Special Feature Here to help **YOU** Issue Two - June/July 2002 Cashflow is King! Everything you need to know about how to raise finance London Manufacturers Showcase On June 20th = Don't miss out! African Majesty "The Gathering of Africa's Best"

2/3 News Bites

Recent news relevant to the industry

- 4 Profile on Doreen Adusel The latest intallment in our continuing series of profiles on LFF personnel
- 4 Courage to Change -The story of London Fashion
- 5 Cover Feature: An African Majesty Winner of the coveted 'The Gathering of Africa's Best' Award
- 6/7 Special Feature: Cashflow is King! Comprehensive guide to raising finance
- 8 The Euro Now the sole currency for the majority of the EU - what you need to know
- 8 The Joint Fashion Industry Team Here to help you understand Government Regulations
- 9 Trade Partners UK Profile on this issue's main sponsors
- 10 Dimension Link -**Electronic Measuring Tape**
- 12 Events Diary and Useful Contacts This issue we list details on major retailers



London Fashion Forum Newsletter Issue 2

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We reach an audience of 2,000 (London) businesses - from right across the spectrum of the fashion industry. If you would like to advertise in future editions of London Fashion Forum newsletter, classified or display, please discuss your requirements and get our rates from Jenny Holloway. Call Jenny now on 020 8462 1475.

Thank you GOL & TPUK

Our thanks go to Trade Partners UK and Government Office for London for kindly sponsoring this edition of the London Fashion Forum newsletter.

news&views from the Chair



David Jones, Chairperson for the London Fashion Forum reports:

The last quarter has proved to be good for retailers with Selfridges flagship store in Oxford Street reporting sales up 16% and Marks and Spencer up 12.6%. It is excellent to see the retail economy so buoyant but I still believe that all the

segments of the clothing and textiles industry including designers, CMT, manufacturers and retailers need to be cautious and, in particular, carefully monitor their cash flow.

One of the major reasons for business failure is not lack of sales or sub-quality products but a squeeze on cash flow. In this issue we have extensively researched all available sources of information from government bodies, business support organisations (BSO's) and financial institutions to provide a first ever, unbiased and comprehensive listing of all financial help available from grants to loans. All contact details and criteria required to access the grants and loans have been set out for you on the centre pages... remember the LFF are HERE TO HELP YOU.

I am also extremely pleased to report that LFF are helping to coordinate the introduction of a Clothing and Textiles Portal system. The aim is to provide a simple one-stop information and access point for all sectors of the industry. The portal will also facilitate and promote e-business and business-to-business contact at all levels of trading activity. LFF are arranging a seminar to take place on the 28th and 29th May at the London Development Agency, St. Katherine's Dock, London. Anyone wishing to attend should contact Jenny Holloway: Tel 020 8462 1475. The industry has been waiting a long time to coordinate everyone together and provide a one-stop shop for the industry.

Another significant development has been the launch of Skillfast-UK. The LFF were invited to attend the launch on 23rd April at Lancaster House in London. The clothing and textiles industry is only one of six sectors that has a "trailblazer" status and hence is great news for our industry. See page 3 for further details on how Skillfast can benefit you.

Finally, the LFF is pleased to report that since the last newsletter our membership has doubled and we are becoming more and more integrated with grass roots projects that benefit a wide cross section within the clothing industry. To help facilitate the LFF growth I would also like to welcome Valerie Siveyer, the new Secretariat, who will be working alongside Jenny Holloway, the Project Manager and the rest of the dedicated committee members of the LFF.

The future bodes well for our industry and the LFF is here to help make it happen.

David Tones - May 2002

Supply Chain Service for London has a new home

The London Regional Supply Office (LRSO) which has been offering its supply chain development services to London businesses since 1995 has transferred to Business Link for London. This will enable them to offer a more comprehensive and integrated offer to their clients.

The LRSO will continue to offer:

- a development service to enable clients to improve their positions within supply chains;
- a supply chain creation programme to enhance design and innovation linkage to manufacture (in order to get new products off the ground).

In addition, they are actively developing a supply chain knowledge centre to help clients access the newest and most up to date information on how to improve your supply chain efficiency. For further details please ring 020 7010 1000 or contact Andrew Figgis - Supply Chain Advisor directly on 020 7010 1463.

New Sector Skills Councils

Building on the good work of the three National Training Organisations (NTO's), Sector Skills Councils have been set up by business for business. The Councils will form a new network giving employers a stronger voice in the planning and delivery of learning and skills. The Government's aim is that the Sector Skills Councils will help the UK to achieve a faster rise in productivity than our main competitors abroad. So far five new 'trailblazer' Councils have been set up and two are relevant to the fashion industry, and we attended the launch of one of these.....

Skillfast-UK Launch 23rd April 2002

On 23rd April the LFF was invited to attend the official launch of Skillfast-UK at Lancaster House, St. James' Palace. Skillfast-UK is the Sector Skills Council for the apparel, footwear and textiles industry. The council, made up of leading industry figures, will provide a new collective voice for the sector to address skills and training issues.

Skillfast-UK has been formed by the industry and three former NTO's: CAPITB Trust, NTTO and FLNTO. Their objectives are to increase skills and productivity within the industry. Skillfast-UK brings together employers, professional bodies, trade unions and government to work on developing skills needed to boost the industry. Through

Skillfast-UK employers will have the opportunity to influence government to ensure the right numbers of people are trained in the right skills to meet the needs of the industry.

Through Skillfast-UK, employers will have the opportunity to influence government spending plans for education and training at the highest

introduced on Company Cars

Pay Up! New Taxes

level. This will ensure that the right numbers of people are trained in the right skills to meet the needs of the industry as it changes.

