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FILIPPO ANZALONE (06)
OWNER, BJORK
FLORENCE, ITALY

Technology and social media are reshaping how we shop; the figure of the merchant as the driving force is disappearing. In order to survive, physical stores will have to emphasize the experience of shopping, which, if crafted properly, can leave a unique imprint.

Although I value the importance of being up to the minute, I run everything through my filter of timelessness. When buying, I always make sure that every piece is going to stand the test of time in terms of quality, functionality and wearability. I do this by selecting essentials made of superior fabrics.

My main tip is: fully understand your client. The more you know, the less risk you take when buying. My principle: 'buy less but choose well'. Sometimes the total look that a brand is trying to impose just does not work for you. So focus mainly on products that you really believe in: it will save you from deadstock and help to boost your own confidence in the value of the product during the selling process.
www.bjorkflorence.com

PETER HANNEWALD (07)
CEO, POOL
MUNICH, GERMANY

I would change offerings to match the seasons, i.e., sell winter items in winter and summer items in summer.

Always keep your eyes peeled. Social media has undoubtedly grown in influence, even if every self-proclaimed 'influencer' isn't always influential.

More interaction with suppliers would be ideal. A multi-channel strategy also helps: today retailers not only have to be active across all sales channels in order to reach and retain customers, they also have to offer added value through merging different channels. We achieve this via both our brick-and-mortar and online stores. Being constantly aware of what the competition is doing is also key.
www.verypoolish.com

SARAH ANDELMAN (08)
OWNER, COLETTE
PARIS, FRANCE

What would I change about retail? Great question! Come to think of it, nothing. I never select products based on their trendiness. I only follow my feelings, my heart. My advice is: don't be afraid to take risks. We need energy, love and creativity.
www.colette.fr

KASPER HOSTRUP (09)
FOUNDER & BUYER, GOODS
COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

Less hype! And more attention to craftsmanship. With regard to retail, it would be nice to stop the acceleration that has been prominent over the last 10 years. Men's collections are shipped earlier every year and are getting out of touch with the seasons: heavy knitwear should not be delivered in June/July, or even in August.

We don't follow trends, and we do not buy for the sake of brand names. We are product-driven; quality and sense of design are key. Our selection is a result of extensive online research, our vast international network and lots of traveling.

My tips? Find your niche within the business. Establish lasting partnerships with your suppliers. Work up a good rapport based on honesty and don't be pressured to buy minimums. Find good suppliers with a strong stock support and core program. And finally, no deal is good enough to overrun your concept, personal beliefs or gut feeling – only buy what you believe in, and if a good deal comes along, then bravo!
<http://shop.goodsco.dk>