

Fast fashion (from wiki)

Fast fashion is a **contemporary term** used by **fashion retailers** to express that designs move from catwalk quickly in order to capture current fashion trends. Fast fashion clothing collections are based on the most recent fashion trends presented at Fashion Week in both the spring and the autumn of every year. Emphasis is on optimizing certain aspects of the supply chain in order for these trends to be **designed and manufactured** quickly and **inexpensively** to allow the mainstream consumer to buy current clothing styles at a lower price. This philosophy of quick manufacturing at an **affordable price** is used in large **retailers** such as H&M, Zara, Peacocks, and Topshop.....

This has developed from a product-driven concept based on a manufacturing model referred to as "**quick response**" developed in the U.S. in the 1980s and moved to a market-based model of "**fast fashion**" in the late 1990s and first part of the 21st century. Zara has been **at the forefront** of this fashion retail revolution and their brand has almost become synonymous with the term, but there were other retailers who worked with the concept before the label was applied, such as Benetton. Fast fashion has also become associated with **disposable** fashion because it has delivered designer product to a mass market at relatively low prices. The slow fashion movement has arisen in opposition to fast fashion, blaming it for pollution (both in the production of clothes and in the decay of synthetic fabrics), shoddy workmanship, and emphasizing very brief trends over classic style. Fast fashion has also come under criticism for contributing to **poor working conditions** in developing countries.

Strategy

Management

The primary objective of the fast fashion is to quickly produce a product in a **cost-efficient** manner to respond to fast changing **consumer tastes** in as near real-time as possible. This efficiency is achieved through the retailers' understanding of the target market's wants, which is a **high fashion looking garment** at a price at the lower end of the clothing sector.....The fast fashion market utilizes this by **uniting with foreign manufacturers** to keep prices at a minimum.

Quick response method

Quick Response (QR) was developed to improve manufacturing processes in the textile industry with the aim of removing time from the production system.....The concept of quick response (QR) is now used to support "fast fashion", creating new, fresh products while also drawing consumers back to the retail experience for **consecutive visits**.....The Spanish mega chain Zara, owned by Inditex, has become the global model for how to decrease the time between design and production. This **production short cut** enables Zara to manufacture over 30,000 units of product every year to nearly 1,600 stores in 58 countries. New items are delivered twice a week to the stores, reducing the time between initial sale and **replenishment**. As a result, the shortened time period improves consumer's garment choices and product availability while significantly increasing the number of per customer visits per annum.

Marketing

Marketing is the key driver of fast fashion. Marketing creates the desire for consumption of new designs as close as possible to the point of creation. This is achieved by promoting **fashion consumption** as something fast, low price and disposable. The continuous release of new products essentially makes the garments a highly cost effective marketing tool that drives consumer visits, increases **brand awareness**, and results in higher rates of consumer purchases.....For example, the traditional fashion seasons followed the annual cycle of summer, autumn, winter and spring but in fast fashion cycles have **compressed** into shorter periods of 4-6 weeks and in some cases less than this. Marketers have thus created more buying seasons in the same time-space.....

Fast fashion—low-cost clothing collections based on current, high-cost luxury fashion trends—is, by its very nature, a fast-response system that encourages disposability. A formerly standard turnaround time from catwalk to consumer of six months is now compressed to a matter of mere weeks by such companies as H&M and Zara, with heightened profits to match. Fast fashion companies thrive on fast cycles: **rapid prototyping**, small batches combined with large variety, more efficient transportation and delivery, and merchandise that is presented “floor ready” on hangers with price **tags** already **attached**. Moreover, lower manufacturing and labor costs mean lower costs overall, which result in lower prices, which, in turn, equal higher volume. Even companies such as Zara, which once manufactured all their goods in Europe, resulting in better quality control, now outsource at least 13 percent of their manufacturing to China and Turkey. Shipping time from China to Europe may take three weeks, but it only takes five days from Turkey. Admittedly, fast fashion companies do employ stables of in-house designers: more eye-catching designs lead to **trendier**, must-have fashions, which **lure** consumers into paying full price now rather than **deferring gratification** until the year-end sales arrive.