Douglas Alexander, Minister for E-Commerce and Competitiveness speaking at the launch said:

"The bringing together of these organisations offers the potential to build on the solid

foundation they have set and I very much welcome that. The challenge will be for the SSC to develop a cohesive and strategic approach to training in these sectors, sectors which are constantly evolving. Skillfast will lead to a more focused skills policy – business will have the means to influence skills policy directly and to tell Government what is

truly needed to meet business needs."

There will be a number of offices around the country including one for London and the South.

For further information please contact Skillfast-UK: Tel 0113 227 3333 Fax: 0113 227 3388 email: enquiries@skillfast-uk.org

UK Classic Womenswear Exhibition at NEC B'ham

As of 6 April 2002 a new tax system has been introduced for company cars. The tax due will be calculated using a percentage of the list price, which will vary according to the level of carbon dioxide emissions. & 13 August 2002.

A minimum charge of 15% of the car's value will apply to cars emitting CO2 at or below a specified qualifying level, measured in (g/km). The charge will increase in 1% increments for every additional 5g/km over that level up to a maximum of 35% of the car's price.

Additionally there will be a supplement of 3% on the list price for diesel cars registered on or after 1 January 1998 up to a maximum of 35%, but this will be waived for cars meeting the EU standard for cleaner cars. Cars without an approved figure of CO2 emissions will be taxed on their engine size.

Further details can be found at the website www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/cars or call the Inland Revenue Inquiry Line on 020 7667 4001, alternatively contact your local tax office.

It has been decided that there will not be a womenswear exhibition at Harrogate this summer. Instead the focus will be on the Moda UK exhibition at the NEC, Birmingham on 11, 12

There is some disappointment over the demise of the Harrogate show as the venue was seen as prestigious and was more accessible for buyers from Scotland and the North. On the other hand there is some feeling that splitting the shows has resulted in a loss of confidence in the UK show market.

However, the general consensus seems to be that concentrating on one venue will stop confusion and maximise returns for the investment in the show. It is thought that one larger event will attract more serious buyers with larger purchase power.

For further details contact Moda on: Tel 01484 846079, Fax 01484 846232, Email info@sflmarketing, Website www.moda-uk.co.uk.

The 2nd London **Manufacturers Showcase** confirmed for June

Venue: London College of Fashion, 20 John Princes St. W1 Date: Thursday 20th June 2002 Time: 12pm set up for 2pm start,

closing at 6pm

The long awaited sequel to the first London Manufacturers Showcase has been booked and it is now the time to sign up 49 manufacturers to exhibit* at this very important event.

Last year we had over a hundred visitors from the likes of Arcadia, House of Fraser. Debenhams, Takashimaya (Japanese Export), Amanda Wakeley, Betty Jackson, Whistles, Per Una, Reebok, Tristan Webber and Clements Ribeiro.

Orders were placed and sucessful business deals were done. This really is the only event of its kind.

One company received an order of 1500 units from House of Fraser and were subsequently introduced to Allders and opened an account with them.

A bag manufacturer received orders from 12 designers and has received many more as a consequence of producing for these designers.

This event will be bigger and better than the last. The venue is the newly constructed Rootstein Hopkins Space in the London College of Fashion, which is centrally located and in close proximity to many of the major buying offices. Arcadia, Debenhams and Marks and Spencer are situated within a stones throw as are many suppliers' offices.

This event will be heavily promoted to ensure we get as much coverage as possible. This in turn will attract more buyers and hopefully more business.



Can you really afford not to attend?

For details please call Cutting Edge on 020 7010 1234 Fax: 020 8493 8845

*Exhibition Fee will apply. Details on application.

Each issue we profile a member of the LFF Steering Goup, this issue....



Doreen Adusei MDes (RCA)

Doreen Adusei is the founder and creative director of Fashionworks, a product development consultancy for the fashion industry, which offers industry-led skills training.

After leaving the Royal College of Art with a Masters degree, she went on to design and oversee the production of collections for Hennes, Harvey Nichols and Liberties. She developed her forecasting and predicting skills at Courtaulds; and went on to become a lecturer in Fashion Design and Illustration at Loughborough University. She became Deputy Head of Department in 1987.

By 1994 her skills as a designer, and her insight into the fashion business and its needs, led her to originate her consultancy. Fashionworks is a unique source of design, technical and production consultancy and support to the industry. The establishment of Fashionworks has initiated a new kind of practical knowledge transfer to owners, managers, workforces and college graduates, acting as a catalyst for the industry.

Since its inception, Fashionworks, with its powerful team of senior collaborators, has conducted over two hundred projects. Each project demonstrates a passion for quality and beauty, combined with a pragmatic determination to achieve practical success for its business clients.

Fashionworks is sponsored by the European Union and the London Development Agency and works in partnership with Islington Enterprise Agency and other business support organisations.

Fashionworks "Strength through creativity, success through quality."

- 64 Essex Road, N1 8LR
- 020 7704 9747
- doreen1367@aol.com

Courageto Change

The Story of London Fashion

Words: Ralph Bernstein Pictures: José Mendonca

n the world of business every change of circumstances brings a wave of upheaval. New technologies, shifting consumer taste and moving patterns of global commerce produce both tragedies, and victories. Rigidity, fear and inertia cause failure, but within every success is a story of an individual's courage and ability to recognise their environment, adapt and change.

London has been the scene of such dramas for centuries and none more so than in the field

of textiles and fashion. The vitality and creativity of London fashion is famous world wide, and behind the headline glamour and excitement lies a powerful supporting structure of skills and production.

Through the 80's, as the centre of volume production shifted increasingly away from London, Mr Isa realised that by broadening his view he could take advantage of London's special qualities of fashion flair and skill. Already a strong manager, he used his broad vision to redirect himself towards quality and flexibility on smaller runs with added value.

