



INTERIOR TEXTILES

FABRICS, APPLICATION & HISTORIC STYLE

KARLA J. NIELSON



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KARLA NIELSON
Orem, UT



Introduction

TEXTILES FORM POWERFUL INTERIOR COMPONENTS as they combine three strong design elements: the emotion of color, the impact of pattern, and textural qualities sensed through visual perception and physical touch. Textiles are specified or selected because they are appropriate choices for the aesthetics and practicality of the space and are right for user or occupant needs. Fabric offers physical and psychological advantages to interiors such as sound absorption, privacy, comfort, enhanced safety, and aesthetics.

Textiles absorb sound from within and without, making spaces more humane and comfortable. Carpeting, upholstered walls, and window treatments with lining and interlining are especially good at accomplishing quietude by sponging noise. Properly selected fabric can assure privacy at the window both day and night. This allows the occupant to experience peace of mind. Textiles can be friendly—touchable, enveloping, comforting. They enhance safety as they cushion floors, seating, and beds; they provide visual comfort on walls and at windows. Textiles are powerful emotional tools; they may rest and calm or stimulate and excite. Textiles can be a familiar face in an impersonal world, counted on for warmth and a bit of luxury and loveliness.

Interior textiles are an artist's medium. More aesthetic feats can be accomplished with fabric and soft flooring than any other interior design component. For example, fabric can be draped, adhered, fastened, attached, grommeted, shirred, stapled, affixed, stiffened, suspended, hung, folded, quilted, appliquéd, upholstered, slipcovered, valanced, pelmeted, sewn, tacked, laminated, glued, stuffed, pleated, ruffled, pleated, piquéd, trimmed, tufted, ruched, layered, banded, contrasted, stretched onto frames, or slid on tracks. There is no limit to the creative ways fabric can be manipulated to create an interior that is unique in design and delightful to the eye, mind, and spirit.

The greatest advantage of interior textiles is the power they possess to set a mood, establish a theme, and secure an ambience. From soft and subtle colors and textures to bold and dynamic materials, the world of interior textiles is an unlimited source in creating great interior design.

Interior Textiles: Fabrics, Applications, and Historical Style is for both new and seasoned students of interior design who value the endless aesthetic wonder and continual technological advancement of contemporary interior design textiles. *Interior Textiles* is a unique and friendly approach to a vast, complex subject. It is divided into three parts.

Part I, "Fabrics," begins with an overview of the textiles industry and explores the spectrum of rewarding textile careers. Chapter 2 explores a relatively new part of textiles — sustainability awareness — now a critical element of interior textiles as it relates to manufacturing, products, and their effects on the world at large, and on the interior environment and its occupants. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 follow the road of textile source and conversion — the study of fibers, yarns, and fabric construction and conversion coloring and finishing.

Part II, "Applications," features chapters that assist the design professional in making the right choice for the right application. Chapter 6 covers the largely nonresidential or contract requirements for textile specifications, including many testing procedures and ratings that assure a fabric will perform as expected. Tests are listed in tables, organized to make a highly technical and complex subject understandable and easily referenced. Chapter 7 discusses the aesthetics of textiles. Chapters 9 through 13 explore the applications of textiles as upholstered furniture, slipcovers, wallcoverings, window treatments, linens and textile accessories, broadloom carpeting, and hand-

and machine-made area rugs. These in-depth chapters cover both contract and residential considerations and are followed by a comprehensive chapter on textile maintenance.

Part III, "Period Styles," addresses the constant elements professionals may rely on throughout their careers, even given the inevitable flux in interior design style and trends. One of these constants is the use of textiles and their colors, patterns, textures, and styles of application in historical periods that continue to influence interior design today. Part III is a richly illustrated section that explores the major uses of interior design textiles through the historical periods. The chapters are divided into major themes: Oriental styles, Formal Traditional styles, Medieval, Colonial, and Country styles, Regional and Thematic styles, and Modern styles. In each period, motifs, upholstered furniture, bed textiles, window treatments, and rugs are described, and many are illustrated. These elements provide endless inspiration for both contract and residential interiors today. For example, in many new contract broadloom carpets, design motifs are taken from periods such as Arts and Crafts or Art Nouveau. This section provides an invaluable and reliable resource for all interiors, as all interior design today is based on designs of the past.

