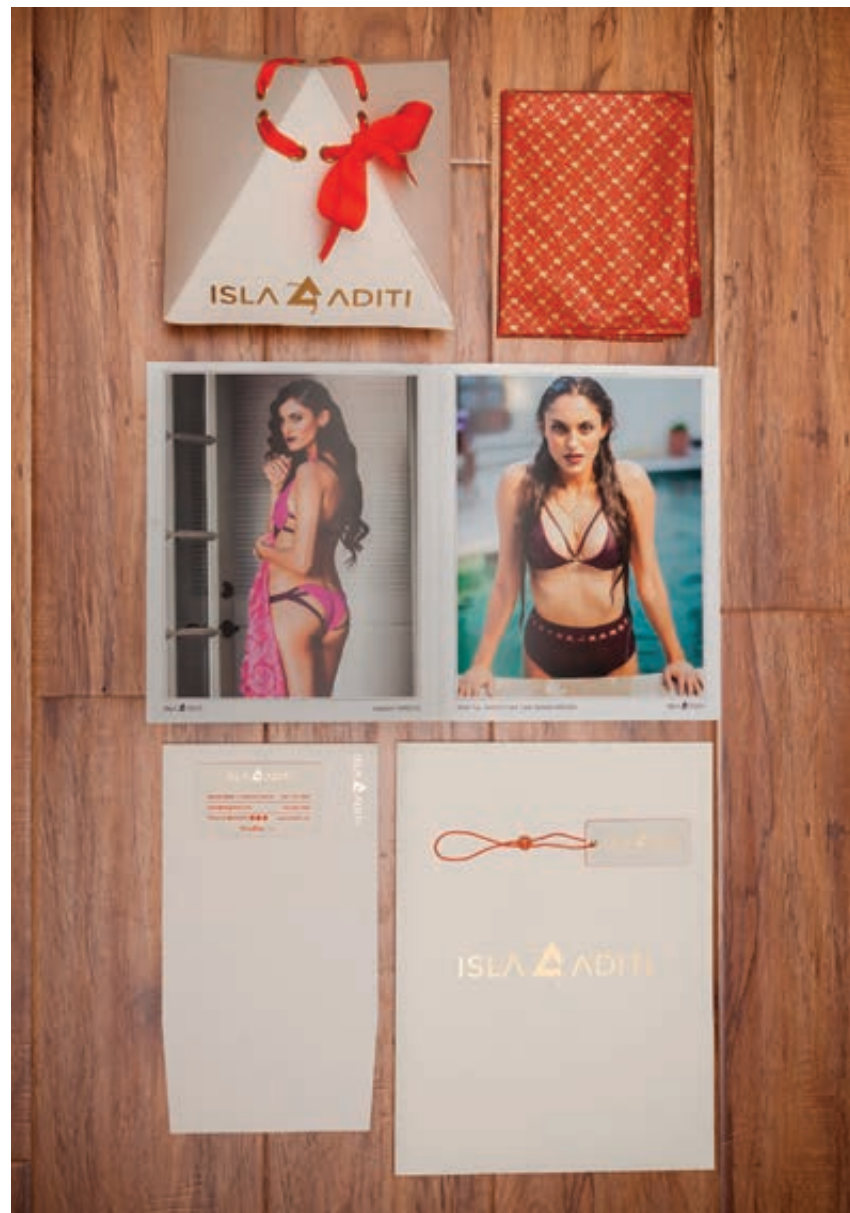
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WHAT'S CHECKING

Shopping in Hollywood's Backyard

Consider Los Angeles' Studio City enclave the backyard of the entertainment industry, said Fred Levine, the co-owner of the **M.Fredric** boutiques.

His company has run a Studio City store for more than 25 years. A lot of entertainment executives and celebrities have shopped at the location, but the frenzy that often accompanies a celebrity's arrival never seems to pass through the district's borders, according to Levine.

"It's more low profile. It's more of a community," he said. The boutiques within Studio City reflect this characteristic of the area's style.