In 1994 he felt ready to found Homme Designs limited in the London borough of Hackney. Attention to detail, pride in quality and

> a determination to provide a helpful service enabled him to build a business manufacturing his clients orders, whilst gradually moving towards specialist design-led production. This meant new

The world will mot

The ultimate business skill is the confidence to change

stand still



eminent position in the world, the industry in London has had to confront formidable problems. In particular, low cost production from South East Asia, the Balkans, Turkey and North Africa has meant that London needs to re-focus itself and find new patterns of competitive advantage.

Mr Bullent Isa, proprietor and managing director of Homme Designs Ltd, has shown what can be done to meet the challenge of change.

When he started work in 1973 as a cotton cleaner, volume production was the order of the day and over the next twenty years he learnt to practice a wide range of skills. He could turn his hand to almost any aspect of garment making, as well as learning how to manage production and how to understand fabrics. Over the years he grew to see the importance of grasping the whole context of his work, so that garments were not just items that had to be routinely manufactured, but also designed, marketed, cared for and taken pride in.

skills and new attitudes in the fields of creativity and marketing.

Help was available. Two arms of the DTI were ready, with Trade Partners offering export advice and contact with potential overseas clients, and Business Link offering

support and advice in Hackney.

In addition, Fashionworks, the product and design development consultancy which operates in east London, gained funding from the European Regional Development Fund and provided Mr Isa with in-house training and support.

Going from strength to strength, he has established a strong customer base for his quality assured manufacturing and production at home and abroad, including impressive penetration of the Japanese market.

Homme Designs Ltd T/A Isa Apparel Unit 4 Millers Avenue, Dalston, E8 2DS **Contact: Bulent Isa** Tel: 020 7923 3098 Fax: 020 7923 3098 E-mail: Hommesdsns@aol.com

Winner of the coverted 'The Gathering of Africa's Best' Award

AnAfricanMajesty

n Africa's present day context where its artists and designers draw considerably on their cultural and historical heritage, fashion clearly presents a link between the past, present and future.

Princess Adelaide Ofori Olagbaju, born

into the 500 year old Panin dynasty in the eastern region of Ghana, is a textile designer and business woman who aspires to fabricate an African modernity that addresses the aspiration and

richness of the post colonial era. Adelaide made her mark in the business word as an executive director at Brian Munro Ltd in Ghana where she oversaw large accounts like Johnny Walker, Gordon's Gin and Heinz to name but a few. After leaving

Brian Munro, Adelaide established her own business, Dachel and Company Ltd, to distribute and manage accounts for companies such as British Overseas & Export as well as acting as the sole agent for companies like

In 1982 Adelaide left Ghana for Lagos with her Nigerian husband where they established a Nigerian operation of Dachel & Company Ltd. It was in Nigeria where Adelaide developed her passion for traditional African textiles into a signature hybrid design known as Kente-Oke while also constructing a purpose built loom with which she could recreate her designs

Friesland Frico Domo.

By introducing the rich metallic yarns and colours that she found in traditional Nigerian textiles (Aso-Oke) to the intricate and ancient weaving techniques employed in Ghana for the ceremonial dress of its kings and queens (Kente), Adelaide had taken her first steps towards recreating a tradition for the modern market place.

The popularity of her textiles doubled overnight and to keep up with the demand she devised a way to achieve high quality work for the mass market as well as putting money back into the local community. With the help of a United Nations Development Grant

Adelaide Olagbaju houses impoverished and destitute women, training and employing them in the art of Kente-Oke for which they receive a regular income. Furthermore she has set up a crèche to accommodate the needs of her weavers further. She now distributes to eleven countries across the globe. Adelaide's tireless efforts to

> create subtle, sophisticated and beautiful cloths that can be used for bridal, formal, casual, corporate and everyday wear with readily available matching accessories that are accessible to the world inspired her to base her day-to-day operation in London's bustling Kensington Olympia. It is here that she runs her growing business and a shop, African Majesty, which sells Kente-Oke fabrics, clothes, soft furnishings, beautiful accessories and iewellery that incorporates Western, Oriental and Atrican styles offering

entirely new colours, blends and materials.

As well as receiving an award for excellence in portraying Africa and African Fashion and Fabrics in a positive light from The Gathering Of Africa's Best. She has also become the voice of the African textile industry reporting on ethnic styles and trends as seen on the catwalk at London Fashion Week for BBC World News. Kente-Oke has been exhibited in the Central Arena at the Millennium Dome, the Living In Colour Exhibition and the Ebony Bridal Exhibition and is also due to be exhibited at Portcullis House, House of Commons, on the 15th of July 2002.

For information on private showings please contact African Majesty 011 44 207 751 1080, email: dacheluk@aol.com, Website: www.africanmajesty.com.

Her clients include: First Lady of Ghana, First Lady of Nigeria, Miss World, Femi Kuti, Sonti Mndebele, Kanya King, Lady Ademola, Janet Boateng, Issac & Marian Osei (Ghanaian High Commissioner).









CashflowisKing

here are times in all businesses when cash flow is tight. A debtor delays payment, a dispute over quality arises delaying payment – the list can go on and on, but business can't. The bank manager needs to be kept happy and the only way this is achieved is to ensure you have sufficient funds to pay cheques raised. So, when there is a squeeze on cash flow, what help is out there to aid businesses to pay the bills?

"I need money"

Questions you need to ask yourself:

- 1. Are any grants available to help me?
 There are grants available from the DTI
 backed Small Business Service for various
 purposes. Also see The Princes Trust and
 Shell Livewire.
- 2. Do you have a good proven track record?

 If yes, then try a loan, overdraft, or perhaps factoring is an option.
- 3. Are you prepared to have joint ownership?
 If your company is capable of growing rapidly and is in a strong market position you may consider Venture Capital or Business Angels.

4. Why do you need money?

- Investment in plant, machinery?
 See the Regional Enterprise Grant Scheme for London and Regional Selective Assistance.
- Investment in technology?
 See Smart and UK On-line for Business
- Setting up a new business?
 See the Princes Trust, Shell Livewire and New Deal.

