

ROMA COHEN
OWNER, ALCHEMIST
MIAMI, USA

I wish sales weren't 100% influenced by digital tools. Brick and mortar and the feeling that one has about the physical experience should remain important.

We do keep track of trends by way of social media, seeing stores, reading, attending shows and just feeling the vibes in the air. But trends are not that significant: most clients' buying decisions are not based on them.

My tips: slow and steady wins the race. It's not a matter of how much you sell but how well you sell it. Profit over PR. At this difficult time in the industry, it's better to be safe than sorry. I don't see the current moment as a growth phase but rather a re-evaluation point. Great things come out of change, so choose your moves wisely.

www.alchemist.miami

ANTONIA GIACINTI (03)
OWNER, ANTONIA
MILAN, ITALY

If I could change the industry, I would change the heads of companies that use us as a promotional vehicle without giving us good commercial conditions! The whole system is in crisis, certainly not just because of us, but because of conflicts of interest between brands, dealers and consumers.

Today everything is about trends: every day we create a new universe on our bodies. Having fun with fashion without taking oneself too seriously is key.

My tip is to ask for support from companies [brands] that have gained a lot through us [retailers]. Of course, they also gave us a certain allure, but unfortunately this is not enough: allure does not contribute towards the expenses of a store.

www.antonia.it

LARS BRAUN (04)
FOUNDER, BRAUN HAMBURG
HAMBURG, GERMANY

I would really like to prohibit our competitors' early sale promotions. Midsummer sales and the like are not constructive – people no longer believe in what they bought a short while ago.

Of course, trends are extremely important for us. They inspire fashion and retail, and if they are gone, our business will be gone. We trace them across all kinds of influences, like architecture, art, zeitgeist and everything else that comes with it. But when we decide what to include in our range, we rely exclusively on our experience.

Retail needs to stop focusing on what is tried and tested. It needs to be courageous enough to venture into new territories and keep asking: do customers really need this, or are they just feeling insecure?

www.braun-hamburg.com

EKATERINA NOZHKOVA (05)
MANAGER, TREND ISLAND
MOSCOW, RUSSIA

Simplicity is perfection. If I could change one thing, I would add more functionality and simplicity.

Yes, trends are important. They show the face of society, and only by studying trends is it possible to form a commercially viable buying strategy. Buying is a complex process, influenced by psychology, sociology, economics and politics.

My tips: monitor the sales statistics; observe your clients, spend more time in the store; be flexible in terms of marketing and discovering new names; understand your target audience and adapt the entire sales process to their interests. We are entering the era of stylists and social media: you need to be tuned into the hype.

www.trendisland.ru

CRISTIAN MUSARDO (06)
CEO, LN-CC, LONDON,
UK AND ONLINE

Creativity should lead tech and business, not vice versa. Also, shortening the sourcing cycle would help both fashion and retail. I'm not saying 'see now, buy now' is the way to go, but a 6-month lag between runway and retail isn't either.

I don't believe trends are relevant for our business. When you pinpoint a trend, it means that it is already dead. Instead, ideas and products are very important. In mid-2014, we started developing our selection of 'conscious' brands and products. We wanted to get behind the people who are making a conscious effort to move towards a more ethical way of producing. We believed in this idea, and we decided to make it part of our brand. Today, it's one of the most important reasons why our customers shop with us.

Tips? Well, the ones who know don't say, the ones who say don't know.

www.ln-cc.com