

ACCESSORY DESIGN AND MANUFACTURE



Sarah Connors

ISS Institute/Italy (Veneto) Fellowship

Fellowship funded by Skills Victoria,
Department of Innovation,
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Executive Summary

The Australian Fashion Accessories Industry is relatively small and has been hit hard over the past decade by the movement of production offshore, mass production and the growth of generically designed products. Nevertheless, as mass-produced fashion has become more commonplace, Australian consumers have begun increasingly to look for well-made, design-led accessories with the added value of being locally produced. There is a growing desire for true Australian fashion products rather than inexpensive, imported and disposable seasonal items.

However, if Australia is to compete more effectively with fashion centres such as Italy, we need to create accessories that are of an extremely high standard that combine original design, innovative materials and high quality finish.

The absence of recognised and accredited training in handbag and accessories manufacture and design in Australia has resulted in people endeavouring to get into the industry without the necessary experience and skills required to produce design-led work that delivers high quality product.

Research identified the following skill and knowledge deficiencies in the Australian accessories industry:

- Under-utilisation of new and improved textile technologies;
- Applications of non-traditional materials (eg plastics, metal, wood) in experimental ways;
- Lack of knowledge in – and access to – high-end construction processes and equipment used specifically for accessory manufacture; and
- Using modern design processes to create ‘fashion forward’ accessories.

The Fellowship enabled these skill and knowledge deficiencies to be addressed by visits to internationally recognised fashion and accessories design houses, educational institutions and research facilities in Europe.

The Fellowship facilitated access to a wide range of skilled professionals in design, implementation, production and machinery use for commercial production of accessories.

Visits were made to:

- A textile research facility: Matech, Padova, Italy
- Educational institutions:
 - Scuola Italiana Design, Padova, Italy
 - Scuola D’Arte e Mestieri di Vicenza, Vicenza, Italy
 - London College of Fashion, London, UK
- A producer of accessories hardware: MCM Crestanello, Vicenza, Italy
- Manufacturers and designers:
 - Coccinelle S.p.A., Sala Baganza, Italy
 - Gabs Bags, Florence, Italy
 - Ghibli, Florence, Italy
 - Miles by Gianni Serena, Vicenza, Italy
 - Sargi, Vicenza, Italy
 - Rabens Saloner, Copenhagen, Denmark
- A commercial showroom: Coccinelle S.p.A., Milan, Italy

Executive Summary

Knowledge and fresh insights on skills and innovations were gained in:

- Machinery and tools
- Threads
- Hand stitching techniques
- Turning a bag
- The *Intrecciato* technique
- Factory and studio environment
- Pattern making and cutting processes

As well as identifying new and exciting materials used in accessories manufacture, by far the greatest numbers of handbags designed in Italy were a combination of leather with metal accessories. There has been little technological development in the processing of leather. Rather it is in the design and fitting of hardware that designers have started to embrace new technologies.

In Italy the sampling process is seen as a very important part of the design process. Even companies that produce the bulk or all of their handbags offshore still sample all designs in their on-site workrooms using highly trained artisans.

The dissemination of the Fellow's findings will add value to the Australian Accessories Industry as well as provide an ongoing education and networking resource for local designers and artisans.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

BA	Bachelor of Arts
ISS Institute	International Specialised Skills Institute
PVD	Physical vapour deposition
RMIT	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
SID	The Scuola Italiana Design
SWOT	Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TCF	Textiles Clothing and Footwear
TFIA	Council of Textiles & Fashion Industries Australia Ltd

Definitions

Innovation	<p>Creating and meeting new needs with new technical and design styles (new realities of lifestyle).</p> <p><i>Reference: 'Sustainable Policies for a Dynamic Future', Carolynne Bourne AM, ISS Institute 2007.</i></p>
Design	<p>Design is problem setting and problem solving.</p> <p>Design is a fundamental economic and business tool. It is embedded in every aspect of commerce and industry and adds high value to any service or product – in business, government, education and training and the community in general.</p> <p><i>Reference: 'Sustainable Policies for a Dynamic Future', Carolynne Bourne AM, ISS Institute 2007.</i></p>
Findings	Small tools and materials used by an artisan.
Schede	A design/specification sheet.
Skills deficiency	<p>A skill deficiency is where a demand for labour has not been recognised and where accredited courses are not available through Australian higher education institutions. This demand is met where skills and knowledge are acquired on-the-job, gleaned from published material, or from working and/or study overseas.</p> <p>There may be individuals or individual firms that have these capabilities. However, individuals in the main do not share their capabilities, but rather keep the IP to themselves; and over time they retire and pass away. Firms likewise come and go.</p> <p><i>Reference: 'Directory of Opportunities. Specialised Courses with Italy. Part 1: Veneto Region', ISS Institute, 1991.</i></p>
Sustainability	<p>The ISS Institute follows the United Nations NGO on Sustainability, "Sustainable Development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"</p> <p><i>Reference: http://www.unngosustainability.org/CSD_Definitions%20SD.htm</i></p>
Toile	A version of a garment made by a fashion designer or dressmaker to test a pattern.

Acknowledgments

Sarah Conners would like to thank the following individuals and organisations who gave generously of their time and their expertise to assist, advise and guide her throughout the Fellowship program.

Awarding Body - International Specialised Skills Institute (ISS Institute)

We know that Australia's economic future is reliant upon high level skills and knowledge, underpinned by design and innovation.

The International Specialised Skills Institute Inc (ISS Institute) is an independent, national organisation, which has a record of nearly twenty years of working with Australian industry and commerce to gain best-in-the-world skills and experience in traditional and leading-edge technology, design, innovation and management. The Institute has worked extensively with Government and non-Government organisations, firms, industry bodies, professional associations and education and training institutions.

The Patron in Chief is Sir James Gobbo AC, CVO. The ISS Institute Board of Management is Chaired by Noel Waite AO. The Board comprises Franco Fiorentini, John Iacovangelo, Lady Primrose Potter AC and David Wittner.

Through its CEO, Carolynne Bourne AM, the ISS Institute identifies and researches skill deficiencies and then meets the deficiency needs through its *Overseas Skill Acquisition Plan (Fellowship Program)*, its education and training activities, professional development events and consultancy services.

Under the Overseas Skill Acquisition Plan (Fellowship Program) Australians travel overseas or international experts travel to Australia. Participants then pass on what they have learnt through reports, education and training activities such as workshops, conferences, lectures, forums, seminars and events, therein ensuring that for each Fellowship undertaken many benefit.

As an outcome of its work, ISS Institute has gained a deep understanding of the nature and scope of a number of issues. Four clearly defined economic forces have emerged out of our nearly twenty years of research. The drivers have arisen out of research that has been induced rather than deduced and innovative, practical solutions created - it is about thinking and working differently.

A Global Perspective. 'Skills Deficiencies' + 'Skills Shortages'

Skill deficiencies address future needs. Skill shortages replicate the past and are focused on immediate needs.

Skill deficiency is where a demand for labour has not been recognised and where accredited courses are not available through Australian higher education institutions. This demand is met where skills and knowledge are acquired on-the-job, gleaned from published material, or from working and/or study overseas. This is the focus of the work of ISS Institute.

There may be individuals or firms that have these capabilities. However, individuals in the main do not share their capabilities, but rather keep the IP to themselves; and over time they retire and pass away. Firms likewise come and go. If Australia is to create, build and sustain Industries, knowledge/skills/understandings must be accessible trans-generationally through nationally accredited courses and not be reliant on individuals.

Our international competitors have these capabilities as well as the education and training infrastructure to underpin them.

Addressing skill shortages, however, is merely delivering more of what we already know and can do to meet current market demands. Australia needs to address the **dual** challenge – skill deficiencies and skill shortages.

Acknowledgments

Identifying and closing skills deficiencies is vital to long-term economic prospects in order to sustain sectors that are at risk of disappearing, not being developed or leaving our shores to be taken up by our competitors. The only prudent option is to achieve a high skill, high value-added economy in order to build a significant future in the local and international marketplace.

The Trades

The ISS Institute views the trades as the backbone of our economy. Yet, they are often unseen and, in the main, have no direct voice as to issues which are in their domain of expertise. The trades are equal, but different to professions.

The ISS Institute has the way forward through its 'Master Artisan Framework for Excellence. A New Model for Skilling the Trades', December 2004. The Federal Government, DEEWR commissioned ISS Institute to write an Australian Master Artisan School, Feasibility Plan.

In 2006, the ISS Institute established an advisory body, the **Trades Advisory Council**. The members are Ivan Deveson AO; Martin Ferguson AM, MP, Federal Labor Member for Batman; Geoff Masters, CEO, Australian Council of Educational Research; Simon McKeon, Executive Chairman, Macquarie Bank, Melbourne Office, and Julius Roe, National President Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union. ISS Institute also puts on record its gratitude to the former Chairman of Visy Industries, the late Richard Pratt, for his contribution as a member of the Trades Advisory Council.

Think and Work in an Holistic Approach along the Supply Chain - Collaboration and Communication

Our experience has shown that most perceive that lack of skills is the principal factor related to quality and productivity. We believe that attitudes are often the constraint to turning ideas into product and a successful business; the ability to think laterally, to work and communicate across disciplines and industry sectors, to be able to take risks and think outside the familiar, to share – to turn competitors into partners.

Australia needs to change to thinking and working holistically along the entire Supply Chain; to collaborate and communicate across industries and occupations - designers with master artisans, trades men and women, Government agencies, manufacturers, engineers, farmers, retailers, suppliers to name a few in the Chain.

'Design' has to be seen as more than 'Art' discipline – it is a fundamental economic and business tool for the 21st Century

Design is crucial to the economic future of our nation. Australia needs to understand and learn the value of design, the benefits of good design and for it to become part of everyday language, decision making and choice.

Design is as important to the child exploring the possibilities of the world, as it is to the architect developing new concepts, and as it is to the electrician placing power points or the furniture designer working with a cabinet-maker and manufacturer. As such, design is vested in every member of our community and touches every aspect of our lives.

Our holistic approach takes us to working across occupations and industry sectors and building bridges along the way. The result has been highly effective in the creation of new business, the development of existing business and the return of lost skills and knowledge to our workforce, thus creating jobs - whereby individuals gain; industry and business gain; the Australian community gains economically, educationally and culturally.

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Acknowledgments

Fellowship Sponsor

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- **Ghibli**
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- **Gianni Serena**
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Annamarie Foutane, Manger, International Projects/Development
- **Scuola Italiana Design**
Giorgio Pellizzaro, Director, and Eugenio Farina, Lecturer

Organisations Impacted by the Fellowship

- Council of Textile and Fashion Industries Australia
- Kangan Batman TAFE Centre of Fashion
- Fashion Design Council of Australia

About the Fellow

Name: Sarah Conners

Employment

- Kangan Batman TAFE, Lecturer, Curriculum Co-ordinator
- Sarah Conners Accessories, Designer

Qualifications

- Certificate IV Millinery, Kangan Batman TAFE, 1993
- BA Fashion Design, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, 1994
- Certificate IV Workplace Assessment and Training, TFIA, 2004

Conners has worked in the fashion accessories industry for 15 years in Australia and the UK. Utilising her initial experience in millinery the Fellow has expanded her interest into other accessory areas including jewellery, handbags and belts, often using materials traditionally reserved for millinery to create designs.¹

The Fellow developed a fascination with the combinations of materials and structure, resulting in Conners establishing 'Sarah Conners Accessories', subsequently focusing on creating handmade small run accessories, with particular emphasis on women's handbags and belts.