So what does all this mean?

There are five main areas of receiving financial aid:

1. LOANS

• Small Firms Loan Scheme

This initiative guarantees loans from the banks and other financial institutions for small firms that have viable business proposals but who have failed to get a conventional loan because of lack of security. Loans are available for between 2-10 years on sums from £5000 -£100,000 (£250,000 if a business has been trading for more than two years).

The government-backed agency Small Business Service guarantees 70% of the loan (85% if trading for more that two years). In return for the guarantee you, the borrower, pays the Small Business Service a premium of 1.5% per year on the outstanding amount of the loan. This premium is reduced to 0.5% if the loan is taken out at a fixed rate of interest. Further discussions regarding the loan amount, interest rate etc. are matters that need to be discussed by you and your bank.

The banks that participate in the scheme are:

- Bank of Ireland
- Bank of Scotland
- Barclays Bank
- Clydesdale BankCo-operative Bank
- Doncaster Business Centre
- First Trust Bank/Allied Irish Banks
- HSBC Bank
- Lloyds TSB Group
- London Enterprise Agency
- Northern Bank
- National Westminster Bank
- Northern Venture Managers Ltd
- Royal Bank of Scotland
- UK Steel Enterprise
- Ulster Bank
- Venture Finance plc
- Yorkshire Bank
- Yorkshire Enterprise Ltd

For further information contact any of the lenders or SBS Loan Guarantee Unit:

Tel: 0114 2597308/9 Fax: 0114 2597316 E-mail: sflgs@sbs.gsi.gov.uk SBS also operate a 24hr helpline on 0845 600 9006. There is also a website accessed via the Business Link site: www.businesslink.org.

Remember, forms need to be filled in and it takes time to process the applications. You need to forecast your cash requirements in advance to benefit from this scheme.

London Business Start-up Fund

Set up to provide financial assistance to entrepreneurs who are not always understood by traditional bank lenders because of their cultural background, or are excluded for economic or social reasons. You can borrow up to £5,000 interest free. There is a management fee to pay. Loans are unsecured and are repaid over up to three years by direct debit. You should approach your local Enterprise Agency*.

London Business Growth Fund

Set up to provide finance when banks or loan companies have refused loans. A comprehensive business plan is required. An Enterprise Agency Advisor can help to compile the business plan. A meeting is then arranged to discuss your application and needs. Amounts of up to £20,000 are available. Loans are unsecured and fixed at 5% over base rate for the first three years, then reset at the start of year four for the remaining term (up to a total of five years). Contact your local Enterprise Agency*.

2. GRANTS

• Department of Trade & Industry
Regional Enterprise Grant Scheme for London
An Enterprise Grant is a once only form of

financial assistance available for most areas in London through the Government Office for London (GOL). The grants complement commercial funds in helping small and medium sized firms (SME's) to finance growth. The criteria for applicants are as follows: -

Small Enterprise

- 1. Fewer than 50 employees
- 2. Annual turnover of no more than £4m (Euro 7 million) or a balance sheet total no more than £3m (Euro 5 million)

Medium Enterprise

1. Between 50 and 249 employees
2. Annual turnover no more than £25M
(Euro 40 million) or a balance sheet total no more than £17M (Euro 27 million).

The grants are available for spending on assets such as equipment, plant and machinery; acquisition of patents; associated land, site preparation and buildings. This is not for cash flow that is a capital expenditure. The amount of grant depends on the project. Up to 15% gross of capital costs may be supported up to a maximum grant of £75,000. High growth businesses with quality projects will be given preference and grants will only be allocated where it can be proved that, without the funds, the project could not go ahead. A project should have good prospects of becoming self-sustaining.

Applications should be made through the Government Office for London: Tel 020 7217 3239, Fax 020 7217 3476 or speak to a Grants Advisor at Business Link for London: Tel 020 7010 1234.

• Department of Trade and Industry Regional Selective Assistance (RSA)

Assisted Areas are part of the UK where regional aid may be granted. In London this applies to parts of Enfield, Haringey and Waltham Forest. Grants are available to most manufacturing and certain service industries.

Amounts of between 5% - 15% are given to projects that will create new jobs or safeguard current employment. The company must demonstrate that without the funding the project could not go ahead.

Applications should be made through the Government Office for London: Tel 020 7217 3239, fax 020 7217 3476 or speak to a Grants Advisor at Business Link for London: Tel 020 7010 1234.

• Smart

This is a Small Business Service initiative that provides grants to help small and medium sized businesses to make better use of technology. Grants are available for a variety of technology projects, feasibility studies etc.

Contact SBS: Tel 0114 259 7788, Fax 0114 259 7330

UK online for Business

A DTI led programme, which encourages businesses to invest in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) by helping with funding. Advisors can give guidance tailor made to meet individual needs. Tel UK Online for Business Infoline 0845 715 2000.

Email info@ukonlineforbusiness.gov.uk.

Website www.ukonlineforbusiness.gov.uk

3. DEBT FINANCE

Factoring

This is when a company 'buys' your outstanding invoices at a discount which gives you immediate cash and gives the lending company a profit when the invoice is paid. Remember, you forfeit some of your invoice value as the lender takes a commission from the full invoice amount. There are many companies which specialise in this area such as: Factoring UK: Tel 0800 132156, Fax 01323 430014 Email info@factoringuk.com, Website www.factoringuk.com.

Overdraft

An arrangement made between yourself and your bank. The bank will allow your account to be overdrawn but you will have to pay an arrangement fee and interest on the outstanding balance. A charge will probably be made for each cheque drawn and credit paid in. This is really only viable short term as interest rates and charges tend to be high.

· Hire Purchase or Leasing

This is a way for companies to have the use of equipment while spreading the cost over a period of time with regular payments. Hire purchase differs from leasing in that once all payments have been made, the business becomes the owner of the equipment. When leasing, the ownership never passes to the business. The Finance and Leasing Association provide a list of members who operate to an agreed Code of Practice. Tel 020 7836 6511, Fax 020 7420 9600, Email info@fla.org.uk, Website www.fla.org.uk.