Resources and Website

An outstanding feature of *Interior Textiles* is the highly usable Resources section at the end of each applicable chapter. Associations and organizations are listed whose membership or information may be of direct service to the textile professional. These annotated resources list the Web site, mailing address, phone and fax numbers, and purpose of each organization. They are composited in the Appendix. The Bibliography at the end of the text is also extensive and useful, as well as the Index.

A Companion Web Site, www.wiley.com/go/interior_textiles, features a wealth of resources including those found at the end of applicable chapters and manufacturers of the products and styles explored in the textbook. The Web addresses are live so the reader can click through to research educational resources, associations, manufacturers, and specific textile products.

The Companion Web Site also includes supplemental tables referred to specific chapters, an extensive Glossary of Terms, and a Historical Timeline of Manufactured Fibers. An Instructor's Manual is also available for those utilizing this book in a course.

Welcome to the amazing world of interior textiles. Enjoy the journey.

Visit www.wiley.com/go/interiortextiles for the expanded supplement and learning resources that accompany this book.



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PART
I

TEXTILES



The Textiles Industry: Profession and Careers



Figure 1.1 Fine textiles for interior design offer myriad patterns, colors, and textures. Here, silk protein fibers are used in a luxurious, high-end residential collection, *Silk Empire II*. Photo courtesy of Highland Court. 800-387-3872 www.highlandcourtfabrics.com.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES

Professional practices is a business term that indicates the body of generally accepted procedures and conduct in a given industry or profession. It addresses the responsibilities of the professional in two directions: to the employer or suppliers, and to the clients or customers. It also means an individual and collective commitment to fair trade and to ethical conduct. In the interior textiles industry and related professions, a variety of textile producers, manufacturers, distributors, retail businesses, and professionals work cooperatively to nurture a vibrant and financially healthy industry. Economically, the textiles industry and

professions are dependent on the same factors as most other U.S. and international manufacturing and consumer-oriented businesses, including the principles of supply and demand and the level of prosperity or intermittent recession.

The textiles profession offers a wide variety of careers in a wide variety of areas and places. Professionals who deal with textiles must work both **upstream** and **downstream**. *Upstream* refers to the business's immediate suppliers, and *downstream* is the outlet for or purchaser of the processed goods. The resulting supply chain is composed of many links, from fiber production at the beginning to the completed end product owned by the consumer.

THE INTERIOR TEXTILES INDUSTRY

The textiles industry is complex, vast, and international. In the United States, the industry employs over 1 million people in fiber production, machinery, textile mills, textile producers, and apparel. It is a \$70.8 billion industry, contributing \$61.7 billion annually to the gross domestic product (GDP). The textiles complex is third largest among the basic manufacturing industries in the United States. Overall, it is a healthy, vibrant industry, although a rise in imported textiles has caused a decline in the domestic consumption of U.S.-produced textiles. Abroad, particularly in China, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, India, and Vietnam, export of textiles has increased dramatically. The United States imports heavily from these countries, as well as from Mexico.

Production consists of many steps in the processing of raw elements into finished textiles. These steps include:

- Producing and/or procuring natural cellulosic and protein fibers and plant and fossil-fuel components for manufactured polymers.
- Spinning yarn.
- Manufacturing textiles by weaving, needle construction, and nonwoven processes.
- Converting textiles by prefinishing, dyeing, and printing, and by standard and decorative postcoloring finishing.

These steps result in salable textile goods that support and enrich the built environment. The finished goods then move through the distribution network into the hands of wholesalers and then to the trade and the public.

Industry manufacturing is complex because of the varying sizes of facilities, their locations, and their ownership. When a manufacturer is engaged in only one step of the process, the business is termed a **horizontal operation**. Two examples of horizontal operations are the production of fabric to the **greige goods**, or unfinished, state, and the conversion process. *Conversion* refers to the converting or changing of greige into finished fabric.

When a manufacturer is involved in several steps of the process, having financial or operational control over them, the business is termed a **vertical operation**. This type of operation may produce greige goods, convert them, and even distribute them to the trade under a proprietary label or controlled brand name.

Another type of textiles business is seen when mills, or manufacturers, produce goods for a specific product or end-use—for example, commercial fabrics that are tested to meet stringent architectural specifications and codes. A different mill may produce only nonwoven goods such as extruded fabrics or needle-constructed fabrics. A carpet mill specializes entirely in spinning carpet yarn, in producing carpet greige goods, or in tufting or weaving commercial or residential carpeting. Further, one or more corporations may own several such specialized mills, each doing business as (d/b/a) a company or brand name under the umbrella auspices of the larger corporate entity.

