Los Angeles Business Journal

Fashion Awards

December 11, 2017

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Letter from the Publisher

Welcome to the Los Angeles Business Journal’s fourth annual Fashion Awards special supplement, in which we celebrate the outstanding work performed by the remarkable individuals and companies that make up one of the most exciting and dynamic sectors of industry today – the apparel industry!

In the following pages we hope to shed additional light on some of the premier examples of the professionals and companies that make the fashion world tick.

Our awards acknowledge the top apparel companies that drive tremendous economic growth in our region. These industry leaders continue to make Southern California a major force in the business of fashion.

We had a wide range of award categories this year including acknowledgements of the cream of the crop in Social Responsibility, Professional Service, Supplier/Vendor, Influencer/Trendsetter, Rising Brand, Technology Innovation, Made in California, Philanthropy and, of course, our Fashion Industry Icon of the Year.

The Awards took place on Wednesday, November 29th, at the City Club LA and it was a great event – honoring those leading lights in our region’s fashion scene and singling out the most impressive achievements across the full spectrum of this ever-evolving industry.

It should be noted that each of the finalists and honorees featured in these pages has played a key role, not only in the success of the apparel industry, but in the success of the Los Angeles economy as a whole. So to all the great organizations profiled in this volume we say thank you!

Best regards,

Anna Maganyan
Publisher & CEO

Congratulations to Darrin and all the 2017 LABJ Fashion Award nominees for making Southern California a major force in the business of fashion.

CIT Commercial Services is one of the leading providers of credit protection, accounts receivable management and lending services.

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Michael Costello is one of the most prominent fashion designers in the world. A self-taught prodigy, he has built an empire by making women of all shapes and sizes feel beautiful—upending an industry that often struggles to achieve diversity and excitement to reach millennials like him. Fashion was something that came naturally to Costello starting at the age of two by drawing dresses on his bedroom walls to opening his first store at fifteen. While many fans recognize him from Lifetime’s “Project Runway” franchise, Michael Costello’s brand has blossomed into an international household name beyond mainstream television.

Costello’s exquisite dresses dominate at prestigious red carpet events from the Grammys to the Oscars. His unparalleled instinct to perfectly enhance the natural hourglass figure has garnered the attention of stars like Beyoncé, Jennifer Lopez, Lady Gaga, Kate Hudson and many more. He has been featured in all major fashion publications including Vogue, WWD, New York Times, Harper’s Bazaar and Apparel News. Several of his dresses are now on display at the Grammys Museum.

The Michael Costello brand with its soft drape, celebrity clientele and massive sex appeal has secured its place in the fashion industry as one of the decade’s most sought after and influential brands. Costello’s appreciation for feminine beauty continuous to inspire him to push the boundaries of fashion and create the next dynamic, bold, statement moment for women and the passion lingers in every stitch and every yard of fabric.

Followed by legions of fans, (millions on social media), Costello continues to capture the world with his creations and his quirky personality.

An avid writer and beauty enthusiast, Teni Panosian founded MissMaven.com, a beauty and style blog, in 2011. She later established a YouTube channel, creating makeup and hair tutorials, style videos, and dynamic travel diaries for an audience of 1 million subscribers. Garnering over 60,000,000 views, she has become one of the foremost YouTube personalities in the lifestyle space. In short, Panosian just happens to be an extremely well informed consumer who’s been doing a ton of research in beauty over the last few years. Also an actress, Panosian has appeared in numerous national television commercials, films, and TV series. She earned a Bachelor’s degree from USC and later completed a Master’s program in Communication Management, also at USC.

Though enjoying an excelling career, one of her many passions lies in animal rescue and raising awareness for issues relating to animal abuse and neglect. Her work in rescue includes advocacy and raising money for various organizations, fostering, and finding safe and happy homes for animals in need.

Led by American television personality, socialite, model, businesswoman, and entrepreneur Khloe Kardashian and London born and raised fashion executive and entrepreneur Emma Grede, GOOD AMERICAN is challenging the fashion industry with a premium denim brand designed for a curvier, sexier and stronger shape. A rising brand and trendsetter, GOOD AMERICAN is designed, manufactured, and distributed from a home base in Los Angeles. The pivotal brand originated from a conversation between co-founders Kardashian and Grede about what it means to be a woman today. So the duo set out to make a denim line that’s sexy and flattering, and made to fit women—not the other way round.

