

FASHION MERCHANDISING

AN INTRODUCTION



FIFTH EDITION

STONE

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An Introduction

Fifth Edition

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PREFACE

The fashion business is exciting, stimulating, fascinating! Because it is also ever-changing, we have developed *Fashion Merchandising: An Introduction*, Fifth Edition, to provide a structured learning process to help students discover the innovation and challenges of today's fashion business.

Fashion Merchandising: An Introduction, Fifth Edition, reflects the survey nature of an introductory course by covering all the interdependent levels of the fashion business so that students can be made aware of the many careers in fashion. The concepts and practices developed are equally applicable to the merchandising of all fashion-influenced goods, although the text treats them largely in terms of men's, women's, children's apparel and accessories. To keep our readers current in the most recent happenings in the fashion business, each chapter concludes with a discussion of the latest developments and upcoming trends.

This fifth edition provides hundreds of new up-to-date examples and illustrations. In addition, the text has been substantially rewritten to sharpen its focus on fashion and to allow space for expanded material on: (1) the business of fashion, (2) domestic and foreign markets, (3) the impact of technology on each level of fashion, and (4) the global sourcing that is so important to the internationalization of fashion.

ORGANIZATION OF THE TEXT

The fifth edition of *Fashion Merchandising: An Introduction* uses the successful classroom-tested organization of the previous editions. It is structured in the following sequential learning order: Unit 1, The Dynamics of Fashion; Unit 2, The Producers of Fashion; Unit 3, The Markets for Fashion; Unit 4, The Merchandising of Fashion.

Unit 1: The Dynamics of Fashion

The first five chapters acquaint the student with the fundamentals of fashion and the basic principles that govern all fashion movement and change. This unit also teaches the fundamentals of the business of fashion. Many new examples and illustrations have been provided.

Chapter 1, "The Nature of Fashion," introduces fashion terminology, examines the components of fashion, and explains why fashion is always subject to change. Chapter 2 explores the manner in which economic, sociological, and psychological factors influence fashion demand. Chapter 3 discusses the rhythmic changes in silhouette, the cyclical movement of fashion, and how to predict fashion trends with relative accuracy. Chapter 4 explains how fashions start; the roles and responsibilities of designers, manufacturers, and retailers; the major theories relating to fashion adoption and dissemination; and why most people follow rather than lead fashion change. Chapter 5 explores the scope of the fashion business, explains the different types of business organizations, and allows the student to investigate the different forms of business structure.

Unit 2: The Producers of Fashion

The next seven chapters trace the history and development, organization and operation, merchandising and marketing activities, and trends in industries engaged in producing fashion. Chapter 6 discusses textile fibers and fabrics. Chapter 7 explains the fur industry and the leather apparel and accessories industry. Chapter 8 explores the women's apparel business with emphasis on current changes and future trends. Chapter 9 covers children's apparel, both boys and girls. Chapter 10 details the operations of

the menswear market and the innovations occurring in recent years. Chapter 11 explores the excitement and opportunities of the many-faceted fashion accessories market. Chapter 12 explains the different levels of the intimate apparel industry and also spotlights the cosmetic industry.

Unit 3: The Markets for Fashion

This unit has been reorganized to give detailed information on domestic and foreign markets and how fashion inspiration comes from many areas around the world. In Chapter 13 the domestic fashion markets are individually detailed. Chapter 14 explores the major foreign markets and their importance as sources of fashion inspiration. The global nature of fashion is detailed in a new chapter, Chapter 15, which emphasizes world-wide sourcing for both imports and exports.

Unit 4: The Merchandising of Fashion

The distribution and promotion of fashion is covered in the last unit. Chapter 16 examines the major types of retail organizations that operate as distributors of fashion goods to consumers. Chapter 17 explores trends in fashion retailing and explains new, exciting, and innovative methods of distribution. In Chapter 18, the fashion auxiliary services are explained with emphasis on advertising and publicity. Also covered in this chapter are resident buying offices and the major changes that are occurring in them.

