

## Manufacture, Import, Supply

We call it MIS. We broadly break down the Fashion industry into three manageable sections, we affectionately call MIS. Covering a wide variety of roles from Designers to Merchandise Managers to Production staff, this is an exciting, dynamic and competitive section of the industry. Let us take you through it! Supply

Any business supplying fabric, trims, goods or services, to the industry. Importing

Any business that imports garments from overseas. Manufacture

Any business that manufactures garments within New Zealand.

We will discuss the jobs that are available in each sector, salary expectations, and just what skills and attributes employers are looking for. We understand how important it is to gain the right skills and qualifications and to 'get your foot in the door,' but let's make sure it is the right door! Supply

The supply sector covers companies who supply the industry services and or goods. Service companies include; freight, customs clearance, and computer software companies. Goods suppliers include companies that sell anything from fabrics and buttons to shoulder pads, laces and zips. It is a growing sector of the industry and fluctuates in size to meet the needs of the industry.

Within this sector it is advantageous but not essential to have industry experience. Some of the entry level roles available include:

- Sales support
  - Administration
  - Customer Services
  - Assistant Buyer
  - Sampling Coordinator
  - Warehouse Assistant
- How do you actually get into this sector of the industry?

It is dependant upon the role but one possibility is to start off in the clerical / administrative area and then work your way up into sales / buying. If your strength lies in the administrative side and you are good with numbers, a foot in the door through the import shipping or freight side could be a good option.

It is advantageous to have some knowledge with regards to how the industry works overall and an understanding of how it all fits together, for example, manufacturing importing etc. Fashion graduates, who have knowledge of textiles and garment construction, are often sought after by fabric wholesalers.

Remuneration is dependent on the role but as a guide these entry-level roles start within the range of between \$20,000 - \$25,000. The clerical / administrative side tends to pay higher than the more creative entry-level roles.

A great sector of the industry to get involved in if you would like a career in sales or administration. Import Importing companies are the 'middle man,' between manufacturers and retail. They usually supply the bulk end of the market, due to minimum requirements that have to be met by the overseas manufacturers.

Some retail chains such as Farmers and The Warehouse import some of their more basic t-shirts and on going lines that have minimal changes year to year e.g. pyjamas.

The more complex a garment is the more likely manufacturing can go wrong, and that's a good enough reason for a Retailer to use an importer or agency.

The Importing companies work closely with the manufacturers and retailers to put product together, and once styles are selected and quantities decided, the Importer will organize the overseas manufacturers to produce the garments.

This sector of the market has grown rapidly. Importing companies have a sales / production type of environment where product is manufactured by 'remote control,' in countries such as China and India. The Import sector has opened up a great deal of opportunities for graduates and holds many opportunities for those that would rather stay away from hands on manufacturing, or would prefer to work in a more commercial environment. Jobs Available / Remuneration

Roles available tend to be in the following areas and the remuneration at entry level tends to be higher than in other sectors.

- Production Assistant \$27,000 - \$35,000
  - Merchandise Assistant (junior) \$24,000 - \$30,000
  - Sales Support \$28,000 - \$35,000
- Qualifications

There are no hard and fast rules - a fashion degree or diploma could help, but historically this sector of the industry has not been covered in the curriculum of these courses. This has changed recently, and most students who start their tertiary study in Fashion from 2003 will have at least a degree of exposure into the import sector.

Employees entering this sector may also come from other sectors within the industry such as from a production type background or from a different industry altogether, such as a sales support / administration background. Manufacture

A manufacturing company is any business that manufactures garments within New Zealand. Manufacturing can be divided up into four main sectors within the industry.

#### 1) Bulk Manufacturers / CMTs

These companies don't actually do any of the designing themselves, and either manufacture within New Zealand, or do a combination of local and offshore manufacturing.

Entry level jobs available in this sector tend to be in the production dispatch/warehousing or office support area for instance;

- machinist
- cutters assistant
- office support
- production assistant
- warehouse / dispatch

#### 2) Bulk Manufacturers / Importers

These companies travel overseas to source design trends, interpret them for the New Zealand market, and sell their products to retail or mail order companies. Garments are either manufactured within New Zealand or offshore. Their clients are companies such as Glassons, The Warehouse, EziBuy and Max Fashions. Entry level jobs available in this sector are in production, product development and merchandising; -office support -production assistant -merchandise assistant -quality control assistant -specifications maker

#### 3) Independent labels

These companies both design product and manufacture for the independent retail market, but don't actually have any retail stores themselves. Companies produce labels such as Vamp, Suzanne Gregory, Verge, Blase and Ashley Fogel.

Entry level jobs available include roles in the design area, production, technical, distribution and office support;

- design assistant
- pattern making (junior)
- CAD operator
- production assistant
- warehouse - dispatch
- sales support and customer service

#### 4) Designer labels - niche market

These companies do the lot from the initial design, right through to manufacturing and distributing the product through their own retail stores, for example Karen Walker and Zambesi. Some designer labels also distribute their product to independent stores that stock a variety of different labels e.g. Hartleys, Identity.

Jobs available are similar to those available with the Independent labels. Most of these companies tend to be owner / operators and the owner is usually also the designer. What do I need to get into the industry?

Specific Fashion Industry qualifications are becoming more and more sought after and in some areas essential. Personality and attitude are the keys to ensure that you will stand out from the other graduates. Enthusiasm, willingness to learn and the ability to do what it takes are invaluable in getting your foot in the door! Qualifications for the Manufacture Sector

It really depends where your strengths lie. If you are happy in a customer services / support type role a bubbly personality and excellent computer and organizational skills just might get you in the door.

If however your dream is to be a 'designer,' a Fashion Diploma or Degree is essential. Most top designers have spent years in the industry, and success definitely didn't happen over night. A good start would be to start out as a patternmaker, design or production assistant. Salary

Entry level positions in the manufacturing sector are remunerated between \$22,000 - \$28,000 per annum which calculates to around \$11 - \$14 per hour. After the first few years of work experience have been gained this will begin to increase. Useful Links

UBD New Zealand Business Directory