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Independent Study and Mentorship

7 September 2018

The Complexity of the Fashion Industry

Assessment 2 - Research

**Date:** Sept, 7, 2018

**Subject:** Fashion Merchandising and Buying

**Works Cited:**

“The Future of Fashion - Series 2 Episode 1.” *British Vogue*, British Vogue, 8 Mar. 2016,

[www.vogue.co.uk/video/the-future-of-fashion-with-alexa-chung-series-2-episode-1](http://www.vogue.co.uk/video/the-future-of-fashion-with-alexa-chung-series-2-episode-1).

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“The Future of Fashion with Alexa Chung – Episode Four.” *British Vogue*, British Vogue, 5 Oct. 2015,

[www.vogue.co.uk/video/the-future-of-fashion-with-alexa-chung-series-1-episode-4](http://www.vogue.co.uk/video/the-future-of-fashion-with-alexa-chung-series-1-episode-4).

Accessed 6 Sept. 2018.

**Assessment:**

The fashion industry and all the major components that go into running the industry have always been an area of interest. The elusiveness and sometimes exclusivity of this industry has made it difficult to imagine having a career in fashion. When the idea of the high fashion industry comes to people’s minds the first thing they tend to think is ‘fashion designer’ not ‘buyer,’ ‘forecaster,’ or ‘merchandiser. This is where the more conventional ways of looking at

this industry fall away and a more analytical side is introduced. Two video episodes from Alexa Chung's *Vogue* series detailing the fashion industry and its many key parts gave an even bigger insight on what it means to be a part of a creative process within a brand and the fashion industry itself.

The first video, "The Future of Fashion - Series 2 Episode 1," is narrated by designer Alexa Chung as she meets with designers and fashion brands. She asks them questions about the role that they play in their company and the various jobs that are available for people who want to work in the fashion industry. The video was insightful at the fact that the fashion industry is not always looking for people who have a background directly in fashion, but a background in what they call 'back office functions.' Back office functions deal with the legal and financial side of a company rather than the creative side held by buyers, trend forecasters, and merchandisers. Learning that the job of a merchandiser not only deals with knowing the customer base and what they want, but with understanding the needs of the particular brand they work for on a deeper level, made the career all the more intriguing. Knowing that no matter what one studies in college, there will always be a place for their expertise is encouraging because it means that going to art school and studying fashion design is not the only option.

The second video, "The Future of Fashion with Alexa Chung – Episode Four," went into detail on careers such as buyer and trend forecaster by interviewing professionals in the field. Selfridges' buyer Judd Cranes' explanation on the job of a buyer was fantastic at providing a clear and concise outlook. His thought that the job of a buyer was to create an environment for consumers spoke to how I feel about fashion. Fashion is emotional and its the job of a buyer to create and set the emotions for consumers. He interestingly mentioned that to be a buyer it is best

to have a background in visual merchandising. This means that while taking the necessary math courses to be able to deal with the financial side of buying, a more creative major such as visual merchandising would be more beneficial to be a successful buyer. It was surprising to learn that trend forecasting is so much more important to the fashion industry than people really realize. Trend forecasters influence the whole trajectory of fashion because fashion designers and retailers base their collections off of their data. To have a career in trend forecasting a background in visual merchandising is beneficial as well because it helps one understand what consumers really want.

After delving deeper into the fashion industry and the myriad of careers available it is safe to say that this industry is much more complex. Learning the path that is necessary to pursue a career in buying and merchandising was extremely beneficial. Not knowing how to pursue a career in the fashion industry was nerve wracking at first but knowing now has eased my mind.

## Video Annotations

### The Future of Fashion- Series 2 episode 1

“A merchandiser is able to sit with the design team and understand what their needs are for the direction of the brand and the particular season...Analytically understand where the company is trying to go in terms of the numbers, in terms of the breadth of the collection, key points and categorizations”

“CEOs need to understand how much time they spend with people and building a team.”

“There are back office function to every company... finance, legal, IT, HR, Logistics, then there is retail operations and e commerce operations. There is merchandising and buying. There is designing, art department, visual merchandising, special projects, graphic designers, content team, and social media”

### The Future of Fashion with Alexa Chung- Episode Four

Paul Smith, Designer- ”There is buying there's press theres social media there's shop design theres styling. There are so many great jobs you can get if you go through the fashion system Buying is one of the most desirable positions within fashion.”

Judd crane, Buyer: “At a basic level we see what we love and we buy them so other people can love them. Our job is to create an environment for the customer. We encourage our brands to really think differently about how they could be portrayed. We are a store that has Chanel right across Rick Owens which you don't see in many environments. Putting those things together, we find it stimulates the customer.”

“The best way to gain experience to be a good buyer is to not become a buyer directly. To have a background in visual merchandising or a background actually working with customers and personal shopping. You have to force yourself to be objective because none of it has to do with what you want to wear it has to do with what will sell.”

WGSN- trend forecasting company: “We look around the world looking at all sorts of cultural influences from street fashion, food. Collecting all that information and presenting it to our customers and using that to set a backdrop for how fashion will develop in the future. We influence the way people will want to dress”