

APPAREL PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT BLUEPRINT

How to Get from Kick-Off to Launch Date
with your Apparel Collection

WELCOME TO THE INSIDERS' CIRCLE!

Hello! My name is Rachel Erickson, and I am a 20-year veteran of the corporate apparel industry. I'm so excited to invite you into The Business of Apparel community, where I love sharing knowledge and teaching all that I've learned throughout my career.



Building an apparel collection is an extremely complicated and detailed process. It involves multiple teams, overlapping timelines, and a countless number of daily deliverables.



As an apparel development and product manager, I was able to gain detailed knowledge about the necessary milestones to hit to create a successful launch plan. And with my Project Management Professional (PMP) Certification, I have mastered the art of placing these tasks into a clear and workable blueprint.



Billion-dollar apparel brands employ hundreds of people to execute all of the necessary tasks, and I have been one of those employees at 5 huge brands throughout my career.

I AM NOW SHARING THAT
BLUEPRINT WITH YOU!

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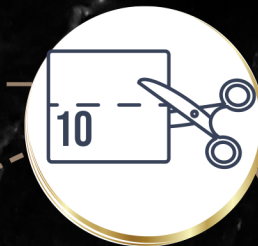
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HOW OUR PLAN IS DIFFERENT



WE START WITH THE NUMBERS

Before diving into anything else, we strongly recommend that you have a clear business plan and budget for your apparel brand. If you don't know how much you can afford to spend on fabrics, samples, and production, then you could be setting yourself up for failure. Set yourself up for success up front!



3D DEVELOPMENT

Working with 3D Renderings of your garment, alongside a professional Pattern Engineer will give you a better idea of what your garment will look like on the body before you cut a single piece of fabric. In addition, you can eliminate multiple rounds of protos and multiple months from your process if you work in 3D first!



SUSTAINABLE PROCESS

By knowing your numbers up front and eliminating excess samples, you automatically kick off your brand with more sustainable processes than the majority of the industry. Learning and implementing this better process keeps thousands of garments out of our landfills each year.

TIME TO PLAN AND PREPARE



INSPIRATION STRIKES!

When a founder or designer has that lightbulb go off above their head, we like to call this a moment of inspiration! A new idea, design, or innovative solution for the apparel industry can be brought to the team to bring it to life.



BUDGET & BUSINESS PLAN

This is the part of the process where most other advisors will tell you to dive right into competitor research and creative design... But here is where we set ourselves apart.

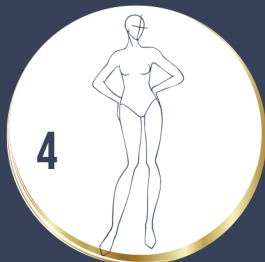
Knowing your budget before you start on any sketching or research phases will help to confirm the feasibility of your entire project. If you were inspired to create a collection of ten new garments, but you can only afford to develop and produce six styles, this is the perfect time to choose which are the best six to start with. Don't waste your time designing and researching pieces that you can't afford to make. Time is precious. Time is money. Spend your time wisely, working on a realistic line plan and business plan.



COMPETITOR RESEARCH

Only after you've put together your budget and business plan do we recommend you start researching competitor brands. What holes do they have in their lines that you could fill with your idea? What kind of pricing are they selling their garments for? What pieces do you love that you want to put your own spin on, and create for your own brand?

PRODUCT MANAGEMENT TIME



LINE PLANNING

You know how many pieces you can afford to make. You have a great idea of what your competitors are doing out in the market. Now it's time to put together your line plan.

List out all of the style details, target costs, ideal margins, and potential revenue for this new collection or idea. Get specific. Know your numbers!



DESIGN BRIEFS & SKETCHING

Put together a brief for your designer, letting them know all of the important details that they need to include in their sketches: style lines, pocket details, fit specifications, etc. If you have ideas on what kind of fabrics you want, include that in your brief.

And above all else, give your designer a target cost for their fabric sourcing needs and for the entire garment. This will help them to understand how detailed or intricate they can be when designing the styles.



FABRIC & TRIM SOURCING

Once you have a fabric and trim target price per garment, you and your team can start reaching out to mills and trim suppliers to find what you need.

Request a variety of options, fabric headers and trim reference books to give yourself multiple options and choices. Do your best to only request items that will fit into your target price.

TIME TO DEVELOP



TECH PACK CREATION

By now, you have figured out all of the fabrics, trims, and details that fit into your pricing model, and you're ready to create a professional tech pack for your manufacturer. A tech pack needs to include flat sketches, detail sketches, a bill of materials, and desired garment measurements for your first prototype. These are the basics. These are also the bare minimum requirements. Anything more you can provide is bonus and helpful, but you must start with these essential tech pack elements.



PATTERN ENGINEERING / 3D DRAPING

Working with an internal pattern engineer and 3D rendering software or working with your manufacturer who can do these tasks for you, take the time to go through 2-3 rounds of digital sample reviews at this stage. Send your tech pack to have a pattern created, ask them to render it in 3D and review it on your ideal avatar body on screen. Discuss the areas that didn't turn out the way you wanted and ask for revisions. Do this until you're happy with the details, seams, pocket placements, 3D fit and total appearance on screen. Your prototyping process will be exponentially easier and shorter if you implement these steps!



PROTOTYPING / FITTINGS / UPDATES

After you're happy with the 3D renderings of your garments, request sample yardage and ask for physical prototypes. This is the most fun part (IMHO)! Once you receive each proto, set up a fitting and review the garment on your consistent fit model for detailed feedback on how the garment feels. Take detailed notes, measurements and then write up your comments for the factory. Make sure to also update your tech pack at every fit round! Do this until you've approved the single base-size protos to size set, and you've approved your fully graded size set to production.

PRODUCTION TIME



APPROVAL TO PRODUCTION

Once all team members are happy with the fit, appearance, cost and sizing of a style, it is time to approve it to production.

Lock down your tech pack, make sure all of the information matches your production needs, and send it off to the factory as finalized!

You can now issue your Purchase Order and confirm bulk production total cost.



MANUFACTURING BULK GOODS

While your factory goes to work creating your bulk goods, this is a great time to secure the details of your marketing and sales campaigns.

This is also the perfect time to start back at the beginning of the process for the next season!

JOIN OUR GROUP!

Interested in learning more details about the apparel development and production processes? While we are working hard behind the scenes to create more robust classes, tools and downloads for you, we are getting started by kicking off a brand new community center on our website.

Sign up for our
**FREE Online
Membership to be
a part of the
community!**

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