While design is an extremely important part of the process, high quality manufacture has also been a goal of Sarah Conners Accessories. As the business moved from using fabric, straw and canvas to manufacture bags and into leather it became harder to maintain quality while still producing locally and in small runs. In order to maintain product individuality and innovation in product the Fellow has devoted considerable time learning more about leather, the techniques involved in manufacture and its design idiosyncrasies.

The Fellow is also working currently with the Kangan Batman TAFE Centre of Fashion in curriculum development and lecturing. Her vision is to reverse the lack of education in the area of accessory design and manufacture in the Victorian and national training system.

The objective for Sarah Conners Accessories is to develop the company's product range to international standards in the design and manufacture of high-end accessories. This is essential in ensuring the label is viable and capable of competing effectively in the global market.

¹ Conners has worked in Peter Jago's millinery studio. In 1994 Jago was awarded the 'Specialised Skills Training Fellowship' to travel to Italy and England to research skill deficiencies in: millinery design and manufacture (equipment, materials) • leather, felt and straw braid manufacture • hat accessories design • technical skills (block moulding, production of wool and fur felt) • sourcing fibres • conservation techniques for maintaining antique fabrications of millinery. The Fellowship was sponsored Kangan Institute of TAFE and the TCF Resource Fund

Aims of the Fellowship

The objective of the Fellowship was to enable the Fellow to gain new skills and insights in specific aspects related to design, materials and technologies for manufacturing accessories as part of the Australian Fashion Industry:

- Gain direct, on site experience of hand craftsmen at work so as to gain a comprehensive understanding of the manufacturing process, thereby helping to facilitate better informed designs.
- Bring back to Australia up-to-date knowledge about tools and equipment used to create high-end accessories.
- Gain insights into the women's handbag and belt segments of the overseas accessories market.
- Learn how education in accessory design and manufacture is approached in countries (such as Italy and the United Kingdom) that have a highly developed and sophisticated culture of craftsmanship, and how these can be translated or transposed into the Australian accessories industry.
- Identify new and innovative materials being used within, and being developed for, the international accessories industry.
- Develop an information bank of material suppliers and producers of fabric, leather and related hardware.
- Develop an infrastructure of information, networks and new skills in which a sustainable high-end accessories business can flourish in Australia.
- Understand the integration of the three main areas involved in accessory manufacturing (see 'Attachment 1: Fashion Accessories').

The Australian Context

Description of the Australian Industry

The Australian Fashion Manufacturing Industry has been hard hit over the past decade by the movement of production offshore, mass production and generic design. During this time the plastics and metals manufacturing sector in Australia has grown. However, these are under utilised areas in Australian fashion design. By using Australian talent and adding new capabilities (skills, knowledge and understandings) in design, marketing, branding, financial planning and directing specific manufacturing skills into the fashion accessories area, handbags can be produced in Australia that are innovative, focused on craftsmanship and commercially viable.

Leather producers in Australia currently aim their products at the automotive/marine or craft sectors. This makes new and emerging materials difficult to source for accessories designers.

The leather and leather substitute product manufacturing sector in Australia is small, having only 487 establishments in a sector that encompasses leather tanning and production, fur manufacturers and furriers, industrial products as well as handbags, briefcases, wallets and belts. While the sector is relatively small, the leather goods (handbags, briefcases, wallets and belts) area makes up approximately one quarter of products and services produced.²

Although Australian companies are producing handbags and leather goods, most of this production takes place offshore. If Australia is to compete with fashion centres such as Italy in both design and manufacture, we need to create high standard accessories that meet customer taste and therefore demand. The manufacturing of high-end accessories is a very specialised area that requires techniques not taught and no longer utilised in Australia.

Because of the lack of recognised or nationally accredited training courses in handbag manufacture in Australia, we do not have the people going into the industry with the necessary skills in and knowledge of working with leather and the complexity involved in the construction of handbags. This leaves the industry reliant on offshore manufacturers who generally want to make products fast and inexpensively. This can often stifle the innovation and creativity of an industry.

As mass produced fashion becomes more commonplace, the Australian fashion buying public are starting to look for well made, design led accessories with the added value of being locally produced.

Presenting design concepts as true fashion products rather than inexpensive, disposable seasonal items is a very important and often neglected aspect of the Australian accessory design process. Consumers should be able to appreciate the inherent value of Australian designed and manufactured accessories. This can be achieved by creating and marketing handbags and accessories that combine original design, smart use of materials, together with high quality and finish.

As the majority of the Fellow's skills in the accessory manufacture area are self-taught the Fellowship has provided a unique and valuable opportunity to see first-hand in Italy true craftsmen at work and how they are able to operate a sustainable accessories business.

² Leather and Leather Substitute Product Manufacturing in Australia, Australian Industry Report 2008. Industry Code/ ANZSIC Code: C2260

The Australian Context

If Australia does not start to develop, teach and promote high end manufacturing skills, domestic accessories designers and manufacturers will not be able to grow and prosper. Although niche and offshore manufacturing for larger product runs will continue to be the norm for the Australian accessories industry, it is important that we grow our local design capabilities and associated intellectual property.

The Fellowship has provided an opportunity to investigate the range of specific skills that make Italian accessory design and manufacture more advanced than in Australia.

The study included:

- Innovative use of new textile technology, as well as the application of less traditional materials eg plastics, metal and wood.
- Experimental use of traditional materials.
- High-end construction processes used specifically in accessory manufacture.

It is important that these skills are brought into Australia in order to assist in creating a supportive, growing and relevant industry. The more successful designers Australia has, the more scope for success each individual has.

Bringing these new skills back to Australia enhances the prospects of, and opportunities for, the advancement of handbag and accessory design. Furthermore, new skills will help deliver a more sustainable Australian fashion supply chain for fashion designers and related trades disciplines, such as machinists.

By placing equal importance on design and manufacture to create products that bring together the Italian culture of great design, quality manufacture and unique materials, the Australian fashion accessory industry will be better placed to redress the domestic trend of import replacement and will be able to compete more effectively in international markets.

SWOT Analysis

A SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis provides a useful avenue for summarising the current situation and the implications of addressing, or not addressing, the need for ongoing skills associated with accessory design and sustainable industry practices.

Strengths

- Melbourne (and Australia in general) boasts a well supported fashion industry with much commercial and government support.
- There is currently a very strong accessories market both locally and internationally.
- Raw materials that are distinctly Australian can be valued added to produce a range of accessories that are highly marketable in the domestic local and international marketplace.

Weaknesses

- Materials (leather, findings and hardware) are often unavailable or available only in large quantities in Australia.
- There is a lack of production people (makers and cutters) working in the leather accessories area.

The Australian Context

- There may be problems coping with large orders due to the lack of manufacturers and materials.
- Lack of training in the leather bag manufacture and design industry.
- There is often a lack of consumer confidence in Australian product; people need the label/brand to be well known before they will buy it.
- High end accessory design companies tend to be very small manufacturers (eg Sarah Conners Accessories).
- The lack of understanding of the differences between design, designing and designer.
- A poor understanding by local accessory designers and manufacturers of the design solutions required to meet customer needs and wants.
- Lack of communication and collaboration between designers and manufacturers.

Opportunities

- Use the Fellowship to promote a greater training and resource development effort through the TAFE system, with particular emphasis on the Kangan Batman TAFE Centre of Fashion.
- Promotion of the combination of the famous workmanship and quality of Italy with the an 'Australian' design style.
- An adoption of some of the Italian mindset in relation to the design process and brand identity.
- There is great potential to establish relationships and create networks with international schools, manufacturers and designers.
- To create products for the local and global marketplace.

Threats

- Poor quality and less expensive bags continuing to take over the market.
- Lack of materials available when required to complete orders.
- Growing material costs in the Australian market.
- Constant demand from the fashion media and consumers for new designers and products.
- Current workplace, education and training practices and remain the same.

Identifying the Skills Deficiencies

Skill deficiencies within the Accessories Design and Manufacture Industry span three key areas:

1. The Design Process³
2. Materials
3. Construction Processes and Equipment

Because of a lack of customer knowledge and understanding (unlike that within the Italian design process), together with an under-utilisation of quality Australian materials, the development of an Australian identity through brand building has been weak.

Identifying the Deficiencies

Innovative use of new textile technology, as well as the application of less traditional materials (eg plastics, metal, wood) and the experimental use of traditional materials

Materials are an integral part of the accessory design process. The use of and the understanding of world class high end materials helps make accessories into design classics and lifelong investments rather than disposable fashion. Understanding the materials used and passing this knowledge onto the consumer is an important part of the high-end accessories market.

Addressing this deficiency included:

- Sourcing of materials
- Visiting trade shows, development houses, wholesalers and tanneries

Activities focussed upon the design process; primarily how material choice informs the design process and the design/construction of fittings and hardware.

High-end construction processes specifically used in accessory manufacture

By developing a thorough understanding of the manufacture process specifically for the accessories industry, this will lead to the development of design skills and confidence, use of less traditional materials and the innovative use of traditional materials.

Australian design confidence resides mainly in the area of mass produced accessories. Companies and designers are only willing to take a chance on cheaply produced disposable fashion.

A thorough knowledge and understanding of the manufacturing process leads to more informed and innovative designs. The Fellow aimed to identify how innovative design is realised in a business savvy environment.

³ Within any product-based industry a true understanding of business planning – including goals – is required, together with specific knowledge and insights into fashion that relates directly to understanding who your customers are, what your customers want and how to engage them.

Australia currently follows trends set in Europe, but we often do not relate these trends to the needs of the Australian customer. European brands embrace the customer and create a total look or lifestyle brand. Australian niche labels need to better embed this into our design and manufacturing culture, so as to create unique and exportable products that meet domestic and international consumer demands.

Identifying the Skills Deficiencies

Research was undertaken looking at very specialised cutting, sewing and construction techniques used in high-end manufacture. Research into the techniques used in the high-end manufacture of accessories begins with developing a thorough understanding of the environment and the key types of machinery used.

Key Questions

See 'Attachment 3 – Key Questions' which lists the questions asked of the interviewees at the site visits.

Why These Skills Need to be Addressed

To create a strong accessories industry, Australia needs to develop the production and materials knowledge to develop a high quality product worthy of both the domestic and export market.

The International Experience

Matech

T +39 049 8705973 W www.matech.it Corso Stati Uniti, 14, Z.I. Sud – 35127, Padova Italy

Contact: Valeria Adriani, Research and Innovation

Established in 2001, Matech is located within the Galileo Technology Park in Padova. Matech brings together materials manufacturers with producers of products through trade shows and presentations to materials manufacturers. Matech then matches product manufacturers with the appropriate materials manufacturers. It sources materials from all over the world (eg Europe, Japan and China).

In some cases Matech will stay with a project through the initial testing and product development process, especially in the case of smaller companies.

As a government funded body, Matech charges product producers on a cost-only recovery basis. This ensures a very affordable service and a more viable option for producers than the expense of undertaking research and development (R&D).