The procurement of smaller companies by larger ones is a major trend today. When this happens, the leadership, direction, and even methods of production may change or be updated. Occasionally a corporation elects to close a mill that does not yield a satisfactory return for investors, whose

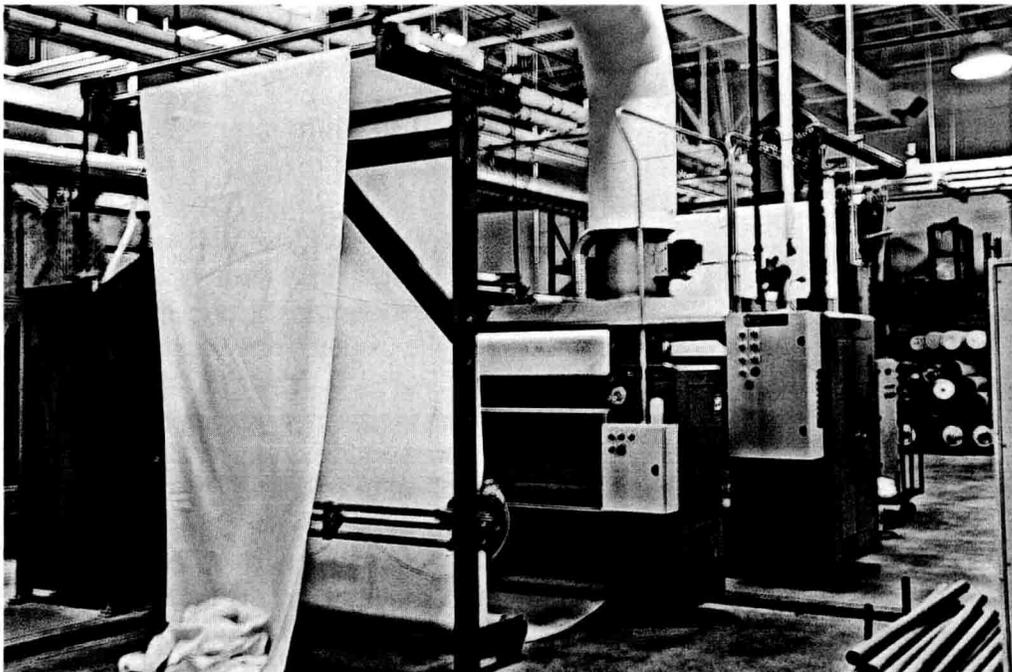


Figure 1.2 In this step in fabric production, the singer burns the surface fibers from greige or gray goods. Photo courtesy of Cotton Incorporated.

sales area is declining, or whose plant is dramatically inefficient. However, the textiles industry is well established and stable, and even with the perceived crisis of a dearth of imported textiles, it remains solid and strong in the United States.

Another feature of the industry is the formation of new corporations by means of shared funding and ownership from successful existing corporations. Companies that join forces may be from more than one country, including the United States and countries in Europe, Central and South America, and the Pacific Rim. These joint ventures may perform research and development (R&D) of existing or new

polymer fibers and a variety of useful products, including interior design textiles, and establish and solidify their marketability. Many manufacturing programs exhibit a symbiosis of marketing, research and development, and sensitivity to green design (discussed below). The textiles industry offers many employment opportunities.

Table 1.1 shows the steps in the processing of fiber to finished goods ready for installation. Each line in the table represents a segment of the industry. In the first step, the production of fibers takes place on a continual and concurrent basis, whereas the following steps are largely consecutive, following an order from beginning to end.

TABLE 1.1 TEXTILES MANUFACTURING FLOWCHART

STEP 1—Fiber Production

- Natural cellulosic fiber production: cotton, linen, jute, others
- Natural protein fiber/fabric production: wool, silk, leather
- Manufactured cellulosic fiber production: rayon, acetate
- Manufactured dextrose fiber production: polylactic acid or polylactide (PLA)
- Manufactured synthetic fiber production: acrylic, nylon, olefin, polyester, others
- Manufactured mineral/natural source production: metallic, rubber



Figure 1.3a Staple fibers are blended to enhance yarns and produce varying characteristics. From Maryrose McGowan, *Specifying Interiors*, 2 ed., John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2006.

