



Fashion is Serious Business!

A look at the hottest careers in the Fashion Industry

Do you remember the last time you went out shopping, and a beautiful dress or shirt caught your eye? Sitting there in a store window, smartly accessorised and presented on a mannequin, inviting you to come into the store and see if it would look as good on you as it did in the display?

Welcome to the complex and lucrative world of the Fashion industry, one that is growing tremendously, in lock-step with the retail revolution that we are seeing across the globe. India is at the center of the global fashion industry, as fashion houses across the world have realized the growing demand for Indian fashion design, and the prowess of the Indian textile and garment industry.

Still, ask a random student or parent about education and careers in the fashion industry, and the opinions would be extreme. "My parents refused to allow me to sign up for a Fashion Design course after my 12th exams" says Shweta V., a promising designer and recent entrant in the fashion and design industry. "They felt that it was a 'fluff' course, only good for students from rich families, who could afford to waste their time and money or could afford to set up a boutique. But after I explained to

them the types of jobs that were available to fashion designers, they let me go for the course".

The fashion industry in India today, is a whole new ball-game. Every major international designer label and retail brand has opened stores, design centers and production facilities in India. From Armani to Zegna, Indians are at the forefront of the design and production of most of the world's most sought after names in fashion.

So what opportunities exist in the fashion industry? Is it just the lucky few, who become top designers of women's clothing, leaving the rest behind? "Hardly!" Prof. Aarti Sarpal, Director of the newly launched ITM Institute of Fashion Design and Technology, says, "Sometimes students come to us thinking that they want to be the next Manish Malhotra or Ritu Kumar, but mostly students are aware of the career opportunities available to them in the fashion industry."

ITM Institute of Fashion Design and Technology, a part of the 20-year-old ITM Group of Institutions, has launched specialised programs in Fashion Design in collaboration with Nottingham Trent University (NTU) UK, First Media Design School Singapore and the Pondicherry Institute of Fashion Technology (under MS University, TN). "Our three-year Bachelors programs in Fashion Design enable our students to access the latest trends and techniques in fashion design, with cutting-edge curriculum from our global partners" says Prof. Aarti Sarpal.

Nottingham Trent University is among the UK's top universities for fashion design courses. The School of Art and Design at NTU has been ranked No.1 by the UK Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), for its successful career placements. Headquartered in Singapore, First Media Design School is a wholly owned subsidiary of First Media Design and Education Group, Singapore's largest design communication group with more than 20 design studios in Singapore and the regional markets. FMDS specialises in graphic design, multimedia design, and design management programs at Diploma and Advanced Diploma levels.

So what can you do in fashion?

Lead designers are the ones that most people think of in connection with the words "fashion industry". Lead Designers are the creative leaders, developing designs for individual pieces or entire lines of clothing and accessories. This typically involves several generations of sketches or computer-aided drafts; consideration of colour, texture, material, and shape when worn; and supervision of final patterning and construction.

While some lead designers are self-employed or head their own labels, many others work for apparel manufacturers, designing fashions to be sold to the discriminating few through high-end catalogs or to the millions who shop at department stores and mass-market clothing retailers.

Technical designers take a lead designer's creations from the prototype stage through to full production. They work up specifications for new clothing and accessories, have samples made, and work with marketing and production facilities to ensure that finished pieces are made correctly and profitably. Technical design might be done "behind the scenes," but it's tremendously challenging and important.

Textile specialists and engineers. The fashion industry is driven by innovation just as other industries are, and for many of its innovations it depends on new

and improved construction materials and procedures created by textile specialists and engineers.

If you are not keen on the design and creative side of the fashion industry, the field offers a plethora of opportunities for those who wish to make careers on the business side.

Fashion Marketers make people want to buy new designs, new clothing lines, or even a designer's or company's entire output. They do this not just with advertising, but through celebrity endorsements, trade shows, samples and promotional events.

Merchandisers typically work for retail companies, where it's their job to make the clothing that the store is selling seem as attractive as possible to the store's customers. They select which clothing items to sell, figure out the optimum amount of space to use for displaying them, what height to place things, which items to display together or next to one another, how to arrange any forms or mannequins involved, even what kind of signs and lighting to use and

how to ensure that the overall experience for the shopper reflects the image they are trying to portray.

Sourcing specialists, work for apparel manufacturers, distributors, and retailers, contacting suppliers to find either the raw materials needed to make clothes (fabrics, leather, dyes, etc.), manufacturers who will make clothing to a fashion company's specifications, or particular types of already-finished clothing that match what a fashion brand is looking for.

Buyers purchase clothing and accessories for their company, either on their own discretion or following the selections of the merchandisers or sourcing specialists. They travel as needed to search for products at trade shows, preview new items that suppliers are offering, present these new products to company executives, negotiate prices and margins, and so on.

There are many more such positions in the fashion business, including Stylists, Fashion Writers, Brand Managers, Photographers, Style consultants and textile designers, tailors etc.

GRADUATE PROGRAMS IN FASHION DESIGN AND BUSINESS FROM ITM

ITM Institute of Fashion Design & Technology offers graduate programs in Fashion Design and Business, in collaboration with Nottingham Trent University UK and First Media Design School Singapore

For those interested in the business side of the fashion industry, ITM Institute of Fashion Design and Technology offers a 3-year Bachelors program in Fashion Business, in addition to a variety of 1-year diploma programs. ITM IFDT's collaboration with Nottingham Trent University gives students the choice to transfer to NTU's campuses in UK or Hong Kong in the 3rd year and graduate at NTU, or complete the program right here in Mumbai.

ITM IFDT fashion programs are currently open for admissions. Contact the Institute toll-free at 1800 209 9727 or email admissions@itm.edu for more information.