People care about how they look in Studio City. Often, they want to make a statement with their style, but the look is casual, according to Levine.—*Andrew Asch*

M.Fredric

12124 Ventura Blvd.

www.mfredric.com/studio-city

M.Fredric boutiques carved a niche in casual looks and denim since the company started its business in the 1980s, but summer styles on M.Fredric's tables and racks have brought out a brighter look in the chain's Studio City store. Among the recent top-selling items are maxi dresses with bright, floral patterns, said Angela Zeldin, the manager of the Studio City M.Fredric.

Los Angeles-headquartered **Flynn Skye** is one brand serving the demand for maxi dresses with florals. One of that brand's pieces retails for \$178. **Olivaceous's** bright, summery dresses also have been popular, with one of its styles selling for \$78.

The store has also long distinguished itself as a place to buy a stylish T-shirt. Tees and dresses from the **Michael Stars** brand have been trending well, with retail price points ranging from \$78 to \$98.

Denim is also a big deal at M.Fredric. **Hudson Jeans** with a high-waisted silhouette and flared ankles have been popular.

Embellishments, such as studs on the denim and distressed fabric, have been popular looks. Retail price points range from \$198 to \$298.

Another perennial favorite is the **Levi's** brand, Zeldin

said. "I always try to have Levi's in the window so people know that they are here," she said. Higher temperatures create a demand for denim shorts, and shoppers have been buying Levi's styles, especially designs from the 501 line, which retail for \$59.



Flynn Skye



Michael Stars



Hudson Jeans

Sy Devore

12930 Ventura Blvd.

www.sydevore.com

Sy Devore was a clothier to Elvis Presley and bon vivants such as Dean Martin of the Rat Pack. The men's boutique that bears his name has outfitted Studio City men since 1962. It opened in its current Ventura Boulevard location in 2000.

The boutique went for a new, brighter look in April when it removed old carpeting and replaced it with blond-wood flooring, said Danny Marsh, Sy Devore's owner. While he made aesthetic changes to his store, Marsh said that the street has also been changing.

"It's more corporate, less boutique," he said of the merchants on Ventura. But the change comes at a time when Studio City residents are looking for clothing that shows increased individuality, he said.

Popular items include unconstructed

blazers or jackets that have no lining or padding. An unconstructed blazer from Italian brand **Circolo** retails for \$695. "It's a finishing piece. It looks good as a blazer or as an outdoor jacket," Marsh said.

The cargo pant has come back into fashion, according to Marsh. But it is not the giant, billowy cargo of the 1990s. The **JW Brine** brand's stretch skinny cargo pant has



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WHAT'S CHECKING

Gisele Tune
12660 Ventura Blvd.
www.giseletune.com

Gisele Tune opened her eponymous boutique in June 1997, and she considered herself something of a fashion pioneer. There were no other clothing stores on the stretch of Ventura Boulevard between Whitsett and Coldwater Canyon avenues.

Her gamble on this stretch of Ventura real estate worked out. There was enough business on the street that she could afford to hire three employees for her 1,000-square-foot shop. The boutique business has changed because of heavy competition from e-commerce titans such as **Amazon.com**, so she currently employs one other salesperson, though there's still enough room in fashion to distinguish herself from other shops in the area.

It's her job to sell clothing that is unique. "This is my passion," she said of her store. "There's nothing else I'd rather do. I like the challenge."

Tune hopes to keep her store unique with lines such as **Limit By Liz**. The Los Angeles-headquartered brand takes vintage mili-



tary jackets and details them with logos of prominent fashion houses. Jackets retail for \$350. Tune said that the jackets frequently sell out and that she had to reorder them three times in May.

Other popular items include casual cotton pants by Israeli brand **Bevy**. The white pants retail for \$175. Tune also sells jeans from the Los Angeles-headquartered brand **Flying Monkey**, whose pants retail for \$75. Tune's customers love them because of the price and style and the fact the denim is artfully distressed, Tune said. The **Zadig & Voltaire** brand's Christy silk tank top has also been popular. Retail price points for the brand range from \$198 to \$220.



