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RETAIL

Retail Destinations Attract Shoppers as NRF Reports In-Store Uptick

By Dorothy Crouch Contributing Writer

The five days spanning Thanksgiving through Cyber Monday drew 126 million consumers to bricks-and-mortar retailers, an increase from 121.4 million in-store shoppers during the same period in 2023, according to the **National Retail Federation** and **Prosper Insights & Analytics**. Online shoppers accounted for 124.3 million during this period spanning Nov. 28 through Dec. 2, a decrease from 134.2 million shoppers in 2023.

“Even with this year’s shortened shopping period and the multitude of early sales promotions from retailers, this past weekend exceeded expectations in terms of the sheer volume of shoppers,” said Matthew Shay, NRF president and CEO.

This year’s total of 197 million shoppers during the popu-
➔ **Holiday** page 3

SUPPLY CHAIN

PI Apparel SCF USA 2024 Highlights Digital Solutions in Supply- Chain Traceability

By Dorothy Crouch Contributing Writer

Digitizing the apparel supply chain affords ease and transparency from farm to retail floor, yet the fashion industry has been slow to adopt proven technologies and emerging innovations. Event producer **PI Apparel** hoped to inspire industry leaders toward adoption of digital tools during its recent Supply Chain Forum USA 2024 in Los Angeles.

PI Apparel connected fashion supply-chain leaders with the companies behind groundbreaking digital and artificial-intelligence technologies and experts in the field whose keen insights helped attendees identify supply-chain challenges coming down the pike and how to weather these issues. The event schedule included expert breakout sessions, panels,

➔ **PI Apparel** page 7

TOP STORIES OF 2024

Throughout the year, we have covered established brands and emerging names, in addition to innovative solutions and impressive designs. Coverage begins on page 4 and continues digitally online and via QR code.



INSIDE

Where fashion gets down to businessSM



- Tukatech, UV Stacks launch division ... page 2
- Textile Exchange show report ... page 6
- Industry Voices ... page 8
- Première Vision expands to Montréal ... page 10
- Resource Guide ... page 10

EDUCATION

LATTC Graduates Embrace 'Gothic Glamour' for Gold Thimble

Los Angeles Trade-Technical College presented the Fall 2024 edition of its semi-annual Gold Thimble Fashion Show on Dec. 6. LATTC hosted the event on its campus, located south of the city's downtown neighborhood.

Twenty-one graduating fashion-design-program students from the school's Design & Media Arts pathway showcased their creations under the theme "Gothic Glamour," which centered on inspiration from the style and culture of the 12th century. The designers developed clothing under eight categories: Gothic glamour, swimwear, childrenswear, athleisure, menswear, avant-garde, gender neutral and evening. First-, second- and third-place winners were chosen from each design category.

"Our students have just 16 weeks to produce a garment from start to finish in each category," said Joseph Guerrieri, chair of design and media arts. "The experience is intense and challenging, but each student stepped up and produced some outstanding work. The Gothic Glamour category gave students a chance to research work from Gothic



LATTC hosted its Fall 2024 Gold Thimble event to showcase the work of graduating students, including Masson Citti, who secured the first-place award for a design that spoke to the show's theme, "Gothic Glamour."

architecture, German Expressionism, contemporary horror films, and Goth music and art. They embraced the assignment and created some truly inspired garments."

Securing the top three awards for the "Gothic Glamour" theme were Masson Citti in first place, Gregory Dorado in second

and Isaiah Hernandez in third. Eveningwear awards were bestowed on Bryan Ortiz, who took first place; Masson Citti, who was awarded second place; and Valerie Menjivar, who was given the third-place award. In the gender-neutral category, Gregory Dorado was awarded first place, Isaiah Hernandez second and Naheim Yusuf third. Avant-garde honors were given to Valerie Menjivar, who secured first place; Chandler Loren Bullock, who placed second; and Cheryllynn Richmond, who won third. Menswear student designer Alexander Ries won first place in the category, while Bryan Ortiz secured second and Will Hendrix placed third. Athleisurewear honors were presented to Angel Cervantes in first place, Will Hendrix in second and Gregory Dorado in third. For childrenswear, Will Hendrix secured first place, Ash Urrutia second and Isabella Aguirre third. Within the swimwear category, Angel Cervantes won first place, Alexander Ries placed second and Cheryllynn Richmond secured third place.

—Dorothy Crouch

TECHNOLOGY

Tukatech, UV Stacks Launch Made-to-Order Division Via Gaiabay

Los Angeles fashion-technology firm **Tukatech** and India's **UV Stacks** have entered into a partnership through which the companies have launched a Made-to-Order division of the global marketplace **Gaiabay**. The new collaboration leverages Tukatech's design software with UV Stacks' Gaiabay platform, allowing U.S.-based brands and designers to create customized products on demand in India. The duty-free goods can be shipped globally to customers through UV Stacks' **Vayulogi** logistics segment.

"Our mission is to create a marketplace that thrives on innovation and inclusivity," said

Gaurav Bhargava, CEO of UV Stacks. "By connecting the USA and India, we're fostering economic growth, cultural exchange and new opportunities for brands to scale globally."

Tukatech and UV Stacks unveiled the collaboration Nov. 18. The companies aim to support brands' and designers' speed-to-market strategies through increased agility that meets customer demands in real time; customization at scale; and cost efficiency that reduces the strain of overproduction, storage and manufacturing expenses.

"With Tukatech's technology, we've made it possible for brands to produce what the mar-



Tukatech founder Ram Sareen unveils his company's partnership with UV Stacks during an event at his Los Angeles home.

ket demands exactly when it's demanded," said Ram Sareen, Tukatech's founder. "This partnership with Gaiabay is a milestone in creating sustainable and responsive fashion."

