

FASHION JOBS 101

24 CAREERS IN FASHION
By Christine DeAngelo



INTRODUCTION

Have you ever thought about entering into the fashion industry but don't know what area of fashion you'd like to work in? Do you feel like your only option is to become a fashion designer? Maybe you love clothing but are not very good at sketching and sewing? Well if so, you have come to the right place! The fashion industry can be an exciting industry to work in however it can also be very overwhelming. Fashion is a huge industry and fashion design is just one career path you can take, there are a ton of other jobs that are just as exciting! I remember when I was entering college everyone wanted to be either a Designer or a Buyer. But what about becoming a Merchandiser, Stylist, Print Designer or Trend Forecaster and so much more? After working in the industry for over 10 years I found there was no really good comprehensive overview of all the various jobs in fashion that are available. So I created this guide to help you find the right path for you! In this book you will find brief descriptions on 24 different jobs in fashion along with the tasks required, the people you will most likely work with, as well as the not so fun aspects of the job. Hopefully after reading this you will have a better understanding of the fashion industry and which career path is perfect for you! As always my goal is to help adequately prepare you for this tough competitive industry and reading this book is a great start! Good luck!

CAREERS

DESIGNER- Have a passion for making your own clothing or recreating a dress that you recently just scored at a thrift shop? If so, you might want to consider becoming a Designer! Being a Fashion Designer is about coming up with new clothing ideas that are different and unique in your own way. In order to become a Designer, you will need to know how to sketch your designs as well how to turn your sketch into a live 3D garment using draping, patternmaking, and sewing skills. Most Designers spend a lot of time doing trend and market research to figure out who their target customer is and what is selling. Having an understanding of color and textiles is crucial as well. While most people choose design as they feel it is the most creative, at the end of the day fashion is still a business and brands need to make money. You will most likely spend the majority of your time designing garments that are salable over something that is avant-garde so keep that in mind. Another huge part of a designer's job is creating tech packs that will be sent off to the factory. These usually consist of flat sketches as well as technical drawings, specs, fabrication, and sewing instructions. You will also be involved in the fitting of the garments on a model as well as dealing with any production issues. As a Designer you must be prepared to wear many hats and deal with many different personalities!

MERCHANDISER- Have a knack for putting outfits together and matching up colors? If so being a Merchandiser may be a perfect fit for you. A Merchandiser's main task is organizing a Designer's or retailer's products based on what's selling, color, trend, and quantity needed. As a Merchandiser you often work as a liaison between the Designers and Buyers to help push the sale of the product and in the right colors and quantities. Merchandisers can often be responsible for providing trend/print direction as well as selecting fabrications to be used for a Designer's line. As a Merchandiser you will spend a lot of time analyzing selling reports, reading customer reviews on fit, and trying to collect data that you can then report back to the Designers. For example, if a particular color is selling well you may want to consider repeating it the following season or staying within the same color family at the very least. You also look to see what silhouettes are selling so that your Designers can expand on these moving forward. You will also work heavily with Buyers to present the lines and get the right pieces in the right stores. The key to success in this position is having the right data available at your fingertips and being able to translate that data for the upcoming seasons!

BUYER- Love to shop? If so, you may want to consider becoming a Buyer. As a Fashion Buyer you would work for a boutique or a corporate store and buy the

clothing that is needed to sell in their stores. You may often travel to fashion shows, trade shows, and visit showrooms in search of finding new styles and lines for your store (this is the "shopping" part)! You should be able to communicate and negotiate effectively since you will be speaking to many different people and often times have to bargain for the price you need. Being a risk taker is also an important trait, since you have to be able to predict if a particular line will sell at your store. Trend forecasting skills also help in this area. The good part is that Designers and Sales associates love to shower you with gifts and dinners as they do so in an effort to persuade you to purchase the line. So you can usually get some good stuff :) However being a Fashion Buyer does require retail math so majoring in Marketing or Fashion Merchandising can help.

SALES- Are you convincing? Can you persuade customers to make a purchase? If so you would be perfect for Sales. Working in Sales will of course require selling skills!! You will be responsible for selling a Designer's line. You should also have awesome enthusiasm and amazing persuasive skills. There are many different types of jobs in sales such as working as a Sales Associate at a store, or as a company Sales Representative in where you would be in charge of selling the company's product to Buyers. Sometimes your job may require travel as you could often times work at trade shows selling the product or traveling direct to various stores to sell the line. In this position you will work closely with Designers to understand their vision, the direction of the line, as well as details such as the fabrication and trims. You should have enough understanding of the garment to have made it yourself!