Bevy



Limit By Liz



Sojara



Teleria Zed




Circolo



JW Brine

been popular and retails for \$365. It has side pockets but also a sleek look more in tune with contemporary fashions. The fabric feels like a sweatpant, Marsh said. Other popular looks include the **Teleria Zed** label's skinny khaki pants made with a stretch fabric. It retails for \$245.



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The Mad-Cap World of Fashion Design

The fashion students at **Long Beach City College** created a world taken from the pages of “Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland” in the school’s 38th biennial fashion show.

The theme for this year’s show was “The Wonderland: Mad Fashion Show,” which gave students their inspiration for the May 26 event.

The more than 100 looks on the runway, held inside the Hall of Champions Gymnasium at the campus, were designed by 26 fashion students.

The show was organized by the fashion-show production class and divided into six segments. They were Mad Fashion, A Dip in the Hourglass Swimwear, Tea Time Day Dresses and Resortwear, Croquet All-Day Sportswear, From Rabbit Hole to Runway After Five, and Curiouser and Curiouser Evening Gowns.

In between segments, stilt walkers and dancers organized by **Pzazz Productions** took to the catwalk to entertain the audience.—*Deborah Belgum*



Victoria Sherman

Lucio Murillo

Tuesday Lionelle

Asmah Guyot

Asmah Guyot



Becky Annella

Becky Annella

Michella Cloutier

Christian Nowowlejski

Christian Nowowlejski

Tavauna Clark

Tavauna Clark

Tavauna Clark

INDUSTRY VOICES: TECHNOLOGY

Artificial Intelligence: How to Work Smarter, Not Harder

By Paula Levy Contributing Writer

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) are often used interchangeably, but they are different. In the simplest explanation, AI is the field of computer science that studies how to make computers good at tasks that are typically done by human beings. ML is a subfield of AI devoted to creating programs that improve performance the more data you have. Both terms are used in speaking about “big data”—analytics and enabling IoT (Internet of Things) in a broader context.

The entry of faster computers, IoT, “connected consumers” and the more common business approaches to the use of AI have brought this innovative technology to the forefront. Robotics, chat bots and voice-activated technology; virtual assistants and recommendation engines; facial recognition and predictive analytics are all powered by AI.

To deliver personalized services, products and content, retailers and brands require intelligence about what customers buy, how and when they shop, what promotions they react to, and what recommendations they like. AI leverages big data, data from social media and website behavioral data to gain intelligence to churn out responses in record time.

In doing so, AI supports multiple strategies for retailers and brands. AI is not about replacing humans but rather empowering them. It uses data to optimize pricing strategies; personalize online engagement; gain efficiencies in the supply chain; and provide better customer experiences online, in-store and through customer support, to name just a few benefits.

AI creates value by anticipating trends based on everything from purchasing behavior to the right product to meet consumer demands. Today, a website visit changes by individual based on products viewed or purchased, wish lists and preferences. Recommendations are now delivered based on this individual consumer knowledge—all due to the advancements in AI. A recent report by research firm **Point-**



Source states that 34 percent of consumers will spend more money online when AI is deployed effectively. That’s a large enough statistic to drive e-tailers to adoption, and AI goes well beyond online.

AI empowers employees and business processes, replacing time-consuming and mundane tasks to gain efficiencies by providing more and better knowledge instantly to customer-service reps, who no longer have to put consumers on hold while they search through data. In the same way, sales associates also deliver better customer experiences by delivering relevant information in record time to consumers. And designers also find preferred fabrics and styles instantly.

In turn, connected consumers share their data expecting to receive relevant experiences. Today, we talk to our mobile device and receive information on the best products quickly through a **Google** search, tell Alexa to order food and change the channel on the TV, use **Netflix** to recommend movies we will like, and the list goes on.

Technology companies including **IBM**, **Salesforce**, **Adobe**, **Microsoft**, **Centric Software** and too many other

solutions to mention are turning out AI solutions at record speed.

