Chapter One

THE FASHION FORECASTING PROCESS

" Fashion used to come from one source at a time, be it the street, the runways or the entertainment business. The interesting thing about today is that influences come from high and low-everything from couture to Target." – Michael Kors

Trend Chasers

a.k.a. Forecasters

• locate the spawning grounds of trends

• identify emerging concepts

• fashion information passed on to other forecasters, product developers, marketers and the press

• work for all kinds of firms

Strategic Window

i.e. a window of opportunity

• timing a firm's product offerings to the customer's readiness and willingness to accept and adopt those products.

Forecasting Defined:

- Forecasting should identify:

  - Source

  - Underlying Pattern

  - Direction

  - Tempo

- Forecasting attempts to project past trends into the future

- Anticipates future developments by watching for signals of change in current situations

Trend:

• Can be emerging, building or declining

• It has identifiable similarities across information sources. (styles, details, etc)

• Characterized by a building awareness among consumers

Fad:

• short trend (a trend with a short duration)

• accepted among a relatively small contingent of consumers

• fades quickly because it isn't supported the corresponding lifestyle changes.

Classics:

• long trend

• any item or style that gains visibility, generates multiple purchases, and reaches a plateau level of widespread acceptance that persists over a long period of time.

• classics implement core attributes desireable while avoiding extreme styling

Visualization

Helps forecasters understand and communicate the movement of fashion and project future directions.

There are 3 most familiar patterns of visualization.

3 Most Familiar Patterns

- Fashion Curves

- Pendulum Swing

- Fashion Cycles

Fashion Curve:

• trends are classified in duration and penetration which are visualized by a curve

• time is on the horizontal axis

• consumer adoption is on the vertical axis

Pendulum Swing:

• refers to periodic movement of fashion between extremes.

Ex. Power dressing in the 80s moved on to relaxed dress codes.

Fashion Cycles:

• The idea that there exist cyclical patterns in fashion that reoccur over time and are discernible.

• The reoccurring patterns are called long wave phenomenon

7 Steps in Developing a Forecast

Tools and techniques that are systematically applied

7 Steps in Developing a Forecast

1. Identify the basic facts about past trends and forecasts

2. Determine the causes of change in the past

3. Determine the difference between past forecasts and actual behaviors

4. Determine the factors likely to affect trends in the future

7 Steps in Developing a Forecast

5. Apply forecasting tools and techniques while paying attention to issues of accuracy and reliability

6. Follow the forecast continually to determine reasons for significant deviations from expectations

7. Revise the forecast when necessary

Long Term vs. Short Term Forecasting:

Long Term Forecasting:

- 5 years or more

- timeline sufficient for decisions related to repositioning or extending product lines

- initiating new businesses

- reviving brand images

- planning new retain concepts

Short Term Forecasting:

• 1 year +

• timeline allows for the segments of the textile / apparel pipeline to coordinate seasonal goods around looks that can be communicated to the customer through the press and stores

Tools used for Gathering Informations for Forecasting:

Fashion Scan:

- Following the latest fashion news to spot emerging fashion & lifestyle trends

- Focus on color, textiles or style forecasting

Consumer Scan:

• Attempts to identify clusters of people who share Characteristics

• Usually combined with demographics, lifestyle, attitudes and behavior

• Used to determine target market

• Can be used to better understand consumer behavior

Fashion Analysis:

• Combines **FASHION SCAN** and **CONSUMER SCAN** to determine what is likely to happen next

• Brings together expertise of a fashion insider & the insights of consumer behavior

Social and Economic Trends:

• Cultural changes in society involve shifts in lifestyle and reflect changes in generational cohorts or cycles in the economy

• Affects mass scale purchasing decisions

• Casual lifestyle, trend resistant consumer

• Megatrends- large scale shifts that cross industry lines

Trend Analysis:

• Detects short & long term trends that affect business prospects

• Uses all of the aforementioned tools:
  - • Fashion Scan
  - • Consumer Scan
  - • Fashion Analysis
  - • Social and Economic Trends
  - • Trend Analysis

Competitive Analysis

• Reasearches the plans and capabilities of competing firms by tracing public information sources.