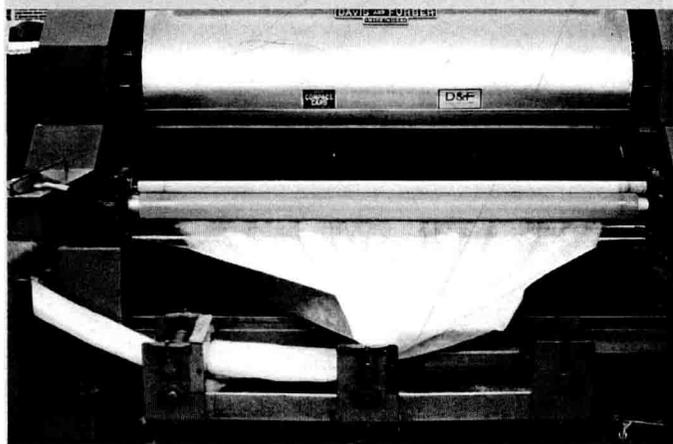


Figure 1.3b Cotton and linen fibers are carded to remove shorter staple, resulting in smooth, long, lustrous fibers. From Maryrose McGowan, *Specifying Interiors*, 2 ed., John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2006.



Figure 1.3c Drafting fibers into slivers increases the length per unit weight. From Maryrose McGowan, *Specifying Interiors*, 2 ed., John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2006.

(continued)

STEP 2—Types of Yarn Manufacturing

- Spinning of natural staple fibers into single- or multi-ply yarn
- Extrusion/spinning of manufactured fibers into continuous monofilaments; texturizing yarn
- Creation of short-length staple from manufactured filaments
- Throwing/compounding filaments or single yarns into plied or complex/novelty yarns

STEP 2 Optional—Types of Yarn or Extruded Fabric Covering

- Dyeing of viscose solution before extrusion of manufactured fibers
- Dyeing or printing of yarn

STEP 3—Greige Goods Manufacturing

- Woven, knitted, needle-constructed, extruded and compound, other fabric construction
- Tufted, needle-constructed, woven carpet greige

STEP 4—Fabric Design and Styling

- Creation of woven and printed design through hand artwork or computer software
- Colorway/dye and pigment engineering selection/specification

STEP 5—Textile Conversion: Coloring and Finishing

- Prefinishing natural fibers: bleaching, mercerizing, stabilizing, precoloring treatments
- Precoloring treatments of manufactured fibers
- Dyeing greige piece goods into solid colors
- Printing pattern on piece goods by screen, roller, transfer, and other printing methods
- Pattern/color applied to carpet roll goods (if not yarn dyed)
- Postcoloring finishes: decorative and/or structural or functional finishes

1. **Textiles are sold to manufacturers of finished product.** Product manufacturers include upholstered furniture and systems furniture companies; ready-made and alternative window treatment manufacturers; bed, bath, and linen manufacturers; and accessory companies. Manufacturers of product obtain textiles from mills in two ways. The first is to select from fabrics that are already produced. This is done at the mill, at a trade show, or in the manufacturer's showroom, if it is represented in a center of commerce such as New York City. The product manufacturer may also contract for exclusive rights to a fabric so that no other entity

STEP 6—Distribution of Piece Goods

- **Rolls or bolts** of interior textiles are known as **pieces** or **piece goods**. A *full piece* is an average of 60 yards long and a *half-piece* is about 30 yards long, although variations occur. Textiles are sold from the mills or manufacturers in four directions:
 1. To the manufacturers of end-product goods: upholstered furniture and wall coverings; ready-made window treatments; bed, bath, kitchen, and hospitality linens; accessory items; and rugs and carpeting
 2. To distributors, jobbers, or fabric companies or houses, which sell to the trade
 3. Through manufacturers' sales representatives, direct to large corporations or institutions
 4. To piece-goods store retailers