Let’s take a look at what some innovative retailers and brands have created based on AI:

- Outdoor apparel brand **The North Face** implemented IBM’s **Watson** in a Q&A interface to select the perfect product. Consumers speak to Watson via a virtual assistant app that asks a series of questions, which learns from them and offers the best products based on that customer’s preferences and needs.

- The luxury department store **Neiman Marcus** introduced its **Snap.Find.Shop** app, allowing shoppers to search for similar Neiman Marcus products from photographs they take while out and about.

- The big-box retailer **Target** created a similar app in partnership with **Pinterest**, finding store products similar to the Pinterest photos.

- Denim icon **Levi Strauss & Co.** launched its Virtual Stylist, working with **Mode.ai** on Facebook’s Messenger app. The app centralizes all sales-associate knowledge as well as offers fashion advice. It’s powered by personalized fit data from True Fit and has been designed to respond to people in a conversational tone.

- **Triumph International**, a lingerie manufacturer out of the EU, collaborated with **Centric Software** to develop an AI Image Recognition Search app for PLM users. Designers take a picture of fabric or trim and can instantly search image archives to find the closest match.

So, what does the future bring? As more and more technology companies are turning out AI solutions and apps and many retailers and brands are also developing their own apps with AI technology, the sky is the limit to meet business and consumer requirements.

Paula Levy is the Chief Strategy Officer for Demand Worldwide. She is a business-technology strategist whose focus is assisting retailers and brands in transforming their marketing and customer-engagement strategies with the adoption of new technologies and business practices. ●

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NEWS

Assembly Bill *Continued from page 1*

of which measure less than 5 millimeters long—are threatening marine life. If passed in the California State Assembly, the law would have only applied to clothing sold in the state.

“Our next steps are to continue pursuing what we’ve started,” said Sean MacNeil, who serves as Bloom’s chief of staff. “Whether it’s this exact vehicle next year or another proposal, plastic isn’t going away, so we have to continue forward to address this problem.”

The microfiber legislation fight

Opponents of the bill questioned how much impact an additional clothing label would have on environmental conservation and wanted to know more about the threat of these tiny pieces found in the oceans. Leaders within California’s apparel industry were satisfied with their efforts to defeat the bill.

“It took a coalition of the industry’s consumer-products organizations to get the message [to not pass AB 2379] into the hands of the legislators, with a direct aim at the politicians whose constituents would be affected. Those constituents are every retailer, large and small,” said Ilse Metchek, president of the **California Fashion Association**.

As news of the bill’s demise spread, Metchek said that AB 2379 was targeting retailers, which would create issues for sourcing, distribution and manufacturing partnerships.

“Let’s not forget that the monitoring of hangtags would have become the legal responsibility of retailers; merchandise comes from a myriad of distribution centers, here and abroad, as well as from online web-

sites,” she said.

In addition to the legal implications faced by retailers in California, opponents of the legislation cited inadequate research as a reason to halt the progress of AB 2379. Some leaders in the apparel industry want to see the government invest more time into learning about the issue before proposing solutions.

“We agree with the California Assembly’s decision to hold off on passing AB 2379 at this time,” said Stephen Lamar, who serves as the executive vice president of the **American Apparel & Footwear Association** and president of the **Washington International Trade Association**. “Microfiber waste requires more research and discussion to understand its precise causes and impacts. Legislation that prescribes regulatory outcomes, such as labeling of clothing, absent a better understanding of the issue, is premature.”

State of microfibers

For now, California-based retailers and manufacturers who sell clothing to partners in the state will not have to abide by the regulations outlined in AB 2379, but the initiative is gaining momentum in other areas of the country.

With a close resemblance to AB 2379, New York’s Assembly Bill 10599 requires all clothing sold in the state that is manufactured using more than 50 percent synthetic materials to include additional labeling regarding potential microfiber pollution resulting from machine washing. Led by Assembly Member and Assistant Speaker Félix Ortiz, the bill was created in an effort to inform customers that the apparel they purchase could potentially shed microfibers upon washing if it’s made of mostly syn-



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Assembly Bill

Continued from previous page
thetic materials.