The partnership relies on Tukatech's digital capabilities in virtual design and fitting, and demand-driven production from small batches to global distribution.

"Tukatech's advanced tools make it possible for brands to create on-demand products with precision and speed," said Bhargava. "This capability allows businesses to remain agile, capture trends instantly and deliver high-quality goods to consumers globally."

Gaiabay has become known for its existing divisions in Mainstream Products, which focuses on high-quality and ethically sourced items to accommodate everyday needs of consumers, and Luxury/Designer Products for premium brands and designers that serve a discerning clientele. Adding the Made-to-Order division to the Gaiabay business eases the challenges of producing quality goods sustainably on a global scale.

"This partnership is more than a business venture; it's a step toward a sustainable and efficient global marketplace," Bhargava said. "Together, we're creating a platform that ensures every brand, designer and consumer has a seat at the table."—D.C.

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Inside the Industry

The Kingpins Hong Kong Pop-Up brought together a mix of denim trade professionals and consumers who turned out for the Nov. 21–22 run of the second-annual event which is organized by the jeans supply-chain sourcing event and global denim platform. Held at DX Design Hub in Hong Kong's Sham Shui Po district, Kingpins Hong Kong featured 24 exhibitors, including denim mills, fiber producers, garment manufacturers, chemical suppliers and textile-machinery makers. The pop-up show ran concurrently with The Fashion Union, an eight-day event celebrating "the beauty of workwear," presented and organized by the Hong Kong Design Institute and supported by the Cultural and Creative Industries Development Agency, part of Hong Kong Fashion Fest, which is presented by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

Texworld returns to the Javits Center Jan. 21–23 for the next edition of its New York show. The biannual Texworld New York event is one of the largest textile and apparel-sourcing trade shows in the U.S. because of the people it brings together from across the globe. This January, Texworld New York will work together with Material Exchange to highlight three trends for the Spring/Summer 2026 season that will offer brands insights into the direction fashion is going as well as provide inspiration for designers to create their own lines and the fabrics they need to do it. The three key trends are Whimsical Wit, expressing imagination and ambition; Engineered Expression, made from innovative fabrics; and Muted Modernism, which includes seamless knits and plush piles.

JOOR, the digital fashion-wholesale-management ecosystem, that has processed over \$100 billion in wholesale transaction volume, has released "JOOR's 2025 Wholesale Trends," a data-driven report outlining its 2025 predictions for the global fashion sector. Key themes include the rise of independent retailers, DTC brands accelerating into wholesale, integrated systems providing the best value, a luxury-goods realignment, and the growth of brand-management companies. More than 14,000 brands and 650,000 curated fashion buyers across 150 countries connect and conduct business on the JOOR platform, where they get exclusive access to a vast wealth of real-time wholesale transaction data. JOOR is headquartered in New York, with offices in Paris, Milan and Los Angeles. To view the entire report and learn more about JOOR, visit resources.joor.com.

Panda Biotech is busy speeding along with the largest hemp processing facility in the U.S., which opened in June in Wichita Falls, Texas, in an old General Motors factory. The main manufacturing gin is seven football fields long and is used to separate the tough outer bark of the hemp plant, which is used to make fibers from the inner woody core. Most of the world's hemp is made in China, but Wrangler has its sights set on working with Panda Biotech as a source for the fiber. Last year Wrangler's parent company, Kontoor Brands, set global design standards that require lower-impact materials for the 141 million products produced annually by its brands, which also include Lee and Rock & Republic. Dhruv Agarwal, vice president at Kontoor Brands, recently said he wants to help make hemp become a viable part of the American fashion industry.

Holiday *Continued from page 1*

lar shopping weekend beat the NRF’s forecast of 183.4 million shoppers. The 2024 total is the second-highest reported figure in the survey’s history, only after the 2023 record of 200.4 million shoppers.

Early planning and collaboration support holiday retail success

As Shay noted, retailers faced the challenge of a shorter post-Thanksgiving holiday-shopping time frame due to the holiday occurring later than in years past. Debra Gunn Downing, executive director of marketing at Costa Mesa, Calif.’s **South Coast Plaza**, mentioned that the center and its retailers, which attract a luxury consumer, started their initiatives early. The large attraction was the 43rd annual Christmas-tree lighting on Nov. 21 at **Town Center Park**, adjacent to the shopping center.

Retailers offered incentives including an in-store tea cart or complimentary gift wrap, and South Coast Plaza collaborated with tenants toward holiday success.

“We work on partnerships with our retailers every day, whether it is signage in the shopping center or placing their events, promotions and activations on our website or providing complimentary social-media services for them and boosting social media so it gets more eyes,” Gunn Downing said. “We offer a gift guide online, and they provide the assets. It’s definitely a two-way partnership throughout the year for us.”

Gunn Downing mentioned that the opening of 40 new boutiques during 2024, including **Lululemon** by the end of November, was a positive retail omen.

“Lululemon opened a new, expanded store on Fabulous Friday,” Gunn Downing said, mentioning South Coast Plaza’s day-after-Thanksgiving celebration. “They opened early and had a line an hour before they opened.”

The Shops at Sportsmen’s Lodge in Studio City, Calif., also welcomed new retailers to its center, including **Alo Yoga**, **Hoka** and **Wittmore**, which opened its doors Nov. 18, adding to the excitement of the holiday season.

“The local community has been very supportive since day one. We’re planning on executing several trunk shows for the holidays, the first of which will be with **Rains**, a brand



California retail centers and their tenants, including (from left) South Coast Plaza, Stanford Shopping Center and Wittmore at The Shops at Sportsmen’s Lodge, compensated for a shorter 2024 shopping season by offering shopper experiences.

from Copenhagen,” said Paul Witt, founder of Wittmore, which is headquartered in Los Angeles. “It was perfect timing for us, and we were able to open just in time for the Q4 holiday shopping season.”