4. EQUITY FINANCE

Venture Capital

This is money raised by selling shares in your business. This type of investor expects high returns on the money. In exchange the investor will help your business plan long term strategies and to increase growth. The Community Development Venture Fund aims to stimulate the provision of venture capital to small and medium sized businesses. Contact SBS: Tel 0114 259 7788, Fax 0114 259 7330 or the British Venture Capital Association

provides information about possible investors. Tel 020 7240 3846, Fax 020 7240 3849, Email byca@byca.co.uk.

National Business Angels Network (NBAN)

Set up to bring together companies seeking investment with investors looking for the right opportunity. The DTI and other financial institutions support NBAN. Companies are charged £200 plus VAT (£235) for entry into the NBAN Bulletin and investors are charged £100 plus VAT for access to the Bulletin. Tel 020 7329 2929 for general information or 020 7392 4141 for an information pack, Fax 020 7329 2626, Email info@bestmatch.co.uk or see the web site: www.nationalbusangels.co.uk.

5. OTHER

The Phoenix Fund

Encourages entrepreneurship in disadvantaged areas by providing assistance to business support providers and to new businesses through various initiatives such as mentoring and rural renewal. Contact SBS Tel 0114 259 7788, Fax 0114 259 7330.

· Shell Livewire

Helps 18-30 year olds to start and develop their own business idea. Also hosts a national competition for new business start-ups and gives cash awards to top projects.
Tel 08450 757 3252, Fax 0191 261 1910, Website www.shell-livewire.org.

The Princes Trust

Provides loans of up to £5,000 and grants of up to £1,500 for young entrepreneurs (aged 18-30) who can show they have a valid business idea or project and have been turned down by lenders because of age, credit record or unemployment history. Also for people leaving the criminal justice system, leaving care, disabled, parenting alone or facing discrimination. Tel 0800 842842, Fax 020 7543 1200, Email info@princes-trust.org.uk, Website www.princes-trust.org.uk.

• New Deal 18-25

Part of the Government's Welfare to Work strategy. Provides support and advice for New Deal jobseekers and helps to draw up business plans.

· New Deal 25 plus

As above but aimed at the over 25s.

· New Deal 50 plus

Provides a Personal Advisor and an employment credit to help start up your new business.

New Deal Contact info (all schemes):
Tel 0845 606 2626, Fax 01789 277071,

Website www.newdeal.gov.uk.

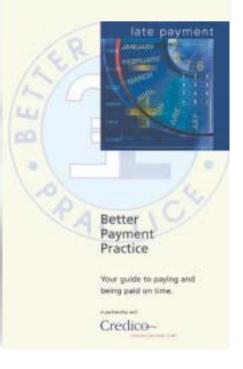
*Please see page 10 for details of how to find contact details for your local Enterprise Agency.

Late Payment Interest: It's Your Right

emember you can charge for late payment. The Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1990 gives businesses with 50 or less employees a right to charge interest on late payments from other organisations. Payment terms can be stated verbally or in a contract or invoice. If no credit period has been agreed. the Act specifies a time of 30 days from delivery or provision of service is reasonable. Once payment is late you should write to the customer stating the daily amount of interest being charged by you.

The Act suggests an interest rate of 8% above the Bank of England base rate. However, credit terms and interest rates can be agreed between you and your customers from the outset. Remember, it may be difficult and awkward to do this but it is your business and you have the right to charge.

The Better Payment Practice Group (BPPG) in partnership with Credico and with the assistance of the Institute of Credit Management has produced some excellent leaflets. If you would like to obtain free copies you should telephone 0870 150 2500, fax 01732 748620 or visit the website at www.payontime.co.uk.





The Euro is now the sole currency for twelve members of the European Union:

France Netherlands Germany
Finland Italy Portugal
Spain Republic of Ireland Greece
Austria Luxembourg Belgium

There are only three member countries that have kept their own currency: -

Denmark Sweden United Kingdom

Points to bear in mind

- As the Euro is now the major currency of the EU you may encounter customers who ask to be invoiced in Euros.
- There is no obligation for you to accept payment in Euros, but you are free to do so if you wish.
- It is advisable to approach your bank or accountant to discuss the implications.
- You may wish to consider opening a euro account but be aware that the euro sterling exchange rate varies on a daily basis. The rate can go up or down.

 When invoicing you will need to state the exchange rate used. This can be set by you to allow for market fluctuations or can be obtained from a variety of sources. If you are operating a euro account at your bank they will be able to give you a daily rate.

When invoicing in Euros there are VAT implications that need to be addressed

If you have customers either in the UK or the EU and are invoicing them in Euros, the sterling equivalent needs to be shown for VAT purposes. The exchange rate used can either be the UK market selling rate at the time of supply or a rate obtained from HM Customs and Excise. Their web site is very clear and shows rates for all currencies including Euros, updated on a weekly basis. The web site address is www.hmce.gov.uk/business/rates/rates.htm. They also have a fax polling facility that will fax you the rates on a weekly basis. Telephone 01702 367941 to give your fax number.

The British Retail Consortium is involved in

the debate on possible changeover to the euro in this country. They have highlighted the following points: -

- Retailers need clarity from the government before they will invest time and money in preparing for a changeover.
- It is difficult to calculate costs to implement the euro but an estimate has been made of 1-2% of turnover.
- Retailers will require at least two years preparation time. If implemented, an introduction date of mid-Feb is favoured as this is the quietist trading period.
- It is thought that a dual circulation period should be no longer than 8 weeks.