GOOD AMERICAN took one hundred hands to make one pair of GOOD AMERICAN jeans. In Los Angeles, pattern makers, sewers and garment technicians among many other artisans, have lent their expertise to the intensive process of luxury denim manufacturing. And the brand has been well received. Utilizing social-media marketing as a lead up to its October 2016 launch, GOOD AMERICAN reached $1 million in sales on its first day.
Procter & Gamble acquired leading direct-to-consumer and natural deodorant brand Native to broaden its personal care portfolio, expand its digital and eCommerce presence, and capitalize on the on-trend and attractive positioning of the brand.
DIRECT TO CONSUMER AWARD

DIRECT TO CONSUMER HONOREE

YAEL AFLALO
Reformation

Created in 2009 by Yael Aflalo, Reformation designs and manufactures the majority of its limited-edition collections in its factory headquarters in downtown Los Angeles. All other garments are produced by responsible manufacturing partners here in the U.S. or abroad using sustainable methods and materials. Aflalo insists upon sourcing sustainable fabrics and vintage garments while incorporating better practices throughout the supply chain to make beautiful styles at a fraction of the environmental impact of conventional fashion. It is Aflalo’s and Reformation’s mission to lead and inspire a sustainable way to be fashionable.

Aflalo, herself a former model, launched the Reformation label in the back room of a store in Los Angeles. After a few years of rapid and mounting success with her hip and popular designs and styles, she began investigating the roots of all materials being used by her brand. The Southern California native also started reading up on both ethical manufacturing and various strategies to scale the company.

In 2012, with the money she had made from Reformation’s early years, along with a side project producing private-label clothes for Urban Outfitters, Aflalo relaunched Reformation as an e-commerce business centered on a two-story factory in downtown Los Angeles and three stores, two in New York and one in L.A. In 2014 it had revenues of $25 million and now counts Taylor Swift and Rihanna among its high profile paying customers.

Online, each piece is accompanied by information on both its carbon and water footprints, and each shipment to customers includes a “RefRecycling” label that allows clients to send in clothes for repurposing.

Aflalo has even assigned a team to figure out how to lower the environmental impact of Reformation’s website.

DIRECT TO CONSUMER FINALIST

JONATHAN SHOKRIAN
MeUndies, Inc.

Jonathan Shokrian is the Founder and Executive Chairman of MeUndies, the lifestyle brand making underwear and loungewear a more important part of its customers’ wardrobes. Shokrian launched the company in 2011 when he saw the opportunity to simplify the underwear shopping experience with superior product and world-class customer experience. MeUndies continues to grow exponentially each year and has sold over 5.5 million pairs of underwear to date.

Shokrian’s MeUndies is a brand that not only provides a premium product at an affordable price, but also is also inclusive and marketed towards all types of today’s consumers. Shokrian has led the team through revving up social media presence, launching a newly branded motif for the company, and getting celebrities and influencers on board to spread a positive, resonating message. Most recently, he helped launch a new and improved MeUndies, solidifying the brand’s mission to be the ‘Feel Good’ underwear brand that celebrates diversity and inclusivity of all kinds of people and body types.

DIRECT TO CONSUMER FINALIST

BRUCE J. GIFFORD
NAKEDCASHMERE

Bruce Gifford recently (August of last year) announced the launch of his newest business NAKEDCASHMERE. The brand will be the first luxury brand to sell direct to Consumer. Gifford and his team have chosen Kate Moss as the face of the brand and had her photographed by the legendary Peter Lindbergh on the quiet beach near Normandy, France.

Cashmere is the story of Leslie and Bruce Gifford who share a passion for the product and the industry that surrounds it. Bruce brings four generations of knowledge about global sourcing and fashion marketing. Bruce began his executive career as a men’s wear buyer at Denver Dry Goods, soon after that he joined his father’s N.Y. sportswear company, which was sold to Hart Schaffner & Marx. He remained, as manager, for 5 years when he and his wife moved to L.A. in 1987. In 2006 he sold his successful sweater company, SWEATER.COM, to Hartmarx. In 2009, the family created 360Cashmere as a new contemporary knitwear brand.

**Reformation**

**MeUndies**

**NAKEDCASHMERE**
Here, the sun rises on a commitment to innovation that drives progress. Our size, culture, and full spectrum of industry-smart accounting, consulting, and wealth management services reflect the needs and nature of dynamic apparel companies. Discover how Moss Adams is helping companies thrive.

Congratulations to the winners of the Los Angeles Business Journal’s 2017 Fashion Awards.

RISE WITH THE WEST.
MADE IN CALIFORNIA HONOREE

HOUMAN SALEM
ARGYLE Company, Inc.

Houman Salem has established a manufacturing facility in the West Valley, and within one year has secured significant contracts from established brands. Now, due to his success, he has reached a point where he must expand both his manufacturing space, and his employee base. This is an important step in maintaining the future importance of Salem’s “made in LA” philosophy and global branding commitment.

Salem’s company, ARGYLE Haus of Apparel (ARGYLEHaus) is a Los Angeles based fashion design house and apparel manufacturing company offering services to established designers, growth-stage companies, and national brands. ARGYLEHaus features a team of industry leading business experts, technical designers, pattern makers, and master seamstresses with over 100 years of combined experience in the fashion, apparel, and manufacturing industries.

ARGYLEHaus’ apparel pre-production services offer a complete solution to prepare clients’ garments for full-scale production and manufacturing. Salem and his team utilize industry leading apparel development software and technologies to achieve maximum operational efficiency to meet all client needs. Proper apparel pre-production and planning significantly reduces production and manufacturing costs, while ensuring top quality output. In this phase of ARGYLEHaus’ process, it is important to identify each garment’s key characteristics in an effort to develop operational best practices and understand resource requirements in order to ensure production consistency and quality.