According to Rachel Podor, assistant vice president of operations with **Midwood Investment & Development**, parent company of The Shops at Sportsmen’s Lodge, engaging with the local community is a key component to the property manager’s strategy. This included a fresh approach to holiday decorations with luxury and ecological elements that Podor said celebrate the “natural beauty of our property while creating a magical holiday ambiance.” The center also featured Kids Club activities, Makers Markets, a Holiday Shop and Stroll, and—in partnership with the **Studio City Business District**—gingerbread-house decorating.

“The key to a successful holiday season in 2024 is creating a sense of community,” Podor said. “Building authentic relationships with your customers and business partners fosters a collaborative environment that drives both loyalty and growth.”

Northern California’s **Stanford Shopping Center** in Palo Alto also serves a discerning consumer and upgraded its holiday atmosphere for 2024. The site’s management focused on

elegance and customer experiences by including an upgraded Santa area that features trees, lights and ornaments in addition to a 30-foot Christmas tree and “a giant, illuminated starburst display,” according to Debbie Jim, director of marketing and business development at the center. Santa events include a Signature Santa Experience, Caring Santa—an exclusive event for children with special needs—pet photos and a breakfast.

“We are more than just a shopping and dining destination but also a great gathering place for families to create memories,” Jim said.

New retailers added to the site in 2024 included **Frame**, **Mejuri**, **New Balance**, **Rolex** and **Wilkes Bashford**. Jim noted that the center will continue to work with its retailers to draw shoppers in throughout the holiday season.

“Stanford Shopping Center offered shopping incentives at select stores through Dec. 13. Customers who spent \$2,000 or more received gift certificates to one of our restaurants—RH or Sushi Roku,” said Jim. “Our shopping incentive has been successful so far, encouraging customers to shop early during the promotional period, which helps retailers reach their goals. Starting Dec. 13, we will launch a social-media giveaway campaign highlighting some of the best gift items and experiences available at the center.” ●



EVENT

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Left: Skirt and top: Milio Milano, Earrings: Uncommon Fashion, Belt and Bag: Lori Veith

Right: Dress: Therapy w/Lisa Adams, Blazer: Reeves & Co., Sunglasses: FREYRS, Necklaces: Yochi, UnCommon Fashion, Chair: Currey & Co.

Explore, connect, and shop with us in 2025! As seasons change and trends evolve, keep your inventory fresh with sourcing opportunities throughout the year. Atlanta and Las Vegas Apparel Markets offer unmatched hospitality, complimentary amenities and exclusive access to top lines.

2025 MARKET DATES

Atlanta Apparel

February 4–7

April 1–4

June 3–6

August 5–8

October 14–17

Las Vegas Apparel

February 9–12

August 17–20

Formal Markets

Atlanta

April 1–3

August 4–8

April Buying Week

April 1–4

This new event merges Atlanta Apparel, Formal Market, and Spring Market at AmericasMart (Gift & Home) for a comprehensive sourcing experience.



Top Stories of 2024



Levi's x BEAMS Super Wide V2 Collection Inspired by 1940s Denim Style

San Francisco-headquartered **Levi Strauss & Co.** has unveiled its fourth collection with Japanese retailer **BEAMS** in the Levi's x BEAMS Super Wide V2 collection, which blends design elements from the denim maker's 1944 edition of the 501 jean. The limited-edition collection was released Jan. 9 on *Levi.com*, *beams.co.jp*, the Levi's app, and at select Levi's and BEAMS stores. The collection was released Jan. 2 during a limited presale through BEAMS Japan (Shinjuku), BEAMS Japan Shibuya and BEAMS Japan Kyoto.

Levi's and BEAMS's first Super Wide collection, which was the third developed through the partnership, was released in January 2022.

The Levi's x BEAMS Super Wide V2 capsule collection builds from a previous collaboration between the two brands. The 1944-inspired Levi's x BEAMS Super Wide V2 Jean was crafted using Orange Tick selvage denim, which was created exclusively for BEAMS. [Read More](#)



Sasson—Yes, That Sasson—and Johnny Was Release New Collaboration

Before influencers and social media, fashion brands took to old-fashioned television advertising with taglines and jingles. And one of them, **Sasson**, entered the pop-culture lexicon with the French motto "OO-LA-LA—Sasson!"

Whether the phrase makes a return remains to be seen, but the denim brand is back thanks to a collaboration with **Johnny Was** released last month. The *California Apparel News* caught up with Paul Guez, who founded Sasson in 1976 and is presently based in Los Angeles, and Rob Trauber, CEO of Johnny Was, to welcome back the iconic brand and get a sense for what's in store. [Read More](#)



Retail Icon Lisa Kline Mentors New Bricks-and-Mortar Owners

It was a magical time, the great retail heyday some 20 years ago when people got off the plane at LAX and the first stop on their trip was Lisa Kline's trendsetting retail store on Robertson Boulevard.

At the peak of her empire, Kline operated six stores and had a staff of 85, but when the economic and retail winds changed direction she closed her shops one by one, the last in 2011. Today she's a sought-after retail consultant with strong opinions on the present state of fashion and retail, not to mention her radical concept for what L.A. needs at the present moment. The *California Apparel News* caught up with the legendary fashionista to find out more. [Read More](#)



SPESA L.A. Event Accents Worker Value as Technologies Advance

The **Sewn Products Equipment & Suppliers of the Americas** hosted its **Advancements in Manufacturing Technologies Conference** April 11 at the **California Market Center** in downtown Los Angeles, aiming to shift demand toward nearshoring options. SPESA President Michael McDonald has been a vocal supporter of gaining greater funding for the innovations in apparel.

"There are really cool startup technologies that could change the face of the industry, but you're not getting **Microsoft**, **Dell**, **GE** or **Airbus** investing hundreds of millions or billions of dollars into the industry," McDonald said during an interview with *California Apparel News*. "It's all grassroots."