Further information can be found at: The British Retail Consortium, Tel 020 7854 8900,
www.brc.org.uk • Bank of England, Tel 020 7601
4444, www.bankofengland.co.uk • H M Treasury
(there are 12 regional forums) for London
Tel 020 7203 1818. www.euro.gov.uk

The JointFashionIndustryTeam

ollowing the success of the Joint Working Pilot on the Fashion Industry in 1999/2000 – where eight government agencies worked together to look at improving conditions in the Industry - Joint Fashion Industry Teams (JOFIT) were set up in London and Leicester to:

- Act in partnership with other groups to help level the playing field – allowing bona fide businesses to survive in the Industry
- Raise the level of understanding of Government Agency obligations
- Help small and medium sized businesses to meet these obligations and improve working conditions.

Steve Percy – Head of London JOFIT, said: "People we meet start off by being sceptical about what we do and some see us as just another vehicle for the Government to come down hard on the Industry".

"However, JOFITs are completely different to normal teams - focussing on working together with the Industry to provide help and advice to small businesses or individuals rather than take a "big stick" approach that may actually result in businesses closing down". "What we are about is helping new businesses to get things right from the start - helping them to complete returns due and meet their obligations. The aim is for these businesses to trade for longer and thrive in the Industry."

"As an example, there are a number of companies we have helped in this way over the past year – where each had a previous history of failed/liquidated companies and large crown debts. With the help of their manufacturers and ourselves, these companies have been able to turn this around and are now fully compliant with their obligations to render returns and pay tax".

As an aid to new businesses, a booklet "Help for your business in the Fashion industry" has been developed to:



- Help people through the "minefield" of government rules and legal obligations
- Provide the information required to set up a new business and where to get additional help if required

Helping you to understand Government Regulations

The booklet (which is available in a number of languages) can be obtained by calling the JOFIT helpline or by e-mail (see below).

Additional JOFIT activities include:

- Running a helpline to provide support and guidance on legal obligations
- Advertising its services in National Press and in Trade Magazines
- Building up partnerships and relationships with people from the Industry – to develop new techniques to help businesses thrive and help with potential cashflow problems etc.
- Offering face to face meetings or places on seminars regarding specific government legislation – Income Tax, PAYE, Tax Credits etc
- Providing help/guidance/leaflets to individuals at County Shows
- Roadshows and other events

Further information or a copy of the leaflet can be obtained by contacting JOFIT on our Helpline numbers: 020 7667 4916 (London) or 0116 228 2830 (Leicester) or by e-mail: jofit.london@gtnet.gov.uk • jofit.leicester@gtnet.gov.uk

TradePartmersUK

Extending the geographical scope of any business is always a tough proposition. Even more so when a company considers bringing foreign markets into play and begins to formulate an export policy.



ery often the companies with the most to offer overseas markets are small to medium sized (SMEs) firms without existing corporate networks or worldwide contacts. It is these firms that Trade Partners UK was established to help in May 2000 by bringing together teams in 200 British overseas embassies. Also enlisted are 45 UK Business Links and at least nine government departments as well as representatives in Chambers of Commerce across the country.

Government-funded, Trade Partners UK aims to help SMEs break into foreign markets by giving them the tools to find local partners and distributors as well as pragmatic advice on the intricacies doing business in a particular country.

Based in the City of London, Trade Partners UK's team of advisers is managed by director, David Train and deputy director Franc Sullivan.

The team coordinates the Passport to Export scheme giving potential exporters access to grants, market research, training and consultancy to make their export initiatives successful.

"We aim to make London the premier region for exporting in the UK by offering a comprehensive service that advises on every aspect of overseas trade. We do this through our International Trade Advisors who have extensive international market knowledge

gained from both the public and private sector," said David Train. "Recent studies predict that over 40,000 companies have the potential to export but only 15,000 of these companies are actually doing so."

Once a company has decided to export. It should contact Trade Partners UK for an initial 'health check' which looks to ensure that it can meet the demands of the foreign markets it is trying to enter. The information gained at this point goes into producing a 'company report', which forms the basis of the advice from the International Trade Advisor on what the company needs to do to make it viable for export.

Trade Partners UK's Passport to Export package includes possible funding of up to £4000 as well as six days of export advice. Another package, Business Development Credits can provide up to £3000 worth of matched funding for export projects. Other packages include Tailored Market Information Reports with contact details of potential business partners, Overseas Visits, development of international press materials and, if needed, specialist legal and financial advice on a target market.

The International Trade Team includes advisors with specific fashion sector experience and a keen awareness of the issues facing fashion companies not only in the domestic market, but also those that compete

internationally. Collaboration with partners such as trade associations, the British Fashion Council and the business support network within London is vital to ensure that companies get the right assistance.

Since September 2000, Trade Partners UK London has played an active part in London Fashion Week offering advice on international trade to exhibitors. The Passport to Export scheme is particularly suited to companies within the fashion sector offering as it does a tailored package of support. Funding for publicity materials is of particular relevance as is support for exhibitions.

Fashion businesses often find that movement of company funds are tied up within delivery and payment cycles, so undertaking new projects to develop business overseas can be extremely difficult. Passport to Export considers all these challenges and not only offers advice and funding, but can also provide vital training to help fashion businesses sell successfully and get paid safely.

For more information please visit the Trade Partners UK website at www.tradepartners.gov.uk, or contact Trade Partners UK, Tel 020 7556 2390, Fax 020 7556 2389.or Phillipa McEvoy - International Trade Team Adviser, Business Link for London/Trade Partners UK. Tel 020 7010 1484, email pmcevoy@bl4london.com.

Export advice doesn't come cheap — it comes free



Trade Partners UK has a vested interest in your export success. As a government organisation, we want British businesses to be strong – competitive, leading edge and world beating. Which is why we offer as much support as we can to companies and organisations wanting to break into world markets.

Whether you are an established exporter, or exploring the opportunities for the first time, our international network of experts will offer objective advice, in-depth information and unrivalled experience to help you understand markets, develop contacts and create new trading opportunities.