TEXTILE/PRINT DESIGNER- Do you love to touch fabrics and the different feel and hand of each one? Or do you get excited over the new prints at Pucci each season? Then you might want to consider becoming a Textile Designer. As a Textile Designer you could design fabrics that are woven, printed &/or knitted. Textile design is similar to fashion design in that you get to create something from scratch however you are only working on the fabrics themselves, not the garments. Your job will also include research and understanding the latest new design trends as well as fabric technological advances that are happening. Many Textile employers do require for you to be a proficient CAD designer. CAD stands for Computer Aided Design which basically means you are versed at using various computer programs and software. Textile Designers can create original designs for existing fabrics such as tweeds, by choosing the different yarn colors they would like to be woven or for stripes, by choosing the different colors that will need to be printed. Or you could also work on developing entirely new fabrications all together. Print Designers are a specific type of Textile Designer as

they only focus on prints. And you still need to be able to use CAD programs to digitally sketch the print you are creating. These programs can help you to create original pattern designs, or re-color existing designs. You also should have an understanding of the different methods of printing such as digital and screen printing as well as the layout of the print (i.e.. single or double border, one way, placement, etc.) If you have a passion for print design this would be a great career!

PIECE GOODS BUYER- Do you love textiles but don't want to design them? Then look into becoming a Piece Goods Buyer. As a Piece Goods Buyer your main responsibility would be to handle the sourcing and purchasing of goods and trims for the production of a line. Designers will often express to you what kind of materials they are looking for and you will then research and source various types of fabrics, trims and notions that you can show them. You will work as the liaison between designers, textile mills, and factories to make sure everything is running smoothly. You often times will get to go to fabric trade shows to stay up to date on all the latest fabric designs and trends that are happening. Having a good understanding of textiles as well as production cycles and calendars is key to excelling at this job. The timing of when fabrics are delivered to a factory to then be cut and sewn is crucial to achieving the desired delivery date. Keeping good inventory records of the amounts of yardage leftover after each order can help you to stay organized. The other challenge in this position is dealing with issues after the fabric has been purchased. A lot of times there can be damages such as misprints, bleeding, shrinkage, color fastness, crocking, stains, holes, etc. which can eat up your yardage forcing you to take time cutting around the damages as well as purchasing more than you initially needed which will then increase your cost in the end. So being proactive to help avoid this issues will help you do your job more effectively!

COLORIST- Are you good with colors? Can you differentiate between all the different shades of blue? If so, you might be the perfect Colorist! As we know there are thousands of different shades for each color and it's a Colorist's job to make sure the color a fashion designer or clothing manufacturer wants for their pieces is achieved. You may be responsible for mixing, developing and creating colors for fabrics if you work in a lab, or you may simply be responsible for approving lab dips that come in from a mill. Most of the time the designer will tell you or give you an idea of what color they want and its your job to hit that color. Other times the designer/manufacture may give you the freedom to choose what you think would be the right shade. The difficulty in this job comes when trying to achieve the same exact color across a number of different fabrics and prints, as most Designers often do. Since a Designer doesn't typically get all

of their fabrics for a collection from the same mill, it can be challenging to achieve an exact match when using multiple mills. Having an understanding of how colors are mixed starting with the basic primary colors is key in order to giving correct comments on your lab dips. As a fashion Colorist you could work for department stores, clothing manufactures, designers, textile companies, design studios and many more.

TECH DESIGNER- Are you good with problem solving? Do you enjoy technical work? If so this might be the job for you. As a Tech Designer you would be responsible for making comments on the fit of a garment. You will also be responsible for ensuring that the specs are met throughout the entire process from first sample all the way through to a T.O.P. sample (Top of Production). To do this you will work closely with the Patternmaker or factory that made the first sample. Not only will you work alongside Patternmakers but sometimes are required to do the work of a Patternmaker yourself. Not all employers that hire Tech Designers will require you to be a Patternmaker but it will come up in most of your tasks. You will also be involved in fittings and will need to check specs on each sample that comes in from your factory. You also often times will also need to resolve manufacturing problems with the factories who are making the garments. This sometimes requires changing the design of a garment slightly which you will then need to convey to the Designer and come to an agreement. This position requires you to be an expert in math as well as have a very good understanding of specing, grading, and pattern making.