"California is usually one of the most progressive states with these issues, which are very complex. I was disappointed [California's AB 2379 didn't pass]," Ortiz said. "New York is still in session, and I am hopeful to bring it to the finish line, to the floor. We have another six days left in session."

Despite the failure of AB 2379 to progress into law in California, there is no denying that it has inspired legislators in other states to take notice. For these politicians, it isn't simply about having laws passed in their own states. They are interested in shifting regulations on a national level.

"We've been working together to have a united bill. We are trying to reach out to legislators around the country," Ortiz said.

In Connecticut, State Senator Ted Kennedy Jr. led a successful campaign to pass House Bill 5360, which is the first law in the nation aimed at curtailing potential environmental effects of microfibers shed from clothing.

While California's AB 2379 and New York's Assembly Bill 10599 require additional labeling on clothing sold in those states, Connecticut's law took steps to create a group of representatives from the ap-

parel industry and environmental organizations. The council will develop solutions for consumer awareness of this issue and make recommendations to the Connecticut Environment Committee prior to January 2019. At that time, the next session will begin and additional legislation will be considered.

"We need to engage the apparel industry to help Connecticut develop a consumer-awareness and microfiber-reduction action plan," Kennedy said in a statement after the legislation was passed.

If the current trend continues, the apparel industry will continue to see additional microfiber-pollution legislation arise at the state level throughout the country. As representatives from the apparel industry continue to monitor these bills, working with legislators to promote more environmentally sound

practices isn't the problem cited by some fashion insiders. The issue is the method some politicians are promoting.

"We have urged lawmakers to refrain from taking action on legislation such as AB 2379 or similar bills in New York until research develops a supported solution to the microfiber issue," Lamar said. "Even with better research, we remain skeptical that a label is the right approach. Labels would only add costs and confusion without solving the underlying issue." ●



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NEWS

Wet Seal *Continued from page 1*

erty for \$3 million after the retailer filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection for a second time in 2017.

Perhaps the only thing that remains of the pre-2017 Wet Seal is its name and its customer demographic, which falls between the ages of 13 and 40. Last year, Wet Seal shuttered its once-large fleet of bricks-and-mortar stores and is now a pure-play or Internet-only retailer at www.wetseal.com, Toubassy said.

It has no immediate plans to return to physical stores because its new model calls for it becoming an “assetless brand company,” the Wet Seal president said.