Advice and information is free. Other services, like training and trade missions, are heavily subsidised. If you'd like to know more, either visit our website — www.tradepartners.gov.uk — or phone us on 0207 215 5444. We look forward to hearing from you.





When measuring is a science

The new development of the 'Electronic' Measuring Tape for Retail & Production has huge benefits



The Dimension Link tape measure brings accuracy and objectivity to measurements on the shop floor. Designed for use in a factory and retail environment, the tape handles like an ordinary cloth tape measure, but records dimensions directly onto a computer screen.

eading and recording the data is automatic and the operator can carry out faster and more detailed measurements. There is no operator error in making and transcribing measurements, the quality and consistency of the final product is controlled.

The tape can operate as a single stand alone measuring station, or a number of measuring stations within the production area can be networked and integrated into a customised data collection system, with onward links to the organisation's Q.A., Quality control, production planning and retail data collection

Typical production applications include:

- For the trimming material supplier
- Estimation of trimmings & thread use in volume production runs
- For the production planner
- Estimating labour content in garment, measuring seams sewn
- For the volume manufacturer
- In-process measurements control, final quality checking of products
- For the distributor's Q.A. departments
- Quality and consistency of sizing of garments from sub-contractors
- For the fashion industry
- Size control of garments in retail

port of a standard personal computer or laptop. The Dimension Link software enables communication between the tape measure and the data processing functions. The system runs

- Provides a calibration to confirm tape accuracy
- Prompts for the next measurement in a user defined sequence
- measurements to be highlighted
- Allows successive measurements as the tape is further extended
- Stored data for trace ability

For further information contact the Dimension Link sales team on, 0208 977 3222 or visit their website www.npl.co.uk/dimensionlink

Teddington, TW11 0LW

The tape measure operates through the serial on all applications up to Windows 2000.

It has many advantages for the operator:

- When he was a fashion agent, John Pearce was frustrated by one
- Can be set up for out of tolerance

- Assessment of reject/ rework levels
- Dimension profile of work pieces
- Links to statistical analysis programmes

The Dimension Link tape has been developed at the National Physical Laboratory in association with experts from the clothing manufacturing industry. It is designed to the highest standards of quality and accuracy.

Dimension Link, NPL, Centre for Basic, Length and Temperature Metrology, Queen's Road,

Records into "Excel" spread sheets

fundamental problem. No matter how hard he tried, he could never keep up with all the changes on the high streets of the UK and Irish Republic. How many fashion shops are there out there? Who are the buyers? What are their bestselling brands? And what else might they like to buy?

John decided to find the answer to these questions. And three years later with his team he has put all the answers into Fashion Profile, a totally new fashion business database which looks set to revolutionise how brands and agents market their collections to buyers. Based on a CD-Rom, and backed up with an internet connection, Fashion Profile lists more than 17,700 independent and multiple women's fashion retailers on both sides of the Irish Sea.

It lists buvers' names and contact details, plus the top five brands sold in each shop or department.

"The great thing about the database -to use the jargon -is that it can be "mined" or "interrogated" - that is, searched-in all sorts of ways to build up different lists of retailers." John explained.

"Let's say an agent is bringing in a new collection which they believe will sit well alongside Frank Usher and also Louis Féraud. The database will list all the customers where these brands appear in the top five. Then let's say the agent decides to concentrate at first on three different geographical areas-the list can be further refined by country, county, city or postcode.

The savings in time, effort, wasteful mailshots, pointless telephone calls and useless visits can easily be imagined - Fashion Profile enables agents to target themselves so much more accurately".

Plenty of agents, of course, claim that they know everyone in their sector. Quite possibly they know most people. but no one knows everyone. More importantly, what if that agent wants to expand his or her business by going into a completely new sector, say from mainstream collections to young brands? Fashion Profile can save them months, if not years, of research by producing a list in seconds of all the shops that sell young fashion brands.

The company was formed three years ago, and Fashion Profile was launched only in December last year. but already it has been bought by some of the best known names in the business (see box below). The price

What the brands think

"Brilliant, inevitable." Mike Claridge sales manager, Brandtex UK

A new way of doing business, a great concept, a great product. You should get everyone in the business at this price." Richard Ellis, Ellis Bridals/John Charles

One decent order per year covers the cost of running this package for the year, which is very impressive. Henrik Hansen, Claire, dk

A great new industry tool." Robert De Keyser, De Keyser

of a year's subscription, just £4,000, is an absolute steal. The first subscribers already have a competitive edge over their rivals. They are now able to market much more accurately to a tightly selected list of fashion buyers.

on CD-Rom and the internet.

Every high street shop revealed – at the

click of a mouse (for just £4,000 a year)

The best database on 17.500 fashion retailers

in the UK and Irish Republic is now available

The database is updated each season. The advantage for retailers to have their details on the database is to encourage agents and suppliers to come to them only with relevant merchandise-and they will probably be offered it before any other shop in their area. Who doesn't want to be first with a hot new collection?

The database is on an easy-to-use CD-Rom and Fashion Profile will be providing a free Web presence for manufacturers, agents and retailers. In an age of fast communications, Fashion Profile is completing the marketing circle between suppliers, retailers and, ultimately, the consumer, Isn't it about time vou took a look at Fashion Profile?



Fashion Profile subscribers include:

Alterna, Anton Dell (GAT Group), Brandtex, Claire.dk, De Keyser, DTI, Ellis Bridals/John Charles Eveningwear, Emap Fashion, Emreco International, Enterprise Ireland, Etnika Accessories. Fenn Wright & Manson, Fisser, Frank Usher, Identity PR. Iceberg Jeans, Joop!, Louis Féraud, Olsen, Peter Golding Jeans, RedGreen, Simon Ellis, Slimma Fashion, Yellohammer.

profile

www.fashionprofile.com

The Fashion Profile CD is compatible with Microsoft Windows 95/98/2000/NT/XP. It costs £500 + VAT including installation and training, followed by a minimum of 12 months' contract at £291.66 + VAT per month. Total cost for 12 months is £4,000 + VAT (or Euro equivalent).