Production

"Supermarket" market

The consumer in the fast fashion market thrives on constant change and the frequent availability of new products. Fast fashion is considered to be a "supermarket" segment within the larger sense of the fashion market. This term refers to fast fashion's nature to "race to make **apparel** an even smarter and quicker **cash generator**".... Cost is still the consumer's primary buying decision. Costs are largely reduced by taking advantage of lower prices in markets in developing countries. In 2004 developing countries accounted for nearly seventy five percent of all clothing exports and the removal of several **import quotas** has allowed companies to take advantage of the even lower cost of resources. The buying cycle is the final factor that affects the consumer. Traditionally, fashion buying cycles are based around long term forecasts that occur one year to six months before the season. Yet, in the fast fashion market the quick response philosophy can result in higher forecast accuracy because the time period is significantly shortened.....

Sustainability

As a whole, the fast fashion sector of the fashion industry is polluting the planet at a continuous rate. Due to the amount of pollution and waste caused by the fashion industry, advances in the realm of sustainability have been made possible. For-profit groups, like Viletex, and retailers, such as H&M, are working to decrease the industry's environmental footprint. Both companies have created programs that encourage recycling from the general public. These programs provide consumers with bins that allow them to dispose of their unwanted garments that will ultimately be transformed into **insulation**, carpet padding, as well as being used to produce other garments.

While recycling is one way that the fashion industry is striving to change the environment, new technologies in fashion also present great potential in environmental turn around. These technologies offer new methods of using **dyes**, producing **fibers**, and reducing the use of natural resources. To decrease the consumption of traditional **textiles**, Anke Domaske has produced "QMilch," an eco-milk fiber, Virus has produced high-tech sportswear from recycled coffee beans, and Suzanne Lee has created vegetable leather from **fermented** tea. Following new fiber types, many companies have created various ways to reduce the amount of dyes **emitted** into the world's **waterways** as well as the level of water consumption. For example, AirDye saves between 7 and 75 gallons of water per pound of textiles produced while digital printing reduces water usage by 95 percent.

While these methods have yet to fully hit the fast fashion sector, they offer alternatives that have the potential to positively influence the industry as a whole. The fast fashion sector thrives on a business model that pushes the environmental boundaries but with the advancements being made, the damage the industry causes can be better **addressed**. Through the understanding of the multifaceted sides of fashion's environmental impact, the negative effects can begin to turn around.

Overconsumption

The business model of fast fashion is based on consumers' desire for new clothing to wear. In order to fulfill consumer's demand, fast fashion brands provide affordable prices and a wide range of clothing that reflects the latest trends. This ends up persuading consumers to buy more items which leads to the issue of overconsumption..... Based on the study of planned **obsolescence** in the *Economist*, fashion is deeply committed to built-in obsolescence. Last year's skirts; for example, are designed to be replaced by this year's new models. In this case, fashion goods are purchased even when the old ones are still wearable. The quick response model and new supply chain practices of fast fashion even **accelerate** the speed of it. In recent years, the fashion cycle has steadily decreased as fast fashion retailers sell clothing that is expected to be disposed of after being worn only a few times. This dramatically shortens the consumers' buying cycle. The quick changing stocks and low price of fashion goods encourage consumers to visit the store and make purchases more frequently. As a result, excessive stock and untrendy clothes tends to end up in **landfills**.

A recent article about fast fashion in *Huffington Post* pointed out that in order to make the fast moving trend affordable, fast-fashion **merchandise** is typically **priced** much lower than the competition, operating on a business model of low quality and high volume. Low quality goods make overconsumption more severe since those products have a shorter **life span** and would need to be replaced much more often. Furthermore, as both industry and consumers continue to **embrace** fast fashion, the volume of goods to be disposed of or recycled has increased substantially. However, most fast-fashion goods do not have the inherent quality to be considered as collectables for **vintage** or historic collections. The low quality goods can only end up as **waste**, hardly to be recycled. These cycles of providing affordable price to trigger the sales, and the low quality comes with it that makes products last shorter are making consumers unconsciously buying more. Not only does it drive sales numbers, but also the amount of waste that comes with it.

Fast fashion brings considerable consumption that prospers the fashion industry. Its unique business model and low prices enables the public to purchase fashionable items even during times of the economic recession. However, it has brought along the problem of overconsumption, whereby countless amounts of waste ends up in landfills. Moreover, hidden costs of landfills also include waste, pollution, energy and natural resources exhaustion.