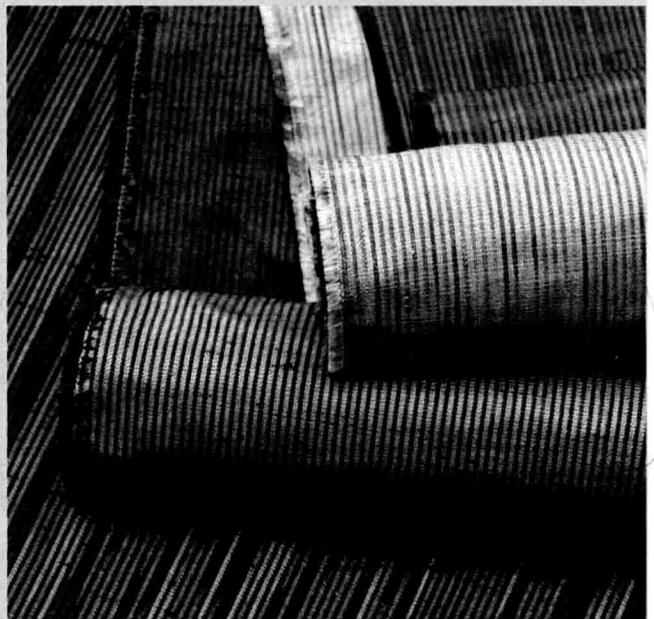


Figure 1.4 Roll or bolt goods, often called **pieces**, are stored in warehouses. Cut orders are taken and shipped to the design professional or fabricator. Photo by Edward Addeo. Photo courtesy of Donghia, Inc. www.donghia.com.

may purchase and sell it. This is possible when the manufacturer can guarantee an order large enough to justify selling the entire quantity produced to one company.

The second way is for the product manufacturer to place an order with the textile conversion mill for goods made to custom specifications. In the case of very large companies, such as those that produce alternative window treatments, this may require the services of chemical engineers who design or write specifications for the composition of yarns or textiles—that is, the fibers, construction, coloring methods, and finishes that meet specific criteria for the end product.

2. **Textiles are sold to distributors, jobbers, or fabric companies or houses.** Several dozen distributors stock textiles as merchandise in the United States and abroad. These are discussed later in this chapter.

These industry distributors then sell goods to the trade. The **trade** consists of architects and interior architects, specifiers, facility managers, interior designers, interior consultants and decorators, and specialty retailers. The trade professional specifies an exact amount of cut yardage from distributors, and it is his or her responsibility to specify (or sometimes design) or select and sell textiles for finished applications. The uses or applications of textiles are: upholstery, slipcovers; wall coverings; window treatments; bed, bath, and kitchen linens; accessories; tapestries or wall hangings; and rugs and carpeting.

3. **Textiles are sold through sales representatives direct to large corporations or institutions,** which buy large textile quantities direct from the mills for installation in their privately owned buildings. This is common in commercial carpeting and systems furniture. It may also take place through a vertical operation manufacturer that also acts as a distributor. Examples are large hotels, religious and educational institutions, government agencies, and corporations that purchase substantial quantities on a repeat basis for new construction or as refurbishing needs arise.

4. **Textiles are sold to piece-goods store retailers** that buy overstocked textiles, discontinued pieces, or second-quality (flawed) goods. Piece-goods stores sell textiles that would not otherwise find their way to the general public. Although some stores are independently owned, most are part of a chain or franchise, thus increasing their quantity buying power. For example, if a mill has ten whole or partial pieces or rolls of discontinued fabric for sale, it would be difficult for one store to justify such a large purchase, whereas a chain store company that can distribute one roll or piece to each of ten outlets can. The price these retailers pay to the mill varies and is often negotiated at costs far below wholesale, making below-retail prices available to the public. Piece-goods stores may also purchase overstock or new goods from a few distributors that are a part of a vertical operation for about half the wholesale or cut yardage price per yard. This is another example of quantity discounting. Piece-goods retail stores are discussed later in this chapter as a way for the trade and the public to obtain interior design textiles.

Textile fabrics and carpeting produced for use in interior design is a multibillion-dollar business—one that is always changing to keep up with new directions in style, color and trends, research and development, and ecological and social needs. The industry is also price driven. Salability and

profitability are key requirements for the manufacture of textile goods. Although critics feel the quality of textile design is waning in favor of enhancing the bottom line, much good can be said of the many companies that not only try to produce high-quality goods but also consider the effect of their manufacturing processes and products on the environment as well as strive to meet the needs of the end user.

