August 2009

Centre for Fashion Enterprise
CFE

High-end fashion manufacturing in the UK - product, process and vision
Recommendations for education, training and accreditation

CONTENTS

APPENDICES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Centre for Fashion Enterprise (CFE) was commissioned by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to undertake a feasibility study to explore fully the market need for a new high-end production hub. This was in direct response to the need highlighted in the DCMS report, Creative Britain - New Talents For The New Economy, published in 2008.

In addition to finding a need for a sampling and innovation facility[1] (outlined in a separate document), the study identified significant problems relating to education and skills training in the sector. Recommendations are given in this report as to how these might be addressed, as well as a recommendation for an accreditation scheme that would aim to raise production quality standards within the sector.

Research outline

Detailed interviews were carried out with fifteen targeted manufacturers known to be working within the high-end sector in London. In addition, twenty two London-based designers were interviewed, focusing on their experiences of having garments produced for the high-end fashion sector. Additional data was gathered from French and Italian manufacturers – known within the industry for their strong performance – as well as representatives from relevant UK, French and Italian trade organisations.

Key findings

The research data highlighted a large number of issues currently facing the high-end sector which collectively inhibit the success of UK designer fashion.

Lack of strategy and co-ordination within the sector

The research identified many problems arising from a lack of sector organisation. Several small organisations are doing beneficial work but this does not contribute to an overarching strategy for growing and sustaining the UK designer fashion sector. The report notes that similar issues in France and Italy have been addressed through a long-

[1] These recommendations are detailed in the supporting report: 'High-end fashion manufacturing in the UK - product, process and vision: Recommendations for a Designer and Fashion Manufacturer Alliance and a Designer Innovation and Sampling Centre'.

term sector-wide strategy. There is no organisation in the UK equivalent to the Chambre Syndicale in France, or Systema Moda Italia in Italy.

Gaps in skills and training

Gaps in workforce skills are a major problem for UK manufacturers as they limit the type of work that a factory can take on. In comparison, all of the French and Italian manufacturers said that their workforce was skilled and competent.

Poor product knowledge (manufacturers) and production knowledge (designers)

Many designers feel there is a need for manufacturers to show more professionalism and to have greater respect for designers and for their product. Additionally, there is a need for designers to have better knowledge of production processes.

Inconsistent production quality

UK-produced fashion is not of the consistently high quality required by the high-end sector. Dominant faults lie in basic production issues such as seam strength, demonstrating a lack of product knowledge, an inadequate level of production skills and quality control (QC) procedures that are not appropriate for the market sector.

Sampling services and other service availability

UK manufacturers are offering a much narrower range of services than their overseas competitors. The majority of designers find it difficult to get sampling done in the UK, so are forced to do this in-house or in overseas factories: the provision of affordable sampling services is therefore a priority.

Production gaps and limitations

The research indicates that UK manufacturers don’t always have the skills or equipment to handle high-end fabrics. This contrasts with overseas manufacturers in terms of skill levels, ability to handle ‘difficult’ fabrics and general understanding of the distinctive characteristics of high-end designer fashion.

Poor capital investment

Few UK manufacturers express an interest in investing in equipment specifically for the small volume runs that typify high-end fashion production. This contrasts with French and Italian manufacturers who see ongoing investment as a necessary part of the business. Regular investments are made to upgrade basic equipment and to acquire innovative and advanced technology.

Recommendations

The issues outlined above need to be tackled if the high-end fashion sector is to realise its potential. Whilst some manufacturers have sufficient production capacity for small design companies, they lack the skills, product knowledge and professionalism to fulfill these orders effectively. As a result, their production compares poorly with European competitors.

The research indicates that the manufacturing industry needs to be better trained, educated and informed. Quality improvements and the introduction of higher skills need to be supported by an 'accreditation scheme' for manufacturers, endorsed and regulated by industry stakeholders themselves and recognized by the authority of the British Fashion Council. This accreditation scheme should dovetail with recognition and delivery of skills and training specifically for the high-end sector.

Recommendation one – accreditation

An innovative solution proposed by the researchers and stakeholders is to develop a Michelin Star type award system for high-end manufacturers to aspire to. It would be based on a manual of QC standards, characteristics and criteria designed to formalise and professionalise the sector, detailed in Section 3.3. Rather than offering free training to the sector, the scheme should be aspirational so that manufacturers undertake training and engage with DISC because they want to be rated as a UK manufacturer that is working at the designer fashion 'high-end'.

Recommendation two – recognition of higher-level fashion manufacturing skills

This report recommends that higher-level fashion manufacturing skills should be accredited by National Occupational Standards in order to recognise the skill set required for high-end manufacturing. This would ensure that manufacturers are able to deal with the specific features of high-end fashion products.

These skills are linked to the recommendation outlined in section 7.0 of this report for an accreditation scheme that acknowledges the high level manufacturing skill set required to meet the characteristics of high-end designer product.

Recommendation three - to focus education and training on the needs of the high-end sector

We propose that education and training programmes should be focused on the needs of each of the various stakeholder groups within the sector, e.g. manufacturers, sample machinists/machinist workforce, production managers and designers. Each has differing needs in terms of management, technical and practical skills and knowledge. A range of innovative solutions has been proposed that embraces new initiatives such as apprenticeship schemes, adoption of appropriate NVQ training in the south-east (where it is currently not offered despite the concentration of the sector in that region), accreditation of prior learning and a high-end manufacturing academy, which could fit within the scope of the Couture Academy currently being assessed by Skillfast-uk.

The business case

The research identifies a high-end fashion sub-sector large enough to make our recommendations viable. There are 400 wholesale designer business located in the south-east, and as many as 150 manufacturers who state that they service the high-end sector in some way. There is also significant funding allocated to Skillfast-uk and Train2Gain to meet some of the costs.

Action plan

- To form a working party with the BFC, MAS, CFE and Skillfast-uk to develop the accreditation scheme
- To set up a first meeting with Skillfast-uk and the National Occupational Standards office to facilitate high-end skills recognition

To disseminate research findings to education and training providers to inform the development of their programmes

The research findings also identified a need for the creation of a Designer and Fashion Manufacturer Alliance with the aim of developing a long-term sector strategy, and to create a designer innovation and sampling centre (DISC). Recommendations for these initiatives have been prepared in a separate report, to advise the BFC, UKFT and other sector stakeholders. The report is available in September 2009. A further report with detailed overall findings from the research study is available from November 2009.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

London's success as a globally recognized fashion capital lies in the innovative fashion design talent emerging from the UK's leading fashion colleges. This designer talent enables the growth of a dynamic high-end designer fashion sector, characterised by low volumes and high prices. However, new designers and even more established designer businesses are disadvantaged because their volumes are low. This leaves them no room to negotiate with manufacturers on quality, price or delivery timings. The credibility of designers with their customers is thus undermined as they are unable to fulfil their order-books and guarantee on-time delivery, which in turn restricts their ability to generate revenues from sales.

The high-end designer fashion sector is also problematic from the perspective of UK manufacturers. Although some designers place small orders with UK manufacturers, production is sourced overseas as order sizes grow, leaving little opportunity for manufacturing businesses to experience the economic benefits that come with larger order sizes. This business pattern also inhibits the development of mutually beneficial relationships between designers and manufacturers.

London College of Fashion (LCF) and the Centre for Fashion Enterprise (CFE) recently completed a NESTA commissioned research project into value relationships within the designer fashion sector.[23] One of the barriers to growth identified in the sector was the shortage of sampling services and the availability of highly-skilled production services in the UK. These factors contribute to lost revenue, prevent business growth and ultimately undermine the credibility of designers.

2.1 Aims of the study

The CFE was commissioned by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to undertake a feasibility study to fully explore the market need for a new high-end production hub. This was in direct response to the need highlighted in the DCMS report Creative Britain - New Talents For The New Economy, published in 2008.

[23] CFE. December 2008. The UK Designer Fashion Economy. ,

The agreed aim of the feasibility study was to:

- Fully explore the market need for a new high-end production hub, to scope out the scale required to be effective, and to identify the skills and management functions needed to deliver any agreed benefits.

The overall objectives of the feasibility study were to:

- Identify and analyse the production service needs of the designer fashion sector, including the size and scale of potential demand;
- Identify the global retailers' experiences and expectations regarding quality, prices and fulfilment of fashion garments/products orders;
- Identify any education and skills gaps within this niche manufacturing sector;
- Provide a proposal for innovative interventions that could make the greatest economic and creative impacts to designers' businesses if addressed appropriately, recognising that this may be a combination of physical facilities and services;
- Assess the feasibility of developing a high-end production hub.

2.2 Methodology

The study was designed so as to obtain a representative picture of high-end fashion manufacturing in London. Details of the research team can be found in Appendix 1.

The research process included four round-table discussions in the form of steering group meetings (see Appendix 2 for details of members) with stakeholders from across the sector. The purpose of these meetings was to gain detailed insights into specific challenges currently facing the sector and to advise on the interpretation of data.

Field data was gathered in the form of interviews with targeted manufacturers known to be working within the high-end sector within London.[24] This fieldwork also attempted to assess which product types are being made and which cannot be made; the skill levels of the workforce and any skills gaps; and manufacturers' perceptions of the market and the specific challenges they face. A total of 15 UK manufacturer interviews were conducted, with 10 participating in follow-up questioning concerning sector definitions. The UK

[24] For the purposes of this study, 'London' was considered to be the area within the M25 and all UK subjects interviewed have a greater London postcode.

sample included businesses that had been trading between one and twenty-five years, with annual turnovers ranging from less than £50,000 to £300,000. Of the UK manufacturers, 40% had been trading for 1-3 years, which represents a relatively high number of new enterprises.

A further 22 in-depth interviews were conducted with London-based designers. In most instances, the designers themselves completed the questionnaire and interview but in the case of some of the larger companies, production managers were interviewed. A spread of micro, small and medium-sized businesses were included in the study. Like the manufacturers, they were asked about the product types that they made or had problems with; in addition they were asked how they located manufacturers; about their experiences in working with both UK and overseas manufacturers; the specific production problems they faced; how they were currently dealing with these problems; and what support or services they felt they might benefit from most.

The original study proposal aimed to conduct detailed interviews with 10 retailers that sell high-end designer womenswear. However, retailers were reluctant to give interviews, possibly because of the current poor economic climate. In response to this, a shortened version of the questionnaire was created and completed by a total of 23 retailers. As the quality of UK-manufactured goods was emerging as a key issue in the early findings, this was the focus of the retailer questionnaire.

The study also included interviews with eight successful overseas manufacturers. The four French and four Italian manufacturers had been in business for 1-3 years to over 25 years. All four French manufacturers had an annual turnover of more than £1 million, whilst the Italian manufacturers had annual turnovers ranging from less than £50,000 to more than £2 million. The findings of these interviews were used in the analysis as a benchmark against which UK high-end fashion production could be compared.

All interviewees signed a confidentiality agreement and throughout the report are only referred to by their research codes so that they cannot be identified. They were also asked if they wanted to be included by name at the end of the report, and a list of those who agreed to this can be found in Appendix 3.

Research was carried out to assess the potential demand for a production hub, as well as a review of existing training and other support services available within the sector.