PATTERNMAKER - Do you like working with your hands? If so, you may like being a Patternmaker. Your job is to take a Designer's sketch and turn it into a 3D garment by using draping and pattern making skills. You will be working closely with the Designer since you will be taking their design and creating a muslin and then a pattern for them to approve. Patternmaking requires drafting skills, knowledge of computer software used in the fashion industry, as well as sewing knowledge. This is a very analytical job that also requires the ability to look at something 2D (a paper pattern) and understand how it will look in 3D (a final garment). Patternmakers also work closely with cutters and samplemakers to ensure that their pattern is cut and sewn properly. Patternmakers usually need all of the same expertise as a Fashion Designer except with a heavier emphasis on draping and sewing. Sometimes Patternmakers can be creative as sometimes during the process of drafting a pattern, changes will need to be made and some Designers are open to taking advice from their Patternmakers.

PRODUCTION COORDINATOR- Are you a natural planner? Someone who is always organizing and good at timing? You would be perfect as a Production Coordinator! As a Production Coordinator you would generally manage the production schedule for the making of a product. You create a production plan and take charge of maintaining all the different departments. As a Production Coordinator you are also responsible for making sure the Designer's product comes out the way they wanted while also keeping the consumer in mind. You also need to work with Sales and your Manufacturer to make sure the product is priced well and your margins are met. You are in charge of inventory control where you track materials through the manufacturing process as well as checking in on how the manufacturing process is going. Juggling a lot of tasks is common with this job. This position typically requires working closely with your Manufacturer and if they are located overseas, be prepared to be up in the middle of the night talking to them!

QUALITY CONTROLIST- Do you enjoy science? Do you like to test things and then track the results? Then look into being a Quality Controlist. Working as a Quality Controlist (or QC for short), you will work to measure if products are meeting a set of quality standards. You will often be planning how often testing will be performed and which tests will be made. There are a ton of different points in the manufacturing process that require a QC. Sometimes you may be required to test the fabric itself for things like, shrinkage, bleeding, color fastness, crocking, as well as wash and care instructions. Maybe the goods need to be waterproof or flame-retardant as well. Then there is the cutting phase which requires a QC to check to make sure that the spreading and cutting of a garment is correct, as well as the sewing phase which requires a QC to check the stitch/seam types, mismatched threads, etc. Then at the end of the production cycle, you may be testing the garments themselves for things like seam slippage, stitch strength, pilling, etc. As a QC you will most likely work in a manufacturing facility to help maintain the quality of the products being manufactured. You would be in charge of checking and reviewing how the production is going and what changes need to be made. There will be a lot of math and engineering involved so be prepared to take a lot of these classes. Also having a good understanding of textiles and production will help too.

STYLIST- Are you a trendsetter! Do you know how to create amazing looks with simple pieces? If so, you would make a great Stylist! Stylists can work at fashion shows, photoshoots, magazines, TV, red carpets and sometimes even with celebrities. Working at a fashion show you would 'style' looks for the runway with the help of the Designer. This means taking the garments that the designer created and figuring out how they will be put together and shown.

Things like rolling up the sleeves, cuffing pants, tucking shirts in, and leaving buttons undone are all styling details. Believe it or not a lot of time goes into things like deciding if a cuff should be rolled 2 times or 3 or if a piece should be layered over something or shown on its own. As a Stylist you can also work for so many different people or companies but the idea of the job is the same; to create timeless, beautiful looks that are unique! As a Stylist you should be creative, imaginative, and a big risk taker. You also have to know how to compromise and please your client! Researching and knowing what is on trend in the fashion industry is also very important since you will want to style your client in the seasons best clothing! Some Stylists work for a Styling Company while others can be independent contractors. Almost everyone would love to be a Stylist but the difficulty here comes with finding the clients.

PERSONAL SHOPPER- Do you have a keen eye for style and fit? Do you give your friends advice on what to wear? Then take a look into being a Personal Shopper! Personal Shoppers help to shop and provide advice and suggestions to their clients. You must be able to figure out your client's style and prepare a completed outfit for any occasion. Sometimes a client could hire you to dress them specifically for an event or an interview while other times your clients just may be too busy themselves to go shopping. And a lot of times a client just may not really know what to wear and so they need the help of a professional to figure that out for them. The best part of this job is that you get to go shopping all the time! And in the process you are always learning about different brands and designers. Your knowledge about fashion and will naturally grow. The bad part is that you will spend a lot of time returning things that your client doesn't want or like.

IMAGE CONSULTANT- Do you have a sharp eye for detail and color? Do you love giving makeovers and dressing up your friends? Then look at becoming a Image Consultant. Image Consulting is the process of empowering clients to look and dress the best for their body type/style and in the end project the confidence that comes with looking good. Most people want to project the perfect image, but they don't really know what looks good on them. As an Image Consultant you will deal with educating, coaching, guiding and mentoring people on how to properly select the right clothing type, color, silhouette and trend that works for them. Sometimes you may have your client fill out an assessment form regarding their style and preferences so you can get an idea on how to help them. This job can be very similar to a Personal Shopper if you are actually shopping for your clients as well. You could also be hired by various companies especially with the human resources department if let's say they want

to have their employees start dressing better. There are really a number of directions this position could go in.