Matech deals with 12 families of materials:

1. Naturals
2. Pigments and fillers
3. Polymers
4. Foams
5. Technologies
6. Surface Treatments
7. Metals and Alloys
8. Technical Fluids
9. Fibres and Textiles
10. Composites
11. Ceramics and Glass
12. Adhesives

Some of the biggest areas within these families include:

- Composites: the mixing of various materials together, eg natural stones embedded in resin to create flooring.
- Face treatments: usually used in the technical area for such things as surface smoothing and friction resistance.
- Nanotechnology: as the cost of this technology is decreasing, the use of this very new technology is increasing.
- Naturals: being led by consumer demand. The demand for sustainable products is increasing greatly every year.

One of the areas of which Matech is most proud is their embrace of technology transfer. One example of this is a fine metal mesh that was developed for use as an industrial filter. This was adopted subsequently by one company to create a breathable, crushable fabric for clothing and also by BMW to create breathable areas in motorcycle helmets.

The International Experience

Companies use Matech mainly to solve problems both in production and wear, the creation of new ideas and to reduce research and development costs. The Fashion Industry is extremely interested in the naturals area, looking for textiles that are kind to the skin, renewable and/or biodegradable. Some of the new innovations are textiles created from soybean, bamboo and milk polymers. There has also been the development of a leather substitute made from the waste of leather product manufacture (ie the small unusable off cuts). The off cuts are turned into a powder, blended with a bonding agent and extruded as a leather substitute. While looking, feeling and smelling like leather (due to the embedding of fragrance during the manufacture process) the final product is not finding great acceptance, especially in the Italian market.

Leather manufacturers in general are very slow to embrace new developments. Technologies already developed for surface treatment are merely being reworked in various ways. This may be due to the leather and finished product manufacturing being such a lucrative industry which generates sufficient revenue to sustain itself without seeing any need to innovate and/or adapt.

The fashion textiles area is particularly effective in saving money on R&D by adopting technology created by other industries. One example of knowledge and technology transfer is the physical vapour deposition (PVD) process. PVD was a technology created initially to strengthen drill bits. It is now being used in the fashion industry to create various finishes on metal such as an oil slick look or a matt patina. Another example of technology transfer uptake can be found in the manufacturing of buckles and buttons using injection moulding technology, developed originally for the packaging industry.

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Contacts: Giorgio Pellizzaro, Director and Euginio Farina, Lecturer

The Scuola Italiana Design (SID) was established in 1991 by Giorgio Pellizzoro. Pellizzoro's career began in marketing where he identified a need for high calibre designers within the industrial design field. The mission of the school is to prepare designers to be industry-ready in three years, a period much shorter than universities. After three years of study, students graduate from the Scuola Italiana Design with a Masters degree. In Australian universities it can take four years to complete such a degree.

The school offers a three-year program and, although the mission of the school focuses on industrial design, the depth and breadth of design knowledge taught in the school prepares students for employment in a variety of fields such as fashion, web and commercial design. The first two years of education at the SID are considered the most important years, creating a strong foundation for the third-year projects.

The first year consists of the basic methodology of design:

- Hand sketching – taking up to one fifth of total hours
- The use of design software
- How to research 'catch news'
- History of art – history is referred to as 'an endless tank of aesthetics'

The International Experience

This is seen as a year to reinvent the creativity inherent in people from an early age and establish the ideas of functionality and style with young designers.

In the second year, students – or young designers, as they are referred to as – start to refine their design skills and are introduced to the concept of commerciality. The young designers concentrate on three specific areas of design:

- Visual design
- Industrial design
- Web design

During this year the fundamentals of design are studied in a very structured manner, with particular emphasis on the synthesis of shape and aesthetics.

The third year focuses on industry-based design projects. While undertaking these projects students are taught how to *“have their head in the clouds and their feet on the ground”*. These projects are not merely based on industry standards. Briefs created by companies to address market demand require the input and involvement of company staff from concept development to final assessment. During this process, students work in teams to bring marketing, commerciality and design together.

Companies that have worked with the school include:

- DeLonghi
- Lamborghini
- Ferrero
- Arneg

Scuola D’Arte e Mestieri di Vicenza

T +39 0444 960500 W www.scuolartemestieri.org Via Rossini, 60, 36100 Vicenza

Contact: Annamarie Foutane, Manager International Projects/Development

The Scuola D’Arte e Mestieri was established in 1858 as an artisan school. Until recently the main focus of the school was the teaching of jewellery design and manufacture. Vicenza has long been the hub of jewellery manufacture in Italy.

The school is non-fee paying and is fully funded by the European Union. Its purpose is to create an industry-ready workforce.

About five years ago the jewellery industry in the Veneto region began to decline. Increased equipment costs and imposts such as environment tariffs impacted adversely on a large number of partial or wholly original equipment manufacturer (OEM) companies.

The school looked at other areas within fashion and design areas. This led eventually to a partnership with Bottega Veneta. The Bottega Veneta School works closely with industry across a range of commercial sectors. Lecturers are also employed in the companies associated with the school. Students are selected by industry representatives. This close collaboration with industry involves students spending several months working in industry in order to gain their European Union recognised qualification. All courses are taught from an artisan perspective. Classrooms have up-to-date equipment and, wherever possible, classroom layout is determined in collaboration with industry.

The International Experience

The school also runs an international program. This entails teachers from Scuola D'Arte e Mestieri working overseas at another school. An example of this is a project in Uruguay, a country with an existing gem and mineral mining industry. Teachers from the Scuola D'Arte e Mestieri bring their artisan skills and Italian design sensibilities to Uruguayan students.

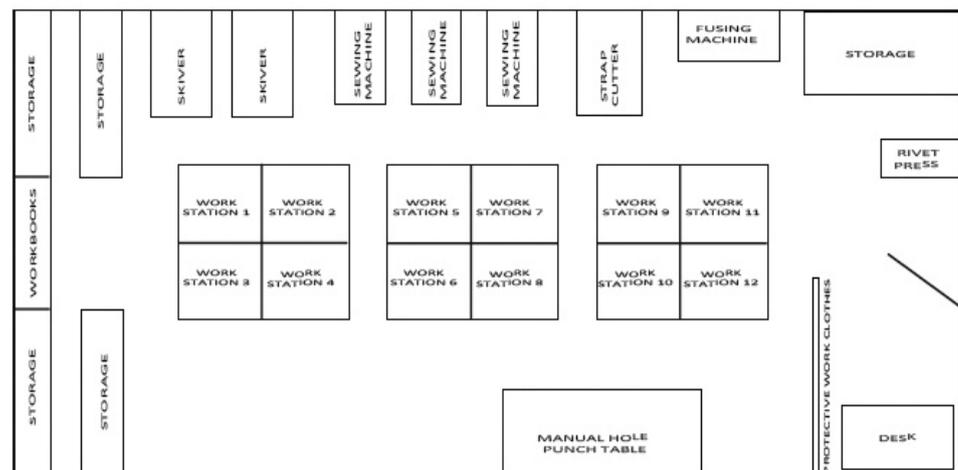
The Bottega Veneta School

The Bottega Veneta area of the school was established to meet a precise need. There were not enough willing, trained and available young people to take up manufacturing positions with the Bottega Veneta company. The specialised area was established to feed workers straight into the Bottega Veneta workrooms.

Bottega Veneta approached the school with the proposal for the training facility. It now completely funds the school, selects the applicants and guarantees employment for students at the end of (or sometimes during) their training. This is the first training facility established in Italy with such a strong and specific industry bond.

In the first year of training the students attend classes eight hours a day, five days a week. In their second and third year, students spend half their time in the classroom and the remainder of the time in the Bottega Veneta workrooms. All teachers are full time Bottega Veneta employees who take time out of their workday to teach. Students learn various techniques by working from start to finish on projects such as bag making. The bags are produced to Bottega Veneta standard using the same quality materials, findings and specifications. All student work is labelled with Bottega Veneta student project labels.

The Bottega Veneta School replicates the real life work rooms, even down to the colour of the walls.



Floor plan of Bottega Veneta classroom

Bottega Veneta takes an artisan approach to handbag manufacture. Equipment and machinery in the simulated workroom is fairly simple.

The International Experience

Facilities include:

- A strap cutter
- Cylinder arm sewing machines
- Electric skivers
- A manual rivet press
- A fusing machine
- Workbenches (hip height)

Each student has a workstation and/or a workbench measuring approximately 150cm x 60cm. The equipment on each workstation includes:

- Rubber/plastic cutting mat
- Leather cutting knife
- Scissors
- Glue
- Pencils
- Marker (small awl)

At the time of the Fellow's visit students were at various stages of work. Many were pattern making using thin cardboard; some were making toiles using inexpensive vinyl to test pattern and shape. During the process of making a bag, students follow a workbook detailing all the steps taken to produce each specific style of bag. The workbooks use photographs of each step in the production with minimal written explanation.

The equipment, set up and teaching tools used within the school were surprisingly simple, the focus being on traditional, small run production techniques. The product created by the students was of an exceptionally high standard. Students are 'commercial work room ready' on leaving the school. In fact, the need for them in the Bottega Veneta workrooms is so high that they are often shifted into the workrooms during their second year.

MCM Crestanello

T +39 0444 961 561 W www.mcmcrestanello.com Via Della Meccanica, 61, 36100 Vicenza

Contacts: Mr Crestanello, Owner/Director, and Daniella Frigo, Sales Manager

MCM Crestanello was established 40 years ago as a wholesaler of pre-made metal handbag accessories including buckles, handles, fastenings and trims. Mr Crestanello started the company based on market research which showed that the handbag manufacturing industry in Italy required access to high quality directional accessories. As the customer base of the company grew they started to introduce a made-to-measure service, thereby enabling handbag producers with the means to control their own designs, production and costs. The company also began to introduce their own designs to the range.

Mr Crestanello's business now comprises its own designs and made-to-measure designs. Through a strategy of producing directional coated metal designs, maintaining an extremely high level of quality and a thorough understanding of market needs, MCM Crestanello has grown to be one of Europe's largest and most successful accessories suppliers.

The International Experience



MCM Crestanello showroom

MCM Crestanello presents two ranges of accessories per year, much like the fashion companies they service. This allows the company to keep abreast of the ever-changing fashion business. This is unusual in their field as most companies produce only one range a year. Research or trend analysis is the starting point of all MCM Crestanello's product ranges and designs. Their market research involves analysis of current and forward fashion trends, emerging new markets and variations in customer requests. Mr Crestanello cited market research as the most important part of the design process.

The design of a range begins 18 months prior to the fashion season with design and prototyping and then sales. Production of the range begins six months before the fashion season. After the initial design is decided upon, pieces are modelled by hand in brass. Modifications can then be made before expensive moulds and presses are manufactured.

The International Experience

MCM Crestanello epitomises the Veneto – or Italian – approach to all aspects of the handbag industry: *“It is an artisan approach with a global outlook.”* Like many Italian companies, attention to detail and quality has at times made business challenging as it confronts cheaper imports.

Nevertheless, MCM Crestanello has managed to grow, with strong designs and by producing all pieces in-house, thereby ensuring complete control over product quality and the supply chain, as well as the capacity to respond rapidly to changing customer needs. This quick response and control has enabled the company to service its customers to such a high standard that price becomes a secondary consideration.

Another aspect of the business that has been central to growth while maintaining integrity is the made-to-measure service they offer. According to Mr Crestanello, some 40 per cent of MCM Crestanello’s business is now customer driven.

Customer-driven designs arrive at MCM Crestanello as sketches or technical drawings. These are then made into brass models for approval and modification. The process can take 30-40 days for a simple piece and up to four months for more complicated designs.