McDonald further explained that apparel companies want to create a better apparel industry but don't know where to start regarding new technology. [Read More](#)



Visualizing Their Next Approach, Malbon Golf Is on Par Fore Apparel

Never doubt the power of the mood board, for it's where dreams are visualized and great enterprises are born. **Malbon Golf** quite literally began as an **Instagram** account created by recreational golfer Stephen Malbon, whose wife, Erica, looked at it one day and said, "If you love golf that much, let's make a business out of it."

Fast forward and Malbon Golf is an inspiring success story that unfolded within a niche market, boasting a robust e-commerce channel, retail stores in prime locations, a new wholesale business, sponsored pros such as Jason Day and a major presence in South Korea.

And it all happened like one of those fluke approach shots that hits the edge of a bunker, tumbles onto the green and rolls into the hole. [Read More](#)



Classic Elements Lead Trends to Support Sustainable Manufacturing

As the fashion industry continues to promise greater movement toward sustainable manufacturing, at the foundation of the pledges apparel companies make lies the sourcing of fiber, yarn and fabric through responsible means. This trend has, over the last 10 years, transitioned into a mainstay—an expectation from consumers that brands will invest in sustainable partners.

Supporting the sustainable supply chain, the year's trends in textiles call for durable fabrics in comfortable fabrications applied to designs that can become classics in consumers' wardrobes and investment pieces by lasting for many seasons. Designs turn toward modern, fresh takes on enduring patterns and styles. The fibers and yarns that are used to create these fabrics are the foundations for rich textures, beautiful hand feel and long life cycles.

California Apparel News asked leaders in fiber, yarn and fabrics: *What trend in textiles do you feel will define this year as consumers seek change in many areas of their lives, including fashion and apparel?* [Read More](#)



LE PICKLE CLUB

In Time for the Paris Games, Le Pickle Club Introduces 'Le Olympic Collection'



It's the latest craze sweeping the nation. No, it's not the hula hoop—this isn't 1958, after all—but rather pickleball, the sport that has a silly name but offers serious fun. It's also serious business for identical twins Ashley Cornil and Sara Brady, who founded **Le Pickle Club** in 2022 in San Francisco after selling their hat brand **Kin The Label**, which they operated for nine years.

The *California Apparel News* recently spoke to the sisters to learn about their fashion line and unravel the appeal of America's fastest-growing sport. [Read More](#)



RENEWCELL

Swedish Investment Firm Altor Acquires Renewcell



Cotton-recycling pioneer Renewcell announced that its remaining assets have been acquired by Altor, an investment firm based in Sweden, and will now be known as Circulose.

The technology of recycling cotton to make a dissolving pulp for MMCF producers such as viscose has been a cornerstone of the company's operations. Circulose pulp, the innovative solution for textile-to-textile circularity, will remain at the forefront to help create a sustainable future for the fashion and textile industries. This commitment to innovation and sustainability is further strengthened by Altor's investment, which provides the resources and network needed to extend Circulose's impact and reach.

"We extend our deepest gratitude to our customers, partners and stakeholders for their unwavering support and collaboration during this journey," said Magnus Lundmark, chief executive officer at Circulose. [Read More](#)



MMGNET GROUP

Informa Markets Fashion Transitions to MMGNET Group and Launches MMGNET, the New Portfolio Parent Brand and B2B Fashion Industry Resource



Informa Markets Fashion has announced its transition to the MMGNET Group, a new insights- and resources-powered parent brand designed to support the wider fashion industry and connect the group's portfolio of brands and their communities, products, services and resources. The MMGNET Group's portfolio of fashion-industry brands will consist of MMGNET, **MAGIC**, **Coterie**, **Project** and **Sourcing at MAGIC**.

"This is more than a rebranding or launch of a new parent brand," said Kelly Helfman, president of the MMGNET Group. "This is about addressing how we serve our audience and the industry." [Read More](#)



MICHAEL LONGMIRE / UNSPLASH.COM

Hope Floats Amid Economic Uncertainty During 2024 2nd Half



Despite a bumpy first half of 2024, which saw a number of bankruptcies and retail closures, there exists an air of guarded optimism as the apparel industry enters the second half of the year. There are uncertainties that lie ahead including the direction of interest rates, continued political and military conflicts around the globe, and the 2024 United States presidential election.

With a keen business sense, a bit of guidance and even greater caution, decision-makers in the apparel industry can successfully navigate through the hurdles caused by these issues and beyond to survive into 2025. *California Apparel News* asked financial leaders in the apparel business: *What successful strategies did you recommend for the challenges faced in the first half of 2024, and how should apparel-industry professionals approach the second half of the year?* [Read More](#)



CPSC

Responsible Textile Recovery Act of 2024 Signed Into Law



Apparel-industry advocates for sustainability are celebrating the passage of Senate Bill 707, the Responsible Textile Recovery Act of 2024, which Governor Gavin Newsom signed into law Sept. 28. The groundbreaking legislation establishes the country's first

Extended Producer Responsibility textile-recycling program, marking a significant step forward in California's efforts to combat waste and promote sustainability.

SB 707 creates a framework for producers to take responsibility for the life cycle of their products and textiles, including repair, recycling and reuse. The bill will not only reduce the amount of textiles sent to landfills but will also support the development of upcycling and recycling across California and help address the environmental impacts of fast fashion and "throwaway culture." [Read More](#)



DAVID DARTNELL FAMILY

Unapologetically Himself: David Dartnell's Son Remembers His Father



David Dartnell, multiple winner of the California Designer of the Year award, has passed away at the age of 61 after a long battle with cancer. Dartnell created David Dart, which became an iconic California brand in the 1990s and helped popularize linen. The

brand operated two retail stores, in Beverly Hills and Santa Monica, and was carried in Neiman Marcus, Bloomingdale's, Saks Fifth Avenue and other major retailers. In 1994, Kellwood acquired the brand for a reported \$70 million, and Dartnell stayed on for a time before eventually leaving due to creative differences.