2.3 Research developments

In additional to the three sample groups of manufacturers, designers and retailers, interviews were also conducted with representatives from three trade organisations: UKFT (formerly the BCIA) in the UK; in France, the Association pour la Promotion et L'Habillement de l'Ouest (APHO), a trade organisation that represents fashion manufacturers in the western region of France; and the Sistema Moda Italia (SMI) in Italy. These additional interviews gave valuable insights into organisation of the sector in the UK and overseas which in turn have helped inform the recommendations.

During the course of the research process, it became evident that there are no agreed standards concerning the production of high-end fashion, so although this was not an initial aim of the study, one of the outcomes has been to establish a set of criteria to assess the standard of high-end fashion production. It is envisaged that this set of characteristics – outlined in section 3.3 - could have both practical and theoretical applications, and a proposal is made in the recommendations section as to how these might be used within the industry.

It should also be noted that considerable efforts were made by the researchers to obtain as much detailed information as possible during the course of the interviews. However, in some instances interviewees were reluctant to give information that they perceived as being sensitive (e.g. information relating to staff background or financial matters).

A list of all acronyms and abbreviations used in this report can be found in Appendix 4.

3.0 THE HIGH END SECTOR - DEFINITIONS

3.1 Definitions of high-end designer fashion in existing research

Existing studies that examine the high-end designer fashion tend to rely on a set of classifications of the industry provided by Mintel.[25] They encompass the following categories:

- Couture – the original designer market dominated by French-based international brands
- International designers – a label usually dominated by one name
- Diffusion – designers producing high-street ranges for specific stores
- High fashion – up-and-coming new designers, usually endorsed by celebrities

However, this categorisation distinguishes between types of designer business rather than fashion products or production processes.

Another definition of the designer industry is used by Newbery in a report commissioned by the Department for Trade and Industry and the British Fashion Council in 2003:[26]

> 'Individuals or teams that combine creativity and originality to produce a clothing collection with a specific or 'signature' identity, exemplified by but not restricted to, the type of company that participates at international trade shows such as London Fashion Week and its equivalents. Fashion designers may produce diffusion lines in addition to their 'flagship' collections and range from established designers with an international reputation or 'brand' to 'cutting edge' newcomers.'

Although this definition incorporates aspects of the designer aesthetic – as distinct from high street or mass production clothing - the emphasis is still on the designer, brand and profile rather than any specific garment characteristics.

The only other categories in use can be found in the Report of the Model Health Enquiry.[27] These categories divide the fashion industry into three sectors: haute couture; ready-to-wear; and high street/mass market. This is helpful as it begins to acknowledge

[25] Creigh-Tyte, A. 2005; The Report of the Model Health Enquiry. September 2007; Roodhouse, 2003.
[26] Newbery, 2003, p.5.
[27] British Fashion Council. 2007. The Report of the Model Health Enquiry , p.33.

differences between the quality of garments in different sectors of the market, the mode of production and an indication of market size and retail outlets captured by each sector but the most useful set of existing definitions is provided by an internal LDA document:[28]

- Couture – high cost, high quality, very high price, low production volumes, often one-offs, brand/reputation is all, designer led
- Bespoke – made-to-measure, still high cost but slightly less high price, high quality one-offs, can be brand/designer led (e.g. Savile Row) or not (e.g. local dressmaker)
- Ready-to-wear – medium cost, good quality but not usually the very best, medium to high price (depending on the designer/retail outlet), usually designer led but not always brand led (more smaller designers with less established reputations)
- Mass production (middle-market) – low to medium cost, medium quality, medium price, not usually designer led but often brand led (e.g. Per Una)
- Mass production (downmarket) – low cost, low quality, low price, not usually designer led (except the designs may be cheap copies of catwalk looks) but often brand led (e.g. Primark)
- Markets – low cost, low quality, low price, not usually designer led; runs are very short

However, the research team felt that none of these adequately or systematically define a high-end fashion designer garment in terms of either the garment itself or the processes involved in its manufacture. That said, the category which best fits the sector examined in this study is 'ready-to-wear'. Whilst both 'couture' and 'bespoke' could also be considered high-end, these terms do not adequately categorise high-end fashion. As the terms used in the Model Health Enquiry, outlined earlier, indicate, 'couture' in its strictest definition is concerned with very high cost, one-off Parisian fashion ateliers. It should not, therefore, be used as a descriptor of any fashionable garment that happens to be expensive or well-made. Likewise, 'bespoke' is a problematic term, and as a recent Advertising Standards Authority case concerning the use of the word indicates, it cannot necessarily be used as an indicator of cost, quality or even mode of production.[29]

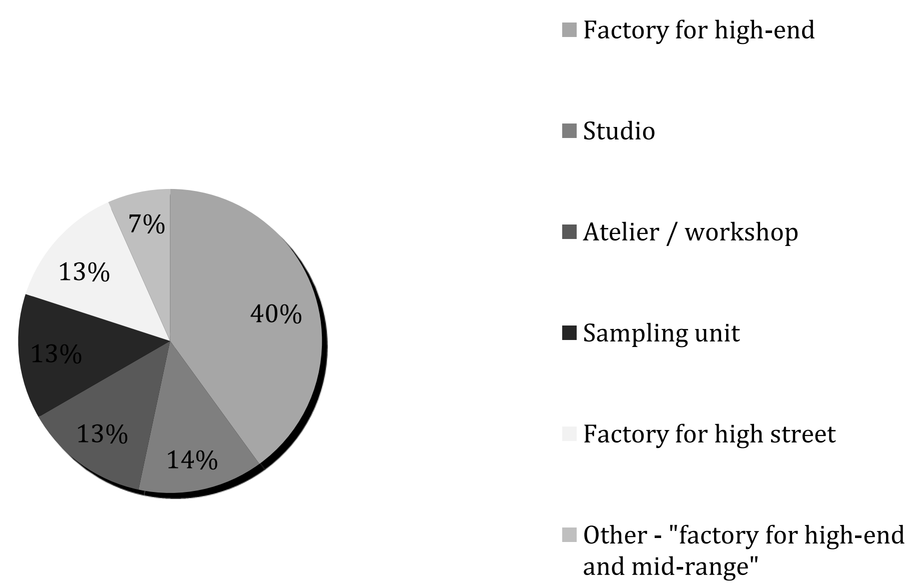
[28] Manufacturing Foresight in London, LDA.Internal LDA document. December 2007. internal LDA document, Manufacturing Foresight in London, p10-11.
[29] In June 2008, the Advertising Standards Authority noted a complaint that the term 'bespoke suit' was being used to describe suits that were in fact machine cut. Although the term 'Savile Row bespoke' refers

3.2 New categories used in this study

For the purposes of this study, manufacturers were categorized in order to ascertain what type of businesses are involved in the production of high-end designer fashion. The categories used were:

- Studio (1-3 employees including freelance staff)
- Atelier//workshop (1-5 employees; specialists e.g. in handwork; sheepskin)
- Sampling unit (5-10 employees; specialise in samples rather than production)
- Factory for high-end (6-10 employees plus 5-10 freelance staff; predominantly producing high-end fashion)
- Factory for high street labels (25+ employees; predominantly producing for high street stores rather than designers)
- Other: ’factory for high-end and mid-range’ (self-categorisation where interviewees felt that none of the other categories adequately described the business)

Figure 1: UK manufacturers in the study sample by category



Although helpful for mapping the range of businesses involved in the sector, these categories still provide little insight into the defining qualities of high-end fashion. Moreover, most of the manufacturers in the study produce garments for more than one

to garments made entirely by hand, the more general term ‘bespoke’ was not found to carry the same implication. The complaint was not upheld.

sector of the fashion industry. For instance, a sampling unit may work predominantly for high-end designers but also produce samples for high-street retailers.

3.3 Characteristics of high-end designer garment production

As there does not appear to be an existing definition of high-end manufacturing, the following definition is proposed:

> *'High-end manufacturing' is the making and finishing of luxury and high quality goods that are often referred to as 'designer label' and which compete globally with renowned international brands.*

In the absence of any appropriate definitions relating to the sector, one outcome of this study was to establish a set of criteria that could be used to differentiate between high-end fashion garments and clothing produced for other sectors of the industry.

During the course of the interviews, designers and manufacturers were asked to describe a high-end garment, and to say whether or not their company was able to produce garments with these qualities. Their comments, along with those of members of the steering group, assisted the formulation of a list of characteristics that describe the production processes and qualities involved in high-end garments. They are as follows:

- Use of expensive, luxury and/or innovative fabrics[30] and trims
- Evident high quality of cut (fit of the garment)
- Evident high level of skill involved in the manufacture of a high-end garment
- Evident high quality of seams (e.g. French seams rather than over-locking, where appropriate)
- Evident partnership between designer and manufacturer in achieving the aesthetic of the garment
- Evident high quality of the finish of the interior of the garment (e.g. bound seams, high-quality linings)
- Specialist finishing as appropriate (e.g. hand-work)
- Evident high quality of overall finishing and high level of quality control applied

[30] May include fabrics with a high natural fibre content i.e. pure silk, wool etc.

These criteria were used to evaluate manufacturers participating in the study; three additional criteria were used to assess the overall success and viability of each business:

- Investment in machinery (including recent investments and future plans for investment)
- Investment in skilled people (including skills of existing staff and training given)
- Viability of business (length of time trading, expected future time trading)

Manufacturers were given a grade out of five for each of these eleven criteria on the basis of data taken from both the questionnaire and open-question interview, resulting in a total maximum score of fifty-five.

4.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS: SIZE AND SCALE OF POTENTIAL DESIGNER DEMAND

4.1 Size and location of the UK designer fashion industry

The absence of any robust data on the size of the designer fashion market in the UK is well-established in existing research.[31] However, there are a few studies that can provide insights into the size of the sector.

The most recent credible data is from the DCMS, stating that in 2007 the UK designer fashion industry employed 130,700 people, and further estimating that in 2008 there were 2,800 'designer fashion' businesses',[32] across the range of design, manufacturing, exhibition and sale of designer clothes (including exports and related consultancy work).

NESTA research published in December 2008 confirmed that the majority of these businesses gravitate to London where most of the influential networks and media are based. Furthermore, on the basis of a 2005 TCSG report,[33] it would be reasonable to assume that the majority of the high-end fashion manufacturing that does take place in the UK does so in London. Importantly for London, it is the UK region where the industry as a whole has declined the least, which can be attributed to the growth of the designer fashion sector in London.

Mirroring the lack of robust designer fashion and clothing industry data, there is 'an absence of any comprehensive databases of CMT companies at either a national or regional/local level',[34] which makes the process of identifying and mapping manufacturing companies difficult. However, the TCSG report notes the importance of the high-end fashion market to London businesses.