VISUAL MERCHANDISER- Are you a visual person? Do you like to build things? Then being a Visual Merchandiser is perfect for you! Your job is to create engaging store displays and windows. You work with the store's product and marketing plan to create a mood and ultimately drive more sales. Your work tells a story and often times brings the product to life. You have the opportunity to come up with strategic ways to sell the product that has been brought into a store. You will usually work with a team of people to purchase materials, build displays, and create the look you want. Sometimes you will also rearrange fixtures and merchandise within a store as items are sold and needed on the floor. You also can be assigned a geographic area and expected to visit stores frequently to check on existing products and displays. Visual Merchandisers also report information about products that are and aren't doing that well, stock shortfalls and any other problems to their managers. The only bad part of this job is that it can be very physically demanding with the building of displays and fixtures as well as the fact that you will often times be doing the displays at night when the stores are closed.

RETAIL STORE MANAGER- Are you a leader? Do people rely on you the most? Maybe being a Retail Store Manager is the fit for you! This job requires you to have an entrepreneurial mindset and be able to make decisions about which lines to stock, how to advertise, and how to display goods - all the skills a fashion marketing and merchandising professional should have. Sometimes as a Retail Store Manager you will also take on the role of the Buyer or if your store is large enough, you will hire someone else to be the Buyer. Sales is definitely your number one goal and so you most likely will employ others under you to help you run a successful store. Positions such as Sales Associates and Visual Merchandisers are all key to running a good retail store. Finding good and efficient Sales Associates as well as hitting your sales goals will be your challenges in this job.

FIT MODEL- Do you like modeling but hate having your photo taken? Fit modeling would be great for you! A Fit Model is a person who is used by a manufacturer to check the fit, drape and visual appearance of a design. In essence you are acting as a live mannequin. The role of a Fit Model is very important to the design process because you have the opportunity to give live feedback on the fit, movement and feel of the garment. This job requires you to try on samples and 'model' them so that the design team can determine if there are imperfections or if style changes are needed before it is mass-produced and

distributed to stores. As a Fit Model, you can work for an agency who acts as a rep for you, or you could work for the actual design company or department store themselves. Another important aspect to note about this job is that you usually must maintain your size measurements all the time in order to ensure that the garments are fitting properly. However fit models come in all sizes, not just super skinny!

PHOTOGRAPHER- Are you the one always snapping pictures at parties? Is 'selfie' your middle name? Then maybe being a Photographer is a good fit. As a Photographer you must have a keen eye for design, shapes, lines, colors, and lighting, as well as understand how to capture an individual focus point within a scene. Fashion Photographers will often shoot models, clothing, fashion shows, parties, celebrities, etc. Sometimes you can also provide valuable input to the designer/client regarding an appropriate location for the shoot as well as any props, backdrop, or set materials that are needed. Depending on the client you may also be in charge of overseeing the hair, makeup, clothing, and other aspects of a shoot in order to ensure that the final product is perfect. It is the responsibility of a Fashion Photographer to highlight whatever the client's focus is whether it be a mood, the model, or the clothing itself. After the photos are shot, most Photographers then go back and edit/retouch the photos until perfection. This often requires knowledge of computer editing programs such as Photoshop. Sometimes one photo can take hours of editing just to get it right and so working in front of a computer should be something you enjoy as well.

EDITOR- Do you live and breathe fashion? Do you collect every fashion magazine possible? Are you obsessed with Anna Wintour? Then look into becoming a Fashion Editor! Your job as a Fashion Editor begins months before an new issue comes out. So if you're working on the new trends for summer, you need to look at swimwear and skirts 6-12 months before that. To decide on the next upcoming trends to be featured, you'll need to look at various designers showcases and runway shows to figure out what options are available for the approaching season. Then sometimes you'll talk to stores to find out what is selling as well. From this research you can create an overall vision for what your publication will display. Then you can create page layout ideas and work on doing the photo shoots to present the clothing in the best possible way. Most Fashion Editors spend their days in an office, on the set of a shoot, or at a showroom/fashion show so it can be a busy and hectic job. Once a photoshoot is complete then the real work begins of editing down the photos, and deciding on the text that will accompany the layout and making sure that the proper credits are given on each piece. Invitations to the best fashion shows and

parties are the norm with this job however it can be very hectic and stressful as you are always working on a deadline.