TABLE 1.2 DISTRIBUTION OF FINISHED PIECE-GOODS TEXTILES

I. Fabric sold from mills to manufacturers of product:

- Window treatment manufacturers and distributors
- Furniture manufacturers and distributors
- Wall covering/fabric manufacturers and distributors
- Bed, bath, kitchen, and commercial linens manufacturers
- Accessory items manufacturers

II. Fabric sold from mills to fabric houses, companies, jobbers, or distributors

Fabric house and company are more exclusive terms for *jobber and distributor*. These companies purchase and warehouse rolls of piece goods, distribute samples, and sell cut orders to the trade.

The Trade

- Architects, interior architects
- Specifiers, facility managers
- Interior designers
- Interior design consultants, interior decorators

The Marketplace

- Residential users: first and second or vacation homes or condominiums, model homes
- Commercial or nonresidential users
- Hospitality, resort, health care, office, institution, retail spaces

III. Fabric or carpeting sold from the mills to large corporations, institutions, government agencies, or religious groups for end-use in their facilities

IV. Specialty retailers, piece-goods and retail stores, carpet mill outlet stores

The Marketplace

- Retail consumers
- Interior design professionals

FIRST- AND SECOND-QUALITY MERCHANDISE

Many nations have fabric manufacturers with a wide range of regional influence and varying degrees of quality merchandise. Not all fabrics and carpeting are perfect, although some fabrics are close. Interestingly, the two countries producing the highest-quality merchandise are among those that sustained heavy destruction of factories during World War II: Japan and Germany. It is said that Japanese textiles are nearly flawless. Excellent goods come from Switzerland as well as Germany, and very fine fabrics are produced in France, England, Italy, and the Scandinavian countries. These countries also rebuilt or upgraded many of their textile mills after World War II. In developing countries, poorer fabrics are produced along with those of finer quality. Millions of yards are imported annually from India, Mexico, and the Pacific Rim, and in interior design, these textiles have achieved a high level of style and fashion acceptance.

In the United States, many newer mills are state-of-the-art and built to the highest European standards. However, some mills date to before the Civil War and utilize antiquated processes in which spun fibers and fine debris can fly through the air and embed in the fabrics, which has a negative impact on their quality. Faults and flaws may also be introduced in the finishing process (see chapter 5), resulting in piece goods that are imperfect even when they are classified as first quality. A catchphrase of the American textile industry, “Firsts are Seconds and Seconds are Firsts,” means first-quality (or top-quality) goods may have as many flaws as those classified as seconds (irregular or flawed goods), and occasionally seconds have fewer flaws than some goods certified as firsts. For this reason, all textiles should be examined before being cut and processed into applications.

First-quality goods are sold to manufacturers of product and to the trade. Second-quality merchandise, as well as discontinued fabric that is no longer current or is considered out of style, is sold to piece-goods store retailers.

“TO THE TRADE”: THE PROCEDURE FOR OBTAINING TEXTILES

Once a fabric is manufactured, it is sampled and sold to the trade by fabric companies, distributors, or jobbers. The owners or buyers of the hundreds of companies in the United States and abroad often make their selections at international trade shows where manufacturers set up booths with creative, eye-catching displays and samples of the fabrics they are offering for sale downstream. The best known of these interior textiles shows are the international Heim-

textil in Frankfurt, Germany, and the Beinalle textile trade show in Paris, France. Heimtextil USA and Interior Lifestyle USA are conveniently located for U.S. companies. New York City is a spring and fall market site for the U.S. mills or converters headquartered nearby. Some distributors and jobbers travel abroad as circumstances dictate.

At all of these locations, piece goods are contracted for purchase by a large number of jobbers and distributors. Thus, the trade professional may see the same fabric in sample books distributed by several companies, each with a different name or stock number and perhaps even priced differently. A fabric that is widely purchased is known as an **open line fabric**, while a fabric that is purchased solely for one fabric company is termed **exclusive fabric**. Such mainstream fabrics have specific markets—some primarily residential, others specifically nonresidential or commercial. That is not to say the two are mutually exclusive. Commercial fabrics may be used in residences, and residential fabrics may be treated to meet fire code specifications, for example, and are potentially useful in nonresidential settings (see chapter 4). Other fabrics are niche-marketed as alternative manufactured window treatment textiles or upholstery for furniture manufacturers.