The TCSG report concludes that CMT businesses in London are very different to their counterparts in other regions. They tend to employ smaller numbers; are more likely to supply independent designers and boutiques[35] rather than wholesalers; and set smaller

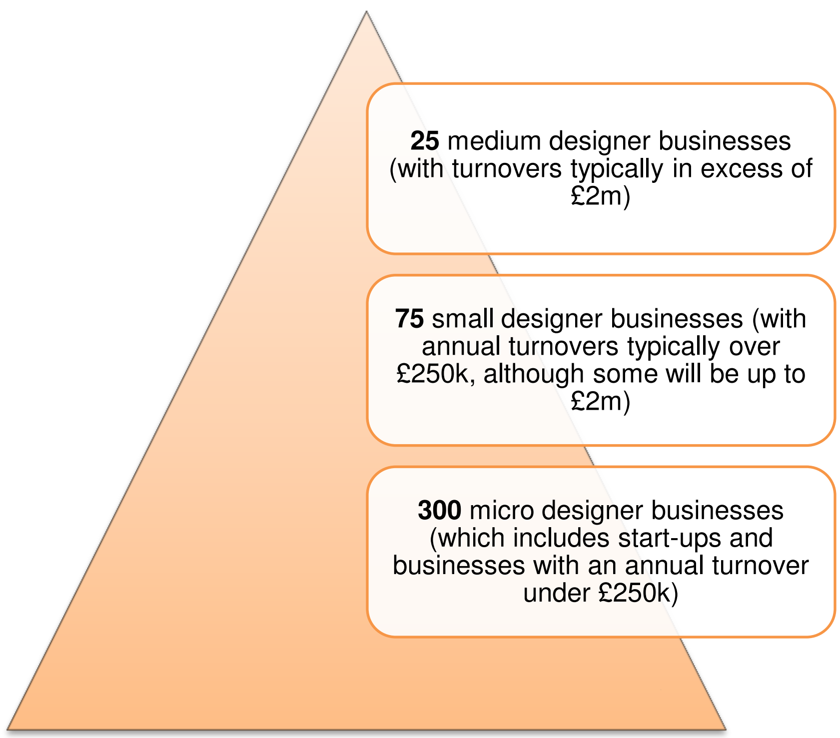
[31] Creigh-Tyte, A. 2005, p.164; Roodhouse, S. 2003; The Report of the Model Health Enquiry. September 2007.
[32] DCMS. January 2009. Creative Industries Economic Estimates Statistical Bulletin.
[33] Textile and Clothing Strategy Group. March 2005. A mapping study of the Cut, Make and Trim sector in the UK.
[34] Ibid, p.8.
[35] Other categories served by CMT companies were: high street chain, manufacturers, wholesalers, mail order, multiples and market traders.

minimum docket sizes. As these are all features associated with the production of high-end fashion – in contrast to other sectors of the fashion industry – it confirms that high-end fashion manufacturing in the UK tends to be located in London.

4.2 The size of the designer (design and wholesale) fashion sector

The NESTA research published in December 2008 identified around 400 designer fashion businesses operating in London as illustrated in Figure 2. This is the estimated size of the sector that would benefit from recommendations made in this report.

Figure 2: Breakdown of designers' businesses by size



Total number of designers: 400

4.3 The size of London's high-end manufacturing sector

Analysis of several recent reports enables the CFE to cautiously estimate that there are in the region of 150 manufacturers operating within London that produce garments for the high-end designer sector.

An internal London Development Agency (LDA) document estimates that there are 1,085 clothing manufacturers, of all types, in London.[36] At the same time, the TCSG report states that 56% of CMT companies in London serve independent designers. The report also states that 30% of CMT units are serving independent stores (as opposed to high street chains or market traders), which are the type of retail outlet most likely to stock high-end designer garments. This would give an estimate of somewhere in the region of 300-500 manufacturers who claim to be concerned with the designer market. However, even this estimate is still likely to be rather high. The TCSG study was published more than four years ago, and it is likely that some of the companies included in that study would have subsequently folded. Also, with no clear definitions around the use of the word 'designer' and no criteria for assessing this in previous studies, there is likely to be an overestimation of the number of manufacturers producing 'designer' fashion, as the term is often applied to a wide range of garment types, not simply high-end or luxury fashion. In the light of forecasts of a 28% reduction in the apparel-manufacturing workforce for the period 2006-2014,[37] and given the global economic recession – which no previous research could take account of – it would be judicious to give a much lower estimate of somewhere in the region of 150 manufacturers operating within London who produce garments for the high-end designer sector.

Further analysis of these 150 high-end manufacturers based on our benchmarking of the manufacturers interviewed as part of this study, enables us to develop an indicative landscape of their capabilities and professionalism. Twenty-five of the 150 manufacturers could be classified as Champion companies. They are achieving high quality standards, are well resourced and have a professional, competitive outlook and will normally have at least one dedicated sample machinist. The Aspiring companies are on the way to achieving a higher quality product and service, if given appropriate

[36] Internal LDA document,. December 2007. Manufacturing Foresight in London. December 2007, internal LDA document
[37] Skillfast-uk, 2007, p.9.

support. There is also potential in these companies for identifying a member of the production team to focus on prototype sampling.

Figure 3: Breakdown of manufacturers by service level

Total number of manufacturers: 150

On the basis of this projection, 17% of London-based Champion manufacturers could benefit from support and development, with a further 17% Aspiring manufacturers potentially benefitting from more extensive support and development interventions.

4.4 Manufacturer benchmarking

The score for each individual manufacturer is listed in Appendix 5 but Table 1 summarises the evaluations of UK, French and Italian manufacturers.

Table 1: Summary of evaluation of manufacturers

Score range	**UK**	**France**	**Italy**	**Level attained and level of development/support required to attain high-end characteristics**
1-10	2	0	0	Poor – unlikely to meet high-end requirements even with extensive support and development
11-20	4	0	0	Inconsistent – extensive development and support required
21-30	3	0	0	Adequate for mid-range – but could benefit from various forms of support and development
31-40	6	1	0	Good – delivers at high end but could benefit from some support and development
41-55	0	3	4	Excellent – luxury end level; no intervention required

Conclusions

On the basis of this evaluation, it is evident that there are significant differences between UK manufacturers and French and Italian manufacturers working within the high-end sector. Notably, none of the UK manufacturers achieved the top banding level (41-55) whereas the majority of French and Italian companies scored highly, and attained this level. It should, however, be noted that there are some differences between the French and Italian manufacturers. Investment in technology and commitment to research and development were particular strengths of Italian companies whilst the French companies scored best on criteria relating to product quality and relationships with designers.

Even the strongest of the UK manufacturers scored poorly on investment in machinery and staff skills. Overall, the picture of UK manufacturers demonstrated a number of impediments to the successful production of high-end designer garments, which are explored in detail in Section 5.

5.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS: GAPS IN SKILLS AND TRAINING

Gaps in workforce skills are a major problem for UK manufacturers because they limit the type of work that a factory can take on. Although 78.5% of manufacturers claimed that the majority of their workers were experienced and competent, most UK machinists have experience of doing section work rather than completing whole garments, which is required for sample work.

Recognition of problems around skills emerged in the open interview questions: 69% of manufacturers highlighted problems in finding skilled machinists, typified by these responses:

> My problem at the moment is finding enough staff who are skilled enough to do the job without having to retrain them. (M202)
>
> I have problems with skilled machinists. Either they are not experienced enough or they are very slow or very expensive. There are not enough good machinists around. (M204)

The ageing workforce is also identified as a problem:

> No new young people coming into the business, especially in the machining *side…that's obviously a skill [that] is irreplaceable in this business.* (M216)

In comparison, all of the French and Italian manufacturers said that their workforce was skilled and competent and none revealed problems finding skilled staff at present. However, the APHO representative noted that, as with the UK, fashion manufacturing in France has an ageing workforce, the average age inside factories being 40-50 years.

Designers are very aware of the skills gaps in UK manufacturing and its impact on their working practises. Of the designers interviewed, more than half said that they had done in-house production, with 19% saying that the primary reason for doing so was that manufacturers were unable to reproduce the design because of the high level of skill required.

Training gaps

Our study suggests that relatively few UK manufacturing staff have received any formal training: UK manufacturers reported that only 20% of their staff are college-trained.

This contrasts dramatically with the French and Italian manufacturers interviewed. All of the French companies had college-trained employees, as did 80% of Italian companies, which may reflect better links between training and employment in the sector in both France and Italy.

There are existing apprenticeship schemes within the fashion manufacturing sector, developed by Skillfast-uk. One is a Bespoke Tailoring Apprenticeship programme run by Newham College in conjunction with the Savile Row Bespoke Association.[38] The other is a partnership between the Somerset-based accessories company, Mulberry, and the local FE college in Bridgwater.[39] However, these are very small, specialised schemes and neither of the current programmes covers high-end designer womenswear, which is the focus of this study.

Training for existing employees

In the past, the sector has been heavily reliant on the highly developed in-house training programmes of the largest firms for a trickle-down of skilled staff. With many of the larger firms now closed, and with much of the sector's operator workforce in the UK now made up of immigrant workers from off-shore factories catering for the mass market,[40] there is little future opportunity for trickle-down from in-house training.

[38] This is a three-stage scheme culminating in an NVQ level 3 qualification.
[39] Apprentices on this scheme are trained in the workplace with funding split between Mulberry and Bridgwater college.
[40] Poland, Bangladesh and China were important countries identified in the study.

6.0 RESEARCH EVALUATION

6.1 Lack of co-ordination and marketing of the sector

The research shows that support and representation of the sector is currently insufficiently co-ordinated. Not only is there no trade association to represent the specific needs of the sector but there are no industry definitions that can be used to set standards specifically for high-end designer fashion.

These findings also indicate that there is potential for significant work to be done with regard to marketing. This corresponds with findings of the TCSG report in 2005, which recommended that CMT firms need to: 're-position themselves in the marketplace, moving away from commodity products towards higher value added segments.'[41] Similarly, an internal LDA report notes that 'many firms are weak at marketing themselves…manufacturers need to be active and visible.'[42] Despite the fact that these recommendations have been circulating within the industry for a number of years, most manufacturers are still not taking action and may require support and training in order to make improvements in this area.

The success of the French Fashion day organised by APHO reflects a demand by UK designers for high-quality production but it is overseas manufacturers, not UK manufacturers, who are responding to this demand.

6.2 Inconsistent production quality

UK-produced fashion is not yet seen as being 'value-added' for retailers and there is much room for improvement in the quality of high-end fashion that reaches the shop floor. This study indicates that UK manufacturers are unaware of the problems associated with the garments they produce, or that they are under-reporting them. The fact that major faults lie in very basic production issues such as seam strength demonstrates a lack of product knowledge, an inadequate level of production skills and QC procedures that are not appropriate for the market sector.

[41] TCSG, 2005: p.25. Specific interventions previously recommended include 'help with selling to buyers' and 'help to start selling on the web'.
[42] Internal LDA document, 2007: part 2, p.2.

London-based manufacturers offer designers an advantage in that it is possible to visit the factory and check on production regularly, which is not possible with overseas manufacturers. However, with the exception of larger companies who have dedicated production staff, this does not appear to happen.

Better training in QC issues for both designers and manufacturers could help address this problem, and the introduction of a set of industry standards, including a certification system, for the sector could give manufacturers an incentive to improve the quality of their production and QC procedures. The characteristics identified in section 3.3 could be used to help assess the skills and knowledge of manufacturers, with a view to strengthening weak areas and developing expertise.[43]

The recurrence of underperformance of fabric as a fault leading to returns suggests designers need to address the fabrics that they are using. Advice from a garment technologist prior to production could help reduce this particular problem.

6.3 Sampling services and other service availability

UK manufacturers are offering a much narrower range of services than their overseas competitors. The majority of designers find it difficult to get sampling done in the UK so they are forced to do it in-house or overseas: the provision of affordable sampling services is therefore a priority. If companies wish to expand and compete with overseas producers for larger orders they will need to address the range of services that they are providing.