ARGYLEHaus is essentially a boutique manufacturing and production house, offering only the highest quality output with relatively low Minimum Order Quantities (MOQ). ARGYLEHaus is a CMT service provider (Cut, Make, and Trim) utilizing the latest in equipment and technologies. Its total service selection also includes finishing services; including sewing all garment labels, affixing hang-tags, and final packaging (in ready to ship condition to retail outlets or to end consumers). As a boutique production house, ARGYLEHaus has the internal resources and capabilities to help launch new brands and collections, while meeting mission critical deadlines.

MADE IN CALIFORNIA FINALIST
KRIS PARK
SIWY Denim

SIWY was founded in Spring 2005 in New York City by Michelle Siwy. Today, the fashion brand is run by CEO Kris Park, an expert in the denim manufacturing business with over three decades of experience. Park is at the helm of the denim kingdom, NEW CREW, which produces SIWY designs, and has manufactured for the world’s most renowned jean companies, including: TRUE RELIGION, LUCKY BRAND, HUDSON and more.

SIWY collaborates with top designers, including Jimmy Taverneti. Developed in the country’s best wash and sewing facilities in California, the brand is known for its Italian and Spanish fabrics, stitch detail, high quality stretch denim and seams, which complement the figure. Made with love in Los Angeles, over the years, SIWY has developed a cult following among denim-heads and style icons including Kate Moss, Sienna Miller, Nicole Richie, Selma Blair and more. SIWY produces four collections per year, each forging ahead with fashion trend and fit.

MADE IN CALIFORNIA FINALIST
OREN AND YARDEN KATZ
Carbon & Hyde

Born into a family of fine jewelers, sisters and designers Yarden and Oren Katz named their traditional family-owned manufacturing house into an edgy and youthful fine jewelry haven. Carbon & Hyde takes on a raw and edgy approach to weaving fine jewelry — each piece is made to become a part of the wearer, like a hide or second skin, crafted for a perfect and comfortable fit. The brand’s jewelry blends a modernity and lightness that makes the collection easy to wear or layer for a bold day-to-night look. All Carbon & Hyde jewelry is crafted from 14 karat gold and diamonds in their Los Angeles jewelry shop. The brand name derives from the core anatomical foundation of diamonds (Carbon) and their love of leather since childhood (Hyde).

The Katz sisters are both really hands-on with the production. They are downtown in the shop almost every day, except for maybe Fridays, when the duo can be seen going around to the stores that carry their line.
Where LA’s business leaders connect, host, work & play.

A toast from the top to the 2017 Fashion Awards winners & finalists.
Honored to celebrate with you.
PHILANTHROPIST OF THE YEAR HONOREE
DOUGLAS EVANS
YMA Fashion Scholarship Fund

As the largest and oldest scholarship organization serving the needs of the fashion industry, the Fashion Scholarship Fund (FSF) (formerly YMA) seeks to identify and create career opportunities for young people worldwide. Douglas Evans is the Chief Executive Officer of this international fund that provides scholarships, internships and mentoring to college students based on merit and winning selections from an annual competition. Evans is a member of the Advisory Board of the California Fashion Association and has contributed over $35,000 to the California Fashion Foundation’s Scholarship programs and events.

Founded in 1937, the Fashion Scholarship Fund is the leading organization in the world discovering and promoting new talent for the fashion industry. Since its inception, the Fund has been working with and for the fashion community by seeking the best and brightest students from around the globe to propel the industry forward. Annually presenting scholarships from $5,000 to $30,000, the Fund leads the industry in support and commitment to education. FSF scholarship, intern and mentoring programs bring young talent to the forefront and, after graduation, continues to work with its alumni to further careers of the young professionals, considered to be the future of fashion.

Evans and his team at the Fund regard their scholarship grants as a worthwhile investment in the future of the fashion industry and, since inception, have awarded millions of dollars in scholarships to thousands of students worldwide. Record donations of over $20 million have been received in the past ten years, including a $1 million gift from the Estate of Geoffrey Beene and over $5 million in donation from the Geoffrey Beene Foundation to underwrite scholarships and enable naming rights of the annual dinner.

In addition to the approximately two hundred $5,000 scholarships the Fund awards annually, it also awards four outstanding National Merit scholars with $30,000 scholarships to pursue their education and career goals, and another four scholars with $10,000 scholarships.

PHILANTHROPIST OF THE YEAR FINALIST
ILSE METCHEK
California Fashion Foundation

The California Fashion Foundation (CFF) supports the various philanthropies favored by the participants in the fashion industry of California. The organization directly holds two major events; the Scholarship Awards program for the 15 colleges and universities with fashion degrees to assist new entrants into the industry; and the Christmas party event for 200 children of the downtown charities such as Boys & Girls Clubs and Para Los Ninos.

