

## **Chapter 9 Case Studies**

### **Introduction:**

Much of the time your work as a fashion professional will be to gather and assess data as it applies to the company you are designing for. You will be expected to research and source information, services and supplies for a number of projects. This means sifting through volumes of material that may or may not be applicable to your product or line. However, as we saw from our interviews in Chapter 6, Industry Insider's that your main job as a person asking questions and gather information in order to glean relevant materials to help you best determine how to save time and money and to ultimately best serve your client!

While it may take time to get used to sorting and sifting through information, we suggest you always keep a journal handy to jot down your thoughts, ideas, inspiration and finds. Obviously the best way to do this for research is by doing it electronically. A PDA can be worth its weight in gold for the researcher, because your information can be downloaded to your computer later for analyzing and refining. If you prefer to work online the copy/paste function of your basic word processor helps you accumulate vast amounts of information, stats and facts to later integrate into your reports. I have chosen to begin with Cottoninc.com because of the online wealth of information that is so easy to find and apply.

The company has one of the more user-friendly sites for the fashion professional. So let's begin this sample case study together by logging on to the Internet and [www.Cottoninc.com](http://www.Cottoninc.com) for some hands-on exercises. It is important you to become acquainted with this valuable resource.

### **Investigational Skills**

The first exercise will help you put into practice several skills and concepts you discovered in earlier chapters. The later exercises will help you create reports and products that are thoroughly well researched and timely for your company and clientele; by making the best use of your research, observational, conversational skills.

Much of the exercise work you will be doing involves a bit of role-play, where you are challenged to wear many hats – a researcher, product developer, designer or other creative professional.

### **Case Study #1: CottonInc.com**

Together let's do a quick hands-on search for find out more about Cottoninc.

1. Where should you begin your search?
2. How would you determine who are Cottoninc's competitors?
3. Where would you find a company fact sheet?
4. Where would you find press releases on the company?
5. How would you locate the key company personnel?

6. How would you determine what products or services a company offers?
7. How would you find out if there were any job opportunities within the company available?

Annotate your finding in a word processor and save this file as: Cottoninc.rtf

Next let's take a look at several other key fiber companies and compare websites and also be sure to also annotate and save these finding in a file entitled: Fiber-comparison.rtf

- 1) Go to Hoovers.com <http://www.hoovers.com/free/ind/dir.xhtml> this willtake you to their main industry directory. Once there look up the following companies. Remember to check with your college librarian to see if your college has purchased the gated subscription to this site. The gated portion of the site will provide a significantly larger database of information.
  - a. Dupont
  - b. Celanese
  - c. Milliken

### **Observational Skills:**

Now that you are more familiar with the advantages of cotton, we can turn our attention to companies that use cotton in their product lines.

For role-playing purposes, let's incorporate your visual skills for observing trends into a practical project. Begin by focusing your study on "SWIMWEAR" because it has a high content of cotton. Next locate three different companies that you know specialize in contemporary women's swimwear primarily made from cotton fiber based fabrics.

Your job is to find three key vendors that fit this market description and thoroughly research them to determine which one you would like to be designing for.

We are sure you would agree that swimwear and jeans are possibly the two most difficult items for an individual to be completely satisfied with in terms of fit.

Therefore taking time to acquire information from consumers on what works, what does not work and why can be invaluable to the design process.

Feel free to begin with yourself if you happen to be in the age or size market for this product you will be designing. Think about your own personal observations of the pros and cons for swimwear brands that you like. Ask yourself what works well and why. Determine what improvements would you make and why and so on.

If you are not part of this demographic market, search out someone you personally know who is. Next solicit them for answers and insights on the swimwear.

Now let's assume you are the head designer for the brand you have chosen.

Begin to look to the past few seasons for what was popular and why. Also determine the direction you feel swimwear will be headed for next years Spring-Summer season.

Annotate your findings. Gather images to determine trends in:

1. Colors
2. Fabrics used
3. Fiber Blends
4. Finishing used
5. Care and storage issues for garments
6. Garment details
7. Garment finishing's and trims
8. Body Silhouette

**Conversational Skills:** *The informational interview*

Visit your local malls and specialty stores and speak with the sales staff about the product lines that are made from cotton. Think of a least five different questions you would like to ask in the course of your time there that could help you improve or enhance a better collection for your client.

**Reality Check --- Practical Application for Your Research**

You should have a wide body of research from this simple assignment, all of which you employed using all the skills you have learned in the earlier chapters.

Based on your initial research and your field research, what conclusions have you come to? Now is the time to formulate your thoughts on how well you completed your research. Do you think you have all the facts that quantify your decisions? Are you ready to pitch your ideas to your supervisor on the direction you feel the new collection should take? If you feel you are ready, type up a

memo with your findings and accompany it with an inspiration board with your ideas for the next collection.