6.4 Production gaps and limitations

Production gaps

There is a considerable mismatch between London production and designer demand for particular product types. Specifically, there is a lack of production facilities for

[43] The steering group also suggested that criteria to measure ethical and 'green' factors could be added to create an industry standard of good practice.

knitwear, beading, eveningwear/couture, lingerie and swimwear,[44] fine wovens, leather, sheepskin, denim, and garments involving silk, chiffon or jersey.

However, there are some manufacturers who are currently meeting these production needs: better signposting would enable designers to locate them. Other manufacturers need to be encouraged to meet the gaps with additional training in garment and fabric types that they are currently avoiding.

Problem fabrics

The research indicates that manufacturers don't always have the skills or the equipment to handle high-end fabrics. This contrasts with overseas manufacturers not only in terms of actual skill levels and ability to handle 'difficult' fabrics but also in terms of understanding the distinctive characteristics of high-end designer fashion.

As designers in the high-end sector are selecting the fabrics themselves – rather than leaving it to manufacturers – they could benefit from the input of a garment technologist who would be able to give advice on fabric suitability when preparing samples for production. This could save both designers and manufacturers time and money, and could help improve retailer confidence in the quality of the garments.

Order size

Order size is perceived to be a major problem for both manufacturers and designers. The majority of orders are for less than 100 units, yet manufacturers are not happy to be producing such small orders. This is reflected in costing scales that effectively penalise designers who are trying to get small orders produced: the issues of small order size and high cost to designers are currently inextricably linked.

The tensions between designers and manufacturers over the size of production runs may in part reflect manufacturers' lack of understanding of the very nature of designer fashion. By definition (as outlined earlier in section 3.1), high-end designer garments are not mass-produced; exclusivity is part of the unique appeal of products in this sector.

There is a need for manufacturers to change their mindset from one that identifies small production runs as problematic to a more collaborative and supportive attitude to young

[44] These products require highly specialized machinery; therefore the recommendation is for better signposting of existing services to meet this production need.

designers who are trying to get established in the market. If these mutually beneficial relationships can be established and strengthened, both designers and manufacturers would be in a stronger market position.

Sourcing manufacturers

Designers rely on referrals from other designers to help them source manufacturers but many struggle to locate appropriate factories. Whilst the majority of designers believe that an advisory service to help with sourcing manufacturers, both in the UK and overseas, would be a good idea, the cost of this service would need to be considered carefully. Should any advisory service be established, membership or subscription fees would need to take account of the size of design companies involved.

6.5 Poor capital investment

Designers have a very bleak view of UK manufacturers' investment in equipment: none rate this as a UK production advantage and all comments made on the subject are negative. Few UK manufacturers express an interest in investing in equipment specifically for the small volume runs that typify high-end fashion production. Those who consider the possibility say that expense prevents such an investment, and they are reluctant to make a big investment unless the machinery would be used a lot.

In contrast, French and Italian manufacturers see ongoing investment as a necessary part of the business, not as a problem. Investments are made regularly both to upgrade basic machinery and to acquire innovative and advanced technology.

Investment in better equipment could bolster designers' confidence in UK manufacturers. For some manufacturers, rental schemes could offer a solution whilst others would benefit from establishing contact and forming partnerships with trusted equipment suppliers. On a very basic level, UK manufacturers need good, well-functioning equipment that is upgraded on a regular basis if they are to compete with French and Italian manufacturers. Furthermore, UK manufacturers need to be encouraged to recognise the long-term benefits of investment in research and development activities and the positive impact that such investment can have on maintaining and improving workforce skills.

6.6 Gaps in skills and training

Research conducted by Skillfast-uk indicates that there is low availability and take-up of publicly funded vocational education and training including apprenticeships. Furthermore, our research found gaps in production skills, and recruitment difficulties with regard to sampling and production types.[45]

Lack of investment in training is not a new problem. In 2004, the LDA's report into manufacturing in London found that:

> Manufacturers under-invest in training when compared with the rest of the *economy…Most of those who do no training at all are generally* absorbed with surviving from day to day and are therefore difficult to engage.[46]

The report goes on to highlight specific skills issues, including: the importance of changing the mindset of employers; ensuring that the skills of experienced workers are not lost; a need for carefully tailored apprenticeship schemes; and the importance of training within the manufacturing environment.

Even though these recommendations were made five years ago, the findings of this study indicate that these issues have not yet been adequately addressed in the fashion manufacturing sector.

Skillfast-uk is the Sector Skills Council for Fashion and Textiles but it has not articulated an understanding of the higher skills needed for manufacturing to capitalise on the quality and marketability of UK designers. One of its stated objectives is to ensure qualifications are fit-for-purpose. If qualifications are to be used as a basis for training then they need to reflect the way that the industry works and the skills that are required by employers.

6.7 Poor product knowledge (manufacturers) and production knowledge (designers)

Manufacturers

Product awareness and knowledge of market position is crucial if manufacturers are to survive the current economic climate. For high-end fashion, particularly of the kind that

[45] Skillfast-uk. July 2007.
[46] LDA, 2004, p.8.

is associated with the design culture of London, innovation is key and manufacturers need to be on-side with designers if this ambition is to be realised. Although innovation in terms of product is important (although this will be driven primarily by designers, with manufacturers acting as enablers), the LDA suggests that: 'key enablers for innovation are principally internal, for example, creating the right business culture.'[47]

Any attempts to professionalise the sector need to emphasise the benefits to manufacturers. Interventions need to help foster partnerships between designers and manufacturers, encouraging all parties to recognise that everyone's success depends on a positive, collaborative relationship that is not helped by a 'them and us' attitude. Moreover, one of the distinctive features of the sector in the UK is the strength of and reliance upon informal networks and it would be advisable to build on this rather than attempt to replace it with an externally imposed artificial structure.

Designers

This study underlines the importance of production knowledge. Designers with production experience clearly recognise the benefits it brings to them in their dealings with manufacturers. Whilst some production problems are undoubtedly caused by manufacturers (e.g. poorly produced garments), other problems are caused by designers. Specifically, better knowledge of the time periods required for delivery of components; clear instructions and 'production-ready' samples; and sufficient time allowed for production would result in much more successful working relationships between designers and manufacturers.

Most college training does not currently incorporate manufacturing as part of design courses, which means that graduates gain experience in factories on an ad hoc basis rather than as a formalised component of further and higher education qualifications. Designers often resist the opportunity to gain experience in factories once they have graduated, which means that they rarely develop a good working knowledge of fashion production. Greater knowledge on the part of designers would undoubtedly be beneficial in the early years of establishing a business when they are unlikely to be able to afford a production manager. However, there also appears to be a role for more and better-qualified production managers in UK manufacturing.

[47] LDA, 2004, p.9.

These findings provide evidence for what has previously been an anecdotal perception that designers need to improve specific areas of their work. Whilst the creative talent of UK designers is well-documented, the WGSN fashion report for 2009 notes that one of the key challenges for British designers in the years ahead is their 'lack of technical and business skills.'[48]

6.8 Conclusions

Our research indicates that the issues outlined above need to be tackled if the high-end fashion sector is to realise its potential. Whilst some existing manufacturers have the production capacity to meet the needs of small design companies – indeed, in many instances they are desperate for more work – they lack the skills, product knowledge and professionalism to fulfil these orders effectively. As a result, their production compares poorly with European competitors.

With reference to the remit of the project, the conclusion is therefore that a high-end production hub is not required. Rather, this study recommends the creation of a high-end sampling and innovation hub along with other measures that address sector co-ordination, skills and training gaps, and industry standards. The education and training recommendations are explored in detail in the following section.

[48] WGSN. 2009. p.22.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations are made here for a series of planned quality improvements and the promotion of higher skills, supported by an ‘accreditation scheme’ for manufacturers, endorsed and regulated by industry stakeholders themselves. The manufacturing industry itself also needs to be better trained, educated and informed.

Recommendation one - an accreditation scheme for high-end manufacturing skills

Recommendations for an accreditation scheme have been made in response to the following identified industry problems:

- Inconsistent production quality
- Lack of product knowledge

The research highlights a need to improve the quality of production within the sector, and promote quality standards throughout the supply chain. The steering group proposed an accreditation scheme as an important initiative to support the industry in taking the responsibility for raising standards. This report indicates that UK standards are currently below the levels the French and Italian manufacturing industries, yet the clothes sell in the same global retail outlets and compete at similar retail price levels. This situation is not sustainable, and undermines manufacturers and designers in their efforts to maintain and build their businesses.

An innovative solution proposed by the researchers and stakeholders is to develop a Michelin Star type award system for high-end manufacturers to aspire to. It would be based on a manual of QC standards, characteristics and criteria designed to formalise and professionalise the sector, detailed in Section 3.3. Rather than offering free training to the sector, the scheme should be aspirational so that manufacturers undertake training and engage with DISC because they want to be rated as a UK manufacturer that is working at the designer fashion ‘high-end’. As manufacturers do not generally see any problem with what they are currently doing and are unaware of manufacturing in high-end fashion in general, they would be unlikely to voluntarily engage in the level of training required unless they perceive a tangible benefit to their business.

The Michelin system awards one to three stars to a small number of restaurants of outstanding quality. Stars are awarded sparingly: for instance, out of 5,500 entries in the UK and Ireland 2004 guide, 98 have one star (‘a very good restaurant in its category’), 11 have two stars (’excellent cooking, worth a detour’), and only 3 had three stars (‘exceptional cuisine, worth a special journey’).

The innovative scheme proposed for the high-end fashion manufacturing sector is currently bannered as the ‘Designer Manufacturer Awards’. BFC recognition would ensure high-profile exposure and industry respect. BFC representatives have indicated that they would not grant the Award but would recognise it. The recommendation is that MAS grants the Award and becomes the accrediting body. Skillfast-uk has agreed to assist in the recognition of the Higher Level Skills by the National Occupational Standards (NOS). DISC would provide the upskilling training and publish training guidelines on its website. If communicated and marketed effectively with tangible benefits it will enable the sector to become self-regulating. There is potential to find a corporate sponsor for the scheme. The Designer Manufacturer Award scheme could work thus:

The CFE devised assessment criteria initially applied to the companies interviewed for this research, presented in Section 3.3. Performance on each of the criteria was graded on a scale of 0-5. The criteria are:

- Whether the eight quality standards for production have been met (potential score = 40)
- Investment in machinery (potential score = 5)
- Investment in skilled people (potential score = 5)
- Viability of business (potential score = 5)
- Total maximum score = 55

A company would need to achieve a score of 46 or above to get the Designer Manufacturer Award and benefit from the endorsements that go with it.

If a company scores 39 to 45 it would be considered an 'associate' designer manufacturing business, one who demonstrated many good elements, a good attitude, and some innovative principles, and who can be brought up to the accredited level providing they engage fully with a specific skill development programme for the workforce.

If a company scores 31-38 it would be considered possible to improve standards but may require investment in equipment and some changes to the management as well as improvement in the ability of the workforce to achieve a good high-end level of manufactured products.

Awardees could receive the following benefits:

- Annual accreditation that is demonstrable and would offer retailers confidence
- Listing on BFC and DISC website, and referrals from the BFC, DISC, CFE and other support partners
- If sponsors were identified, there could be incentives such as a sponsored Innovation Award for those achieving the Diamond level, to be presented at the British Fashion Council Awards event. It could be £5-10,000 worth of new equipment for the first award, training programmes the second time they receive an award, and developing new marketing activities the third time.
- Training and support to Platinum Awardees to bring them up to Diamond levels.