Ilse Metchek, the president of the California Fashion Association (CFA), created the organization in 1994, with assistance from the major financial and manufacturing participants of the region’s apparel industry. The CFA provides leaders of Southern California’s manufacturing and textile community with the opportunity to share information about the current global economy. Current professional affiliations include Board Membership of the LAEDC Advisory Council for the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising, Board Member of the Vernon Chamber of Commerce, member of Fashion Group International of Los Angeles, and President of Image Makers L.A. a consulting group to the apparel industry businesses.

PHILANTHROPIST OF THE YEAR FINALIST
ERIK ROSETE
Art Hearts Fashion

As a voice for artistic and cutting edge designers, Art Hearts Fashion is paving the way toward the future of Fashion Week. Art Hearts Fashion’s philanthropic drive stretches internationally, putting the spotlight on how fashion can promote constructive ideals and influence the progressive evolution of the fashion industry.

Led by Erik Rosete, the platform raises awareness for organizations including: AIDS Healthcare Foundation, Project Cancerland, American Cancer Society, Make-A-Wish Foundation, VH1 Save The Music, Wednesday’s Child, Children’s Hospital LA, & Women’s Cancer Research Foundation. Art Hearts Fashion has sponsored shows for terminally ill cancer patients, granted the wishes of Make-A-Wish children, raised funds and awareness for various charitable partners, produced fashion shows for children recovering from cancer treatment, presented artists affected with HIV, and models with disabilities. Through its work, Art Hearts Fashion has launched the careers of international supermodels, and broken the mold of the fashion industry. In the past year its work has been named the most impactful fashion event ever by Yahoo!
Since 1995, Tukatech, Inc. has equipped the apparel industry with advanced software and machinery to maximize production efficiency from the pattern room to the cutting room. Our breadth of solutions includes an award-winning pattern-making system, a virtual sample-making suite, and so much more! From recent college graduates, to freelance designers, to established manufacturers, Tukatech offers custom technology packages that are tailored to the needs of fashion businesses of any size.

These tools have helped Los Angeles, CA to become a hub of fashion influence and innovation, with the most efficient fast fashion business models in the world. "Over 80% of California's fashion industry is making amazing strides in fast fashion using our technology. More than 90% of all universities and fashion schools teach product development with TUKA3D, and even some high schools have incorporated the software into their curriculum. The reward for our hard work is much appreciated," says Mr. Sareen.

Thank you to the thousands of TUKA customers worldwide who trust us every day to do what we love to do. We can't wait to continue our journey of innovation and remain committed to providing the fashion industry with powerful tools to achieve excellence.

Congratulations!

To Ram Sareen, TUKAteam, and the entire TUKAfamily for receiving the Los Angeles Business Journal’s "Technology Innovation" Fashion Award.

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Congratulations!
RISING BRAND HONOREE
EUNICE CHO
AELLA

After graduating from Yale with a degree in fine arts, Orange County-raised Eunice Cho headed for New York City and wound up working for a high-end lingerie company. There she took on a number of creative roles while whetting her appetite for the business side of the fashion industry. She decided to go to business school, which led to the realization that she had nothing appropriate to wear to the interviews. It became apparent to Cho that the casual and comfortable clothes she wore to work in the anything-goes environment of fashion didn’t meet the expectations of the buttoned-up business world. In classic entrepreneur fashion, Cho decided to create her own solution: AELLA.

Launched three years ago by Cho, AELLA is an online retailer offering women a full line of pants, blazers, and t-shirts. The company has now made its foray into brick-and-mortar sales with a pop-up at Bloomingdale’s flagship store in New York City.

In short, AELLA is a three-year-old womenswear brand focused on creating everyday essentials for women who are going places. Using patented & proprietary activewear-inspired fabrics, AELLA combines performance benefits with polished, office-appropriate silhouettes. For the on-the-go woman who needs clothing that can keep up, AELLA’s entire offering is machine-washable, comfortable, flexible, and wrinkle-resistant. Pants are AELLA’s core offering, and the brand offers several services including try-on sizing & stylist consultations, to ease the pain of shopping for pants online.

AELLA is a proud proponent of Los Angeles based sourcing and production. Using the company’s South Gate knitting mill, AELLA is able to create and knit proprietary textiles that adhere to the brand’s mission of creating machine-washable & performance-based clothing. The majority of AELLA’s styles are then produced locally in Los Angeles. In addition, the brand’s leadership team regularly partners with and supports Los Angeles based brands & organizations, specifically those founded by women.

RISING BRAND FINALIST
COREY EPSTEIN AND MARK LYNN
DSTLD

DSTLD, an LA-based brand, was launched in 2014 under the premise that ethically produced, well-crafted clothing shouldn’t cost so much, and that Fast Fashion is an excessive and unsustainable industry. Inspired by the creatives that constitute Los Angeles — filmmakers, writers, entrepreneurs, artists, and designers — Corey Epstein and Mark Lynn set out to build a contemporary brand based on the modern uniform they saw around them: jeans, t-shirts, and other luxury-level basics no person can live without.