Appendices

Four appendices have been added to this edition. They address themselves to the career goals of students in the fashion business. The career information from the last edition has been updated and significantly reorganized for greater ease of use.

TEXT FEATURES

The fifth edition has many exciting special features that make the people, principles, practices, and techniques of the fashion business come alive in the minds of students. We believe that these features will help the students to learn about the fashion business in an enjoyable manner. All these features are appropriate for class discussion and library research projects.

Fashion Focus

A popular feature added in the last edition, the "Fashion Focus," highlights interesting people, places, and/or products that impact on the subject matter. This feature is found in every chapter.

Technology Talk

"Technology Talk" is a new feature that covers the latest technology and highlights how the implementation of "high tech" has caused dynamic changes on every level of the fashion business. These "Tech Talks" can be used as current events projects with students following the changes, successes, or failures of these technological innovations. This feature is found in Units 2 and 4.

Briefly Speaking

Another new feature, "Briefly Speaking," is a short, interesting article about a specific new development in the fashion business. These "briefs" can be used as examples, so that students can research the current literature on fashion and write their own "briefly speaking" articles. This feature is found in Units 2, 3, and 4.

Glossary

The glossary contains over 250 industry terms. A knowledge and understanding of the "language" of fashion gives students a firm footing upon which they can "step-out" into the industry and know they are speaking the right language.

End-of-Chapter Activities

Each of the 18 chapters in the text concludes with three kinds of student-oriented activities designed to enrich and reinforce the instructional material. A "Merchandising Vocabulary" section in each chapter explains fashion and merchandising terms introduced for the first time in that chapter. The student will recognize these terms when they appear in subsequent chapters. These terms are also in the Glossary.

"Merchandising Review" asks questions about the key concepts of each chapter. These questions provoke thought, encourage classroom discussion, and develop recall of the material presented in the text.

The section called "Merchandising Digest" consists primarily of an excerpt from the text. It asks the student to explain the significance of the excerpt and to support the explanation with specific illustrations. This activity affords the student an opportunity to apply theory to actual situations and to draw on his or her own background and experiences.

End-of-Unit Activities

Another popular feature that has been repeated in this edition is the "Fashion Project," drawn from authentic merchandising situations, which

ends each unit. These fashion projects emphasize and reinforce the instructional elements brought out in each unit. The projects enrich instruction and suggest to students that fashion merchandising is a dynamic and exciting field.

Instructor's Manual

An instructor's manual is available to adopters at no cost. It includes a number of options for organizing the fashion merchandising curriculum and contains general suggestions for teaching the course. It also contains supplementary assignments for each unit. The key to the text includes answers to all end-of-chapter and end-of-unit exercises.

A useful feature is a test bank of five tests containing test material for the units, and a final examination. The tests are composed of 100 objective questions each and are ready to duplicate.

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UNIT ONE

the dynamics of fashion

A black silhouette of a woman's leg and hand. The hand is at the top left, with fingers slightly spread. The leg extends downwards, wearing a polka-dot skirt and a high-heeled shoe.

Fashion on its most basic level is about the making and selling of clothes. On another equally important level, though, it is about the making and selling of image and style. Fashion is the most dynamic of American businesses. It thrives on change. If the fashion business did not change, it would not survive. After all, the most important thing the fashion business does is to show the world what is new. It does this through the merchandising of apparel and accessories.

As a business, fashion is composed of many, often paradoxical, elements. It is an art and a science, an industry that is at the same time both highly personal and incredibly public.

Fashion can be viewed as an art because so much creativity is required to make its products. Unlike most other businesses where conformity is the norm, fashion nurtures innovation and creativity in those who work in the industry.