Manufacturers would be attracted to the scheme via a number of routes: learning about the scheme through DISC, BFC scheme marketing activities, recommendations from designers, recommendations from other manufacturers.

Recommendation two - recognition of higher-level fashion manufacturing skills

The research findings demonstrate a need to provide sector-specific training. The aim is to raise the level of manufacturing at large to a quality and expertise level identified in Italy and France in order to make the high-end fashion manufacturing industry competitive and commercially viable. Additionally, it is envisaged that this would help professionalise the manufacturing and fashion designer sectors. The research findings outlined in section 5.6 indicate evidence of market failure as a result of training gaps or inadequate service provision within the sector.

Recommendations for education and training have been made in response to the following identified industry problems:

- Inconsistent production quality
- Gaps in skills and training
- Poor product knowledge; poor production knowledge

Skills gap recognition

Designers participating in this study noted that a higher level of manufacturing skills are available outside the UK compared with those in the UK. This is perceived to be craft skills, technology skills or a combination of both. This research found no innovation or training evident in the UK that is currently addressing this gap, and manufacturers are relying on the skills already demonstrated by their employees, the majority of whom originate from outside the UK.[63] Training that does exist in the UK, and which is accredited by National Occupational Standards, is of a skill level that is required for general garment production. This does not recognise the specific high-level skills required for high-end designer manufacturing, and which are distinct from the skills required for general clothing manufacture of high-street fashion.

This report recommends that higher-level fashion manufacturing skills should be accredited by National Occupational Standards in order to recognise the skill-set required for high-end manufacturing so that producers are up to dealing with the characteristics diverse fashion products.

These skills are linked to the recommendation outlined above for an accreditation scheme that acknowledges the high-level manufacturing skill-set required to meet the characteristics of high-end designer products.

Identified higher skills are:

- Whole garment assembly (as opposed to piece work)

[63] Much of the UK fashion manufacturing workforce is made up of workers from Bangladesh, Poland and China.

- Production of prototype samples
- Product knowledge of the aesthetic and distinctive features of a luxury garment
- Hand finishing skills
- The ability to assemble garments with irregular fabric combinations or sections
- Skills for handling 'difficult' fabrics and garment types (e.g. sheers, stretch, silks, chiffons, jersey etc.)
- Skills for handling complex garment construction, patterns and cut
- 'High-end' pressing to excellence standard
- Ability to create a garment interior with a luxury finish
- Seaming ability appropriate to high-end finish in all garment and fabric types.

The identified education and training needs are to:

- increase the number of 'high-end' sample machinists available in the sector
- increase the number of trained production managers in the sector
- raise the competency level in UK manufacturing to support the needs of the designer sector
- promote the sector and the breadth of employment opportunities within the sector
- attract new entrants and to up-skill employees currently working within the sector
- improve the communication of training and education opportunities that already exist
- develop new programmes where there are identified gaps in provision

Recommendation three – Education and training

Proposals are presented according to industry sector:

7.3.1 Education and training – manufacturers (owners/managers)

7.3.2 Education and training – sample machinists/machinists workforce

7.3.3 Education and training – production managers

7.3.4 Education and training – designers

7.3.1 Education and training – manufacturers (owners/managers)

Manufacturers are in need of management skills in numerous areas of their work, as outlined in Section 4. None of the UK manufacturers interviewed had any discernable marketing skills, and business support for the fashion manufacturing sector is generic and so does not focus on the marketing and sales growth of the high-end designer sector. Only a minority of manufacturers are aware of a need to address their marketing shortcomings. Conversely, in France, where there is a more successful high-end fashion manufacturing sector, they actively market their services to UK designers at targeted events in London. As discussed in Section 4.2.10, they see a strong potential market here and little competition.

Management training programmes for manufacturer owners should include:

- Professionalisation of businesses: new business models; provision of new services; operational efficiencies; marketing and customer relations skills
- Introduction of efficiencies that could ease the problems caused by the timing of production cycles
- Advice and training on finance management; how to price competitively
- Management training in the EC with French and Italian trainers, to learn their distinctive skills and practises
- Product awareness courses to encourage manufacturers to develop an empathy with and knowledge of both the product and the sector. Programme content should include product differentiation (high-end versus high-street characteristics)
- QC training for manufacturers appropriate to high-end

There are currently no funded support deliverers where enquiries from manufacturers can be sign-posted. Grant Thornton has recently been contracted as MAS in London. In the past, MAS has been the provider of tailored practical support and information for manufacturers on matters such as lean manufacturing, business development and legislative issues across the manufacturing industries, including the fashion industry.

If manufacturers are to benefit from advice and support services, these services need to be clearly signposted, as noted by the London Development Agency. This weakness in the provision of support can be addressed in several ways.

Firstly address the organisation of the sector through a Designer Manufacturer Alliance between MAS, BFC and CFE. The Alliance would need to work together with Skillfast-uk to plan and implement the raft of improvements that are being suggested here.

Secondly, liaise with HEIs to deliver continuous professional development courses in London and the regions. As outlined by HEFCE in its Employer Engagement Policies and reiterated by Universities UK, universities need to look at their delivery methods if they are to address employer engagement and the impact of the current economic climate. Organisations like Design London (RCA and Imperial), University of the Arts London (London College of Fashion and London College of Communication) and many others are already addressing this market need.

Thirdly, a Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) may be appropriate to a business that can meet the criteria of the scheme and attract match funding to employ a graduate who will bring a whole new aspect to the development of the business. This could be a marketing or a business development manager function. KTP providers need to market their services in the high-end manufacturing sector. This can be accessed through the Knowledge Transfer Bureau at DISC.

7.3.2 Education and training – sample machinists/machinists workforce

The findings discussed in Sections 5 and 6 indicate that the UK high-end manufacturing sector currently lacks the skills to compete effectively with overseas manufacturers. Additionally, there is a shortage of sample machinists in London. The French and Italian high-end fashion manufacturers employ 20% of their machinists from local colleges. That is not the case in UK. This weakness in both the skills level and the availability of sample machinists can be addressed via several routes:

Upskilling existing machinists who are working in the industry

Raising young people’s aspirations to access high level training at NVQ level

Upskilling existing machinists who are working in the industry

Learning Skills Council (LSC) Cluster Funds

By accessing LSC funding, employers can be empowered to create unique training programmes to suit the specific needs of the sector. This could be an effective way of delivering training to existing employees within the high-end manufacturing sector. If a group of 25 employers can come together to identify new skill needs, the LSC will fund new training programmes in the workplace for employees aged over 25 years.

Train2Gain

Government funding has already been allocated for a Train2Gain compact amongst the Lead Provider Network. The Train2Gain contract is currently out to tender. For employees who don't already have a full Level 2 qualification, Train2Gain will provide funding for literacy, numeracy and English language skills, plus their first Level 2 qualification. There is also funding available for a number of additional Level 2 qualifications and they will provide full funding for the Level 3 qualification. Given the sensitivities of the sector, it is essential that the training brokers have this sector knowledge. This funding can be accessed by companies to develop bespoke training that will develop their piece workers into sample machinists thereby increasing the capacity in the sector and add value to the individuals and consequently the employers' businesses.

Accreditation of prior learning to support progression

Given that most machinists working in UK fashion manufacturing enter the sector on the basis of prior employment experience rather than through education and training routes, mechanisms need to be developed to ensure that prior learning can be accredited.

Development of existing providers and networks that deliver successfully

There are several options for the provision of training for machinists, some of which have their funding up for renewal. None of them currently address the high-end level of manufacturing skills nor the development from piece worker to sample machinist. However, HEBA and Fashionworks are noted for their contribution to training workers in the fashion sector. Both organisations have an infrastructure and networks in place that could be further developed.

HEBA[65] is a training and enterprise project that provides support to women from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, particularly those from the Bangladeshi community in Spitalfields. They provide machining training from a very basic level with the aim of getting women into paid employment. The scheme does not aim to produce high-end seamstresses, although trainees who have skills are able to progress to further training.

Fashionworks runs 'training activities and advice on sampling and sourcing manufacturers.'[66] Its activities are not specific to the high-end sector and there is a primary focus on designer-makers.

Raising young people's aspirations to access high level training at NVQ level

National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)

Existing NVQs provide core skills but not the whole garment assembly and high-end appreciation that this report has identified as needed. There is definitely room for a specific high-end qualification to be developed. Skillfast-uk would seem well placed to address this if provided with a new set of National Occupational Standards for the higher level. This would provide additional marketing collateral for the sector to attract new entrants and subsequently workers. Skillfast-uk is currently promoting the following existing frameworks and individual qualifications to employers:

ABC Awards Level 2 – NVQ in Manufacturing Sewn Products (NQF) (500/1201/0)
ABC Awards Level 3 - NVQ in Bespoke Cutting and Tailoring (NQF) (500/3778/X)
ABC Awards Level 3 - NVQ in Apparel Manufacturing Technology (QCF) (500/5454/5)
NOCN Level 3 - Skills for the Fashion Industries (Endorsed pathways – open pathway).
BTEC - Level 3 National Diploma in Fashion and Textiles. Edexcel currently working on the review and migration into the QCF

Skillfast-uk notes that Further Education (FE) colleges, which traditionally offered technical day release courses (NVQs), are no longer active in the London area. There is

65 http://www.ssba.info/heba.html.
66 http://www.fashion-works.org.uk.

an NVQ scheme for the Manufacturing Of Sewn Products, but this is currently only being offered by colleges in the East Midlands, North West and South West. Whilst London is the largest region in terms of employment opportunities for the sector, there are no NVQ schemes offered here (nor are there any offered in the East of England, South East, North East, Wales or Northern Ireland). The recommendation is for a wider application of the NVQ scheme to include London.

Development of apprenticeship schemes

The Government has pledged funds for an apprenticeship scheme, which could attract new entrants into the high-end manufacturing industry so that they will be trained from the outset in higher-level skills. The specialised tailoring and accessories apprenticeships described in Section 4.2.6 are examples of this model.

A high-end manufacturing academy

A high-end manufacturing academy' could address the findings of this study concerning skills, including the provision of apprenticeships. However, the provider would need to recognise exactly what the UK designer industry needs and recognise the higher level of practical and aesthetic skills required. It could replicate the Tailoring Academy developed in partnership with Savile Row and Newham College or the partnership between Mulberry and Bridgwater College for leather goods, both of which are funded as further rather than higher education.