With the help of a small circle of socially responsible suppliers, DSTLD maintains high standards for people and apparel alike. The brand demands a higher standard not just in denim, but also in labor practices and conditions. DSTLD carefully screens its suppliers, laundries, and factories to ensure its products are fairly manufactured and 100% sweat-shop-free. The brand is equipped with top-of-the-line premium fabrics, many of them eco-friendly and fully sustainable.

RISING BRAND FINALIST
ALISA TOVMANYAN
Tovmali

Fashion designer Alisa Tovmanyak, founder of Tovmali, began designing from her love of fashion and affection with colors and texture. She had made a career out of her passion and was able to achieve her dream of designing her own collection. Tovmanyak began illustrating at the age of 3 with guidance from her grandfather and sewing dresses for her Barbies at the age of 6 with guidance from her grandmother.

Growing up, Tovmanyak’s interest in fashion deepened and evolved even more. She has always been interested in outfits that women wear around her, paying close attention to details in their garments. As a designer, she combines sophistication, ease and “super-chicness” in her designs. She loves elaborate, personality flattering, feminine yet fun pieces. She loves the idea of elegance and intricacy, and she is never afraid to make a bold statement or try something new. Tovmali—the brand is her very own ready-to-wear fashion line, where she creates colorful designs with a feminine silhouette.
SUPPLIER/VENDOR OF THE YEAR HONOREE

TAMMY CHATKIN-NEWMAN
24 SEVEN INC.

Tammy Chatkin-Newman has been a Human Resource professional since graduating from college. She rose to become the Director of Human Resources for Autoland, and then became the head of recruiting for the Guess Corporation for eight years. She opened the west coast office of 24 Seven, Inc. in the early 1990s, and continues to be the most knowledgeable service provider in the area of fashion industry HR. Under her stewardship, 24 Seven provides stalwart support of the Fashion Industry Human Resource Association (FIHRA) and the California Fashion Foundation Scholarship Awards Program.

24 Seven is the leading specialized talent recruitment firm for global brands and emerging companies across the US and internationally. From design concept through product marketing, 24 Seven has the talent network to support brands at every stage of the consumer experience. Under Chatkin-Newman’s stewardship, 24 Seven has become the go-to talent source supporting the world’s top teams in Fashion, Retail, Marketing, Interactive and Creative. Chatkin-Newman’s team of strategic recruiting professionals are proven industry experts and have either personally worked in or recruited exclusively for the industry practice they serve. Chatkin-Newman and her team’s hands-on experience makes them particularly in-tune to your distinct needs. They’re experts at perfectly matching candidates to unique client scenarios in: Fashion, Retail, Advertising, Marketing, Design, Interactive/Digital, Media, Beauty, CPG and Entertainment. Chatkin and 24 Seven have pioneered the “creative freelancers” concept within the fashion industry.

A visiting lecturer at the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising (FIDM) since 1994, she has also been appointed as an instructor for FIDM’s career life planning course. Additionally, she is a founding member of the Fashion Industry Human Resource Board. In 2003, Chatkin-Newman was appointed to the Fashion Group International Los Angeles Board where she shared a co-chair for community outreach. Most recently she has taken on that chair herself.

SUPPLIER/VENDOR OF THE YEAR FINALIST

BILL TENEBLATT
Antex Knitting Mills

Antex Knitting Mills is a vertical knitting, dyeing, printing, and finishing company established in Los Angeles in 1973. The company produces approximately 1.5 million yards of fabric per week. Its traditional business is to provide fashionable knitted fabrics to the junior, contemporary, and children’s markets. The Antex Premier Performance division provides technical fabrics to the outdoor and active wear markets.

A family operation, the company is owned by Bill and Anna Teneblatt, who pride themselves on Antex’s flexibility in servicing its customers’ needs in providing competitively priced, high quality fabrics and quick deliveries. It is the company’s goal to service the needs of the apparel industry by offering fabrics that appeal to the fashion, lifestyle, and performance driven customer. Antex is a huge operation with 380 knitting machines and 550 employees. Operating 24 hours a day, Antex also owns and operates a dye house located across the street from the main facility. The two facilities take up about 500,000 square feet spread across four square blocks.

SUPPLIER/VENDOR OF THE YEAR FINALIST

JARROD PURDON
UPS

The UPS Corporation, in its entirety, and the apparel/textile sector executives in particular, have played a significant part in making every business entity aware of their efforts to help the environment. As a transportation company, they were among the first to operate and market their ‘green’ trucks, and they have made sure that their clients know about their efforts, thereby educating many manufacturers and retailers by doing their part in this movement.