In an exclusive interview with *California Apparel News*, Devon Dart, the designer's 29-year-old son, who works in Los Angeles in creative endeavors, remembers his father, shares insights into his world and discusses carrying on the family legacy. [Read More](#)

Engagement and Collaboration Lead the Circular Path at Textile Exchange

By Dorothy Crouch *Contributing Writer*

Global nonprofit **Textile Exchange** channeled its mission to develop planet-positive materials production into a meeting of experts in fashion, textiles and apparel with its Conference 2024, which focused on the theme “The Case for Change.” The Pasadena, Calif., event took place at the **Pasadena Convention Center** and via an interactive virtual channel online.

“This is an opportunity to come and understand the challenges in [the textile] marketplace and how we can contribute to not only sustainability but also to creating value for everybody in the value chain,” said Amy Cooper, general manager of USA business development and SVP North America for French biochemistry firm **Carbios**, who traveled to the conference from Kentucky. “Solutions already exist to these problems; they’re there but they’re not affordable in the context of the current environment.”

The Oct. 28–31 show encouraged attendees, speakers and exhibitors to speak candidly regarding how they can fortify their businesses by incorporating environmental best practices. All players along the textile supply chain must rely on one another to succeed, and enough opportunity exists for everyone to be successful.

“These are the sustainability champions here—a convergence of them,” said Jen Hodo, manager at Mumbai, India-headquartered **Birla Cellulose**, who noted that the company’s next phase is circularity as it continues to link up with other major industry players such as a recent partnership with U.S.-based textile-to-textile recycling company **Circ**. “The opportunity is to get the brands to buy in. We have the fibers available—we’ve had them for years now—so we need the brands.”

Collaboration was also top of mind for Andreas Dorner, general manager of **RE&UP**, the textile circular-technology firm based in The Netherlands.

“On the one side there should be competition, but on the other side the cake is big enough and everybody agrees—let’s go together. To make the change, everybody can have a slice of the cake,” said Dorner. “It’s not a dream anymore, it’s reality. It’s implemented, soft or strong, and you cannot turn it back. There is so much evidence now that it is working and



Textile Exchange relayed the urgency of climate action through different offerings, such as an exhibitor floor, a photographic installation and information sessions during its Conference 2024. Pictured from left, Naia from Eastman, “Sueño en Azul” (A Dream in Blue) and RE&UP.

it will become a very strong part of this industry. You have real companies, real products, interested buyers and interesting conversation.”

Making it click through conversations

Many conversations on the exhibitor floor flowed from a strong roster of information sessions, roundtables and panel discussions. Carolina Sister Cohn, global marketing leader for textiles at Kingsport, Tenn.’s **Eastman**, maker of Naia, was grateful for the opportunity to discuss new materials-sustainability standards and regulations, and looked forward to fresh approaches to circularity.

“We were on the ‘Materials Matter’ panel trying to explain why it’s important to have the standards and how Eastman will support implementation. I was also on the panel talking about innovation and recycled feedstock, and the challenges in the industry because we have a lot of technology challenges still to overcome,” said Sister Cohn. “We are all together to try to solve the issues and try to make the textile industry more sustainable. No one can do that alone so we have to join forces.”

Theresa Murtha, director of raw materials at **Faherty**, attended the conference from New York and enjoyed the panel “From Risk to Opportunity: The Business Case for Climate Action,” led by Andrew Winston of **Winston Eco-Strategies**.

“He was very engaging and factual, and put a positive spin

on things that are negative and we need help with,” noted Murtha. “A lot of the challenges are how we can move forward. I do raw-material development so for me it’s how do we go to the next level of not just general recycling but textile recycling, textile-to-textile and issues like that.”

Textile Exchange producers also sought to connect attendees to the global network of people and land from which materials originate before they are used to make their brands’ goods. These efforts included a photographic exhibition titled “Material Worlds,” a collaboration and competition that Textile Exchange hosted with **Magnum Photos**. The exhibition featured raw imagery depicting fiber sourcing in different regions of the world such as indigo cultivation in Cusco, Peru, depicted through the winning collection, “Sueño en Azul” (A Dream in Blue) by Alejandra Orosco.

Attendees who wished to extend their Textile Exchange experiences were encouraged to embark on one of the organization’s Nov. 1 field trips. These opportunities to explore fiber-and-material-sourcing and production businesses afforded stronger connections with the conversations attendees engaged in during the previous days. These excursions included visits to businesses such as **Homeboy Threads**, a Los Angeles textile processing and rehabilitation and reentry program for former gang members and individuals who were formerly incarcerated, in addition to a journey to **Bowles Farming Company** in Los Banos, Calif., a regenerative farming operation that includes cotton production. ●

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PI Apparel *Continued from page 1*

roundtables and one-on-one meeting opportunities in addition to an intimate collection of exhibitor booths that showcased innovative tools to support digital and AI-powered supply-chain management.

Caroline de Baëre, footwear-industry expert and adjunct professor at **California College of the Arts**, chaired the event after presiding over PI Apparel's SCF USA 2023 in New York. The value of this particular PI Apparel event, according to de Baëre, was the opportunity for fashion professionals in different areas of the business to gain relevant information regarding how digital supply-chain tools create a more cohesive system.

"AI is driving tremendous opportunity but also driving risk. Leaders need to move beyond exploration of AI, tech and transparency to be fully integrated and cross functional. They need to create these cross-functional strategies for departments to communicate. A lot of times supply chain, production or design weren't as cross functional as they need to be now," said de Baëre.

