

# How to Be Successful in the Fashion Business

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Whether you're creating your own fashion business or want to help someone else's fashion business thrive, there are lots of steps you can take to make the business as successful as possible. While it's helpful to have a little business experience, it's also easy to learn about building a business as you go using books, online resources, or even classes. All it takes is some thoughtful planning and a few marketing ideas, and your fashion business will be on its way to being a success.

## Method 1

### Method 1 of 3: Building a Successful Brand



**1 Develop a strong and recognizable brand identity.** In order for your fashion business to be unique and do well, you'll want to try to stand out from other fashion businesses in a distinct way. Figure out what ideas, concepts, or actions represent your brand and make it known how your business is different from all of the others.<sup>[1]</sup>

- For example, maybe you only sell dresses that fit a specific look or style, or maybe all of your clothing is created sustainably.
- Create a brand logo that helps illustrate what your business is about, like incorporating an image of a leaf into your logo to show you're environmentally friendly.
- Come up with a brand mission statement that clearly defines what you're all about for your customers.



**2 Choose a brand voice that represents your clothing.** Your brand voice is the type of language you use to talk to your customers and will depend on the mission of your fashion business. For example, you might choose to craft your website content, emails, and any other marketing materials in a friendly and conversational tone that makes you stand out.<sup>[2]</sup>

- Maybe you choose a brand voice that's very professional, or opt for one that's super authoritative.



**3 Stay consistent with the content and messages you put out.** Once you choose your brand identity, it's important to stick with this message and theme so your fashion business is cohesive. This includes things like staying consistent with your chosen brand voice or producing clothing that always fits with your brand identity.<sup>[3]</sup>

- Staying consistent is important on social media too. Keep all of your posts structured the same way so customers start to recognize your business automatically.



**4 Hire people that are passionate about the brand and mission.** You want your employees to be as excited about your fashion business as you are. Find people that connect with your brand's identity and mission so that they'll be motivated to make your business succeed.<sup>[4]</sup>

- If you're just starting out, reach out to fashion schools near you to see if they have any students who are interested in an internship.



**5 Decide who your target audience will be to market to them directly.** Figuring out who your client is, whether it's a pre-teen girl, business man, or even a pet, will help you decide where your marketing should go so it's the most efficient.<sup>[5]</sup> Think about what your target audience tends to read and watch, as well as places they like to visit, so you have lots of marketing ideas.<sup>[6]</sup>

- For example, if you have a boutique full of fitness-inspired clothing, you might look into advertising in sports, fitness, or wellness magazines, or even pair up with a local gym.



**6 Keep an eye on your finances so they stay under control.** If you're just starting out, it's likely that you'll have to spend money to make money. Figure out how much money you have versus how much you'll be spending, making sure you won't be going over your budget.<sup>[7]</sup> Keep a record of everything you're spending as well as any money that's coming in so you can refer to it whenever you need to.<sup>[8]</sup>

- For example, while the cost per item might be cheaper, it's best not to stock up on tons of clothing items by buying them in bulk when you first start out, just in case you're not able to sell everything.



## Method 2 of 3: Using Marketing and Networking to Expand Business



**1 Build strong relationships in the fashion business by being reliable.** Everyone you interact with, like your manufacturers, buyers, and especially your clients, is an important relationship that you'll want to keep as you continue your business. Communicate with these people regularly and professionally and try to keep each relationship positive and helpful.<sup>[9]</sup>

- Take advantage of opportunities to make contacts in the fashion industry—you never know when you might need them!
- Be honest and reliable in your relationships with investors, buyers, workers, and manufacturers so they stay strong.



**2 Use social media to promote your clothing.** Create an Instagram account to post pictures and captions of your clothing, using the hashtags to get your posts seen by your target audience. While Instagram is the most helpful for promoting fashion businesses, you can also create a Facebook, Twitter, or even YouTube account to reach more people. Try to create one post a day to stay consistent and offer lots of content.<sup>[10]</sup>

- For example, you might post a picture on Instagram of one of your bathing suits with hashtags like #swimsuitseason, #readyforsummer, or #beachfashion.
- Keep your social media accounts for your business professional and include your contact information and website in your social media bio.



**3 Listen to helpful feedback so you can make your business better.** Whether it's input from customers or your coworkers, it's important to take the feedback into consideration so you can make helpful improvements. Constructive feedback will let you know what changes you can make to your business so it's the best it can be, and acting on that feedback as soon as it's brought to your attention is the best thing you can do.<sup>[11]</sup>

- When people have advice for how to make your business better or what they're unsatisfied with at the moment, take notes so you can refer back to them later.



**4 Create an email list to keep in touch with customers.** When customers go to make a purchase, or even just browse your website, have an option available for them to receive email updates about new merchandise or special deals.<sup>[12]</sup> This is a great way to collect information about who is buying your products and encourage them to keep buying clothing through periodic emails.<sup>[13]</sup>

- You might choose to send emails out to your email list of customers once a week, twice a month, or once a month.





**5 Pass out flyers or brochures to reach a wider audience.** Design a flyer or brochure that catches people's attention, using bright colors and easy-to-read wording. Display several pictures of items that you're selling so potential customers can get a good idea of what your clothing looks like, and tell customers how they can access your products.<sup>[14]</sup>

- Place your website's URL on the flyer or brochure so customers can easily find it.
- Put your social media accounts for your business on the flyer or brochure as well.
- Pass out brochures in the park or on the street, or hang flyers at the library or community center.

### Method 3 of 3: Increasing Production and Sales



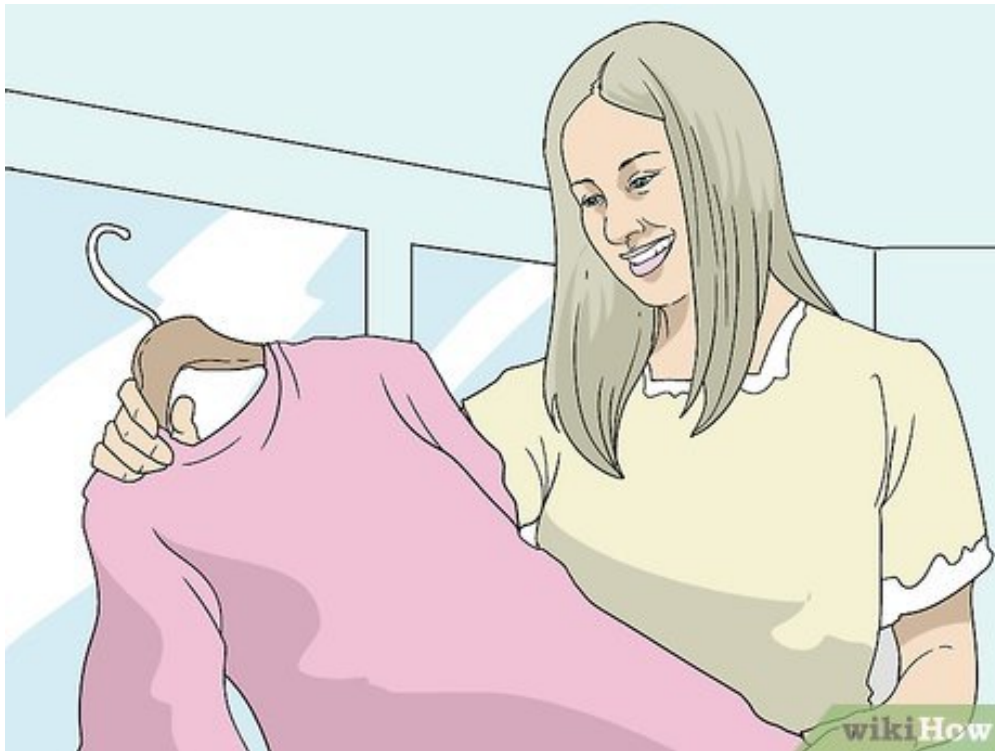
**1 Do research on trends to find out which products are more likely to sell.** Instead of just jumping right in and creating a ton of clothing, research businesses that are your potential rivals. Find out which styles, colors, and designs people are buying most frequently, or if there's something that customers are looking for that isn't currently out there.<sup>[15]</sup>

- Make notes of popular trends you notice between different fashion businesses and let this influence the products you create.



**2 Set prices that are reasonable for your clients while making a profit.** When you decide prices for your clothing, you'll need to sell it for enough money to make a profit while ensuring your customer will want to pay that amount. Figure out how much is spent on materials for each item, as well as the time spent to make it, so you have a better idea as to how much the clothing item should cost your customers.<sup>[16]</sup>

- Do research to find out what similar clothing items are selling for to help you decide on your prices.
- Set your price so you're making a decent profit on each item, otherwise you won't make money in the long run.



**3 Offer clothing that comes in a wide range of sizes to be inclusive.** If you're a women's clothing business but your sizes only go from 0-6, you're not providing for as many women as you could be and will miss out on extra business. Try to offer a wide range of sizes for your audience so that you're seen as an inclusive brand.<sup>[17]</sup>

- It's okay to have more general sizes like Small, Medium, Large, and so on instead.
- It's a good idea to create a clear size guide to help people figure out which size of your items to buy, especially if you're selling clothing online where people can't try it on first.



**4 Create a website that's user-friendly for your audience.** Use an ecommerce site to build your website because these have helpful shopping features that make buying clothes online super simple. Make your website easy to navigate as well as easy to read and understand so people enjoy using it.<sup>[18]</sup>

- Include a Contact page so your customers can contact you if they need to.
- Upload clear pictures of your clothing items from all angles so people can see what the clothes look like.



**5 Start with a small amount of inventory so you're sure to sell it all.** While it's great to think big in terms of your goals, start with a realistic amount of clothing that you plan to sell.<sup>[19]</sup> Once you've established yourself as a brand and sold enough to start making some money, you can begin purchasing inventory in larger quantities.<sup>[20]</sup>

- For example, if you're starting out as a small T-shirt business, you might purchase 100 shirts in all different sizes and work on selling those first.





## Tips

- Don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it—it can be very helpful to hear other people in the fashion business talk about their own challenges and experiences.
- Study up on business practices by learning from books or classes.

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