Jarrod Purdon is an Integrated Marketing Strategist for UPS and is largely seen in the industry as an innovative, emerging leader in integrated marketing with more than a decade of experience driving business results for clients. He is highly effective at managing both cross-functional and multi-business unit project teams and has expertise in using segmentation and analytics to design marketing programs and tactics. He’s also a strategist who combines market, customer, competitor, and company situational analysis to align strategic direction.
FRANK KAUFMAN
Moss Adams LLP

Frank Kaufman, a Certified Public Accountant, has been directly involved in the fashion manufacturing and retail industries since starting with Moss Adams in 1983. He is well versed in multiple industry sectors, such as apparel and consumer goods, as well as the various distribution models, including traditional bricks and mortar, e-commerce, and consumer products in general.

Kaufman has been an integral force within the service producer community, within the Los Angeles fashion industry and the Orange County segment of fashion product providers. With a focus on helping clients to grow and achieve their goals, Kaufman identifies impactful industry trends, develops relevant strategic plans, and assists in plan implementation. He spends a significant portion of his time with clients during liquidity events, where preparation and negotiation are integral for success.

He has been a featured speaker on significant panels regarding the business of fashion, and is considered an expert in finance and his advice is sought after for the many merger and acquisition projects having to do with brand development.

ROBERT EZRA
Freeman, Freeman & Smiley, LLP

Robert Ezra is a partner in the Los Angeles office of Freeman Freeman & Smiley, LLP and head of the Fashion Law Practice. Over the course of his 40-year career he has earned the reputation as a leading lawyer in the apparel, fashion and textiles industry by assisting clients in critical decisions in all aspects of their business operations.

Ezra gained practical industry knowledge as an accountant and loan officer to garment makers before he became an attorney. As a loan officer with Manufacturers Bank in downtown Los Angeles in the early 1970s, he learned the entire manufacturing process from spinning yarn to retail delivery and every aspect in between.

Ezra specializes in contractual claims, shareholder and partnership disputes and dissolutions, including provisional remedies, unfair competition, intellectual property claims and business torts both within and outside the apparel industry. He devises legally protective and creative resolutions in business conflicts and creates valuable opportunities for clients in the areas of financing and business growth.

DARRIN BEER
CIT Commercial Services

Darrin Beer has more than 25 years of financial-services experience and has been an important member of the CIT Commercial Services team since 1999. In his most recent role as Western Regional Manager for CIT, he brings tremendous knowledge and experience and provides strong leadership to the Western regional team. CIT is one of the largest factoring companies in the United States and has been in this business of invoice factoring since 1928.

CIT Commercial Services is the nation’s leading provider of financing to consumer products companies, tailoring business credit solutions to help companies increase sales, improve cash flow, reduce operating expenses and eliminate customer credit losses. Their clients are vendors that sell to a broad range of fashion retailers, wholesalers and distributors across the nation and abroad. Beer is actively involved in the philanthropic activities of the Fashion and textile complex of California and is a Board member of the California Fashion Association and the The Professionals Club (TPC).
TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION HONOREE

RAM SAREEN
TUKATECH INC.

Trendsetters change the way business is done... and Ram Sareen of Tukatech has changed the way design rooms and production departments work. The way Sareen’s Tukatech engineers the process, incorporates shared knowledge, and uses current, new technology has genuinely revolutionized the ‘fit’ process. Tukatech’s technology has enabled the industry and its educational institutions to become ‘trendsetters’ on their own, by being the first to develop technologies for 3D and ‘avatar’ fitting methods.

Sareen founded Tukatech Inc. in 1997 and serves as its Chief Executive Officer. Sareen is widely considered one of the top apparel specialists in the world, with over 45 years of expertise in apparel. His fashion industry history includes work with London Fog and Gerber Technologies. Sareen also co-founded Styku, LLC, a 3D retail measurement system and serves as its Chairman. He was named as one of the “top 20 influentials” in the California garment industry in two separate years.

Tukatech is now the garment and apparel industry's leading provider of fashion technology solutions. The company offers award-winning 2D pattern making, grading, and marker making software, automated marker making software, 3D sample making/digital development software, as well as garment plotters, and automatic spreaders and cutters for production. All systems include unlimited training, consulting, process engineering, and implementation. The capabilities of Tukatech's technology remain unparalleled in the fashion industry, and all of its products are offered at affordable prices, with some systems available for rent.

Sareen has been at the forefront of product development technology for more than 20 years, and has been the primary mover of 3D display and virtual reality availability within the PLM (Product Lifecycle Management) discipline. Since the inception of apparel industry usage, Tukatech has seen the greatest innovations and has the largest “international” reach for design and product development interaction between the companies in Los Angeles and their global suppliers.

TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION FINALIST

ADAM GOLDENBERG
TechStyle Fashion Group

Adam Goldenberg started an advertising network of gaming sites called Gamers Alliance while in high school, and at the age of 17 sold the business to Interim Media. Shortly after joining Interim, Goldenberg was named COO, becoming the youngest COO of a publicly traded company. He built Interim into the number one entertainment destination online and one of the internet's first performance marketing companies. Following the acquisition of Interim by News Corp. in 2000 for more than $650 million, he partnered with his longtime colleague, Don Ressler, to launch Intelligent Beauty, an e-commerce brand incubator platform.

