

BUYER VOICES

HOPES, FEARS AND TRENDS

WeAr has asked international retailers what they would change in the industry, if they still care about trends and how they minimize risks in the current climate



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VICTORIA DE LA FUENTE (01)

ACCOUNT MANAGER, BERGDORF GOODMAN,
NEIMAN MARCUS AND FENWICK, LAMBERT AND
ASSOCIATES BUYING AGENCY, NEW YORK, USA

What I would change is speed. Designers now show 4–6 collections a year. This has an impact on creativity, as designers don't have enough time to nurture a concept before it becomes a collection, and on quality, as manufacturing is outsourced and craftsmanship is no longer valued. The consumer pays the price, too: there is a lack of a sense of exclusivity, which luxury fashion should be based on.

Trends are important, as they help to create a guideline. We read all the main publications, go to art and tech fairs, follow the shows and the street style. Before the season starts, we create a trend book that showcases colors and styles we need to look out for. It helps us to stay focused during the market.

Knowing the customer inside out is key to minimizing risks. Spend time in the store, talk to them, observe them. I believe in giving clients something they cannot get anywhere else; this means staying on top of up-and-coming designers, and bringing customizable products, collaborations and one-of-a-kind items to the store. Pop-ups and trunk shows are a great way to try out new designers before committing to buying while creating novel in-store experiences for customers.

www.lambertandassociatesgroup.com

ALEXANDRE FURTADO (02)

CO-FOUNDER, DAMAGE PLAYGROUND
ROTTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS

Reduce supply by 90%, thereby revaluing what garments are actually made for. Less luxury farce, more focus on high-quality production, finishing and durability. Concentrate on the boring but essential basics of garment production. Discourage waste!

Trends are fake. People buy or reject what is presented to them. The industry merely adapts. If a critical mass is reached, the rest will follow and a new trend will emerge. My decisions are based on perceiving what could be, without compromising the 'now'. 'Items that last forever' is my mantra, though in the end it's nothing but a wild guess: what didn't work yesterday could become all the rage tomorrow for some odd reason.

Sell before you buy. Focus on close long-term relationships with a select group of partners. This might mean that you have to be satisfied with less, especially in the beginning, or maybe even forever.

www.damageplayground.com