Although this service enables companies to have pieces that can set them apart from their competitors, it is a time consuming and very costly process requiring a commitment to thousands of pieces for each style. Most small and medium companies do not use this service, but tend to use the designs produced in house at MCM Crestanello, subsequently modifying their handbag designs to suit or having them stamped with their own logo.

During the early years of the company’s establishment, Mr Crestanello spent time actually learning how to make handbags so that he would have a thorough understanding of the processes and materials involved. He was kind enough to share the following advice for improving skills and knowledge in design and production:

1. Use old handbags to learn about structure and production methods. They can be pulled apart, studied and copied. Attention should also be paid to all internal aspects of a bag including linings, stiffening and seams.
2. Gain a thorough understanding of leather and its properties by creating a library of leather and experimenting with it. Create a ‘leather experience’.
3. To maximise the prospects for business success, find a style, technique or specialist area to concentrate on. Mr Crestanello referred to this as being the ‘best in your garden’.
4. The cutting of the leather is one of the most important areas in the manufacture of a bag. This is where money and time can be lost or saved.
5. Learn to turn a bag (making it inside out and then turning it back). This is an important skill as it creates a perfect looking bag with little or no stitching on the outside and takes less time to manufacture than a bag than is stitched on the right (visible) side.

The International Experience



Coccinelle head office, Sala Baganza

Coccinelle S.p.A.

T +39 0521 837988 W www.coccinelle.com Head office and workrooms: Via Lega Dei Carrettieri, 6, 43038 Sala Baganza, Parma

Contact: Filippo Valdarnini, Operations Manager

Coccinelle was established in 1978. In 2006 it was incorporated into Antichi Pellettieri S.p.A, a subsidiary of the Mariella Burani Fashion Group. The workrooms of Coccinelle are housed with the commercial, logistics, sales and design departments in a building that was originally the family home of Coccinelle's founders.

All of these departments work together closely and communicate continuously about the viability of designs, availability of materials and costing issues. Valdarnini cites this as one of the reasons for Coccinelle's success, as no design goes into the sampling process that has not been thought through from a commercial, as well as a design point of view.

The design and sales teams discuss the upcoming range before designs are started, with both areas constantly looking at trends in design and the consumer market.

Although New York is the trend leader in the accessories market, the design team also keeps an eye on global and broader social trends. Trends are also discerned through up-to-date market sales research and customer feedback. Designs that have sold well will be pulled through to the season and re-worked in more seasonally suitable colours or fabrics. All design and sales teams attend the Italian leather fair 'Linea Pelle' twice a year to see first hand new material trends.

Coccinelle create about 240 styles of bags per season. This comprises eight different lines (or stories) with six styles per line, all offered in five different colours or materials. Due to the volume of bags being produced each season, Coccinelle now supplies to over 1,300 clients with most of its production handled offshore or with non-Italian specialist European manufacturers.

Although production is offshore, all samples are created in-house by highly trained staff. Sampling in house is a very expensive process, but it ensures that handbags go to the production facilities with the patterns proved, materials tested, schedules (specifications) detailed and samples provided. A well developed, planned and tested sample means there are fewer problems during production, thereby saving money in the long run. For Coccinelle the testing process starts well before samples are made, with all materials and trims being tested in-house for durability and performance.

The sampling process begins with schede arriving in the workroom. Patterns are then produced by the pattern makers or the 'modelistes'. The modelistes make patterns by hand on thin cardboard and pattern makers use a CAD/CAM system to produce patterns that require less testing or experimentation, ie patterns for bags where a similar style has been produced previously. Apart from the CAD/CAM system everything else within the workroom is very traditional with 17 people working to create the 'salpa' or first sample.

The International Experience

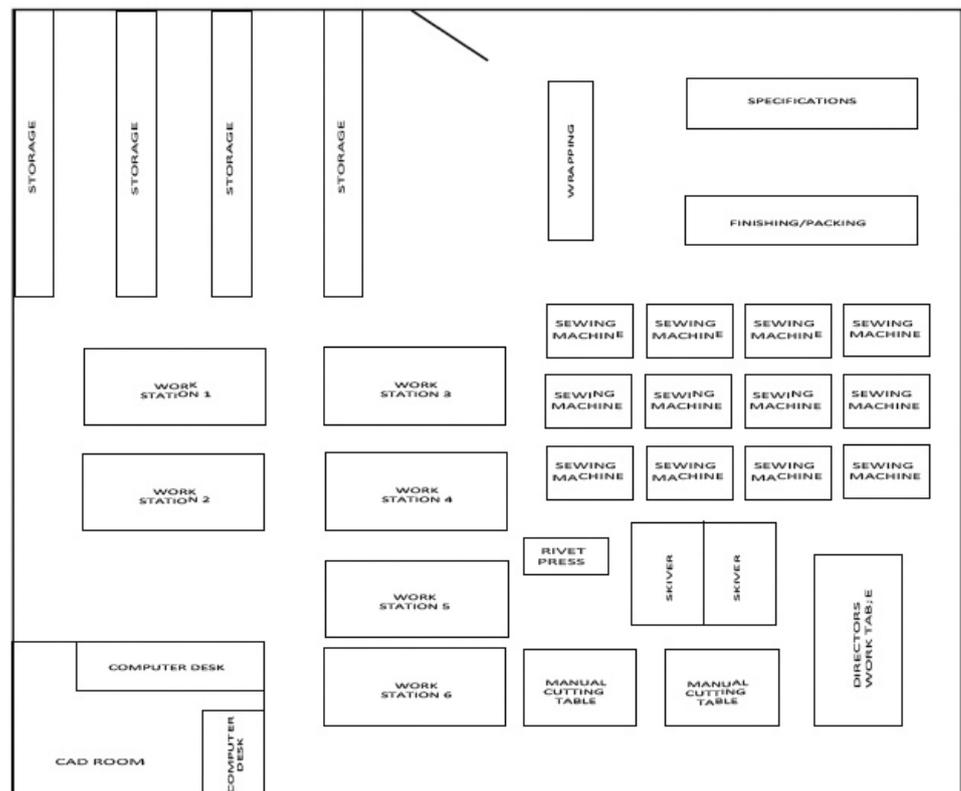
Each workstation comprises:

- Rubber/plastic cutting mat
- Leather cutting knife
- Scissors
- Glue
- Pencils
- Marker (small awl)

Workroom equipment comprises:

- Cylinder arm sewing machines
- Post arm sewing machines
- Flat bed sewing machines
- Small electric skivers
- A manual stud/eyelet machine
- Workbenches (hip height)
- A manual cutting table – like a draftsman's table with a plastic top

In the Coccinelle workrooms all bags are cut by hand. During the construction process regular discussions take place between the design and management teams to solve any problems as they arise.



Floor plan of Coccinelle sample workroom

The International Experience

Coccinelle Showrooms

T +39 02 62004411 W www.coccinelle.com Via Borgonouvo, 22/24, 20121 Milano

Contact: Elisabetta Calboli, International Communications Department

In 2006 Coccinelle established impressive sales headquarters in Milan with a flagship store on Via Manzoni. The Milan showrooms serve various roles, namely sales, public relations, customer relations and image control.

The showroom controls sales of Coccinelle product worldwide. The company also has a distributor in Russia, which is a large and lucrative market for European designers. Sales are conducted in a series of rooms in the showroom to enable each product story or product section to be shown to its best advantage. For example, the monogrammed story, together with its co-ordinating pieces, is a consistent sales leader and is shown in a separate room from the rest of the collection.

While handbags make up the majority of the seasonal ranges, there are also shoes and boots, jewellery, belts, scarves and a small selection of clothing. As brand and customer loyalty grew Coccinelle added other accessories to its range of handbags. This has enabled Coccinelle to offer its wholesale customers a more integrated product range for its stores, as well as in the company's stand-alone boutiques. It also offers in-store customers the opportunity to create a total look, matching shoes with their new handbag. It also captures Coccinelle customers who may choose not to invest in a new bag every season, to add new pieces to their wardrobe.

Marketing is a crucial component of the Coccinelle sales strategy. Marketing for the European market is run in-house from the Milan showrooms and outside agencies are contracted for other markets such as the USA. Coccinelle advertises in magazines in all markets, but only uses billboards in the Middle East.

New product ranges are introduced to general and trade media outlets through private showings and social events during each season, via the Milan fashion week and regular product reminders and media releases throughout the year. Media releases play an important role in maintaining high brand awareness in the media.

Coccinelle designers and marketing staff are generating new ideas constantly to grow brand awareness.

Recent examples of this are the 'Goodie Bag' and new giftware. The Goodie Bag is a leather handbag that was introduced to raise funds for the building of a school in Africa. Apart from the humanitarian aspect, this initiative brought Coccinelle an excellent media profile and presented the company (and more importantly, the brand name) in a very positive light. The other new initiative is the introduction of giftware for release during the Christmas selling season. This initiative provides Coccinelle with a new marketing angle of interest to the media, thereby leading to increased sales of mainstream Coccinelle product together with competitively priced giftware.

Coccinelle believes that centralising all components of its business enables it to control and better define the image it presents to both wholesale and retail buyers. Coccinelle is marketed as a lifestyle choice; a modern urban range of accessories harking back to the traditional qualities of functional design and artisan manufacturing techniques.

The International Experience



Gabs Bags, Firenze store

Gabs Bags

*T +39 0547 373 077 W www.gabsfirenze.it www.emergentitaliani.it/company.swf
Via S Carlo 2707/2709, 47020 Carlo Di Cesena*

Contact: Franco Gabbrielli, Designer

Gabs Bags was founded by Franco Gabbrielli in 2000. Gabbrielli comes from a family of leather workers. His father ran a small factory in the heart of Firenze (Florence) and Franco grew up with a love of the world of handbags. He did not follow his father's footsteps into the production area. Instead he chose to focus purely on design and has grown a brand that is both traditional in its design sensibilities and original in its execution.

In 2005 Gabs Bags was absorbed into the Campomaggi & Caterina Lucchi s.r.l. company and is now in a stable with other brands including Jay Chui, Via Della Vigna, Sofia G, Caterina Lucchi and Campomaggi. The brands cater to separate and distinct parts of the accessories market, but work from the same head office and share resources such as sample machinists, cutters, administration staff, showrooms and management. Design and marketing however, are undertaken on a brand-by-brand basis.

There appears to be a growing trend for companies to coalesce into a group. For Gabbrielli this arrangement has given him the resources to distribute internationally, produce larger volumes and buy high quality materials, while maintaining control of his original design concept. He believes he has seen his company grow far beyond what he could have achieved on his own.

Gabs has a very simple design ethic that sets it apart from other brands. While most brands develop two collections a year showing completely new styles, Gabbrielli has designed only two bags for the Gabs range with the ingenious use of press studs to change the original shape. Both styles come in three different sizes (small, medium and large) and each season the materials and prints are updated and reinvented.

While Gabs catered initially for a young, 'free' customer, its customer base has grown subsequently to encompass women in the 25-60 demographic. Gabs Bags considers its customer base not as an age group, but as a 'type'. Gabs targets women with an adventurous sense of fashion that moves beyond current fashion trends. The varied range of materials, finishes and sizes, combined with the customer ability to change the shape of their own bag has greatly increased Gabs Bags' sales in recent years.