In 2010, the duo founded JustFab Inc., later renamed to TechStyle Fashion Group, to reimagine the business of fashion through data, personalization and vertical integration to benefit the modern shopper. Today TechStyle offers a unique shopping experience to more than four million VIP Members through a portfolio of brands including JustFab, Fabletics, ShoeDazzle and Fabkids. In just over six years, TechStyle has become one of the fastest-growing fashion companies in the world.

TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION FINALIST

MARK WILLINGHAM
Agent Inc.

Mark Willingham’s Agent Inc. is completely re-imaging the multi-billion dollar modeling industry; creating efficiencies, transparency, opportunity and a safer work environment that supports diversity and empowers models with the tools and knowledge to successfully manage and grow their careers. Agent Inc. disrupts major talent-related verticals, which have traditionally relied on agents to book and manage jobs between clients and talent. The Agent platform already has in excess of 5,000 registered models. Agent streamlines the booking process by efficiently connecting talent with clients. For the companies hiring models, Agent offers companies more diversity and overall options than a traditional modeling agency. Agent provides real value to both sides of the marketplace, empowering companies to efficiently find and book highly vetted models in minutes by utilizing powerful, granular search filters. The Agent platform is free to use and a small fee of 5% is only charged to companies once they have completed a job and electronically paid the model.
Social Responsibility Honoree

Rose Marcario
Patagonia

Rose Marcario was CFO and COO of Patagonia from June of 2008 - March 2013 and became President of the company in March of 2013, a title she continues to hold. Marcario has been a huge contributor to the company's substantial sustainability efforts. Sustainable to the core, Patagonia makes apparel that lasts a long time, is made from sustainable sources, educates consumers to purchase only the apparel that they need, advocates to preserve public lands, and the list goes on and on.

Since 1985, Patagonia has pledged 1% of sales to the preservation and restoration of the natural environment. The company has awarded over $74 million in cash and in-kind donations to domestic and international grassroots environmental groups making a difference in local communities. It’s a legacy that Marcario continues to lead, including the company’s trailblazing work with the Sustainable Apparel Coalition for which Patagonia helped gather the top leaders in the apparel industry, non-governmental organizations, academia and the U.S. EPA to create an index of social and environmental performance. Today there are 49 members of the Sustainable Apparel Coalition, which represent nearly a third of all clothing and footwear sold on the planet.

This is just one example of Marcario and her team working alongside her competition for a greater good. She and Patagonia maintain a generous attitude toward competition. Marcario’s stance is that if you have a product breakthrough that has less wear and tear on the environment, then it is that something you should be willing to share with your competitors.

In February of last year, Marcario and Patagonia founder Yvon Chouinard made a public statement about the company’s commitment to public lands by choosing to withdraw the company’s participation from the annual Outdoor Retailer show trade show in protest against Utah Governor Gary Herbert’s attempts to rescind the Bears Ears National Monument.

Social Responsibility Finalist

Cash Warren, David Ehrenberg, Alan Stuart
Pair of Thieves

The three friends and entrepreneurs who started Pair of Thieves have proven to not only be great businessmen, but particularly generous as well. Alan Stuart is the artiste of the brand, Cash Warren, the idea guy, and David Ehrenberg is the business end, leading sales, manufacturing and operations. When Stuart, Warren and Ehrenberg heard that socks were the most requested and least donated item at homeless shelters they decided to do something about it.

Building a thriving business is gratifying, but helping a neighbor in need is so much more important. After spending the last few years building a growing basics business, the three put their heads together to plan one of the largest sock donations in history.

After months of planning, Pair of Thieves partnered with the Shelter Partnership of Los Angeles to reach over 80 shelters throughout the county of Los Angeles. This holiday season, Pair of Thieves will donate over 750,000 pairs of socks in Los Angeles alone!
INDUSTRY ICON AWARD

INDUSTRY ICON HONOREE
KEVIN SULLIVAN
WELLS FARGO CAPITAL FINANCE

Wells Fargo has been linked to the apparel and textile industry of California since the early 1960s and its support for the professional and charitable efforts of its participants can always be counted upon. Wells Fargo Trade Capital is one of the largest bank-affiliated factoring companies in the U.S. and provides senior secured financing solutions for domestic and international manufacturers, wholesalers and importers through trade finance and factoring.

Kevin Sullivan is Executive Vice President at Wells Fargo Capital Finance, managing the Western Region for the company's Trade Capital division. As a leader in this banking and factoring institution, he maintains involvement with every aspect of his clients' operations, giving sought-after advice based on a history of success.

Prior to joining Wells Fargo Trade Capital in 2000, Sullivan worked for NationsBank Commercial Corp (becoming Bank of America Commercial Corp) as Senior Vice President and Western Region Business Development Manager. Currently, he is also a member of the Executive Board of Directors of the California Fashion Association and is a past President of the Apparel Industries Group for the City of Hope.
For Millennials, Mobile Sales Dominated Cyber Monday Week

This year’s recent Cyber Monday Week was the largest online sales day ever, and for the ever-hungry millennial shopper, mobile sales not only dominated but resulted in higher dollar sales.