Set aside your research for a few weeks and go back and re-evaluate what your conclusions were. Did you over look anything? Did you make any assumptions that you don't have the facts or stats to quantify? Are you brave enough to submit the results to an impartial source for their evaluation of your findings? The hardest thing for the fashion professional maybe to quantify what they seem to instinctively know from years of practice. However, you have to remember designing is not about divining! It is about fact, stats, and informed "predictions" based on this information.

If you feel comfortable with your finding, you are ready to move on to some other case-study exercises!

## **Case Study #2 ART DECO inspired line of fabric prints for the Petite Market**

### **Advanced Fashion Application:**

You have been asked by your manager to design a line of better petite sportswear related separates for a private label. Your research will also include information on types of prints to be used on the fabric for next fall. The theme is ART DECO inspired prints. Where would you go first?

#### **Hints:** *Search for the following:*

- Information and images on the ART DECO period of art and architecture
- Leading artist and examples of their work
- Leading fashion designers of the period and examples from their collections
- Leading textile artist from the period
- Signature fashion elements that were indicative of the period such as:
  - Dominating silhouettes
  - Favorite color palettes
  - Fibers and fabric used
  - Important details
- Obtain the most current demographics and psychographics for petites.
- Determine the main concerns for the petite woman when purchasing.
- Next, locate three top designers or popular manufacturers who specialize in petite clothing.
- Compare and contrast their lines. Where are they the labels sold? Which is the most popular with the woman in her 30's, 40's and over 50?
- Define each company signature look. Begin to clearly annotate the following facts
  - Price Point i.e. Popular, Moderate, Better or Designer
  - Consumer taste level i.e. Conservative, Updated or Advanced
  - Design a new collection for a Private Label draw at least 15 related separates as technical drawings to be placed on a Presentation Boards. (FYI: another name for technical drawings is mini-bodies or croquis)
  - Select a color palette and make a Color Card Presentation Board
  - Determine what role color, scale of the print and other design considerations should be evaluated for your market segment.
  - Now if you are trained on the computer you can begin to render digitally the following fabrics to be an updated reflection of ART DECO inspired fabrics. If you are not trained on the computer you can do a mock-up of presentation boards with swatches and swipes to depict your findings. For the reader who would like to learn more about how to digitally render fabrics you can go to my website

[www.ComputersandFashion.com](http://www.ComputersandFashion.com) or to the Prentice Hall website <http://www.prenhall.com> to learn more about obtaining: Rendering Fashion, Fabric and Prints with Adobe Photoshop ©2004 or the newest version *using Adobe Illustrator* available Fall 2005 by M. Kathleen Colussy and Steve Greenberg.

- Solid fabric
- Stripe
- Check
- Plaid
- Floral
- Geometric...don't forget the choice you make for each of these must all be able to mix and match!

*Putting it in to practice:*

You are now ready to practice designing a line of related separates based on readings.

- Make a digital moodboard with your findings
- Annotate the results of your query in bullet style with images in a MicroSoft® Power Point Presentation.

**Great Recommended URLs**

1. [http://www.philamuseum.org/collections/modern\\_contemporary/1950-134-59.shtml](http://www.philamuseum.org/collections/modern_contemporary/1950-134-59.shtml)
2. [www.artcyclopedia.com](http://www.artcyclopedia.com)
3. Next Go to GOODIES CD> Chapter 7> search the URL databases

Be sure to make note here for all of the additional sites you found in the course of your research.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.



## **Case Study # 3 Levi's and cotton trends for men**

### **Advanced Fashion Application:**

<http://www.levistrauss.com/> & [www.cottoninc.com](http://www.cottoninc.com)

Using these two great company sites, determine what the trend will be for men's jeans for next year Fall-Winter.

Hint\* [Go to the GOODIES CD> PDF Files> search the Cottoninc files](#) for preliminary information.

Next [Go to GOODIES CD> Chapter 7> search the URL databases](#) for forecasting information, as well as marketing statistics sites on demographics and psychographics.

### **Highly Recommended URLs**

<http://www.levistrauss.com/news/>  
<http://www.us.levi.com/fal04a/levi/main.jsp>

List the additional sites you found here:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

## **Case Study #4 Denim Trend Analysis**

### **Advanced Fashion Application:**

Compare and contrast last year and this year for the following:

1. What brands of denim are the most popular?
2. What styles and brands are out of fashion?
3. What kinds of jean shapes or silhouette are women wear? Are men wearing?
4. Are there any new trends in colors, washes or treatments from one year ago, from 2 years ago?
5. Be specific on colors what are the hot colors, what are the safe colors and what colors are out?
6. Are customized jeans important, is so what kinds of details or sizing are you noticing?
7. Is vintage important?
8. What are the main jean labels for the following price points:
  - a. Popular (a.k.a. budget)
  - b. Moderate
  - c. Better
  - d. Designer
9. What other items are you seeing made in denim?
10. What type of weave are you noticing in denims that may be different from several years ago?
11. What were the leading websites you located on denim that provided insight into the above questions? Will these sites likely to be there in (1) year from now, (5) years from now?
12. Who were the leading denim companies in 1976, 1974, 1984 and in 1994? Which are still around today?