To cope with this growing demand and maintain price competitiveness (Gabs handbags sell at €70-€150) production has now been taken out of the main factory and is now produced by outworkers throughout Europe. This has made the sampling process extremely important.

All samples are made on the premises in workrooms attached to the design rooms. Every sample is made in these workrooms in a very traditional, Italian way. With minimum machinery, technology and a workforce of only four, bags are produced to be factory and sale samples. The only part of the production not handled by outworkers is the cutting of materials. In order to reduce material wastage and maintain high quality, all leathers and materials are cut in-house using four pneumatic cutters, a hand cutting table and a meterage cutter.

The International Experience



Cutting irons stored in boxes labelled with style numbers and photographs of bags



Patterns being made for new season handbags

In the Campomaggi & Caterina Lucchi s.r.l. workrooms each workstation comprises:

- Scissors
- Glue
- Pencils
- Marker (small awl)
- Knife
- Double sided tape
- Pliers



Campomaggi & Caterina Lucchi s.r.l. workrooms showing a bag in production

The International Experience

Workroom equipment comprises:

- Cylinder arm sewing machines
- Post arm sewing machines
- Small electric skivers
- An electric stud/eyelet machine
- Workbenches (hip height)
- A manual cutting table – a small workspace with a thick rubber mat on top
- Pneumatic cutters
- A meterage cutter



Electric stud/eyelet machine



Campomaggi & Caterina Lucchi s.r.l. – Gabs showroom

Wherever possible, double-sided tape is used instead of glue in these workrooms. Tape is easier to control with less spills and smears on the bags. Use of tape also reduces toxic fumes in enclosed workroom spaces. Glues and tapes are not used generally as a permanent finish, but are used on parts of the bag that will be sewn by hand or machine, later in the production process.

Ghibli

T +39 0571 297961 W www.ghiblisrl.com Via Palagina, 45/P, 50050 – Loc. Ponte e Cappiano, Fucecchio

Contact: Illaria Manzi, Commerciale Manager

Ghibli is a boutique classic handbag manufacturer. Piero and Maura Ghibli established the company in 1968. Piero and Maura still head up the company with assistance from their children. Maura is in charge of the design area and studies trends, creates designs and draws the bags for sampling. Piero, who is self-taught in bag manufacture, oversees the production of the bags.

As the company grew and they became more comfortable in their ability to create and manufacture quality bags, they sought a niche market. This led them to explore the use of exotic skins. Python skins were subsequently chosen.

The International Experience

These skins are less expensive than other exotic skins, have a large surface area and are readily available as they are farmed in large quantities in South America. Hand painting the skins enabled Ghibli to add another point of difference to their bags as no other company in Italy uses this technique. As each skin is hand painted, no two bags are ever alike.

Ghibli focuses on the artisan approach to bag making. The company uses local outworkers to manufacture the 800-900 bags produced each month. Although more expensive than producing offshore, the use of local workers helps maintain an artisan finish to the bags.

Ghibli handbags retail from €600-€900. This places them at the luxury end of the market. Although Ghibli is stocked by 100 retailers in Italy and is in the process of establishing the brand in the Russian market, the company is still considered a small boutique manufacturer.

Workrooms

The Ghibli workrooms are surprisingly small for what appears (by Australian standards) to be such a large production. The workrooms consist of six distinct areas all housed under one roof. Close proximity greatly assists production flow.

The work space comprises:

1. The python skin bank
2. Design room
3. The skin painting area
4. Cutting area
5. Sewing area
6. Finishing area

Each workstation comprises:

- Scissors
- Glue
- Pencils
- Marker (small awl)
- Knife

Workroom equipment comprises:

- Cylinder arm sewing machines
- Post arm sewing machines
- Small electric skivers
- A manual stud/eyelet machine
- Workbenches (hip height)
- A manual cutting table
– like a draftsman's table with a plastic top
- Pneumatic cutters
- An embossing machine



Post arm sewing machine, Ghibli workrooms

The International Experience

The python skin bank is a large lockable room in which the skins are stored and sorted. The skins are bought in large quantities and, although cheaper than many exotic skins, are still expensive and are, therefore, kept secured and in large rolls to prevent creasing and cracking. Skins are sorted into size, quality and colour bundle. The average dimension of a skin is approximately two meters in length and 40cm at its widest part. Skins are purchased in their natural form, so they arrive as a pale cream colour with some visible markings. At the beginning of each season, colour ways or groups of colours appropriate for that season are developed for the new bags.

Skins selected from the skin bank are taken to the painting area for hand painting with dyes. The skins can be painted several times to create the desired finish with a base colour being painted and then other layers added to create highlights, contrasts or to enhance the natural markings on the skin. In between each layer of painting the skins are hung on racks to dry. This is a time consuming and labour intensive process.

The design section of the workroom is located on a mezzanine level above the main workroom. This enables the Ghiblis to be physically close to the production process. An important first step in the production process is determining market trends. While Ghibli pays attention to all market trend issues it keeps a close eye on what the big brands such as Gucci and Prada are doing. Not picking up on a season's 'it' colour or shape would damage sales. Once trends are determined it is the designers' role to create bags with the Ghibli look and quality. Effective market research also involves looking backwards to the previous season's designs to see what sold well and could be brought into the current season with adaptations in colour and materials.

Cutting is an important part of the production process. Using this expensive and textured leather means that many bags need to be cut by hand rather than with a pneumatic cutter. The additional costs involved in this process are more than offset by reduced waste and the maintenance of the integrity of the Ghibli brand for quality bags. Python skin is backed with a bandage like fine fabric to create strength and durability and this is often done before the cutting process.

The sewing area features a single large worktable, eight sewing machines (both post and cylinder arm) and a table for applying costa or dyes to bag edges. All bags are finished in the workroom with threads clipped and burnt, quality checked, hardware and leather cleaned and bags tagged and packaged.

Miles by Gianni Serena

Miles s.r.l. Viale Pasubio 11, 36030 Caldogno, Vicenza

Contact: Gianni Serena, Owner/Director

Miles is a small company, established and run by Gianni Serena for 40 years. The company creates approximately 70 styles of handmade, high quality, mid price leather handbags each year and sells to some 300 stores per season. In a market that has been dominated by high-end name brands (eg Gucci) and low-end imports, this has been a difficult market. This is now changing, however, as consumers are showing an increasing appreciation of the worth of artisan made bags with a point of difference at an affordable price. Miles handbags retail at £150-£200.

The International Experience

Serena describes his work as being his life. He started as an assistant in a pelletterie (leather workshop) in his early teens and has spent the best part of his life perfecting his craft. He believes what has made him a successful designer and manufacturer is a passion for his product and an extensive knowledge of every area and technique used in the manufacture of leather handbags.

The workroom consists of a series of workstations comprising:

- Scissors
- Glue
- Pencils
- Marker (small awl)
- Knife
- Pliers
- Hammer
- Punch



Workroom table with equipment

Workroom equipment comprises:

- Cylinder arm sewing machines
- Small electric skivers
- A manual stud/eyelet machine
- Workbenches (hip height)
- A manual cutting table
– like a draftsman's table with a plastic top
- Pneumatic cutters
- A strap cutter
- A gluing machine

Being such a small company it is easy to follow the progress of a handbag from concept design to product. The process is in five stages:

Concept

Consists of the design, pattern making and sampling of the bag. Design is often based on the market trends that larger, better-known companies have established for a season. Designs are then modified to suit the Miles price range and customer.

Pattern making is done on fine cardboard for the sample, and once the sample is approved and patterns finalised, they are translated into cutting irons. Cutting irons are the metal stamps used with the pneumatic cutting machines. Pattern pieces that are to be cut by hand are made from thick cardboard.

Cutting

The cutting of the leather is the most important part of the manufacturing process due to the cost of the leather and the precision and skill required. Leather is the largest cost component of the production process, so maximising the cut is crucial. The cutters are sometimes referred to as the 'artisans of the iron'. Cutting also involves cutting boards, backings and lining ready for production.

The International Experience

Skiving and Preparation

Skiving is the process of shaving the back of the leather to reduce thickness. This reduces bulk in the seams. Preparation also includes gluing strap pieces, over locking or finishing edges as required, applying glues and gathering zips, hardware, glues, dyes and labels. The preparation step of manufacture varies greatly with each design but is important in ensuring the assembly stage runs as smoothly as possible.

Assembly

Assembly involves all the steps needed to get the bag together. This includes sewing by hand and machine, application of glues, hand finishing and hammering of edges, attachment of hardware and staining edges.

Finishing

Preparing the bag ready for shipment and sale and involves burning thread ends with a lighter, removing any marks on the leather or hardware, attaching tags, stuffing the bags with tissue paper and enclosing in protective dust covers.

Steps in the Production of a Leather Bucket Bag

1. Cut all components including leather, lining and backings.
2. All pieces requiring thinning are skived.



Step 2: Skiving leather pieces for sewing



Step 3: Sewing edges of bag pieces on a cylinder arm sewing machine

3. The edges of the main body of the bag are stitched around to reduce bulk and to stop the quilting stitches on the leather from coming undone.
4. The pocket in the back piece of the lining is assembled.
 - a) Cardboard is glued to the back of the lining to reinforce and create a template for the pocket.
 - b) Glue is attached to the back of the cardboard and the pocket opening is cut and folded back to the inside.
 - c) The zip is glued face down onto the back of the pocket opening and glue is applied to the back of the zip.
 - d) The fabric for the pocket lining is glued to the lower edge of the zip.

The International Experience

- e) With backstitch at one end, the lower pocket edge, zip and lining are attached together.
- f) The pocket lining is folded up and glued to the top edge of the zip.
- g) With backstitching at both ends, the top edge of the pocket edge, zip and lining are attached together.
- h) The sides of the pocket lining are sewn together.
- i) Reinforcing (a fine sticky-backed vinyl) is attached to the back of the lining beside the zip pocket where the mobile phone pouch will be attached.
- j) The piece of leather cut for the pouch is stitched across the top.
- k) The pouch is attached to the front of the lining then stitched down the left side.
- l) The pouch is then held in the correct position and stitched across the bottom.
- m) The pouch is again held in the correct position and the sewn down the right side. This stitching is done continuously with backstitching at the top of the top of the pouch on the left and right sides.



Step 4: Sewing the mobile phone pocket onto the lining



Step 4: The finished back pocket on the lining

5. Leather for the handle loops is glued, hammered flat and cut into four pieces.



Step 5: Hammering the handle loops together



Step 6: Attaching the piping to the handle

The International Experience

6. With piping placed down the centre of the handle piece and rings slipped onto the handles, the handles are glued with the end folded up and the sides attached together. The raw edges of the handle are stained. The handle loops are then slipped through the rings.
7. The handle is sewn close to the internal piping and excess material is cut off with scissors.
8. The base/sides of the bag are sewn together, glue is applied and the seam is opened up and hammered open. Part of the seam is cut away at the pattern making stage to create less bulk in the finished seam.



Step 8: The base/sides of the bag sewn together with the seam opened



Step 10: Trimming edges of the leather

9. The face plate is attached to the front of the bag with screws.
10. The lining is glued to the inside of the front, back and base of the bag. The lining is cut 1cm smaller than the outside pieces.
 - Glue is applied to the edges of all pieces and they are then folded in and hammered down
 - The corners of the bag are pinched together with pliers, excess is cut off and hammered down
11. The zip is glued to the back of the facing pieces and sewn. At this stage the zipper has no pull attached.
12. Glue is attached to the edges that are to be sewn together on the front, back, base and facings.
13. The facings are then attached to the top of the front and back with the handle loops sandwiched in between and stitched.
14. The base of the bag is attached to the front and back and sewn. The bag is eased around the machine, making sure to catch the sides of the facings and corners of all layers.