Fashion marketplace Flagship, targeting male and female early adopters ranging from 21 to 35 years old, reported an all-time high of 35 percent mobile sales during Cyber Monday week – higher than the national average of 24 percent – and most surprisingly, the average dollar sale of mobile transactions was 20 percent higher than desktop transactions.

"Embracing the mobile experience is the only way to capture the attention of millennials," said Scott Latham, CEO of Flagship. "In addition to offering hundreds of independent brands to this fashion-forward group, we've invested in the technology to appeal to heavy mobile users. We've found that not only is the tech driving sales, but we are seeing significant increases in average spending, which is ultimately leading to repeat purchasing."

Top sales drivers for Flagship's Cyber Monday week were a 2 for $15 tie bundle from New York country club bad boys Filthy Etiquette and $55 short sleeve sweatshirts from Santa Barbara street wear innovators Akomplice.

According to Adobe Analytics data, consumers across the board are using mobile shopping, but an overwhelming 75 percent of millennials are expecting to make purchases with their smartphone, especially to seek fashion like alternative apparel.

The National Retail Federation reports 174 million Americans shopped the 5 days between Thanksgiving Day and Cyber Monday. Cyber Monday alone saw over $6 billion in online sales, with $1.5 billion in mobile specifically.

"We know that the e-commerce landscape is constantly shifting," added Latham. "As an innovative startup, it is our responsibility to bring a fresh perspective and provide the customer with the best experience, whether on desktop or mobile. While mobile might be currently dominating, many aspects are being overlooked by the bigger players who are slower to react."

Flagship carries over 175 independent fashion brands from all over the world on their marketplace and drops 20 new brands a month. Founded in 2013 as "the Amazon for independent brands," customers can shop globally while supporting local, small fashion brands that offer unique streetwear, menswear and womenswear. Their mission is to break the ever-elusive millennial shopper, mobile monopolies and into the local economies spawning independent apparel brands.
Fashion Industry Benchmarking Study
Reveal What Matters Most

Findings show U.S. industry executives are most concerned about the impact of trade protectionism, risk management, and border adjustment tax proposal

The United States Fashion Industry Association (USFIA) released the fourth annual U.S. Fashion Industry Benchmarking Study earlier this year. The study is a survey of 14 executives from the leading fashion and apparel brands, retailers, importers, and wholesalers.

While the majority of executives are optimistic about the five-year outlook for the fashion industry, the percentage fell from 92.3 percent in 2016 to 71.0 percent in 2017—a record low since USFIA began conducting the study in 2014. This decline could be explained by the rise of new challenges for the industry—specifically, the “protectionist trade policy agenda in the United States,” which executives rank as their top challenge this year, up from being ranked the #10 challenge last year.

Conducted in conjunction with Dr. Sheng Lu, Assistant Professor at University of Delaware Department of Fashion & Apparel Studies, the survey asked respondents about the business outlook, sourcing practices, utilization of Free Trade Agreements and preference programs, and views on trade policy.

Other key findings include:
- Executives are more concerned about trade protectionism, market competition from e-commerce, and supply chain risk than they are about cost; “increasing production or sourcing cost” dropped from the #2 concern in 2016 to the #7 concern in 2017.
- Only 36 percent of executives expect to increase sourcing from Vietnam, compared to 56 percent last year; this is likely due to the United States’ withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership.
- Among all sourcing destinations examined this year, Bangladesh is considered the most competitive in terms of price—but also the riskiest in terms of trade compliance.
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1 Finalist Teni Panosian (The Alpha Belle Inc) and guests Angelica Mikosian (reBelle Makeup), and Suzy Sagayan (Ice Link).

2 Jesse Castell (Michael Costello) and Honoree Michael Castello (Michael Castello).


4 Nominee Kinya Claiborne (STYLE & SOCIETY Magazine).

5 Platinum Sponsor Ilse Metchek (California Fashion Association).

6 Silver Sponsors CIT Commercial Services.

7 Troy Jenkins (Profit Investments), Sandy Lee (City Club LA), Nominee Jana Coke (Jana Coke Style), and Bent Strokes (Venture Lynk Capital & Advisory).

8 Finalist Alisa Tovmanyan (Tovmali) and Nominee Samantha Lauren (What Would Kiki Wear).

9 Nominees Nancy Prellana and Pierina Merino (PIEMER).

10 Finalist Brandi M Jones (The Brandi Jones).

11 Finalists Yarden & Oren Katz (Carbon & Hyde).

12 Nominee Kathy Kim (Honey Punch) and guest.

13 Nominee Deborah Sawaf and Sima Sawaf (Thale Blanc, LLC).

14 Finalist Bohbot Angelique and Kris Park (SWY Denim).

15 Diamond Sponsor Marvin Padilla (Intrepid).

16 Nominee Sylvie de Gil (Jomsy Fashion).