Fashion has always been considered a science as well. Modern fashion manufacturing was born during the industrial revolution and has matured in the age of technology. Without machines, clothing could never be mass-produced. Technology has revolutionized the way fashion is made. Almost all stages of clothing production from design to delivery rely to some extent on technology.

Fashion, always a highly personal business, is in the process of becoming even more so. Clothing design has always been about one person's—the designer's—ideas. Today, though, one cannot examine the personal element in fashion without also talking about the customer.

A decade ago, fashion designers and leaders virtually dictated what the consumer of fashion wore. Today's fashion users, however, are more sophisticated, more knowledgeable, and most important, more individualistic. They are not afraid to express their own ideas about how they want to look against the designers' ideas about how people should look. For the first time in the history of fashion, customers are unabashedly taking an active role in choosing what they wear.

The result has been role reversal: Where the makers of fashion once got their ideas entirely from their own world of style, they now borrow freely from the external world. New fashion ideas now come from the world around us: the streets, innovative teenagers, a new play, a celebrity with his or her unique look.

But however personal fashion is on one level, the making of clothes is still very much a public business. Always, the fashion business must cater to a mass market, and these days, even to one with rapidly rising expectations. Thanks to television, new ideas and trends now sweep across the country and are adopted in a matter of days.

When we speak of fashion as a public business, we are also referring to the external forces that affect the business. Shifts in the economy, sociological influences, and demographic changes all contribute to change in fashion and therefore affect the fashion business.

All these contradictory elements work to keep the fashion business dynamic and ever-changing. In this unit, you will examine how and why fashion changes. You'll begin to develop a basic vocabulary and a working knowledge of the principles around which the fashion world revolves (in Chapter 1). You'll examine the various forces that come together to make fashion dynamic and alive:

- ▶ The environmental forces—the role that economic, sociological, and psychological elements play in the fashion business—in Chapter 2.
- ▶ The cyclical forces—how fashions change and how an understanding of this constant cycle of change can be used to predict and analyze current and future fashion—in Chapter 3.
- ▶ The design forces—the role played by designers, manufacturers, and retailers in creating fashion—in Chapter 4.
- ▶ The business forces—the scope of the industry, its recent growth and expansion, and various new forms of ownership—in Chapter 5.

Not only does fashion thrive on change, but the business of fashion is itself changing. The world of fashion operates in a far different way today than it did 10 years ago. It moves faster and reaches more people. It is more sophisticated. And perhaps most important, it is more businesslike. In order to understand the changes that have occurred and will occur in the future of the fashion industry, you must first understand the dynamics that underlie the fashion business.

THE NATURE OF FASHION

“Fashion is and has been and will be, through all ages, the outward form through which the mind speaks to the universe. Fashion in all languages designs to make, shape, model, adapt, embellish, and adorn.”¹

Fashion, then, involves our outward, visible lives. Fashion involves the clothes we wear, the dances we dance, the cars we drive, and the way we cut our hair. Fashion also influences architecture, forms of worship, and lifestyles. It has an impact on every stage of life from the womb to the tomb.

People started covering their bodies with clothes to keep warm and be modest, but adornment—decoration—was already an important part of dressing. Pressure from peer groups and changes in lifestyle influence the type of adornment considered acceptable in a particular time or for a particular group. Basically, of course, the reasons people have for wearing clothes have not changed. Today people still wear clothes to keep warm or cool and for the sake of modesty, but what we select for those purposes is very much influenced by a desire to adorn ourselves.

Because people are social animals, clothing is very much a social statement. By looking at the way a person dresses, you can often make good guesses about his or her social and business standing, sex-role identification, political orientation, ethnicity, lifestyle, and aesthetic priorities. Clothing is a forceful and highly visible medium of communication that carries with it information about who a person is, who a person is not, and who a person would like to be.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FASHION

During recent years the general interest in fashion has increased enormously. Fashion is one of the greatest economic forces in present-day life. To a great extent, it determines what people will buy. Change in fashion is the motivating factor for replacing clothes, cosmetics, furniture, housewares, and automobiles. Fashion causes changes in consumer goods and at the same time makes people want the new products, since the thought of being unfashionable is a fate worse than death to many people!

