

Lectures on Defensive Management

Lecture #4: Sampling of garment: avoiding problems from fashion designer, and other source

Objective:

- . Revision of the line development
- . Revision of the sampling activities
- . Demonstration of errors
- . Planning technique in error trapping and error avoidance.

Outcome:

- . Capable to minimize problem in line development-related activities..

Introduction of line development

1. Revision of development process
Before a line of merchandises can be developed, the fashion designers must understand the fashion trend and design accordingly.

- 1.1 Where to search for idea?

- Local - TDC fashion library, Fashion forecast report, etc.
- Overseas - Fashion show in London, Paris, Milan, Tokyo, New York, etc.
- Shopping - Both local and overseas

- 1.2 How to develop idea?

Sorry, it is very difficult to describe.

- 1.3 General steps:

- #1 Select the theme, image, mood, etc.
- #2 Select the colour, print, fabric, etc.
- #3 Select the styling details, look, silhouette, etc.
- #4 Make initial prototype
- #5 Design Manager screens the design and select the promising ones
- #6 Make salesman samples

Example:

In the initial phase, there are 120 styles.

After visual screening by the design manager, there are 40 styles.

Prototypes are made for these 40 styles.

After further screening, there are 30 styles left.

Salesman samples are made for these 30 styles.

After the response is collected through the salesman, 5 styles are dropped.

Finally, only 25 styles are put into production.

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1.4 What the Design Manager is looking for?

- Does this style follow the trend?
- Does this style sell?
- Is it easy to manufacturer in mass volume?
- Any hide potential disaster?
- How much does it cost?
- How much can I sell it?
- What is the profit margin?

1.5 Common dilemma

. Designer loves perfection, but perfection is costly!
[Is there a balance?]

. Designer loves the design, but not all designs can sell!
[How to compromise?]

2. Sourcing the manufacturer

Placing the right style to the right manufacturer is both an art and a science.

2.1 Where to look for production?

Typically, different country is known for her own specialities. Here is a list of the common factors:

Material: does that country export the material?

Workmanship: is it good enough to meet the requirement?

Labour: is it a good buy for the workmanship?

Duty: any import duty if this country is the country of origin?

Quota: any quota restriction if this country is the country of origin?

2.2 Going through local agency or contact factory directly?

Generally speaking, there is no single answer to this question. It depends on the country, language barrier, distance away from the office, and other factors.

Local agency	Direct contact
If you cannot speak the language	Know the language
Some government owned factories are controlled by an agency	Private factor
If the factory is too far away, and the order is too small to establish the direct contact	
High cost, because of the middle man	Less cost
Less control on the quality	Better control of quality

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2.3 Coordinating the sampling/production

Depending on the type of clothing, coordination may be needed. For example, the fabric is made in country A, and the making up is done in country B.

In high fashion business

- S fabric and making up are typically done in two different countries.
- S fabric sampling is done in a country which can handle small quantity.
- S making up is done in a country with good workmanship.
- S before the fabric is available, sample garment must be made with material of similar quality.
- S there is usually a up-charge for the sample garment.

In coordinated line

- S tops and bottoms are manufactured by different factories. The colour and finishing of the fabric must be matched.
- S fabric sampling is done in one factory.
- S fabric is then transfer to the CMT factories.
- S before the fabric is available, sample garment must be made with material of similar quality.
- S if the quantity is large, no up-charge for the sample garment.

In separated

- S the factory takes FOB order.

2.4 Defensive techniques

- C allow adequate time for sampling
- C check all possible error (careless mistake, etc)
- C since the sample garment may not be made in exact material, list all the difference from the anticipated sample, and get black and white agreement or approval
- C ship production sample for final approval

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General guidelines:

Hong Kong: excellent workmanship;
moderate price.

China: cotton, linen, silk, wool apparel;
moderate price;
good workmanship.

Taiwan: T/C or other synthetic fibre;
moderate price;
good workmanship.

Japan: Excellent design;
excellent workmanship;
expensive labour.

Other South East Asia Country:

Material: cotton, linen, T/C, etc. (Less winter material)
Workmanship: ok to moderate
Labour cost: low to medium

Mediterranean Sea

Material: cotton, etc.
Workmanship: ok to moderate
Labour cost: low to medium