Skillfast-uk is researching the feasibility of a 'Couture Academy' in the UK which may be able to address the skills and training needs identified in this study. However, they have identified funding as a potential problem: HEI support will be necessary in order to attact HEFCE funding, if the Academy is to offer a higher education programme. Skillfast-uk has outlined the Academy's various aims, although at the time of writing this report, these had not yet been published. The aims of the proposed Couture Academy are as follows:

A: The components to support the type of approach to training and development that would meet employers' needs already exist within the education system in the UK

B: There needs to be a strong vocational component to all Academy programmes at all levels/years

C: The technical expertise of tutors (i.e. those with strong industry links) and the allocation of lecture/teaching hours needs to reflect the vocational competence levels of graduates expected by employers when seeking to recruit

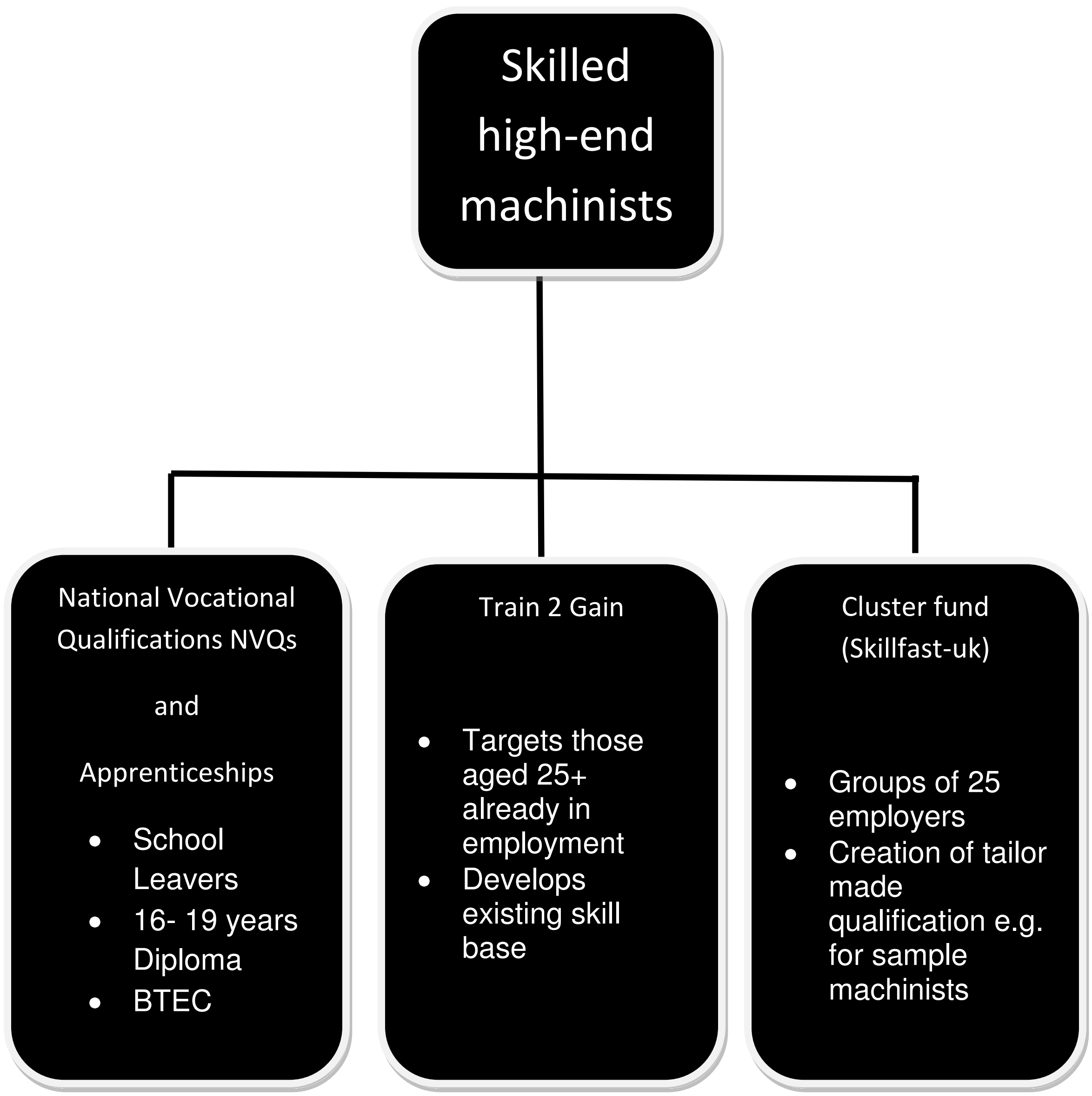
D: A key change in the current delivery model would be a move away from the traditional academic calendar to one that follows the fashion show year

E: The education programme would span a full 5-day week and run for a business year

F: Progression should be possible in the form of: apprenticeships, full-time foundation programmes and masters degrees

G: The Academy programmes would include business, technical and creative options

Figure 4: Training provision for machinist/operator workforce in high-end manufacturing



Improved marketing of the high-end fashion manufacturing sector

Marketing is needed to raise the image of manufacturing in the fashion sector. A 2004 LDA report notes that: “manufacturing continues to suffer from a negative image, particularly among young people entering the labour market and considering career opportunities."[67] This suggests that some work needs to be done with both school leavers and fashion graduates on the role of manufacturing in the fashion industry.

Manufacturers can develop and broker a 'Sector Skills Agreement' - a 'deal' that brings employers together with funding agencies and learning providers with the aim of breaking down barriers that impede skills and training improvements. This scheme also needs to be marketed effectively.

7.3.3 Education and training – production managers

At present there is a shortage of production managers in the designer fashion sector. The skills gaps for production managers are the same as those identified for designers in section 4.2.2. Limited opportunities exist for fashion design graduates to progress into production management roles. Moreover, the production managers interviewed for this study reported that as the number of UK manufacturers declines there are ever fewer opportunities to gain production experience in the UK.

Of the 480 fashion degree courses currently listed on the UCAS website, 93 are foundation degrees that work in partnership with their industry. Of those, only three do not feature fashion design in their content or title, reflecting an emphasis in fashion education on design rather than production. There are few postgraduate courses that specialise in Pattern Cutting and Garment Technology.

Graduate apprenticeships

These could be funded under the Skillfast-uk apprenticeship scheme. The UK Government has pledged funds for Skillfast-uk to create apprenticeships for the sector in partnership with providers. The lack of UK businesses at the high-end of the sector may mean that a partner organisation will need to secure manufacturing internships overseas. This could be accessed by fashion graduates demonstrating an aptitude for technology, skill development and high-end fashion manufacturing, finishing and/or handwork. Any UK apprenticeships should include an international component with companies based in France, Italy and other emerging high-end production regions.

[67] LDA, 2004, p.11.

Continuous professional development and post graduate education

There is also a need for postgraduate training or continuous professional development (CPD) that specialises in production management. This would enable more technically-orientated design graduates to make the transition into relevant industry employment. One such scheme is due to be delivered at LCF starting in September 2009.

It would be valuable to fund scholarships for graduates to study on postgraduate courses in garment technology in countries with a strong reputation for high-end fashion manufacturing, such as Germany and India. They could then return to the UK to build knowledge and capacity in the UK. However, to date no funding for this has been identified.

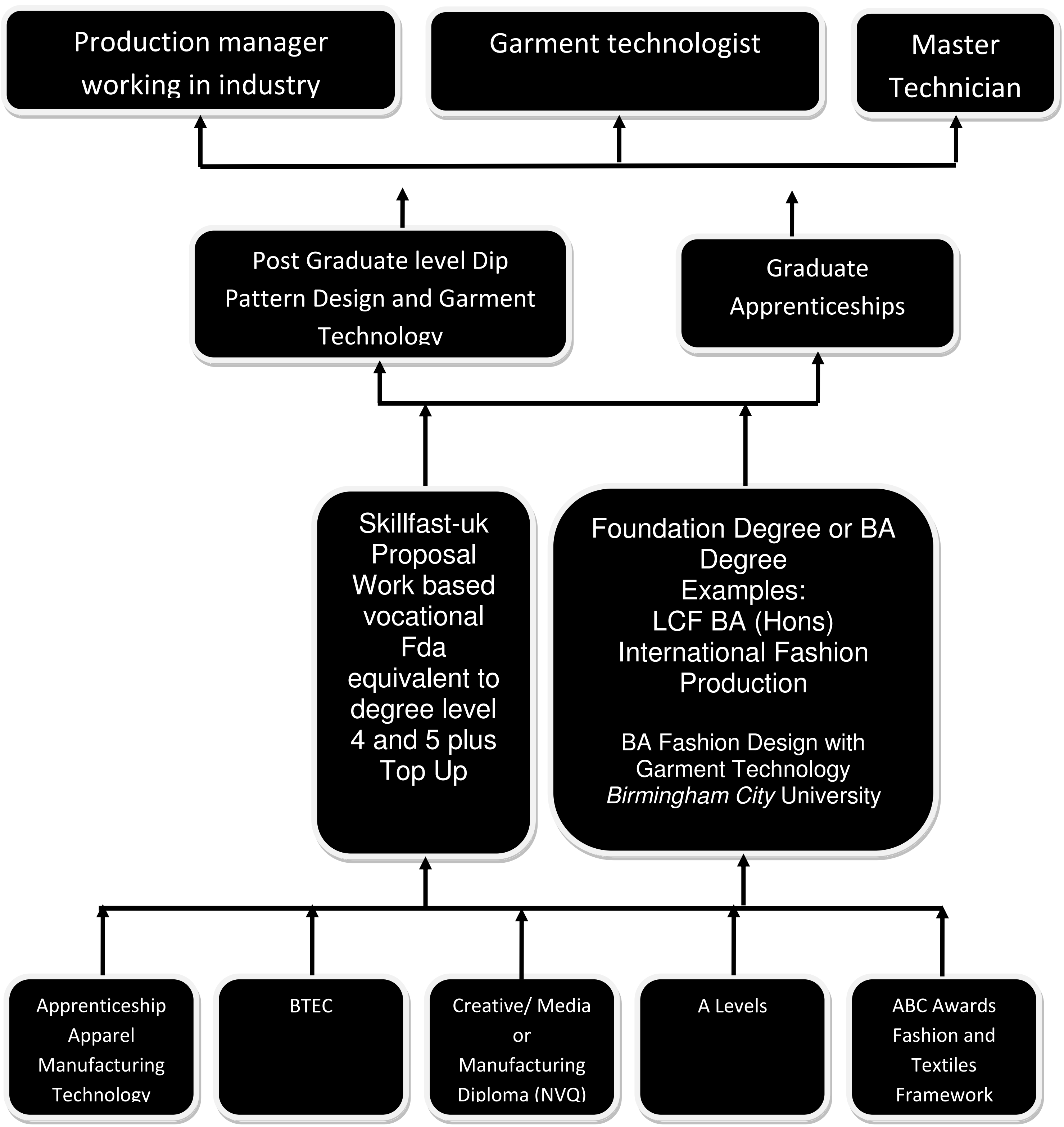
Knowledge Transfer Partnership

A Knowledge Transfer Partnership may be appropriate to any business that can meet the necessary criteria and attract funding to employ a graduate who will bring a new component to the development of the business. This may be a garment technologist, master technician or production manager function that will add a new business function and subsequently grow the business. These can be set up through the Knowledge Transfer bureau at DISC.

7.3.4 Education and training – designers

There is an ongoing debate in fashion education as to whether fashion design students should get better business and management education, or higher technical training, or be developed as creative and innovative designers. The fashion industry business model in France works on the assumption that designers do the design, manufacturing people do the manufacture and business people do the business. This has proven to be a successful business model for high-end fashion business and industry. As discussed in Section 4.2.2, both manufacturers and designers have identified lack of production knowledge as a problematic gap in existing fashion education. This research has also identified a lack of garment technology and production courses at both FE and HE.