As important as fashion is to the individual consumer and to fashion businesses, probably less is commonly known about fashion than about most other human activity. Although reams of material have been written about fashion, relatively little explains why and how a fashion begins, becomes popular, and declines, and what the principles are that govern fashion trends. Students of human nature want to know what fashion means—both in the past and in the 1990s. Is fashion a political statement? A social statement? Is fashion a measure of the national economy or an art form? Sociologists, psychologists, and historians study fashion in order to better understand society, human nature, and the past. Their findings provide us with insight into the meanings of current fashion.

Webster defines fashion as “prevailing custom, usage, or style,”² and in this sense it covers a wide range of human activity. The term is used in this book in a narrower sense: **fashion** here means the style or styles of clothing and accessories worn at a particular time by a particular group of people.

THE FASHION BUSINESS

Fashion today is big business; millions of people are employed in fashion-related activities. The **fashion industries** are those engaged in manufacturing the materials and finished products used in the production of apparel and accessories for men, women, and children. Throughout this book any reference to “fashion industries” means the manufacturing businesses unless others are specifically mentioned. The broader term **fashion business** includes all the industries and services connected with fashion: design, manufacturing, distribution, retailing, advertising, publishing, and consulting; in other words, any business concerned with fashion goods or services.

Marketing

Today, marketing has become a major influence in the fashion business. What does marketing mean? Most people think of marketing only as promotion and selling. However, promotion and selling are only two aspects of marketing. The process of **marketing** includes diverse activities that identify consumer needs, develop good products, and price, distribute, and promote them effectively so that they will sell easily. “The aim of marketing is . . . to know and understand the customer so well that the product or service hits him and sells itself.”³

Fashion Marketing and Merchandising

The fashion business has been rather slow in adopting the marketing techniques that have been so successful in the growth of consumer goods such as automobiles, packaged foods, and health

and beauty aids. For many years fashion producers were only concerned with what was economical and easy for them to produce. They would spend considerable time and money trying to convince the consumer that what they had produced was what the consumer wanted. The producer had little or no interest in the wants and needs of the consumer.

Recently, however, the total process of marketing has been adopted by the fashion business and is being applied to the products and services of the fashion industries. The result is called **fashion marketing**: that is, the marketing of apparel and accessories to the ultimate consumer.

The topic of this book is narrower than fashion marketing; we are concerned with **fashion merchandising**, which refers to the *planning* required to have the right fashion-oriented merchandise at the right time, in the right place, in the right quantities, at the right prices, and with the right sales promotion.

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT FASHION

As the power of fashion to influence our lives grows, three misconceptions about it continue to be widely held. The first and most common misconception is that designers and retailers dictate what the fashion will be and then force it upon helpless consumers. It has been said that the industry is composed of "obsolescence ogres." In reality, consumers themselves decide what the fashion will be by influencing new designs and by accepting or rejecting the styles that are offered. Consumers are, in truth, "variety vultures."



Spangles, sequins, and see-through are a mark of the distinctive fashion style of Cher, who is seen here in an Egyptian-inspired outfit.

The second misconception is that fashion acts as an influence on women only. Today, men and children are as influenced by and responsive to fashion as women. Fashion is the force that causes women to raise or lower their skirt lengths, straighten or frizz their hair, and change from sportswear to dressy clothes. Fashion is also the force that

influences men to grow or shave off their mustaches and beards, choose wide or narrow ties and lapels, and change from casual jeans into three-piece suits. Fashion is also the force that makes children demand specific products and styles.

The third misconception is that fashion is a mysterious and unpredictable force. Actually, its direction can be determined and its changes predicted with remarkable accuracy by those who study and understand the fundamentals of fashion. Fashion was once considered an art form controlled by designers who dictated its content. But fashion has now evolved into a science that can be measured and evaluated.