FASHION JOURNALIST- Do you have the gift of gab? Are you a superb writer? Fashion Journalism might be up your alley! Fashion Journalists are expert researchers and reporters who focus on trends in the fashion industry. Depending on your place of employment, you may have a variety of different responsibilities. Some Journalists spend most of their time in offices, browsing online resources, and conducting phone and email interviews. Others have the opportunity to travel and attend high-profile fashion shows and insider meetings. There are a number of important skills that are needed to be successful as a Fashion Journalist. It is important to have excellent communication skills as well as the ability to present interesting information through words and photos. You also need to be friendly, knowledgeable about the industry, and dedicated to your work. A Journalist must be able to network with people in the fashion world to develop relationships and be granted interviews and access to exclusive events. Lastly, it is necessary for a Journalist to keep up-to-date on trends and popular culture so he or she can stay relevant with their target audience. Often times you will work closely with the Fashion Editor who will edit your story for the publication so it is best to have a good relationship with this individual.

FASHION PUBLIC RELATIONS- Are you always in the know about what events are happening? Well look into Fashion Public Relations (PR)! A Fashion PR company or executive would be responsible for a number of things including building relationships with the press, organizing and managing guest lists for promotional events, writing, distributing and following up on press releases and press packs, dealing with requests from the press and celebrity PRs and reporting back to clients on the publicity they're getting for their brands. PR executives also help maintain the public image of the brand and help to gain a following with the brand. They may help with marketing ideas, or photo shoots, or just maintain the overall perception of the brands mission and image to the market. You will also often work along side advertising, marketing, and social media teams in order to make sure the image you are projecting for your client/brand is consistent.

MARKETING/SOCIAL MEDIA- Do you have the eye for fashion and the mind for business? If so, Fashion Marketing is a good choice. While you wouldn't actually be designing clothing, you are responsible for helping designers market their lines and identify their target customer. Once you figure out what your target customer wants and desires, you can then use that information to develop

a marketing plan with coordinated elements such as advertising, special events, public and media relations, videos and social media, as well as written articles and materials. Increasing sales and gaining brand recognition is the ultimate goal. At the end of the day fashion is a business and the objective is to sell a product. A lot of companies now are utilizing Social Media in order to achieve this goal and so you could be hired as a Social Media Expert. Posting updates daily about news, announcements, events, promotions, and sales can all help to grow a business. For example, organizations can use Facebook to promote events and give full news stories. They can use Twitter for shorter updates such as deals and sales. Then of course is the customer service part which social media now allows you to connect straight with your customer. This can be useful for things like tweaking the fit of a garment that everyone is complaining is too small or to reproduce a style that everyone is liking.

TREND FORECASTER- Are you the first one of your group of friends to always have the hottest or latest trends? You could be a Trend Forecaster! As a Trend Forecaster, most of your time is spent researching what is currently happening, both locally and internationally across a broad spectrum of different areas such as Design, Art, Fashion, Economics, Retail, Consumer spending patterns, etc. Through this study you can start to see in which way the trends are moving and what will be a short fad or micro trend and what will be a major trend, that will have longevity. Then you can translate this information into various products such as books, disc sets, swatch cards, etc. that you then sell to Designers to use for their next collections. You also will often be invited to fashion shows and presentations so you are kept in the loop on all the latest fashion buzz. However this job can be difficult in that you are often predicting trends for anywhere from one season to 3 seasons ahead! Having a good understanding of fashion history is crucial to excel in this position.

FASHION SHOW/BACKSTAGE COORDINATOR- Do you like running the show? As a Fashion Show Coordinator, you will be coordinating different sources of talent that bring a show together. Fashion Coordinators oversee the whole production of a fashion show or presentation which can sometimes start a few months prior to the actual show. They need to maintain a unified and organized atmosphere for everything to be a success. You are basically the one in charge of everything. This is a role for someone who is very fast and good at multi-tasking. You will be responsible for the timing of the show, model placement order, how fast the models are walking, etc. As a Coordinator you also work very closely with the designers, stylists, dressers, and hair/makeup artists. Being a good people person is very helpful in this position.

CONCLUSION

As a Designer/Merchandiser/Stylist/Personal Shopper/Image Consultant/Fit Model myself I understand what it is like to be in these different positions as well as work with individuals in all of the other positions. Fashion is a tough industry but it can be rewarding when you find your niche. I hope you enjoyed this book and were able to find a career in fashion that suits you. Please be sure to check back often on our website for additional tools and resources that are available! If you'd like to discuss any one of these positions in more depth please contact me for a complimentary 30 minute session so we can review. I look forward to your success!

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