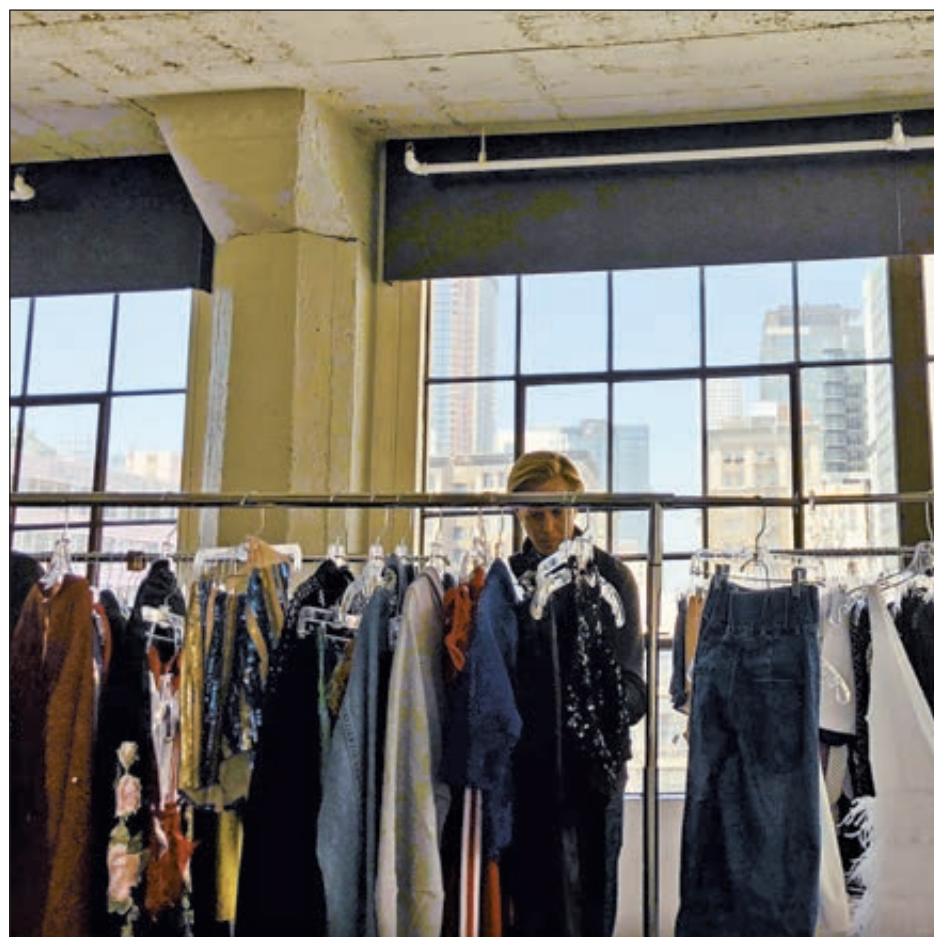
With this model, a brand outsources businesses such as retail, distribution and fulfillment to third parties. “Then [brands are] free to focus on what brands do best, nurturing and growing their connection and relevance with customers,” Toubassy wrote in a 2017

tomers through social media. “If they engage with the right influencers and they engage with the right people, they can revitalize their brand and be cool again,” Nguyen added.

However, while going digital-only may look easy, said Wendy Bendon, the chair of the fashion marketing department at **Woodbury University** in Burbank, Calif., “It’s a Hail Mary pass to go online,” Bendon said. “You have to understand the community that you’re trying to drive your brand to and have a very authentic voice.”

Authenticity can be taken down to a granular level. If a retailer does not post images with an en vogue photo filter, consumers will not view them. If a retailer does not work with the right bloggers and social-media stars, consumers won’t be interested in what the retailer is selling.

Wet Seal knew it needed to close its stores, but the difficult part was calculating how to go forward, Toubassy said. “The biggest challenge, with all the mall-based Wet



Wet Seal's downtown Los Angeles headquarters

paper called “The New ABCs of Consumer Brand Reinvention.”

“Enter the assetless brand company, an innovative new entity that keeps a brand’s name but reduces its balance sheet and just might be the future of branding in the 21st century,” he noted.

A keystone to this strategy is spreading the word on Wet Seal’s styles through high-profile bloggers and social-media personalities.

The test for Wet Seal’s new model was launched on June 4, when it released a collaboration line with **YouTube** stars Niki and Gabi DeMartino, 23-year-old twins who claim to have 6.6 million YouTube subscribers. The collection, called **Niki & Gabi**, includes everything from accessories and tops to dresses. Core retail price points range from \$15 to \$35.

Other once-high-flying brands, including **Bebe**, have experimented with shedding stores and going digital. Becoming a digital company is something Wet Seal should have done a long time ago, said J’Net Nguyen, creative director for marketing research company **The Right Brain Studio**. “Wet Seal became outdated. They weren’t cool,” Nguyen said.

One reason Wet Seal lost market share was that the retailer had not engaged with its cus-

Seal stores closing, was figuring out how to let our customers know that we were back in a big way online. With so many companies trying to grab their attention, traditional media methods have a limited impact. We have opted to take a more organic and entrepreneurial path by rebuilding the customer base in an authentic way, heavily using email and social media to let people know we are back,” he said.