THE TERMINOLOGY OF FASHION

What is the difference between fashion, style, and design? Just what do high fashion, mass fashion, taste, classic, and fad mean? To avoid confusion when discussing fashion, we must first understand the meanings of these terms. The definitions that follow are based on the work of Dr. Paul H. Nystrom, one of the pioneers in fashion merchandising.⁴

Style

The first step in understanding fashion is to distinguish between “fashion” and “style,” words that most people use interchangeably although there is an immense difference in their meanings. In general terms, a style is a characteristic or distinctive artistic expression or presentation. Styles exist in architecture, sculpture, painting, politics, and music, as well as in popular heroes, games, hobbies, pets, flirtations, and weddings.

In apparel, **style** is the characteristic or distinctive appearance of a garment—the combination of features that makes it unique and different from other garments. For example, T-shirts are as different from silk blouses as they are from peasant blouses. Riding jackets are as different from safari jackets as they are from blazer jackets.

Although styles come and go in terms of acceptance, a specific style always remains a style, whether it is currently in fashion or not. Some people adopt a style that becomes indelibly associated with them and wear it regardless of whether it is currently fashionable. Joan Crawford’s platform shoes, Katherine Hepburn’s pleated trousers, the Duchess of Windsor’s hairdo, Woody Allen’s sneakers, Michael Jackson’s glove, and Bruce Springsteen’s T-shirts are all examples of personal style.

Some styles are named for the period of history in which they originated—Grecian, Roman, Renaissance, Empire, flapper era (1920s), Gibson Girl era (early 1900s). When such styles return to fashion, their basic elements remain the same. Minor details are altered to reflect the taste or needs of the era in which they reappear. For example, the flapper style of the 1920s was short, pleated, and body skimming. That style can be bought today, but with changes for current fashion acceptance.

Fashion

On the other hand, a **fashion** is a style that is accepted and used by the majority of a group at any one time, no matter how small that group. A fashion is always based on some particular style. But not every style is a fashion. A fashion is a fact of social psychology. A style



Is it a bird? A plane? Superwoman? No—just a “high-fashion” leader viewed by a “mass-fashion” follower.

is usually a creation from an artist or a designer. A fashion is a result of social emulation and acceptance. A style may be old or new, beautiful or ugly, good or bad. A style is still a style even if it never receives the slightest acceptance or even approval. A style does not become a fashion until it gains some popular acceptance, and it remains a fashion only as long as it is accepted. Miniskirts, square-toed shoes, mustaches, and theatrical daytime makeup have all been fashions. And no doubt each will again be accepted by a majority of a group of people with similar in-

terests or characteristics—for example, college students, young career men and women, retired men and women.

Fashions appeal to many different groups and can be categorized according to the group to which they appeal. **High fashion** refers to a new style accepted by a limited number of fashion leaders who want to be the first to adopt changes and innovation in fashion. High-fashion styles are generally introduced and sold in small quantities and at relatively high prices. These styles may be limited because they are too sophisticated or extreme to appeal to the needs of the general public, or they are priced well beyond the reach of most people. However, if the style can appeal to a broader audience, it is generally copied, mass-produced, and sold at lower prices. The fashion leaders or innovators who first accepted it then move on to something new.

To contrast with high fashion, **mass fashion** or **volume fashion**, consists of styles that are widely accepted. These fashions are usually produced and sold in large quantities at moderate to low prices, and appeal to the greatest majority of fashion-conscious consumers. Mass fashion accounts for the majority of sales in the fashion business. Mass fashion is the “bread and butter” of the fashion banquet!

Design

There can be many variations of detail within a specific style. A **design** is a particular or individual interpretation, or version, of a style. A style may be expressed in a great many designs, all different, yet all related because they are in the same style. A sweatshirt, for example, is a distinctive style, but