

Trims – choice, procurement and timely delivery

“We often find that designers send us incomplete docket for a style. They will send us fabric and lining, but no zips – and say that the zips will come later, or all the components and the wrong fusing. Then they expect that because the fabric has arrived we should start the docket – but often we can’t and this jeopardises the agreed production delivery date.”

Manufacturer

Trims can cause problems for both designers and manufacturers if designers plan their production badly and misjudge the lead times for delivery of fabric and all other components (buttons, zips, labels etc.) When placing an order, time also needs to be factored in for additional processes such as sending patterns out for grading. Too often, designers are only thinking about the final delivery date, not the whole critical path for production.

Incomplete or poorly timed delivery of components to factories can cause a lot of production problems. Designers sometimes assume that because factories have the fabric and patterns, they will be able to start work, but factories will not usually start work until all components have been delivered. Trims often have just as long order lead times as fabrics, which many designers who are just starting out don’t seem to be aware of. Sometimes, what seems like the smallest part of the garment – for example the sizing or composition label – can delay the finishing of a garment by weeks.

Designers also need to be sure that they are using the most suitable trims or components



for their garments e.g. using very heavy zips on a light chiffon garment, or ordering the wrong length of zips and expecting the manufacturer to alter them (which takes time and costs money). Even fusings, interlinings and other internal, structural components can cause production hold-ups, although some manufacturers keep stocks of fusings in order to avoid further delays. Again, care needs to be taken ordering the correct components prior to production starting.

Many designers struggle to find good, reliable trimming suppliers within the UK, particularly if they are only ordering small volumes. Some designers even continue to buy trims from retail outlets (e.g. John Lewis) rather than wholesalers, which means they are buying more expensive and often less technically advanced trim. Likewise, manufacturers are increasingly finding it harder to source trims in the UK, and many end up ordering them from Italy or France.

Top Solutions:

- Clear packing lists detailing all components relating to style.
- Effective communication between designers and manufacturers regarding timing of the delivery of components.
- Agreement of when the actual make of the docket will start.
- Better education around suitability of trimmings – involving close discussion with the manufacturer on the best/most product applicable trim.
- Database with details of trimmings/components stockists.
- Familiarise themselves with Seasonal Gant Charts/Fashion Critical Paths.

Relevant sections from the Fashion Toolkit:

- Production Schedule.
- Critical Path Management.
- Production Management.



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