

CJN Consulting
Courtney Noumair
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Summary by Kirsten Shea

Courtney Noumair, an alumna of the University of Rhode Island, has worked at numerous companies and gained sufficient knowledge in the technical design sector of the fashion industry to open her own consulting company. While she gained experience working different jobs, ultimately it was Calvin Klein that led her to technical design. Courtney thought she would become a merchandiser, but she fell in love with product development and worked as a technical designer for 29 years. Courtney discussed the factors that go into technical design and how they lead to good business.

Courtney started with the steps in developing a collection. First, designers need to come up with a concept. This inspires the color palette, which is based on the season and picked to compliment trend-forecasted colors. After the color palette is decided, fabric and trims come into play. If graphics are going to be implemented, they must be designed in the time frame to deliver products on time. Silhouettes impact which styles a designer will produce. Courtney stresses that these aspects need to be decided before the design team comes into the picture.

Once a collection is organized, Courtney explains what a tech pack is and the technical designer's role and responsibility. A tech pack consists of everything needed to produce the garment and make the design come to life. This includes a bill of materials (BOM), sketches and construction of the design, a page object model (POM), a graded rule, a how to measure guide, and fit pic pages. The technical designer's role is to make sure all of these details are accurate by measuring the garments for the pattern makers and on live fit models to see how the fit can be refined. Courtney emphasized the importance of fittings for technical designers so they can provide suggestions and ideas of how to make the garment better overall.

After the tech pack is finalized, the first prototype can be developed. Courtney discussed how designers try to use the actual fabric and trim in the prototype so the final product can be more accurate. She also emphasized the significance of managing lead times. Fabric and zippers have the longest lead time of raw materials so a designer must plan accordingly. Lastly, top of production (TOP) occurs so designers can see what the line will look like before it is sold to consumers.

Courtney likes to celebrate her accomplishments at the end of each season. She says that people can get lost in this fast-paced industry and it's important to pat yourself on the back for your good design. Recently, she opened her own consulting firm, *CJN Consulting*, and her own design/production business, *Whirly Bird*. Her businesses are successful because designs have been thoroughly thought out in the technical design process. Courtney exemplifies how determination and creativity can lead to good business.