Expect to see more collaboration with bloggers. “We really hope bloggers and influencers will start to see Wet Seal as a canvas for them to express their unique fashion point of view, and we plan to dedicate significant resources to building these programs for the foreseeable future.”

The retailer also hopes to give its consumers a say in what product it makes through its Seal Squad, which offers discounts and prizes to shoppers who sign up for the promotions.

People in the Seal Squad can vote for products in each weekly drop. Data gathered from the votes will allow the retailer to make more products based on shoppers’ likes.

The company is also getting faster. It releases 100 new styles every week. It currently makes tops, bottoms, dresses, footwear and accessories. Later in 2018, it will introduce sunglasses and beauty products. ●

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PRODUCTION ARTIST

JRs Fashion Tops. Recolor/Revise/Resize Artwork/Prints using Illustrator/Photoshop. Placement of screens on final patterns. Review Artwork/Prints Pitch Sheets & screened Blocks for Import Tech Pkgs creation. Close communication with Sales, Design & Production teams to ensure accuracy of orders. Email: trankin@selfesteemclothing.com

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HEAD MERCHANDISER ASSISTANT

Girls Co. in Burbank looking for an asst to the head merchandiser. Min. 5-10 yrs exp with design thru production. Must be able to multi-task with excellent follow-up & communication skills. Email resume to: HR@vesturegroupinc.com

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CONTROLLER

Orange County denim manufacturer & apparel importer is seeking a financial controller. Apparel industry exp. is req'd. Duties include general ledger maintenance, cash management, accts receivable, accts payable, payroll, management reporting, & interfacing with the Company's CPAs. Knowledge of QuickBooks is req'd, & knowledge of AIMS is preferred. Submit resume and salary requirements to: denimisawayoflife@gmail.com

PATTERNMAKER NEEDED

Seeking a Freelance/Temp-to-Perm Production patternmaker. Gerber V9, and Gerber 3D exp. required. Must be detail oriented and have excellent communication skills. Candidate will be asked to do a test pattern. Please send resumes with salary requirements to: recruitment@barcouniforms.com.

**For classified information, contact Jeffery Younger at 213-627-3737 ext. 280
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RETAIL ANALYST/PLANNER

Fashion company seeking a Retail Analyst / Planner with Walmart exp. to join their whole-sale team. This position is for Women's Sleep-wear.

Responsibilities:

- * Create & maintain plans to identify plan vs actual sales opportunities
- * Create & Process Weekly & Seasonal Sales Reports
- * Assist in forecasting plans for all accounts as needed
- * Compile monthly forecasts & projected inventory
- * Create seasonal assortments / plans
- * Develop plans to support sales strategies
- * Compile recaps and planning tools

Requirements:

- * Must have Walmart exp.
- * Must have wholesale exp.
- * 1-3 yrs. exp. in Merchandising
- * Bachelor's Degree in Finance
- Skills:**
- * Proven Analytical, Financial, Organizational, & Communication skills
- * Proficient in MS Office (Excel, Word, & Power-Point)
- * Ability to read, understand, & interpret various Financial & Retail Performance Reports
- * Must have strong Wal-Mart Retail-Link exp.
- * Exp. with AS400 ACS a plus
- * Ability to multiple, prioritize & meet tight deadlines

Email resumes to: tstevenson@mgtind.com

Jobs Available

DESIGN ASSISTANT/PROJECT MANAGER

XCVI is looking for an exp'd team player to manage all design-through-production related projects for major branded and private label customers. Responsibilities include communicat-ing and coordinating with client, domestic and international vendors and team members on: costing, TNAs, cutting tickets, sourcing fabric/trims, fabric/sample testing, lab dips, PP samples, TOP samples, fit/fabric/color approvals and all routing/manual related items. Exp. with N41 preferred. To apply, please send resume and salary history to jobs@xcvi.com.

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Midwest Apparel Trade Show 6/24-25
Fashion Market Northern California 6/24-26
Agenda Long Beach 6/28-29



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Trims, Accessories & Branding

Trims, Accessories & Branding Advertorial

T-Shirt Advertorial

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