The International Experience



Step 14: Gluing the base of the bag to the front and back



Step 14: Easing the bag around the sewing machine

15. The zipper pull and zip end are attached, threads are clipped and burnt and the bag is ready to be packed.



The finished handbag

The International Experience

Sargi

Sargi started as a small artisan factory making handmade Veneto bags. As their reputation grew, they began creating their own designs as well as handle sampling and production for other labels. Spreading their business over several labels created a stable income.

Sargi's reputation for high quality production led to it being contracted to make Bottega Veneta handbags under license. Behind its run down factory façade, Sargi is today making some of the world's most expensive and prestigious handbags under strict Bottega Veneta guidelines and certification requirements.

The Certification Process

Before a contract was entered into, certification was gained and the factory inspected by Bottega Veneta. Equipment was upgraded with some equipment supplied by Bottega Veneta.

All designs and specifications for production come directly from the Bottega Veneta head office in Vicenza, together with the appropriate leather. The leather arrives with a certificate of quality. Only sufficient leather arrives to make the required number of bags. Sargi tests the leather thickness and quality on site to confirm quality. If leather is delivered without a certificate of quality it must be sent back to Bottega Veneta. Any bags made from uncertified leather and forwarded to Bottega Veneta for despatch are returned to Sargi for destruction with no financial recompense.

The next step in certification comes while the handbag is in production. A certificate of authenticity is attached inside the bag. Very small items receive a small silver tag detailing the factory in which it was made.

When the handbag is finished it goes into the packaging area. All finished items receive a final check for quality and are packaged with another cardboard label featuring the Bottega Veneta logo and the identifying letter of the factory where it was produced. A bar code is then attached to the outside of the packaging.

If all of the certifications are not incorporated into the final product it is returned to Sargi, without payment, to be destroyed.

The Guidelines

All stages in the manufacture of a Bottega Veneta handbag are controlled by Bottega Veneta. Each design arrives with a 'components' list. This list details every item, the code and the quantity used to make the handbag. This list will comprise items such as leather, buckles and labels, as well as information on the number of pieces and the type of paper to be used for packaging. The exact number of components needed to make the required number of bags is delivered to the factory.

General guidelines are also established for the factory and production. Bottega Veneta determines the types of machinery, threads, glues and backings to be used in every step of production, as well as production methods such as the stitch count (three stitches per 1cm for most bags is the norm).

While highly sophisticated, the Sargi workroom contains minimal machinery and equipment. Their greatest asset is the skill of their workers. A great deal of time and care is taken with each bag being made as a 'one-off' or in small runs of five or six.

The International Experience

Each workstation comprises:

- Scissors
- Glue
- Pencils
- Marker (small awl)
- Pliers
- Double sided tape⁴
- Hammer

Workroom equipment comprises:

- Cylinder arm sewing machines
- Small electric skivers
- Table or large area skivers
- A manual stud/eyelet machine
- Workbenches (hip height)
- A manual cutting table – like a draftsman’s table with a plastic top
- A pneumatic cutter
- A CAD electric cutter
- A strap cutter
- Gluing machine and spray area
- A heat press



Cabat Bag

Steps in the Production of a Leather Bottega Veneta Intrecciato Cabat Bag

A tubular piece of *Intrecciato* leather, with the raw edges taped, arrives at the factory. *Intrecciato* is a specialised technique that is only carried out in the Bottega Veneta workrooms by highly trained staff. It can take up to two days to weave one bag. All other pieces needed for the bag are cut and the components prepared.

1. Two layers of leather are glued, then cut, and the edges finished to create the handles for the bag.
2. The unfinished edge of the bag is stitched to reinforce the edges, mark the corners and prevent the weaving coming loose.
3. The main body of this bag is made inside out. This process is known as *lavorazione a filetto*. It creates a bag that is stitch free on the outside; a look that does not interfere with the *Intrecciato* finish. The base of the bag is stitched together, glue is then applied to the inside seam and the seam is then opened and hammered.
4. The corners of the bag are then sewn together and the bag is then turned the right way in and the corners are hammered.

⁴ Double sided tape was being used to hold *intrecciato* pieces together during production and glue was being used in all other areas.

The International Experience

5. The handles are then attached with a small square of leather located on the inside to create a strong and attractive finish.
6. Holes are punched into the firm leather to be used for the base of the bag. These are punched at equal distances around the edge before the base is hand sewn into the bag. No stitch is visible from the outside. Hand sewing is an unusual and expensive feature in a bag.
7. A pre-made soft cotton detachable lining is then placed inside the bag.

Rabens Saloner

T +45 4092 0297 W www.rabenssaloner.com Frederikssundsvej 62B, 'The rear', DK-2400 Copenhagen NV, Denmark

Contact: Eva Bartels, Press Agent



Rabens Saloner showroom

After working as a fashion buyer for many years, Birgitte Raben Olrik established Rabens Saloner two years ago. While her previous experience as a buyer has given Olrik a solid commercial background, she has devolved responsibility for commercial and business matters to others in order to concentrate on the design and marketing aspects of her product range.

The creation of a range at Rabens Saloner is approached in a completely different way than most commercial fashion ranges. Instead of having a customer profile, price points and a set number pieces that need to be created, Olrik creates with very little thought for current trends and expectations. Each season she creates a collection of clothes for her muse, a person that for Olrik personifies her mood and ideals for the coming season.

An entire wardrobe is created for this person. Olrik finds that her customers more readily accept her designs when she works in this way.

Rabens Saloner does all of its sampling and production offshore (mainly in Nepal). Olrik works closely with these offshore small producers to develop textiles and designs. Her ranges include hand knits, hand-woven fabrics and piece dyed garments using natural dyes. Using so many hand techniques as opposed to machine knitting and weaving and chemical dyes means that quality is at times difficult to control. Nevertheless, as each piece is so individual, she feels a real pride in her artisan pieces.

Despite making all clothing and accessories offshore Olrik believes her company still has a very Danish ideal and execution. All her designs feature 'clean lines' with little detail and the use of strong, bold prints. She uses natural high quality materials, and engages in ethical small-run design-led production. The designer has great respect for the producers and artists involved in making each garment.

The International Experience



London College of Fashion

University of Arts London, London College of Fashion

T +44 207 514 7400 W www.fashion.arts.ac.uk 20 John Princes Street, London W1G 0BJ

Contact: Steven Harkin, Lecturer Fashion Accessories⁵

Courses Offered

Short Courses

- Surface Pattern for Leather
- Product Illustration
- Accessories Workshop – Leather Bags
- Introduction to Handbag Design
- Small Leather Accessories
- Creating Soft Bags
- Sustainable Accessories Design
- Leather Bags 1
- Leather Bags Intensive Workshop
- Leather Bags 2

Under Graduate Courses

- Diploma Cordwainers Accessories
- Foundation Degree Cordwainers Accessories
- BA Honours Cordwainers Accessories

The London College of Fashion offers a wide range of courses for those interested in handbag manufacture. There are short courses on offer to beginner students as an introduction to accessory manufacture and design. There are also short courses for more experienced students – including industry practitioners – that enables them to study specialised areas without having to make a large time commitment. For example, students who are already adept at handbag production can do courses such as ‘Surface Pattern for Leather’ or ‘Product Illustration’ to expand their professional knowledge.

In 2000 the London College of Fashion began a collaboration with Cordwainers. Cordwainers (known officially as the ‘Worshipful Company of Cordwainers’) is “*dedicated to the support of education and training in the design and production of footwear and associated leather accessories and the promotion of the footwear industry.*”⁶ Through this collaboration the London College of Fashion offers the Diploma (one year), Foundation Degree (two years) and the BA Honours (three years) in accessories design and manufacture. These courses offer very vocational based training with an emphasis on the practical side of accessories.

⁵ Steven Harkin is a ‘Victorian Government/ISS Institute Design Fellow’. In 2006 he conducted a series of Masterclass workshops on fashion accessory design at Kangan Batman Institute of TAFE. Harkin’s ISS Institute Fellowship and subsequent Masterclass workshops stimulated further interest in the development of the Australian fashion accessory industry through the experience of collaboration between designers and makers of fashion accessories. Sarah Connors’ Fellowship builds on and complements the Fellowship awarded to Harkin. Prior to taking up his position at the London College of Fashion, Harkin was based in Torino, Italy, designing, prototyping and producing high quality bags for sale in Italy, Greece and New Zealand.

⁶ <http://www.cordwainers.org/>

The International Experience

The London College of Fashion enjoys strong links with industry and organises practical placement options for students. More academic subjects such as communications, marketing and design are also studied as part of these courses.

The London College of Fashion recognise that fashion accessories is one of the fastest growing areas in fashion. The college offers students a varied selection of courses, targeting all areas of accessories. The college believes that all aspects of the accessories industry are important to sustain a healthy, productive and growing industry. Servicing consumers and the needs of industry requires people trained in design, construction, mass production, artisan work and marketing.

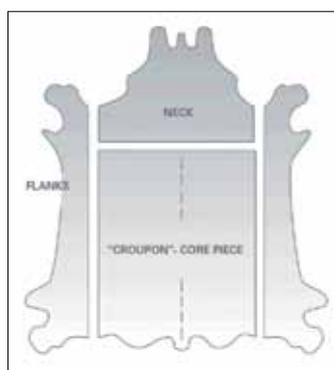
Outcomes

How Choice of Material Informs the Design Process

The materials used in the bags viewed throughout Italy varied greatly, but by far the greatest numbers of handbags were a combination of leather with metal accessories. While the design of accessories in Europe is inspired and extravagant, the industry limits itself through its reliance on the natural beauty, high quality and consumer confidence in leather.

Linea Pelle is the largest leather Fair in the world and is held twice a year in Italy. It is at Linea Pelle where materials are sourced. As with the fashion industry, design is very much led by the textile producers who are creating new designs and establishing trends at least two years ahead of product manufacturers. Most companies rely on what is shown at Linea Pelle and what is commercially available in order to produce their ranges. Only the larger companies can afford their own R&D in textiles and leather.

There have been minimal technological advances in the processing or development of leather. While machinery and safety have improved, most new technologies have been very slow to be taken up (if taken up at all) by the industry. The attitude seems to be that, as they are working with such an amazing and adaptable natural product, why change it? The leather finishing techniques of dyeing, coating and embossing are still used extensively in different combinations each season.



Croupon

Rather than the choice of materials, it is the cutting of leather that informs design. Leather hides are of an irregular shape, are often marked and can be of uneven quality. The core piece from the back of the animal – the croupon – is the most valuable piece of the leather. Leather from the belly and neck are looser in texture and often more damaged. As all marks must be cut around for a high-end handbag production, only a small part of the hide is available for the body of a handbag. Seams, pockets and handles will be designed to best use the leather with as little waste as possible. As the leather is often the biggest cost component in production, the cutting is extremely important.

To reduce leather waste, the linings, facings and bases will often be cut from the lower quality areas of the hide. The further inside a bag you go, the less expensive the material.