## **Case Study #5 Hispanic Influence on fashion**

### **Advanced Fashion Application:**

Write a White Paper on the influence of Hispanics in the US on fashion. You can cite arbiters in different arts or other areas that are Hispanic influence fashion.

Hint\* Go to the GOODIES CD> PDF Files> search the Cottoninc files for preliminary information.

Next Go to GOODIES CD> Chapter 7> search the URL databases for forecasting information, as well as marketing statistics sites on demographics and psychographics.

## **Case Study #6 The Buying Power of Children**

### **Advanced Fashion Application:**

You need to design a collection for children's wear for Summer 2006 go online and determine the trends in:

1. Silhouettes
2. Fabrics
3. Colors
4. Patterns
5. Details
6. Trims

From your results make the following:

- a. Memo with your statistical research
- b. Moodboard or Inspiration Board for your line
- c. Technical drawings of your collections
- d. Be sure to include swipes for numbers 1-5

Hint\* Go to the GOODIES CD> PDF Files> search the Cottoninc files for preliminary information.

Next Go to GOODIES CD> Chapter 7> search the URL databases for forecasting information, as well as marketing statistics sites on demographics and psychographics.

## **Case Study #7 Changing Ideals of Beauty – Body Silhouette**

### **Advanced Fashion Application:**

Determine the ideals of body proportion for petite women for the following years.

1. 1950
2. 1960
3. 1980
4. 1990
5. 2005

Locate information on where the standard sizing measurement for women from 1950 to 2005. Determine what has changed? Determine the average dress size in 1954, 1964 and so on. What are the standard sizes today? Where there distinctions made for petites, missy, and plus sizes during any of these years? Who oversees the standardizing process for the US and who overseas or determines sizes for the UK?

Next Go to GOODIES CD> Chapter 7> search the URL databases for forecasting information, as well as marketing statistics sites on demographics and psychographics.

## **Case Study #8 Swimwear Trend Analysis**

### **Advanced Fashion Application:**

Part 1) Using Hoover's compare and contrast 4 major Contemporary Women's swimwear labels/brands, by target market and price point.

Part 2) Locate 5 trends for summer (2 years from now) Contemporary Women's swimwear. Cite the information.

Part 3) Compare and contrast to styles of Swimwear (2 years ago), (1 year ago) type your findings in bullet style, noting what is the same, what's new and where you found your information and images. Next determine what will carry over to (2) years from now.

## **Case Study #9 Historical Revival Trend Analysis**

### **Advanced Fashion Application:**

The year is 1964, can you locate the following:

1. Information on the favorite pastimes
2. Information on the culture such as the most popular movies, music art and theater.
3. What was the leading art movement?
4. Locate information on the hottest fashion trends including who were the leading designers in the US and in Europe.
  - a. What were the important color stories?
  - b. What were the latest prints or patterns in clothing?
  - c. What were the important clothing details? i.e. types of collars, sleeves, hem length etc.
  - d. What were the most significant fibers and fabrics used.
  - e. What types of shoes, accessories were in fashion?
5. What were the major economic facts for that year?
  - a. What was the cost of a 4 bedroom house?
  - b. What was the cost of a new car?
  - c. What was the cost of a dress?
  - d. What was the average life expectancy?

Now take what you have gleaned and design a contemporary line of women's clothes based on this era.

Also go to Goodies CD> PDF Folder for >COTTONINC for

1. **0604 Textiles Consumer Children Pref Stats**
2. **1997 Plus Article**
3. **1201 Multi Cultural Consumer**
4. **2002 An Expanding Market-Plus**
5. **Population Changes Charted**
6. **2004 Cotton Fiber Chart**

We have provided space for you to jot down some of your favorite sites annotate them, of course bookmark them and by all means --- share them --- go online and visit my site and drop me an email with what you have found.

I can be reached at <http://www.computersandfashion.com/> \_

I appreciate your feedback, and I will be continually updating the recommendations I receive from my readers on my website. It will not be long until you are well on your way to becoming a fashion sleuth!

Signed,

Kathleen

Alias Inspector Trousseau – *Your Official Fashion Sleuth!*