Figure 5: Education and training provision for production managers in high-end manufacturing



A number of specific problems requiring particular attention have been identified:

- Knowledge of the production process (including importance of getting manufacturers to produce samples to ensure accurate costings)
- Production management and communicating with manufacturers (based on the LCF courses run through the MSSSP programme)
- Training in use of existing software packages that can help with costing and pricing (e.g. Zedonk)
- Advice/training on negotiation skills with manufacturers and stockists/buyers
- Increased knowledge of and subsequent use of contracts when placing orders with manufacturers

Continued professional development

Short courses and Continued Professional Development (CDP) courses can address these gaps. They should be accredited so that they accumulate towards a higher qualification thus giving better value for money and a sustainable and accountable benefit.

Whilst there are a number of organisations that provide mentoring support to fashion designers and designer/makers in London, there tends to be an emphasis on general business skills rather than specific troubleshooting of production problems. Moreover, existing support schemes aim to serve all London-based designers and therefore do not address the specific needs of the high-end sector. The CFE appears to be the only one focusing on the business development of high-end fashion designers.

In the past there have been attempts to deal specifically with designers' lack of production knowledge: the City Fringe Partnership co-ordinated MSSSP programme in 2006-08; and LCF's former 'Manufacturers Appreciation' two-day courses, which aimed at helping designers learn to communicate effectively with the manufacturers they work with. Regrettably, there have been no subsequent repeats of the courses. A second recommendation under training and education for designers would be to deliver these workshops again.

Postgraduate courses

Postgraduate courses (PGDip programmes) currently offered for designers focus on fashion design, creative pattern-cutting, garment technology and specialist tailoring. None that specifically address production planning and management have been identified. Moreover, PGDip courses tend to be full-time and full-cost. The timing and cost of additional training for designers needs careful planning as few young designers would have much time or money to re-invest in postgraduate education.

Internships

Most degree courses in fashion include a work placement or internship opportunity. Undergraduate fashion students need to be encouraged to take up internships with manufacturers with a view to building production management skills and general appreciation of how a manufacturer works.

Research

Research into the sector is sparse and not widely disseminated. This study has identified some gaps in knowledge that could be addressed by further research:

- Size, scope and categorisation of the UK fashion manufacturing industry in fiscal and quantitative terms. This should include an assessment of: gross turnover of fashion manufacturing in the UK; an estimate of the percentage of this total turnover that relates to high-end (designer) fashion; figures for domestic and export markets in terms of turnover and sales; data on garment categories e.g. dresses, trousers, jackets and ratio for each; number of manufacturers in UK; the business category in which they operate e.g. sampling unit, high-end manufacturer, high-street manufacturer etc.; percentage of sector category representation e.g. designer high-end, high street and so on.

- Further research on the specific details of training conducted in Italian and French training in the high-end fashion manufacturing sector which enables them to successfully and consistently deliver high quality designer garments into the marketplace.

References

British Fashion Council. 2007. Report of the Model Health Inquiry. London: British Fashion Council.

City Fringe Partnership. 2005. Fashion Sector Investment Plan. London.

Creigh-Tyte, A. 2005. Measuring creativity: 'A case study in the UK's Designer Fashion sector.' **Cultural Trends**, 14:2, 157-183

Department for Culture Media and Sport. 1998. Creative Industries Mapping Document. London: DCMS.

Department for Culture Media and Sport. January 2009. Creative Industries Economic Estimates Statistical Bulletin. London: DCMS.

The Apparel & Textile Challenge. 2004. The Designer Manufacturing Handbook. London.

Centre for Innovation and Partnerships. 2006/2007. Fashion Business Support Guide. London.

Frontier Economics. 2006. *Comparative Analysis of the UK's creative industries*.

GLA Economics. 2004. *London's Creative Sector*. London: GLA Economics.

London Development Agency. December 2007. Manufacturing Foresight - Internal London Development Agency document. London: LDA.

London Development Agency. 2004. Production industries in London: Strategy and Action Plan 2005-2008. London: LDA.

NESTA. December 2008. The UK Designer Fashion Economy: value relationships – identifying barriers and creating opportunities for business growth. London: Centre for Fashion Enterprise.

Newbery, M. 2003. A study of t*he UK 'Designer Fashion' sector. Findings and* recommendations. London: Malcolm Newbery Consulting Company.

September 2007.The Report of the Model Health Enquiry.

Roodhouse, S. 2003. Essential facts: the nature of designer fashion and its markets. Bolton: Bolton Institute.

Roodhouse, S. 2004. The New Global Growth Industry: definitional problems in the creative industries – a practical approach. Bolton: Bolton Institute.

Skillfast-uk. July 2007. A sector skills agreement action plan for apparel and sewn products.

Textile and Clothing Strategy Group. March 2005. A mapping study of the cut, make and trim sector in the UK.

WGSN. 2009. WGSN UK Fashion Report 2009.

The Work Foundation. June 2007. *Staying Ahead: the economic performance of the UK's* creative industries. London: Department for Culture Media and Sport.

WWF. 2007. Deeper Luxury.

Websites

www.asa.org.uk/asa/adjudications/

www.berr.gov.uk

www.cityfringe.org.uk

www.craftcentral.org.uk/designermakergallery

www.designermakers.org.uk

www.eef.org.uk

www.fbsg.org.uk

www.fashioncapital.co.uk

www.mas-london.co.uk

http://reports.mintel.com/

www.nesta.org.uk

www.skillfast-uk.org

www.textile-training.com

www.wwf.org.uk/deeperluxury

Appendix 1: The Research Team

The project team brings together expertise from fashion academics within the London College of Fashion and the business expertise of staff at the CFE.

Wendy Malem is the Director of the Centre for Fashion Enterprise and Dean of Enterprise and International Development at London College of Fashion. She is responsible for chairing the steering committee meetings for this research project, aligning the research within the sector and leading the industry champions in shaping the recommendations. She has significant fashion industry experience, holds an MBA, and has ten years of Higher Education senior management in fashion design and entrepreneurship.

The Project Manager for the study is Jan Miller, who is Business Development Manager at the Centre for Fashion Enterprise (CFE). Jan is also responsible for liaising with and co-ordinating the steering committee. Jan has significant experience of successful project management of externally facing projects at CFE and LCF, including significant funding applications and subsequent delivery of ERDF and RDA-funded projects.

The Principal Investigator for this project is Anna König, who is Senior Research Fellow at the CFE and Lecturer at London College of Fashion. She completed her MA at the London College of Fashion in 2002, and has been a lecturer at LCF since then. In addition to several academic publications, she has written for The Times and The Guardian on the subjects of education and fashion respectively.

Sara Martins Poltorak is a PhD student at Goldsmiths, University of London. She co-ordinated the data collection and compiled statistical information for the project. Sara also conducted the interviews with French manufacturers and with the APHO representative.

The Research Assistants, Hannah Jones, Katie Jackman and Nana Adusei-Poku conducted the majority of the interviews with designers and manufacturers.

Enrico Venturini, from Next Technology – Tecnotessile, conducted the interviews with Italian manufacturers.

Appendix 2: Steering Group membership

Wendy Malem	Director CFE, Chair
Jan Miller	BDM CFE, Project Manager
Anna König	Senior Research Fellow, LCF
Sara Martins Poltorak	Senior Researcher
Roland Mouret	Creative Director, Roland Mouret
Kinga Kochowitz	Production Manager, Betty Jackson
Barbara McSloy	Production Manager, Richard Nicoll
Helen Clarke	Production Manager, Margaret Howell
Claire Hendrey	Production Manager, Paul Smith
David Mason	Director, Nutters
Nigel Rust	EEF (formerly MAS)
Martin Stone	British Fashion Council
Angela Pugh	NESTA
Wendy Parker	DCMS
Judith Rosser Davies	Senior Project Manager, LDA
Chas Hubbard	Skills Director, Skillfast-uk
Justine Wright	Skillfast-uk

Appendix 3: List of interviewees – companies and individuals

Hirana Ltd.
The Sampling Unit Ltd.
GE Design Ltd.
Style Shake
Yesevi
Rocky Garments
Barbara & Justyna Tailoring
Maderite Ltd.
Kerry Hope Ltd.
New Planet Fashions
+ Samples Ltd.
Kash’s Studio
Catherina Eden Ltd.
Norris Raymond
Classic Cuts
Crossbow Fashions Ltd.
Bruni Couture
Fonlupt Simon
Sefa
Styl Couture
Textile du Maine
Cipriani S.p.A.
Luca Venturini
David di Ferrari Bruno

Betty Jackson Ltd.
Margaret Howell Ltd.
Georgina Harley-Smith
Cassette Playa
Louis de Gama
House of Holland
Braganza Studios
Marios Schwab
Peter Pilotto
Emmeline 4 Re
Jo Sykes
Danielle Scutt
AnnaKarenina Designs and Corsetry
CoOperation Design
Jojo & Malou
Jasmine de Milo
Steph Aman
Feather London
Labour of Love
Uma Miy
Carte Blanche
K3 Japan
Super Sweet
Co Chine Chine

H. Lorenzo
Asos
Sotris
A La Moda
Van Ravenstein
Coming Soon
Circus
KNIQ
Start London
Jenko
Paul Smith Ltd.
Adam Mansell
Charline Fuzeau
Mauro Chezzi
Confezioni Marvi
Fashion Life Style

Appendix 4: Terms of reference (acronyms and abbreviations used in the report)

APHO	Association de Promotion de. l'Habillement de l'Ouest
BCIA	British Clothing Industry Association
BERR	Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform
BFC	British Fashion Council
BOS	British Occupational Standards
CFE	Centre for Fashion Enterprise
CFP	City Fringe Partnership
CMT	Cut, make and trim
CSF	Centre for Sustainable Fashion
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
DFMA	Designer and Fashion Manufacturer Alliance
DISC	Designer Innovation and Sampling Centre
EEF	The manufacturers' organisation
EFF	Ethical Fashion Forum
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
FE	Further Education
HE	Higher Education
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEIF	Higher Education Innovation Fund
KTP	Knowledge Transfer Partnership
LCF	London College of Fashion
LDA	London Development Agency
MAS	Manufacturing Advisory Service
NESTA	National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
QC	Quality Control
SMI	Sistema Moda Italia
TSB	Technology Strategy Board
UKFT	UK Fashion and Textiles Association

Appendix 5: Evaluation of manufacturers

UK manufacturer	Score (maximum 55)
M201	32
M202	31
M203	12
M204	26
M205	26
M206	15
M207	32
M208	9
M209	10
M210	19
M211	33
M212	19
M213	32
M214	28
M216	38
F1 French	46
F2 French	45
F3 French	46
F4 French	33
It1 Italian	47
It2 Italian	46
It3 Italian	46
It4 Italian	46

Appendix 6: Fashion Sector Support organisations

Organisation / scheme name	Description
BERR **Dept for Business Enterprise & Regulatory Reform**	Fashion & Clothing no longer a priority sector for BERR. It is dealt with by the RDAs according to their own sectoral policies.
British Clothing Industry Association (BCIA)	(extract from website) Now merged wit UK Fashion Exports to become UK Fashion and Textiles (UKFT). The British Clothing Industry Association (BCIA) and its export division, UK Fashion Exports (UKFE), sit at the core of their market, working for the benefit of fashion, clothing and knitting businesses across the UK. BCIA guides and advises its members on all the essential aspects of running a business and supplying clothing and knitwear to the global marketplace. Through UKFE it gives help and advice on how to achieve sales in overseas markets. The British Clothing Industry Association (BCIA) provides secretariat support to a number of other trade associations. Over the past 10 years it has developed a strategy of helping associations maintain their services to their members whilst at the same time bringing them under the umbrella of 5 Portland Place. This has helped create a critical mass of associations within the clothing and textile sector and given the members a position in a much wider network. However it does not have a strategy for high-end manufacturing.
British Fashion Council	The BFC promote their New Gen scheme which serves as a prestigious launch pad to showcase the best up-and-coming British fashion talent. It also acts as an important introduction for young UK-based designers to influential press and buyers. Catwalk designers receive £5000 - £10000 towards their show costs, sponsored Exhibition space, usage of the BFC Catwalk tent and mentoring. Recognising the need for ongoing support, this scheme can be awarded to designers for up to four seasons. Designers receive access to sales and marketing support and business advice in partnership with BFC corporate supporters.