While AI adoption by major brands can help existing practices evolve, de Baëre noted that emerging and boutique brands are able to align with these technologies more easily than larger companies, thereby changing the industry as they scale.

"If you're a smaller company and smaller brand, you're going to be more nimble and get there faster before you grow," de Baëre noted.

Making the case for digitizing the fashion supply chain

PI Apparel, which is operated by British parent company **MarketKey Ltd.**, kicked off the first day of the Nov. 18–19 event at the **Luxe Sunset Boulevard Hotel** with a keynote panel covering "The New Regulatory Landscape in the U.S. Fashion and Apparel Industry—Implications for the Supply Chain." The panel was moderated by Ilse Metchek, apparel



The PI Apparel Supply Chain Forum USA 2024 featured information sessions such as a panel covering "The New Regulatory Landscape in the U.S. Fashion and Apparel Industry—Implications for the Supply Chain," with (from right) Ilse Metchek, Elise Shibles, Robert Krieger and Heather C. Litman.

industry analyst and former president of the **California Fashion Association**. Metchek spoke with Robert Krieger, president of **Krieger Worldwide**; Heather C. Litman, partner with **GDLSK**; and Elise Shibles, partner on the advisory committee and textiles and apparel practice leader and forced labor practice leader with **Sandler, Travis & Rosenberg**.

Brands must identify digital and AI tools to facilitate traceability as global sustainability legislation and potential tariffs placed on goods entering the U.S. demand tracking from the early stages of the supply chain.

"Traceability is at the forefront of what you need to be focused on in managing the risk in your supply chain," said Litman. "The single most important thing you can do is know where all of the elements of your goods are coming from."

Monitoring the sources from which goods are produced is crucial to navigating new supply-chain-tracking demands, but Shibles also expanded on a concept that Litman described as "traceability before and traceability after."

"Extended producer responsibility for both packaging and textile products [is key.] What are you going to do after you've sold the good to a consumer to deal with where that T-shirt winds up later?" asked Shibles.

Kim Thomas, founder of **Kim Thomas Consulting**, which

guides footwear brands through design and development, found the commentary eye opening, particularly as she plans sourcing for her clients.

"I work a lot with American production but I also work with Chinese production, Portuguese production and Italian production," Thomas explained. "As things are shifting, it's interesting to get educated input especially from the [keynote panel of people] who were talking about the differences in manufacturing worldwide and what the implications are going to look like along the supply chain."

Attendee Laura Sheehan, financial representative with **Northwestern Mutual**, attended a panel covering "Transforming Supply Chain Management With Emerging Technologies" with Nick Vyas, executive director at the **USC Marshall Randall R. Kendrick**

Global Supply Chain Institute.

"Over the course of the conference it was apparent the supply-chain industry faces many unique challenges both on the national and international front," Sheehan said. "This presentation succinctly brought the macroeconomic factors into context and translated those factors into insightful impacts for the industry."

The solutions for these challenges lie in technologies such as AI, machine learning, blockchain and IoT, according to Ana Friedlander, senior director of industry and solution strategy at the cloud-based enterprise software firm **Infor**. Friedlander referred to AI as "augmented intelligence" during her roundtable, "Think Tank: Tailoring Your Apparel With AI-Enhanced Demand Forecasting," explaining that the technology incorporates "human expertise" to yield technological solutions.

"AI enhances traceability and operational efficiency by providing real-time insights, optimizing supply chains and ensuring every step, from raw-materials sourcing to product delivery and how it comes back, meets the highest standards of sustainability and compliance," said Friedlander. "It's streamlining not only forecasting or planning but streamlining the business and all the different aspects of it." ●



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CALIFORNIA REPUBLIC

Warning: Failure to Label in California Is Known to Cause Litigation Nightmares

By Chelsea Murtha

AAFA Senior Director of Sustainability

Labels with a scary warning—that the product you are about to buy is known to the state of California to cause cancer or reproductive harm—are found on everything from cleaning supplies and furniture to bottles of hot sauce and even entire hotel buildings.

Soon you will see them on more clothes and shoes—and this is a good thing.

This proliferation of labels is a direct result of California's Proposition 65, a policy that attempts to help discerning consumers choose safer products through chemical warnings.

California's list of potentially harmful chemicals numbers more than 900 items. Unfortunately, the agency that administers the program, California's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), does not establish science-based concentration limits to guide manufacturers about safe chemical levels. This means even trace amounts of listed chemicals—amounts that are naturally occurring, such as acrylamide in coffee—can form the basis of expensive and time-consuming legal action against brands and retailers.

Lawsuits abound despite the consumer never being in any actual danger. In response, virtually every industry slaps an indemnifying “warning” label on all products, protecting themselves from litigation while at the same time engaging in robust chemical-management systems to ensure that the products are safe.

Although they have deployed their own extensive chemical-management and product-safety protocols, many apparel and footwear brands and retailers have largely resisted using labels, fearing a consumer backlash that has not materialized in other industries. In practice, this means some retailers have even refused to stock safe apparel and footwear products if they are accompanied by a warning label.

Sadly, no amount of chemical management can create a “safe harbor” against a flood of lawsuits under Prop 65. Recent litigation, as well as the continuing listing of new chemicals by OEHHA, make it clear that warning labels are the only way to avoid lawsuits. From BPA and BPS to PFOA, PFOS and beyond, trace levels of listed chemicals—which are safe for the consumer—are being found by dogged bounty hunters. They make their living finding any trace of a chemical and extracting legal settlement fees from brands and retailers for whom it is less costly to pay up and move on than litigate low-level findings.

This takes on an added urgency as the industry is heavily investing in textile-to-textile recycling, where total elimination of all trace contamination by listed chemicals is virtually impossible. In fact, California will demand such recycling initiatives through programs like the Responsible Textile Recovery Act.