The International Experience

Design and Construction of Metal Fittings

It is in the design and fitting of metal hardware where designers have started to embrace technology, albeit on a small scale. While technology is not often developed by the accessories industry, there is a readiness to take up technologies developed by other industries. Notice is always taken of new finishes developed for metals by the construction industries and composites developed for areas such as flooring and roofing. These technologies are often easily adapted for use in the manufacture of accessories hardware.

The use of fittings and hardware also allows designers to differentiate their product from other designers. Due to costs associated with creating hardware from scratch, many companies rely on stamping or punching their logo or brand name on pre-designed hardware. Many designers will look at the available range of hardware before finalising designs. Having developed initial concepts, appropriate hardware will then be developed with designs finalised and sampled when hardware sizes, materials and availability are established. Rather than being an afterthought, the use of hardware is an integral part of the design process; the design of such in some instances being the focus of the finished product.

High-End Construction Processes Specifically Used in Accessory Manufacture

All companies visited by the Fellow consider the sampling process the crucial part of the design process. Even those companies producing handbags offshore still sampled all designs in their on-site workrooms using highly trained artisans. In-house sampling allows experts in production to communicate with the designers with both skill sets, enhancing the final product. When design or production issues can be solved on the spot, designs can be realised more quickly. Furthermore, while sampling in-house can be costly, those costs can be offset by not having to send products back and forth between designer and manufacturer. Design companies also see this as a way to set the benchmark for production quality, making sure that the hand finishing techniques and the 'Italian way of doing things' is maintained.

Because of high domestic labour costs and a dwindling skilled labour force in Italy, designers see offshore or out-worker production as a viable and sometimes necessary option. At the same time, they also recognise that this option makes product quality harder to maintain. The challenge of quality control is managed, however, through the creation of their own samples, very detailed specification sheets, producing or buying Italian made hardware and shipping all components such as leather, backings and hardware to the producer.

Construction processes include:

Machinery

The machinery used in high-end handbag manufacture in Italian factories is simple and minimal. Machinery includes:

- Cylinder arm sewing machines with low benches
- Post arm sewing machines with arms of various heights
- Industrial flat bed sewing machines
- Small electric skivers
- Manual stud/eyelet machines

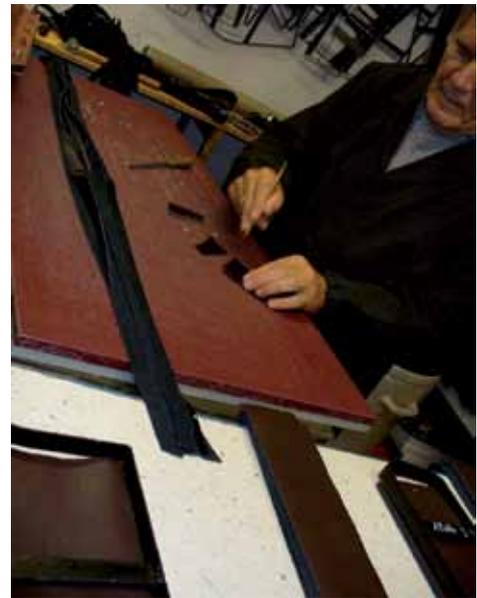
The International Experience

- Pneumatic cutters
- Strap cutting machines
- Gluing machines

(Only one large company uses a CAD automatic cutting machine)



Machinery – workroom showing pneumatic cutter and iron cutting stamps



Tools – demonstration of hand cutting leather with a knife

Tools

Tools used in the workplace are minimal, with workspaces generally kept clear and uncluttered. Tools include:

- Hammers or mallets
- Knives for cutting leather
- Hand punches
- Rubber/plastic cutting mats
- Scissors
- Pencils
- Markers (small awl)
- Pliers

Except for the leather-cutting knife pictured, all tools are readily available at hardware stores and are not particularly leather tools.

Threads

Threads used are usually of a synthetic blend as natural threads are often thought to be weaker and prone to rotting. Bottega Veneta creates handbags to last a lifetime. They do not use thread that disintegrates. Guterman 702404 Mara 50, Mara30 is the thread used in this instance.

The International Experience

Attachment of Trims and Hardware

The attachment of trims and hardware is usually achieved with screws that are included with the hardware and clamps that are built in. Most attachments require holes or slits to be punched or cut into the leather. When the leather to be punched is too thick or hard to fit into the hole punch, holes are burnt into the leather for hardware to be attached.

Hand Stitching Techniques

Due to the strength of machine stitching in general production, hand stitching is undertaken only for decorative purposes. In the case of the Bottega Veneta Cabat bag the stitching cannot be seen on the outside. This adds further to the sense of luxury.

Hand stitching can also be used at the end of machine-stitched seams. This creates a neater finish than a machine backstitch. When features such as pockets are attached to the outside of the handbag, the ends may be finished by hand or where extra strength is needed. This is done by leaving long threads at the end of the machine stitching and then hand sewing the thread back through the holes created by the machine stitching.

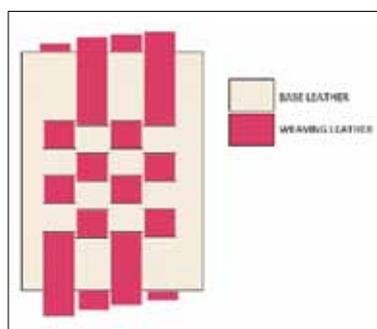
Turning a Bag

Lavorazione a filetto means working to thread. It is the term used to describe the turning of a bag. A turned bag is one stitched inside out. When turned out the right way all seams are internal with no stitching visible on the exterior of the bag.

Using a post sewing machine, the body of the bag is made inside out. Before linings and/or straps are attached the bag is turned out. This is done by turning the bag the right way out and pushing out the corners. This is a difficult process and is carried out by experienced workers. A mistake means the bag can be permanently creased, and as the bag is often very close to completion, any damage can be very costly.

While the turning of a bag is difficult, the stitching process is quicker than stitching the bag on the outside. The finish is also cleaner with the 'secrets' of the bag remaining internal.

The *Intrecciato* Technique



Intrecciato Technique

The *Intrecciato* technique is used by many high-end manufacturers. It was developed by, and remains the signature technique, of Bottega Veneta. *Intrecciato* describes the weaving of leather to create material for a bag.

Depending on the design and finish required, strips of leather are cut at about one centimetre wide. Leather slits are cut on a base piece of leather and the strips are then woven through the base slits by hand. It can take up to two days to create enough material for one bag.

The base and weaving leather are generally the same colour and texture, which creates an almost seamless finish. The weaving is tight with the slits in the leather as close together as possible. This technique is often simulated on a much less expensive scale by embossing the woven pattern onto leather.

The International Experience

Factory and Studio Environment

In all schools, sample workrooms and factories, the work area is an integrated space with defined areas. All workers including cutters, makers and finishers are able to communicate and interact with each other. This is particularly useful in the sample workrooms and classrooms as it allows problems to be solved quickly. In large work areas it is considered important to keep separate and clearly defined:

- Pattern making and sampling
- Cutting
- Making
- Finishing and packing

Pattern Making and Cutting Processes

All manufacturers and schools visited by the Fellow use a manual pattern making system. Patterns are created on fine cardboard and, depending on the cutting technique to be used, the patterns are either:

- Transferred to iron stamps for pneumatic cutting
- Copied onto a heavier cardboard for hand cutting
- Digitised onto a CAD system for transfer offshore

During the pattern making process, the smaller components such as pockets, handles and the basic shape of the bag are first mocked up in vinyl so that changes can be made while the pattern is being made. As leather is such an expensive material, the pattern is as perfect as possible before the first leather sample is made.

Knowledge Transfer: Applying Outcomes

December 2008 – Establishment

Sarah Conners Accessories began establishing a pattern making, sample and small run production service. Many designers in Australia have great ideas and designs, but the knowledge to make handbags themselves, or the income and volume requirement to look at offshore production is prohibitive. This service is aligned with a garment sampling facility so is able to tap into the existing market of designers looking into accessories manufacture. This service will focus on the importance of the sampling process within production of all types, helping to educate designers to the importance of finishing techniques.

December 2008 – Build Up

Following the Italian advice of a slow and steady build up of customers, the ongoing branding and selling of a high-end product within the Australian marketplace will be pursued by Sarah Conners Accessories. This slow build up of customers will allow the company to maintain integrity in both design and manufacture while establishing a style and reputation.

January 2009 – Hardware

As seen in Italy, the finishing of a bag and the hardware used is of enormous importance. Sarah Conners Accessories will be researching the importation of Italian hardware for use in its own designs as well as for sale within the Australian marketplace.

January 2009 – Education

The development of courses aimed at potential bag makers is important, as without education and a chance for students to gain a nationally recognised qualification it is hard for an industry to grow and become viable. Globally, the accessories industry is strong and continuing to grow. With an educational system in Australia that brings together both an artisan and commercial approach to design and manufacturing, students will be able to operate within an international market.

This concept will be explored by Sarah Conners through her work and affiliation with Kangan Batman TAFE.

January 2009 – Resources and Support

In addition to education, the development of resources and support is an important part of the process of building an informed industry. Resources are important, specifically because the handbag industry may include technical information, technique instructions, supplier information and marketing resources. This aspect of the industry's needs could be well dealt with by the establishment of an industry representative body or a less formal community of practice.

Recommendations

Government

Italy has a long history and culture of handbag manufacture with a knowledgeable and established workforce. Australia lacks this background, but given that it has a strong design and innovative fashion industry, there is the potential to establish a viable accessories segment. Building a skilled workforce is a long-term project but doing so will enable Australian designers to become part of the growing and lucrative accessories market in all areas, from design to manufacture.

While building a workforce is a daunting process, designers and manufacturers that adopt the Italian method of maintaining the sampling process in-house before taking production offshore will go a long way to creating greater quality control and product integrity within our industry. Australian designers need to fully embrace the Italian mindset of beginning and ending the design process with market and customer research (see 'Attachment 2 – The Italian Cyclical Design Process').

While the Australian Accessories Industry is small, it has great potential to grow and become part of the very lucrative global accessories industry. Future growth will require the support of industry, education and government to ensure a better integration of designers and manufacturers with the suppliers of materials required for handbag manufacture.

Organisations that can play a role in this regard include:

- ISS Institute
- Council of Textiles and Fashion Industries of Australia
- Textile Clothing and Footwear Union of Australia
- Fashion Technicians Association Australia
- Australian Fashion Council
- Australian TCF Technology Network
- TAFE institutes such as Kangan Batman TAFE, Centre of Fashion
- Australian Government, DEEWR (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations), the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (incorporating Small Business), state and territory departments responsible for education and training, particularly the Victorian Department of Education and Skills Victoria.
- Australian Association of Leather Industries

These bodies also need to facilitate the development of an accessories industry group or association to support the development of networks, export and import opportunities and educational possibilities.

Funding for manufacturers to employ young people to learn in the workplace or travel overseas to attend Italian or European schools specialising in manufacture techniques while still being employed in Australia will ensure skills are developed and kept in our local industry.

So that the needs of this industry can be met, greater focus needs to be placed on accessories rather than seeing it as a small part of the clothing manufacture or craft industries.

Recommendations

Education

The establishment of accredited educational courses is a long-term project. Appropriate courses need to be established that take leather work – in particular bag making – from a hobby or craft course to a fully developed course with a national qualification to make students industry-ready.

In the Australian environment, students need to have thorough knowledge of the process of making a bag, combined with an understanding of design and commercial viability.