• Over time this allows for the benchmarking of activities against competitors and to develop an accurate view of the market environment.

Discovering the Zeitgeist

Zeitgeist = "The Spirit of the Times"

• All cultural components respond to the spirit of the times

• Tthe power of the zeitgeist is the ability to coordinate across product categories

• Fashion affects all product categories

• Individuals in large numbers choose among competing styles; they choose those styles that click or connect with the spirit of the times.

Defining Fashion:

- Fashion is a style that is popular in the present.

- It is a set of trends that have been accepted by a wide audience.

- It is a complex phenomenon: psychological, sociological, cultural or commercial points of view

7 Statements of Fashion:

• Fashion as a Social and Psychological Response

• Fashion as a Popular Culture

• Fashion as Change

• Fashion as a Universal Phenomenon

• Fashion as a Transfer of Meaning

• Fashion as an Economical Stimulus

• Fashion and Gender Differences

7 Statements of Fashion:

- **Fashion as a Social and Psychological Response**

Clothing simultaneously conceals and reveals the body & self.

The buying of fashion is cognitively challenging ($$$ vs. value) and emotionally arousing (+ vs. -) in terms of symbolic meaning to products.

7 Statements of Fashion:

• Fashion as a Popular Culture

Operating within the domain of popular culture

It is sometimes trivial and transient

This invites skepticism because it sometimes seems frivolous or extreme

7 Statements of Fashion:

- **Fashion as Change**

Captures charms of novelty

Responsiveness to the spirit of the times and the pull of historical continuity

7 Statements of Fashion:

- **Fashion as a Universal Phenomenon**

example: Mid 15th century Burgundy was a fashion hub

With international trade came exposure to foreign styles

Fashion is trade in materials, ideas and artisans

7 Statements of Fashion:

- **Fashion as a Transfer of Meaning**

Meaning exists in the cultural environment

Designers, marketers and the press transfer meaning to a consumer good.

One buys the consumer good and constructs one's world

7 Statements of Fashion:

- **Fashion as an Economical Stimulus**

Fashion is an economic entity

Planned obsolescence powers the economic engines of fashion

There is a pleasure associated with new looks and new clothes, styles, etc.

7 Statements of Fashion:

• • Fashion and Gender Differences

Men's clothes traditionally occupational

Women's clothes traditionally vented their individuality

Apparel for the genders is not on the same field.

Nystrom's Framework for Observing the Zeitgeist

Attempted to list factors that guide & influence the character and direction of fashion

Nystrom's Framework for Observing the Zeitgeist

- **Dominating events**

- **Dominating Ideas**

- **Dominating Social Groups**

- **Dominating Attitude**

- **Dominating Technology**

Nystrom's Framework for Observing the Zeitgeist

• **<u>Dominating events</u>**

3 kinds:

Significant occurences = war, death, world fairs, academy awards etc.

Art Vogues = Russian ballet

Accidental events = discovery of king tut's tomb

Nystrom's Framework for Observing the Zeitgeist

- **Dominating Ideas**

Patriotism, Greek ideal or classic beauty

Multiculturalism, environmentalism, gender equality, etc.

Nystrom's Framework for Observing the Zeitgeist

- **Dominating Social Groups**

Those with wealth, power & leadership positions

celebrities fall into this category

Nystrom's Framework for Observing the Zeitgeist

• **Dominating Attitude**

attitude of the times

**eras of differentiation v. conformity
(20's & 60's v. 30's, 50's & 90's)**

Nystrom's Framework for Observing the Zeitgeist

• **Dominating Technology**

technology imprints:

including production methods

materials

infiltrating our daily lives