Chelsea Murtha

Only labels can stop this litigious activity.

For this reason, you can expect to see more warning labels on clothes and shoes in 2025 while in fact your wardrobe is safer and more sustainable than ever.

Increased labeling means we, as an industry, will have some work to do to educate consumers and secure their continued trust on how the industry is leading on product-safety efforts. In this vein, AAFA's RSL will certainly play a prominent role as it continues to be the most popular resource on the AAFA website—open to AAFA members and stakeholders at large—to ensure baseline chemical management.

And while an increase in labels will not mean an increase in safety risks, it should bring about a reduction in pointless litigation, thereby avoiding an extra cost that only gets passed on to consumers.

If a company chooses to use a Prop 65 warning label on its products, the company must select from two label content options. Companies must also determine the placement of the warning label on their products and on their websites if the products are sold online. With the proliferation of chemicals covered by Prop 65, AAFA understands the complexities of compliance strategy. Learn more at aafaglobal.org/Tools because keeping fashion safe and affordable is always in style. ●

As AAFA's Senior Director of Sustainability, Chelsea Murtha serves as the association's advocate and spokesperson on matters of sustainability and product safety. She engages with Congress, the executive branch, independent agencies, as well as state and local legislatures and agencies and foreign governments on sustainability, product safety and chemical-management issues important to the industry. Murtha is also the staff liaison to AAFA's Environmental Committee and Product Safety Council. In November 2024, AAFA published a new Prop 65: Best Practices & Warning Label Guide for members.

Unlocking Efficiency and Cost Optimization in Fashion with AI-Powered Innovations

In today's fast-paced fashion landscape, brands face the dual challenge of keeping up with consumer demand for personalization and speed while reducing their costs.

At the forefront of tackling these challenges is Lectra, a pioneering player in Industry 4.0 solutions, whose innovations leverage AI, IoT, and Big Data to streamline production processes and reduce fabric waste.

A New Era of Fashion Production with Valia Fashion

Lectra's latest solution, Valia Fashion, is a game-changer for fashion brands and manufacturers. Unveiled recently, this intelligent digital platform automates and connects the entire fashion production workflow, offering seamless integration with existing cutting systems and advanced digital twin technology. These features help fashion businesses streamline their operations by automatically allocating resources, eliminating waste, removing manual and duplicate steps, and ensuring data accuracy. This optimization improves efficiency, reduces costs, and enables precise fabric utilization while minimizing the risk of overproduction.

AI's role within Valia Fashion goes beyond automation; it integrates **predictive analytics to forecast fabric needs and adjust production plans based on real-time demand and historical data**. This AI-driven forecasting empowers brands to manage production dynamically, adapting to seasonal fluctuations or sudden market changes with minimal waste. Valia Fashion's adaptability addresses today's complex demands, from small, on-demand runs to large-scale production. Its predictive capabilities enable brands to **forecast fabric usage with greater precision, enhancing both sustainability and profitability**.

"Our mission with Valia is to help our clients produce only what consumers will buy," explains Maximilien Abadie, Chief Strategy Officer at Lectra. "By connecting the entire value chain, we're driving meaningful efficiencies and empowering brands to meet the cost and sustainability goals." This integrated, AI-driven approach not only addresses immediate production challenges but also **strengthens long-term resilience in an evolving market**.

“

By connecting the entire value chain, we're driving meaningful efficiencies and empowering brands to meet the cost and sustainability goals.

Maximilien Abadie
Chief Strategy Officer

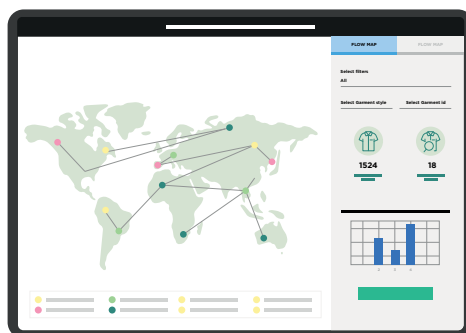


TextileGenesis: Bridging the Traceability Gap

As sustainability regulations grow stricter and the regulatory environment around imports becomes increasingly uncertain, traceability in the textile industry has become essential. Meeting evolving compliance standards demands innovation to ensure materials are verifiable and transparent across borders.

TextileGenesis, a groundbreaking Lectra platform, enables **end-to-end fiber-to-retail traceability**, specifically designed to tackle the industry's 95% traceability gap. Using digital tokens, known as **Fibercoins**, TextileGenesis verifies sustainable fibers such as cellulose and recycled synthetics, ensuring transparency and mitigating risks of unverified materials across the supply chain.

The platform's AI component allows brands to **track and verify materials in real time**, identifying risks or inconsistencies at every stage of the supply chain. This AI-powered traceability equips brands to navigate regulatory challenges like the EU Digital Product Passport (DPP), while also addressing shifting import standards. Amit Gautam, CEO of TextileGenesis, emphasizes the importance of transparency for circularity: "If you're not sure about the composition of the garment, then it directly impacts your circularity." Knowing a fabric's precise makeup enables recyclers to repurpose materials effectively, closing the loop for sustainable textiles.



Retviews: Data-Driven Decisions to Maximize Profit Margins

To remain competitive in today's data-rich environment, fashion brands need more than intuition—they need **real-time data insights**. Retviews, an AI-powered competitive analysis platform, supports trend forecasting to help brands make informed decisions by providing up-to-the-minute data on competitors' product assortments, pricing strategies, and sustainable certifications. This intelligence allows brands to craft collections that align with current and future trends, while **avoiding overproduction and minimizing waste**.