Contact John Pearce on sales@fashionprofile.com Mobile +44 (0) 7789 656443 Telephone +44 (0) 20 8541 4460 Fax +44 (0) 20 8255 3344 www.fashionprofile.com

Clicksalesman Software Ltd, Suite Three, Marlowe Court, Parkleys, Richmond, Surrey TW10 SLR

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Contact Jenny Holloway for more details and to book your space in our next issue. Call Jenny on 020 8462 1475

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Your Company's Name Here

Reach a targetted audience of 2,000+ London Fashion Industry companies by advertising in London Fashion Forum Newsletter. Call Jenny Holloway on 020 8462 1475 to find out how.

Enterprise Agencies

Portobello Business Centre,

There are around 100 enterprise agencies in the London Area. These can be found in the Yellow Pages under 'Business Enterprise Agencies' For example: -

TOTOGORIO Basilioss Contro,	
2 Acklam Road W10	Tel 020 7460 5050
London Enterprise Agency,	
Park Street SE1	Tel 020 7236 3000
Ethnic Minority Enterprise Project,	
7-15 Greatorex Street E1	Tel 020 7655 0906
Business Link for London,	
103 Oxford Street WC1	Tel 0845 600 9006
Camden Enterprise Ltd,	
61 Birkenhead Street WC1H	Tel 020 7278 5757
Islington Enterprise Agency,	
64 Essex Road N1	Tel 020 7226 2783
Kings Cross Partnership,	
31a Wicklow Street WC1X	Tel 020 7713 1177
Enfield Enterprise Agency,	
201 Hertford Road EN3	Tel 020 8443 5457
South Central Business Advice Service,	
53 Brixton Station Rd SW9	Tel 020 7274 9119
Kingston Small Business Advisory Service,	
90 Richmond Rd, Kingston upon Thames	Tel 020 8296 9598
	2 Acklam Road W10

Events Diary

UK Events

JUNE

THE TEXTILE INSTITUTE AGM AND AWARDS PRESENTATION
Marks and Spencer, 47-67 Baker Street, London W1U 8EP
Tel 020 7580 8289 (Must book in advance)

UKFE TREND SEMINAR
 Board Room, 5 Portland Place, London W1B 1PW
 Tel 020 7636 5577 Laurian Davies Fax 020 7636 7848

AUGUST

11-13 PRIMA (womenswear)
Harrogate International Centre Tel 0870 429 4672

18-20 PURE (womenswear)
Olympia, London Tel 0870 429 4504

18-20 PREMIER (womenswear)
Olympia, London Tel 0870 429 4486

18-20 HARROGATE (lingerie and swimwear)
International Centre, Harrogate Tel 020 7937 6401

SEPTEMBER

1-3 **FURURA FAIR** (womenswear, menswear, childrenswear, footwear)
Royal Dublin Society Tel 00353 1295 7418

1-4 AUTUMN FAIR (giftware and accessories)
NEC, Birmingham Tel 020 8277 5865

17-19 **RETAIL INTERIORS AND INTERNATIONAL DISPLAY WEEK**(Interior design and display equipment)
Earls Court, London Tel 01424 870015

Overseas Events

JUNE

4-6 EXPOFIL

 Parc des Expositions, Paris-Nord, Villepinte, Paris
 Tel 020 7221 3344

 20-23 PITTO UOMO (menswear)

 Fortezza da Basso, Florence Tel 00 39 0055 3693407

28-30 PITTO BIMBO (childrenswear)
Fortezza da Basso, Florence Tel 00 39 0055 3693407

JULY

3-5 PITTO FILATI (womenswear)

 Fortezza da Basso, Florence Tel 00 39 0055 3693407

 5-7 KIND & JUGEND (children and menswear)

 Kuln Messe, Cologne Tel 020 8681 8166

 5-7 SALON PLANETE 0-16 (childrenswear)

Paris Expo, Porte de Versailles, Paris Tel 00 33 1490961 20-23 ISPO NEW MUNICH TRADE FAIR CENTRE (sportswear)

20-23 ISPO NEW MUNICH TRADE FAIR CENTRE (sportswear)
Tel 020 8940 4625



Key to symbols: \boxtimes =Post, **©**=Tel, \otimes =Fax, \Rightarrow =Email, \triangle =Website

Useful Contacts

This issue: Major Retailers

Arcadia Clothing Plc

Colegrave House 70 Berners Street London W1T 3NL

© 020 7580 9085

ir@arcadiagroup.co.uk

www.arcadiagroup.co.uk

Army and Navy Stores

101 Victoria Street London SW1E 6RA

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www.houseoffraser.co.uk

Barkers of Kensington

63 Kensington High Street London W8 5SE

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Debenhams

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www.debenhams.com

French Connection Group Plc

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www.frenchconnection.com

Harrods Ltd

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www.harrods.com

Harvey Nichols & Co Ltd

109-125 Knightsbridge London SW1X 7RJ

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www.harveynichols.com

Hobbs Ltd

47 South Molton Street London W1K 5RY

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020 7629 3380

House of Fraser

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020 7529 4700

020 7629 9479

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John Lewis Partnership

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08456 049 050

www.johnlewis.com

Karen Miller

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9 7836 6900

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www.lauraashley.com

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0207 938 1300www.marksandspencer.com

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020 7379 0835

www.mujionline.com

River Island

283 Oxford Street London W1C 2DL

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Selfridges

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020 7495 8321

www.selfridges.co.uk

Warehouse

19-21 Argyll Street London W1F 7TQ © 020 7437 7101

020 1751 1

Whistles

1 Thayer Street London W1U 3JA © 020 7935 7013