Creating this very specific area of vocational education will take a commitment in terms of both time and money from TAFE institutions and educational bodies. The current Textile, Clothing and Footwear (TCF) LMT07 national Training Package contains specific leather production certificates, namely:

- LMT21207 Certificate II in Leather Production
- LMT30907 Certificate III in Leather Production

In conjunction with other TCF units this could be a strong base for the development of a handbag design and manufacture course.

Training support also will need to be developed for current industry participants. It is important for people in industry to be able to up skill or acquire new skill sets without taking extended or unpractical periods of time out of the workplace. This would encourage companies already in the handbag design industry to continue in manufacturing, grow their businesses and drive their own production and quality with less reliance on outside manufacturers.

Along with course establishment, the development of resources for both course and industry support is an important part of the process of building an industry. Resources need to encompass:

- Supplier information and networks
- Industry resource contacts and details
- Instructional books and information
- Materials information

Community

Promoting the Australian Accessory Industry to both Australian and international buying publics needs to be showcased as both a stand-alone industry and one that integrates seamlessly with other areas of the fashion industry.

An improved promotional effort should include:

- Dedicated areas at fashion week events and accessories trade shows that focus on handbags.
- Austrade-sponsored accessories expos in developing markets.
- Advertorials in major magazines and newspapers promoting new and upcoming designers.
- Collaborations with Australian and international clothing designers.

Recommendations

Combined with the in-house promotion of individual brands, large-scale promotion of the Australian accessories industry could be achieved through the support of an industry body established for the accessories industry as well as by government bodies such as Austrade.

ISS Institute

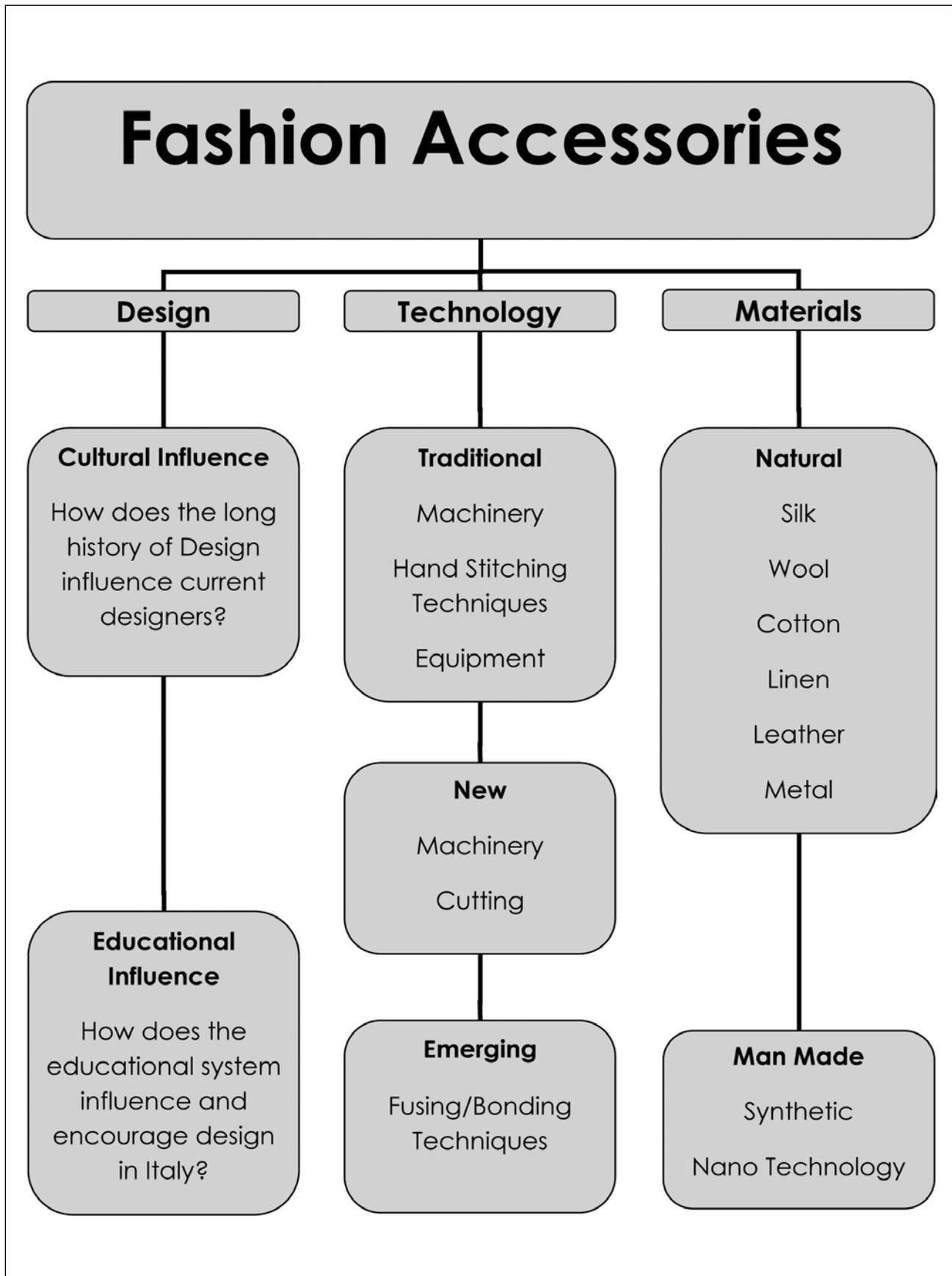
The invaluable amount of knowledge and information gathered through this Fellowship has reinforced the Fellow's belief that better networks between designers and makers (local and international) with varied areas of expertise is of the utmost importance. It is recommended that further initiatives be explored by the ISS Institute to bring together industry practitioners from both international and local companies.

Skills deficiencies do still exist in the Australian industry and accessories designers need assistance not just in the very specific manufacturing techniques involved in handbag and accessories manufacture, but also in the areas of production planning and scheduling, management of the design process and sales – business planning and execution.

There are significant benefits in bringing experienced international designers and manufacturers to Australia in order to make them accessible to current and future members of the accessories industry. Similarly, the provision of further Fellowships that enable Australian accessory designers and producers to travel overseas and tap in to the wealth of experience and expertise of overseas designers and manufacturers would be a further positive contribution to the development and health of the Australian accessories industry.

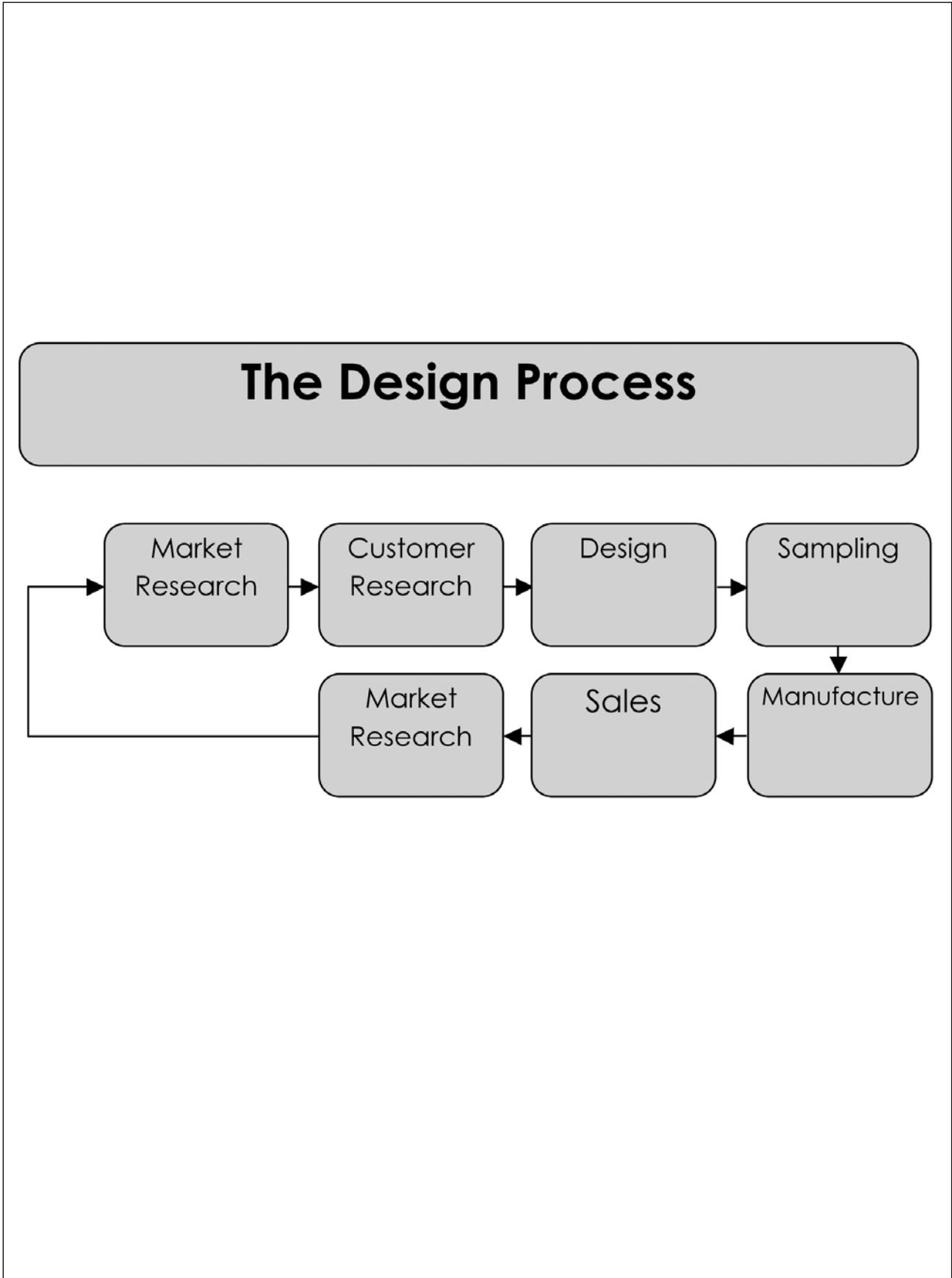
Attachments

Attachment 1 – Fashion Accessories



Attachments

Attachment 2 – The Italian Cyclical Design Process



Attachments

Attachment 3 – Key Questions

Factory and studio environment:

What types of tables and workstations are used in both the design process and the production process?

Pattern making and cutting processes:

What style of pattern making is used? Are patterns produced using CAD technologies or created by hand?

How is leather cut? What technologies are used to cut leather?

Construction processes including:

Machinery

What machinery is commonly used in the construction process? This may include sewing machines (cylinder arm, post), eyelet machines and shape tacking machines.

Tools

What tools are commonly used in the production process? This may include punches, knives, needles, mallets etc

Glues and backings (stiffening)

Which glues and backings are used to create bags that are firm while retaining the natural properties of the leather? At what point are glues used and how are backings attached to the leather?

Threads

What types of threads are used for construction and decorative stitching techniques? What techniques are used to finish thread ends?

Attachment of trims and hardware:

Hand stitching techniques

When is hand stitching used instead of machine stitching and how is saddle stitch achieved by hand?

Turning a bag

What series of steps are followed to turn firm bags without crushing, creasing or damaging the bag?

The *Intrecciato* technique

How is the *Intrecciato* technique achieved? How is the leather prepared, plaited and finished?