In addition, Retviews uses AI to identify slow movers within collections, allowing brands to fine-tune assortments and make proactive decisions about discounting or inventory adjustments. This predictive AI technology reduces excess stock and waste, empowering brands to meet consumer demand while lowering environmental impact. Retviews provides actionable insights that directly enhance sustainability, profitability, and market responsiveness.

Expanding the Reach of AI with a comprehensive range of solutions to cover the entire fashion value chain

Since 2007, Lectra has invested heavily in Industry 4.0 Technologies, such as IoT and AI, building an extensive database across its **8,100 solutions deployed worldwide**. This long-term commitment to research and development has enabled Lectra to create AI algorithms specifically designed for fashion that optimize production planning, reduce waste, and improve manufacturing agility.

Lectra's innovative approach not only meets today's demands but also anticipates future shifts in fashion.

Beyond Valia Fashion, Lectra's ecosystem includes solutions that deepen its coverage. This broad scope reaffirms Lectra's role as a vital ally for brands committed to innovation and sustainability in an ever-evolving industry.

Launchmetrics, a recent addition, offers brands AI-driven insights to track brand performance campaigns ROI and benchmark performance. More recently, Lectra has continued to invest in AI by signing strategic partnerships with **Six Atomic**, which uses AI to streamline product development, and with **AQC**, which focuses on automating textile defect detection.

Lectra continues to set new benchmarks in the fashion world, leveraging AI to shape a future where efficiency, sustainability, and profitability coexist.

For more on how Lectra is transforming fashion manufacturing, visit Lectra's website.

lectra.com

LECTRA

Resource Guide

Fashion District The Evans Group

www.tegmade.com
The Evans Group (TEG) is a reputable LA-based fashion development and production house catering to both established and emerging designers. The company operates an acclaimed vertically integrated facility in the Arts District of Los Angeles, crafting patterns, samples, and small-volume productions. As a premier cut and sew manufacturer, TEG specializes in bringing client designs to life with precision and excellence. For a comprehensive launch experience, services include design, fabric and trim sourcing, marketing, and mentorship. Since its establishment in 2005, TEG has assisted close to 4,000 clothing brands, generating over 30 year-round living-wage jobs.

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www.fabricmerchants.com
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Technology Lectra

www.lectra.com/en
As a major player in the fashion, automotive and furniture markets, Lectra contributes to the Industry 4.0 revolution with boldness and passion by providing best-in-class technologies. The group offers industrial intelligence solutions — software, equipment, data, and services — that facilitate the digital transformation of the companies it serves. In doing so, Lectra helps its customers push boundaries and unlock their potential. Lectra has a strong presence in the United States with a manufacturing facility in Tolland, Conn., and one Experience Center in Atlanta.

Trade Shows ANDMORE's Atlanta Apparel

www.Atlanta-Apparel.com
Atlanta Apparel is the largest apparel market on the East Coast, offering thousands of contemporary women's, men's, children's, and accessories lines all together in one location at one time. Seven markets throughout the year feature an expansive—and growing—product mix, including contemporary, young contemporary, social occasion, bridal, resortwear, fashion jewelry, fine jewelry, shoes, handbags, and more showcased in permanent showrooms and temporary exhibition booths. The next market, Feb. 4–7, 2025, offers a wide range of collections as well as the industry's top footwear and accessory brands. Details and entire 2025 market schedule can be found at www.Atlanta-Apparel.com.

IFJAG

info@ifjag.com
www.ifjag.com
IFJAG trade shows feature fashion jewelry and accessories from around the world with over 100 manufacturers or direct importers showing exclusive designs to IFJAG's unique venue of private showrooms which offer buyers a professional environment. The upcoming show is in Las Vegas running Feb. 8–11 at the Embassy Suites Las Vegas. Preregister at the IFJAG website. New exhibitors who would like to participate in the show are welcome. Buyers are offered complimentary lunch and local transportation reimbursement.

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TRADE SHOWS

Première Vision Expands to Montréal for Spring 2025

Think fashion from Canada and you may be inclined to make a joke about the famous “Canadian tuxedo,” or jeans with a jean jacket. But fashion in Montréal is far from that, and the charming francophone city will soon join Paris, Milan and New York on the **Première Vision** show roster.

Debuting April 22–23 in Québec's vibrant metropolis, the trade show will bring together key players from fashion, design and the broader creative industries with the support of the **Montréal Fashion Cluster**, **Tourisme Montréal** and Québec's **Ministry of Tourism**. As a driving force for the fashion industry, Première Vision seeks to place itself as a catalyst for the growth of Québec's fashion, economic and business-tourism sectors.

“Montréal's fashion is unique, and its creativity is flourishing,” said Thierry Langlais, vice president of operations at Première Vision New York. “What stands out is the city's community-based fashion scene, where local brands and products thrive. The more we explore Montréal, the more we see it as a true mosaic of fashion, blending history and innovation. Its deep roots in the fashion and garment industry have laid the foundation for today's creativity.”

The alignment has been in development for eight years, with key players including Mathieu St-Arnaud Lavoie, executive manager of the Montréal Fashion Cluster, and Florence Rousson, fashion divisional CEO at **GL Events**, owner of Première Vision. “The arrival of Première Vision in Montréal is a game-changer for the sector,” said Lavoie. “Québec and Montréal's history



Première Vision will add a Montréal edition to its calendar with the show scheduled to debut April 22–23 as show management seeks to tap into the region's unique fashion, according to Thierry Langlais, vice president of operations at Première Vision New York.

is deeply intertwined with the development of these major industries, which form a vital part of our collective culture. Première Vision Montréal recognizes Québec's creative strength and expertise.”

The event is expected to attract 120 exhibitors and 1,200 visitors from North America and beyond. Designers, companies and students will have the opportunity to network, discover new products, and attend workshops and conferences at milestone events for Montréal's fashion ecosystem.

—Christian Chensvold



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* TECHNICAL DESIGNER *

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