For some international fabrics, a U.S. company may purchase exclusive rights to distribute a line or a fabric—in the United States only, however, not around the world. Some fabric houses or companies, distributors, or jobbers have a few or many fabrics that are specifically milled and converted with an exclusive pattern. Exclusive or proprietary (solely owned) fabrics have a place in the high-end market as fabrics not widely available to the general public.

There are levels of exclusivity in fabric companies. The more exclusive, unusual, and costly U.S. fabrics are typically sold through **fabric houses** headquartered in New York City and represented in design center showrooms. Their fabrics are distributed to the professional trade only. Such upscale fabric houses advertise in high-end shelter magazines and aim for fabric name brand recognition. Many have warehouses in several major cities.

The terms **distributor** and **jobber** indicate a regional fabric company, headquartered in a city other than New York, whose fabrics are distributed regionally or nationally through sales representatives and at trade shows. Distributors and jobbers offer a wide range of textiles, all priced moderately. They do little, if any, national advertising, which helps keep their costs moderate. The fabrics offered by distributors are considered the bread and butter of thousands of interior design professionals, while the textiles sold by exclusive fabric houses are the cream. Both types of fabric lines are considered essential to a well-rounded design business.



Figure 1.5a Contract textiles and carpet samples are often distributed to the trade in architectural binders that fit neatly on reference shelves.



Figure 1.5b Sample books with cord handles are distributed by fabric companies or jobbers. They vary in size and contain color lines—all the colors available in a fabric or collection of fabrics.



Figure 1.5c Memo samples of specific fabrics are useful in coordinating furnishings and making presentations.

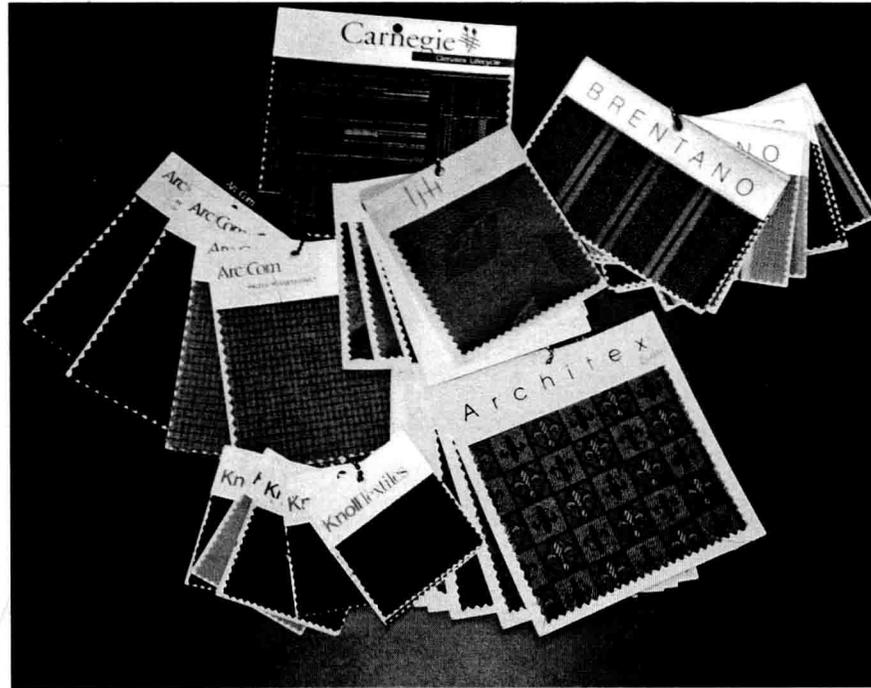


Figure 1.5d Swatch cards of contract textiles are often linked by small chains in groups. These are used in specification books and board presentation layouts.

Commercial or nonresidential fabrics are represented in both fabric houses and regional distributors. It is less critical for commercial fabrics to be in the lay or public fashion spotlight, although advertising in commercial publications and sample distribution through sales representation to designers is essential so such fabrics will be specified.

The term *jobber* (which technically applies to both fabric houses or companies and distributors) comes from the

way the distributing company purchases **job lots**, or several pieces of a fabric of the same dye lot at one time, to assure consistency. When a job lot is purchased, some yardage is sent to a sample manufacturer, which cuts the fabric and creates sample books, ringed sample sets, memo samples, showroom hanging samples, swatch/sample cards, and sample one-yard lengths. Each of these sample types has a different purpose: