

College Students Provide Insight about Fashion Choices on the Campus Level

by Vicki Camp



Four college students from NC State University's College of Textiles participated in a thought-provoking panel discussion during THA's recent Marketing Symposium. Each panelist candidly offered her own opinions and insights to questions concerning fashion and shopping. Below is an excerpt of this interactive presentation along with a brief description of each panelist and her typical wardrobe choices:

Genessa Fratto enjoys focusing on vintage fashions but always wants to be comfortable. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Textile Technology Management.

Kate Dutton returned to NCSU to obtain a master's degree in textiles and apparel management, with a particular interest in textile-related products for the urban market. Her wardrobe mostly consists of casual wear and a few suits.

Megan Huffman's wardrobe is full of casual, dress and business clothes. She enjoys blending comfort with fashion and is currently working toward a MS in Textile, Apparel, Technology and Management.

Shanna Bruer, a 2nd year PhD student with research interests in brand development and differentiation strategies, has a diverse wardrobe to accommodate multiple professional and casual roles.

What are your must-have items for school this season?

Hosiery with patterns and textures, colored tights to go with basic black clothing, fishnets to wear with jeans and heels.

When does the shopping experience begin for you?

From when a new fashion catalog arrives in the mail to looking at magazines in the store—they show what's in and what's not, to watching what TV stars are wearing like Kate Hudson and Sarah Jessica Parker, to receiving a coupon from a favorite store and finally to actually going in a store to get a hands on experience and touch items.

How do you shop (online, in stores, catalogue, etc.)?

Shanna answered that she was not the most typical shopper. She shops through every single venue – discount stores to malls. When asked why, she replied that shopping is a game/hobby and likes to shop as many places as possible. Megan identified shopping as a stress reliever and likes to walk around stores and especially enjoys a good sale - shopping makes you feel good. Kate likes to go to the mall for major items and then goes to discount stores for basic items. Being on a student budget she often hits more discount stores. She likes to take notice of visuals around the store and seeing complete outfits on mannequins showing how everything would look together. Genessa replied that she knows the stores she shops at quite well and pays attention to what's on sale. She admits that she has no problem wearing an item from Target with a higher end item.

Panel Cont. on page 14.

Marketing Symposium Cont.

and is recognizable in 3 to 5 seconds should be the goal of your visual creation. Stop your buyers in their tracks and tell them what you're selling....simple and effective. Communication is the key to visually marketing your products and building brand loyal customers.....yes, seeing is believing."

A special thanks to **Dorlastan Fibers**, **Nilit America Corporation** and **RadiciSpandex Corporation** for their financial support of this event.

See the March/April issue of *Hosiery News* for more details on additional presentations given during the 2004 Marketing Symposium.



College Panel Cont.

What can a retail store do to attract you and entice you to go inside?

The use of sale signs, promotions, incentives, and using lots of color, visual displays that are different and eye popping, sparkly and metallic items along with changes in store formats. Anthropology stores, for instance, are very eye catching—so much going on in the store.

How often do you see legwear on mannequins?

Mannequins in Gap show leg warmers, have seen stockings by purses and Banana Republic has fishnets on mannequins.

Ever purchased hosiery online?

None had ever purchased hosiery online. Hosiery not promoted online as much as apparel is. Prefer to actually feel the hosiery so usually buy in stores.

What do you think about couponing...Does it impact your purchasing decisions...What type of couponing works for you?

Buy \$100 and get \$25 off, 25% off, \$ off first pair of something, buy one get one free, promotion coupons and/or point systems with store cards (i.e. GAP card is also good at Old Navy and Banana Republic).

How much do you spend per month on shopping?

Answers ranged from \$200-\$800/month and depended on the season. Bulk spending usually done in August (getting ready for school), December (Christmas presents) and in January (acquiring Spring wardrobe).

Of the \$200-800/month spent on clothing, how much is spent on hosiery per month?

10%, \$10-20/month on any type of hosiery.

Who do you consider to be icons in music/fashion?

Sarah Jessica Parker from Sex in the City, the cast on OC, Kirsten Dunst (not over the top in her dressing), Gwen Stefani (unique and put together) and Madonna is always wearing hosiery to go with the times. Nicole Kidman wears garments appropriately, seems like she enjoys wearing garments picked for her and always looks put together, wears them and acts appropriately in them; Princess Diana always looked respectable at any kind of occasion. Most of the outfits worn by TV stars, however, would not be considered everyday fashion.

What do you and your classmates wear to class?

Guys: Casual Polo look to more fitted European look (depends a lot on geography), jeans or khakis and that's it, can only accept a slight change in color or style. Not many wear socks, but if they do they're usually Polo too. Must educate men to change – there has been more changes in hairstyles than clothing. Girls: Undergrad – rainbow colors, mini skirts, baseball shirts, sorority

shirts, casual wear; Grad school – tweed and heels.

What brands do you believe get it right?

Banana Republic, Victoria Secret, J Crew, North Face, Columbia, Polo – appeals to all ages, Ralph Lauren – associate name with many products.

When buying hosiery, without mentioning a particular brand, what do you look for?

Buy at discount retailers and get name brands in different colors and styles. One can buy black hose anywhere. Usually buy knee highs at Wal-Mart—\$4/pack—considered “throw aways.” Not brand loyal. Buys in bulk what she needs. Looks for colors that not everyone else would buy.

What's in your sock drawer?

Trouser socks, tan socks to wear with Merrells®, tights, patterned hosiery (fishnet, micromesh), athletic socks with extra “poof” on the bottom, knee socks, pig socks (novelty).



As the premier manufacturer of spun yarns, Parkdale has always focused on three things:

- ◆ **Product Excellence,**
- ◆ **Innovative Technology and**
- ◆ **Fulfilling the needs of our customers.**

Parkdale
PO Drawer 1787 - Gastonia NC 28053
Phone: 704-864-8761