

Careers in the Clothing Industry

WHEN CELEBRITIES walk down the red carpet for an awards show, reporters ask the big question: “Who are you wearing?” Few people become famous fashion designers outfitting celebrities for their big night, but many other jobs may suit you if you are interested in fashion and clothing. In this unit, you will learn about the six areas of the clothing industry and the many jobs that fall within those areas.



Objective:



Describe careers in the clothing industry.

Key Terms:



- apparel production
- design
- fashion merchandising
- fashion promotion
- fashion service
- textile production

Clothing Industry Career Options

Your clothing’s journey from the designer’s sketchpad to your closet involves various types of workers. Some handmade garments exist, but others are mass-produced items from factories. Workers are needed to be in charge of ordering, making, selling, and cleaning items that make their way into your wardrobe.

SIX AREAS

Six main areas of the clothing industry are fashion merchandising, fashion service, fashion promotion, apparel production, design, and textile production. Within each main area, there are a variety of career opportunities.

Fashion Merchandising

Fashion merchandising is the sale of clothing and accessories. Careers in fashion merchandising include buyer, customer-service representative, department manager, fashion coordinator, merchandise manager, product developer, sales associate, stock clerk, and store manager.

Fashion Service

Fashion service is service related to clothing and accessories. Careers in fashion service include alterationist, clothier, color consultant, dry cleaner, laundry worker, personal shopper, specialist for in-home decorations, stylist, textiles restorer, upholsterer, and wardrobe consultant.

Fashion Promotion

Fashion promotion is the advertising and promotion of clothing. Careers in fashion promotion include art/creative director, copywriter, display designer, fashion model, fashion-promotion specialist, graphic designer, market analyst, public-relations specialist, and sales representative.

Apparel Production

Apparel production is the manufacturing of clothes and accessories. Careers in apparel production include inspector, machine-manufacturer representative, patternmaker, sample maker, senior mill assistant, sewing machine operator, shipping and receiving clerk, supervisor, and production manager.

Design

Design is the planning and preparation for manufacturing. Careers in design include accessories designer, apparel designer, apparel stylist, design associate, fabric designer, fabric librarian, fabric stylist, sketcher, and textile colorist.

Textile Production

Textile production is the manufacturing of fabric for clothing and textile products. Careers in textile production include chemical technician, environmental engineer, machine operator, process engineer, product-development manager, research scientist, textile chemist, textile converter, and yarn technician.



FIGURE 1. Fashion designers sketch a design in preparation for manufacturing.



FURTHER EXPLORATION...

ONLINE CONNECTION: Celebrity Designers

It is becoming more common for actresses and pop stars to branch out into the fashion industry. Though these celebrities may have no formal training or experience in design, they are able to cash in on their famous names. Many work with teams of designers to create lines of clothing, shoes, handbags, and other mass-marketed accessories.

Visit the following website to read about 10 celebrity fashion lines. Choose one celebrity line and conduct further research on it. Make sure the line is actually designed by the celebrity, not a line that hires celebrity models to advertise or endorse the brand. Find out how long the line has been in existence, what it includes, and the annual sales.

<http://www.newser.com/story/130064/melissa-mccarthy-and-10-more-celebrities-turned-fashion-designers.html>

NECESSARY SKILLS

Each career area requires a particular set of skills. Some skills overlap into more than one area, while other skills are specific to one area.

Fashion Merchandising

Fashion merchandising requires skills in interpersonal communication, organization, management, decision making, problem solving, mathematical ability, and analytical thinking, as well as mental and physical stamina.

Fashion Service

Fashion service requires skills in communication, organization, management, sewing, and fashion sense. An individual pursuing a career in this field needs self-discipline and knowledge of fibers and fabrics.

Fashion Promotion

Fashion promotion requires skills in communication, organization, management, and analytical thinking. An individual pursuing this type of career should be creative, enthusiastic, confident, and outgoing. He or she should enjoy working with and being with others.

Apparel Production

Apparel production requires skills in interpersonal communication, manual labor, and computers. Hand-eye coordination, mental concentration, teamwork, and flexibility are other needed skills.

Design

Design requires communication skills, design knowledge, artistic abilities, sewing skills, and teamwork skills. A person pursuing this type of career must have a “passion for fashion.” In addition, he or she should be creative and have a strong work ethic.

Textile Production

Textile production requires skills in problem solving, analytical thinking, communication, teamwork, and record keeping. A person in this field should have excellent hand-eye coordination and attention to detail skills.

INDICATORS

Indicators are characteristics that show a person is a good match for a career. People suited for design careers enjoy shopping for clothing and reading fashion magazines. Also, they are attentive to new fashion designs. Generally, they possess strong opinions about clothing styles, notice colors, possess a talent for sketching, and enjoy working with fabric. They have a knack for putting together outfits and often receive compliments on their clothing.

- ◆ People suited for fashion-merchandising careers possess a people-oriented outlook. They deal well with high pressure and stress, and they “roll with the punches.” They show extreme interest in fashion and enjoy learning different skills. These people like to work with others. In addition, they see new technology as an asset.
- ◆ Indicators that a person is suited for a fashion-service career include being self-motivated and enjoying the process of helping people. They must listen carefully and respond sensitively to other people and their circumstances. These workers should have confidence in personal judgments and should believe in the importance of reputation.
- ◆ People suited for fashion-promotion careers have plenty of physical and mental energy and possess confidence in personal ideals. They are open to changes in plans or routines and are able and willing to take risks. These workers like to travel and enjoy working with different people. They respect other views and concerns, but they argue persuasively. They are capable of predicting people’s expectations and reactions in given situations.
- ◆ People suited for apparel-production careers pay attention to details and take pride in doing quality work. They appreciate the way parts of a process fit together and give input confidently. These workers enjoy learning new skills and believe that even small tasks are important. They usually have a talent for helping people work well as a group.
- ◆ Well-suited workers in textile-production careers pay attention to details and show interest in the process by which things happen. They have a strong sense of self-direction and take charge of the environment. These workers enjoy seeing how efforts contribute to a group’s success, and they are able to balance several tasks at once.

Summary:



There are six main areas of the clothing industry: fashion merchandising, fashion service, fashion promotion, apparel production, design, and textile production. Within each main area, there are a variety of career opportunities. Each career area requires a particular set of skills. Some skills overlap into more than one area, such as communication and teamwork. Other skills are specific to one area, such as artistic ability for design careers.

Checking Your Knowledge:



1. List three careers and their indicators in fashion design.
2. List three careers and their indicators in fashion merchandising.
3. List three careers and their indicators in fashion service.
4. List three careers and their indicators in fashion promotion.
5. List three careers and their indicators in apparel production.

Expanding Your Knowledge:



Find out more about the education requirements for careers in the clothing industry. Choose at least one fashion design school, and learn more about it. Find out what types of classes are offered, what degrees or certifications you may earn, and how long the program of study usually takes.

Web Links:



Career Choices

<http://fashionista.com/2010/08/which-fashion-career-is-right-for-you/>

Fashion Merchandising

http://www.ehow.com/about_4608516_what-fashion-merchandising.html#page=0

Job Descriptions

<http://artbistro.monster.com/benefits/articles/11905-top-fashion-industry-job-descriptions-and-trends?page=2>