Centre for Fashion Enterprise	The CFE has positioned itself as the sole provider exclusively focusing on business support for London's emerging high-end / luxury fashion product designers. It strategically works alongside and in partnership with other key organizations, whose focus is primarily on the launch and showcasing of new and emerging designers. CFE support includes 360° business support, high level advice and coaching tailored to each business, investment opportunities and access to facilities.
Centre for Sustainable Fashion	Summer 2009 sees the CSF launching a programme of workshops and tailored advice to support London based fashion design businesses in analysing their business practices and implementing change for a sustainable future. Workshops will cover design, production, materials/sourcing, communications and new technology, working towards building an innovative and sustainable business management system. Beneficiaries will also be supported in creating a code of conduct for their business and their suppliers. The programme will be free of charge for eligible businesses.
Chartered Society of Designers	A professional body for designers; fashion is one of seven design areas represented and is the third most popular membership group. Training is primarily CPD (continuous professional development), business-focussed rather than skills-focussed. Applicants have to pass an assessment in order to become a member (will look into what this entails).
City Fringe Partnership	Broad focus on fashion and clothing sector. No high-end focus Ran the MSSSP project funded by the LDA between 2006-08 focusing on provision of support to London's manufacturers (not specifically high-end); also some support (but less of a priority) to Designer. Partners included LCF, London MAS, LARC, Fashion Capital. Currently negotiating new funding. So no support currently available to the sector. They saw the Fashion Expo as very successful, although no high-end designers interviewed as part of this research had heard of it. They offered valuable ' Manufacturers Appreciation' courses: 2 day courses aimed at ensuring designers are able to communicate with Manufacturers. They have an ERDF project awaiting approval, but its focus is on export growth for designers and manufacturers. It is not thought to include any Designer-manufacturer communication or partnership support. Nor is it aimed at the high-end. It has a very broad reach. City Fringe partnership ceased trading in 2009.
Clerkenwell	provide business training for their members (who are across the creative

Green Association	industries), but report that nobody has asked about skills for high-end fashion
Cockpit Arts	Business incubator / list of designer makers. About 30% are high-end fashion / textiles. Used to direct some enquiries to LARC, but now struggle to find appropriate training. Anecdotally, one member was unable to find a course to improve grading skills, so ended up using outworkers, sourced by word-of-mouth. They don't themselves offer technical skills training as they cover too many different disciplines (i.e. the needs of a ceramicist are very different to those of a high-end fashion designer). Cockpit Arts Also reported difficulties around finding suitable UK production UK facilities although some members are specifically seeking this as it fits with their brand. Building a database / network of manufacturers.
CreativeCapital	Signpost training rather than offer it and report a low number of fashion-related enquiries, although they do receive some enquiries about sustainability. This may be due to their current focus on arts rather than design: they are looking to develop their involvement with fashion, but limited resources currently prevents development in this area.
Ethical Fashion Forum	Deals with all levels of the fashion industry, but their New Entrepreneurs programme is targeted towards designers looking to start up a fashion business with a strong focus on sustainability. EFF also offers training in the form of networking seminars and masterclasses around specific issues such as ethical sourcing. They noted a "hole left by LARC" in terms of production.
Fashion Capital	The Workshop, linked to has its own production unit although it is unclear what proportion of users are high-end designers. They also offer tailor-made courses in practical skills such as CAD CAM. This is a self-financing, privately-funded enterprise.
Fashion Works	Broad focus on fashion and clothing sector. No high-end focus Runs 'funded' consultancy and training activities: advice on business start-up, sourcing manufacturers etc. Not specific to high-end, Main focus is on support to designers, Designer / makers. Currently awaiting feedback from ERDF on project funding applications.
HEBA	Broad focus on fashion and clothing sector. No high-end focus HEBA is a training and enterprise project which provides support to women from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, particularly those from the Bangladeshi community in Spitalfields. They provide machining training from a very basic level to get women back into work. It is not aiming to produce high-

	end seamstresses. Although those 'trainees' who have skills can obviously progress on. Through the CFP's investment HEBA trains women in garment production, giving them skills which lead to flexible employment. To support this HEBA also provides auxillary services such as childcare as well as further ESOL and IT training. HEBA also brokers commercial piece work for their beneficiaries through its production unit, which has recently worked with a number of organisations using recycled materials and ethical production techniques.
London MAS	A contract is soon to be re-issued from the LDA. In the past funding period, they did not have a specific fashion/tailoring programme. All support was tailored one-to-one. It was free up to 3 days, then 50% thereafter. Typical support would have included: Strategic review; Manufacturing review; Training review; Lean manufacturing, (and training for lean); Sales and marketing support and strategies; Internal systems development
Manufacturing Technology Centre , Coventry	Collaboration between Advantage West Midlands and East Midlands Development Agency To be opened in 2010 Focus on regional manufacturing strengths and promoting a low carbon economy The centre will include industrial scale pre-production and demonstration facilities
Ministerial Advisory Group on Manufacturing	http://www.berr.gov.uk/whatwedo/sectors/manufacturing/strategyreview2008/page45271.html **One of the five major dynamics identified as shaping the manufacturing sector is:** **'The increased recognition that investment in people and skills is among the most important for companies to make'**
National Skills Academy for Manufacturing	Government supported initiative, focusing on employer led training. RDAs have a big input. Focus very much on heavy engineering sectors such as Aerospace, Automotive, Marine, Electrical, Electronics, Metals, Engineered Metals and Bioscience. www.nsa-m.co.uk
Newham College of FE - Centre for	Broad focus on fashion and clothing sector. No high-end focus The training they provide is aimed at employers. Typical training includes

Innovation and Partnerships (CIPs)	courses on photo-shop, illustrator, trend forecasting. Dedicated training facilities; can train up to 20 at one time; fully used at present. Either 3 week on a Sat, or 6 weeks as an evening course. "Nothing aimed specifically at the high end", "some" enquiries", but currently not enough to warrant course provision They have an ERDF project 'London Style' (2008-2010) which is awaiting contract signature, offering business support to London based fashion, jewellery and accessories designers. It does not include Designer-manufacturer communication or partnership support. Nor is it aimed at the high-end. It has a very broad reach.
R&D Tax Credits	Definition of R & D for Tax purposes (*extracted from 'R&D Tax Credits. What's In It For You?; DIUS*) "Just catching up with lots of other companies can do isn't R&D: the work needs to be a genuine advance (though not necessarily a huge one). Work has to fall within the definition of R&D used for tax purposes. Your work may be R&D if it meets these tests: Does it involve developing scientific or technological knowledge that isn't commercially available? What scientific or technological challenges have had to be overcome? (These have to be uncertainties that competent professionals can't readily resolve, and where solutions aren't common knowledge.) Rules There are some detailed rules you need to check before claiming. For example, only some costs qualify, and there's a minimum spend of £10,000 a year on R&D, as defined for tax purposes."
Skillfast-uk	(extract from website) Skillfast-uk's task is to overcome [these] barriers, and help employers to improve their productivity through better skills. To do this, Skillfast-uk aims to: 1. Develop and broker a "Sector Skills Agreement" - a "deal" which brings employers together with funding agencies and learning providers to break down the key barriers to improving skills and training 2. Transform learning supply, by helping the mainstream education system to understand employers' needs, and by developing constructive relationships between employers and institutions 3. Ensure qualifications are fit-for-purpose. If we are to use qualifications as a basis for training, then qualifications should reflect the way the industry works, and the skills employers need. We intend to revise qualifications that are not fit-for-purpose, develop new qualifications where they are needed, and "delist"

	qualifications that are no longer relevant to the industry's needs.
Technology Strategy Board	Funding/Investment in new innovations Companies can access funding to support collaborative research projects, but they need to have an emphasis on innovation Definitely not applicable to support businesses to simply catch up with their competitors
Train 2 Grain	**Can skills brokers recommend sector-specific training?** Train to Gain works with the Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) to identify the specific skills needs of each business sector. Your skills broker will have the expertise to offer sector-specific skills advice. **Working together: SSCs and Train to Gain** To meet the needs of all business sectors, we are setting up agreements - called sector compacts - to work together with the SSCs. This means you can be sure your skills broker, college and training provider will understand how your business sector operates and the recent developments that affect your specific skills needs. The agreements let us fund high-level training in the skills that matter to each sector. The SSCs offer expert understanding of their sector and can pinpoint training that delivers real business benefits. You can get extra support from January 2009, including more fully funded training, and funding for smaller, focused training programmes for small and medium sized private sector businesses. • **First full Level 2 qualification (equivalent to 5 good GCSEs)** For employees who don't already have a full Level 2 qualification, we provide funding for literacy, numeracy and English language skills, plus their first Level 2 qualification. There is funding available for a number of additional Level 2 qualifications. Just contact your skills broker, college or training provider to find out more. • **Contributions to Level 3 qualifications (equivalent to 2 A-levels)** For employees with a Level 2 qualification, we'll contribute significantly towards the cost of a Level 3 qualification. For employees who don't have a Level 2 qualification but have the skills to progress straight to Level 3, we will provide full funding for the Level 3 qualification. For those who already possess a Level 3 qualification or above there is funding available for a number of additional Level 3 qualifications. Just contact your skills broker, college or training provider to find out more. For those employees who are aged 19-25 we provide full funding for a Level 3 qualification. • **Apprenticeship programmes** Funding is available for Apprenticeships and advanced Apprenticeships. • **Leadership and management skills** NEW For organisations in the private sector with **5** to **250** employees, we offer an in-depth skills analysis for owner/managers, plus grant support of up to £1000 to develop leadership and management skills. • **Contribution to wage costs** For small businesses (less than 50 employees), we'll contribute to the cost of

	your staff spending time away from work undertaking agreed training.
UK Design Skills Alliance : UK Design Academy	UK Design Skills Alliance includes members from Creative and Cultural Skills Council, DCMS, Design Council and others. The Alliance says they will work towards ensuring the UK design sector has the skills required by manufacturers to compete in global markets www.ukdesignskills.com It includes educational programme and mentoring schemes. No specific reference or application to the issues tackled in our Study
UKFT	A newly formed organisation that brings together the BCIA and UK Fashion Exports as well as several smaller service providers and organisations. It was formed in 2009 to bring all the organizations at 5 Portland Place together under one umbrella. The new Board members have yet to meet and yet to decide policy.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive. Apologies are given to any projects or organisations that have been overlooked.