



UNIVERSITY OF BORÅS  
SCIENCE FOR THE PROFESSIONS

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## Support and training needs among Swedish Fashion companies

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<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. The result from the questionnaire .....</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1. Background of the respondents and the companies .....	3
2.2 Areas for training .....	5
<i>Specified needs for training</i> .....	5
2.3 Information needs .....	8
2.4 Experience and formats for training .....	8
<i>Training experience</i> .....	9
2.5 Summary of the questionnaire.....	10
<b>3. Roundtable discussions .....</b>	<b>12</b>
3.1 Participants .....	12
3.2 Themes .....	12
<i>Finance and access to risk capital</i> .....	13
<i>Production</i> .....	13
<i>Sales, distribution and on-line business</i> .....	14
<i>Internationalization</i> .....	14
3.3 Summary of discussion and conclusion about the need for training .....	15
<b>4. Training programmes offered to fashion companies.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>5. Identified gaps between need and education offered.....</b>	<b>19</b>
5.1 Three good examples of training programmes.....	19
<i>Sustainable Fashion Academy</i> .....	19
<i>The Swedish School of Textiles</i> .....	20
<i>Hyper Island</i> .....	21
<b>Appendix 1.....</b>	<b>23</b>
The production of the questionnaire .....	23
<b>Appendix 2.....</b>	<b>23</b>
The organization of roundtables .....	23

## 1. Introduction

This report presents the result of a questionnaire about the view of Swedish fashion companies on their need for training and education as well as the result from two roundtable meetings with ten Swedish fashion companies. The research is done within the EU project *Baltic Fashion*. The purpose of this project is to support the fashion industry in the Baltic Sea Region and the objective of this part (Workpackage 3 and 5) is to develop training programs within each country, as well as producing a web site with information that fashion companies need.

This report is divided into four parts. The first one presents the result from the questionnaire and the second part is the result from the roundtable discussions. The third part is a table of existing training and support programmes and the fourth part shows three good examples of educational programmes for fashion companies. Information about how we conducted the questionnaire and organized the roundtable is found in appendix 1 and 2.

## 2. The result from the questionnaire

This is the result from the questionnaire to the Swedish companies and the result will be put together with the result from the other participating Baltic Sea countries. We have 16 respondents, and in total there will be around 120 answers. This report only covers the answers from the 16 Swedish companies.

### 2.1. Background of the respondents and the companies

The companies answering this questionnaire were quite young which can be seen in table 1 below; only one company is older than ten years. Half of the respondents are between three and ten years and less than half of the respondents are younger than three years.

**Table 1** *Founding year of the company*

	No of companies (NoC)	%
• 2000 and before	2	13%
• 2001 – 2009	8	50%
• 2010 – 2012	6	37%

The older the company the more likely it is turned into a limited company. Some companies form their company very early as a limited company. This is also reflected in the background of the responding companies in this study in table 2.

**Table 2** *Legal form of company*

	NoC	%
• Sole proprietorship	3	19%
• Limited company	12	75%
• no answer	1	6%



As expected the most common product category is women's wear, which is the largest fashion market. But as many as 62,5 per cent also make men's wear, see table 3 below.

**Table 3 Respondents' product categories**

	NoC	
• Women's wear	12	75%
• Men's wear	10	62,5%
• Sport's wear	2	12,5%
• Other	3	19% (Shoes + underwear)
• Children's wear	1	6%

When it comes to field of activities all of the respondents design their products and two thirds consider themselves as manufacturers (Table 4). None of the respondents have any manufacture facilities as this outsourced, but they are indeed responsible for the manufacturing towards their customers.

**Table 4 Field of activities (multiple answers possible)**

	NoC	
• Designing	16	100%
• Manufacturing	12	75%
• Marketing	9	56%
• Retailing	6	38%
• Wholesale	2	18%
• Other	3	19%

Most of the companies are small, which is shown below in table 5 and 6. We also asked who many of the employees are women and in the small micro companies they are all women.

**Table 5 Number of Employees**

	Number of employees	No of respondents/No of women
• 1-2 employees	9	All
• 6 employees	1	5
• 10-15 employees	3	no answer
• 20-50 employees	3	no answer

**Table 6 Turnover**

	NoC	Definition of categories
• Micro company	9	(<10 employed and turnover <2 mill Euro)
• Small company	3	(<50 and <10 mill Euro)
• Middle sized	2	(<250 and <50 mill Euro)
• No answer	2	



As most of the respondents are micro companies it could be expected that there is very little export, see table 7 below. But still, most of the respondents have some export and as many as 4 companies (25%) have more than 50% export.

**Table 7 Export – estimated in percentage of turnover**

	NoC
• No export	2
• <10% of turnover	1
• 11-50%	6
• 51-80%	4
• No answers	3

## 2.2 Areas for training

When asked to rank the most urgent needs for training; sales and marketing together with distribution rank highest (Table 8).

**Table 8. What would you consider the most urgent needs of training for your company?**

1. Sales
2. Marketing
3. Distribution
4. Finance
5. Design
6. Sustainability
7. Internationalization
8. HR

### Specified needs for training

Below the result from specified issues where we have summarized those who agree fully and those who agree somewhat to a group of “agreeing”. If equal number the issue with the strongest “agree fully” is ranked first. The same logic is applied for those who disagree and those who disagree somewhat.

### Marketing issues

We then asked more specifically what kind of training was seen as important and divided the questions into different areas of management and design. All fields of marketing are considered important or needed but communication and how to plan and run marketing campaigns are the most needed areas when it comes to training (Table 9).



**Table 9 Marketing**

	Agree	Disagree
• Communication of garments	12	4
• How to plan and run marketing	12	4
• Communicate brand in store	11	5
• How to build brand	11	4
• Pricing strategy	10	6
• Presentation technique	10	6
• Visual merchandising	9	6
• Market research	9	6

When we asked about training regarding supply and distribution the most urgent need concerns new online business (Table 10). But generally how to manage the supply chain is considered as very interesting to develop further. Work with sourcing material and retailers are important according to more than half of the respondents but here there are also many who are not interested. All different aspects of supply and distribution are considered important more or less.

**Table 10 Supply and distribution channels**

	Agree	Disagree
• New online business	13	3
• Document flow of garments	12	4
• Manage supply chain	10	6
• Source material	8	8
• Work with retailer	11	5

Internationalization is necessary for growth, but still, within the fashion industry it is also assumed that the company should first be strong on the domestic market. Of the respondents in this study only 2 companies (13%) has no export and 4 companies export more than 50 per cent of their production (see table 7 above). The 3 companies who did not answer indeed have export but we do not know how much. When exporting we assumed that the legal aspects as well as the sales process would be of interest to learn more about and this is also according to the answers by the respondents (Table 11).



**Table 11 Internationalization**

	Agree	Disagree
• Legal aspects of contracts	14	2
• How to sell internationally	13	3
• Quality control of subcontractors	12	4
• Contracting companies abroad	11	4

**Financial issues**

We expected finance to be an urgent area for training and to some degree it was but not very strong concern (Table 12). Still, there is an interest to increase knowledge in how to budget but also how to get investors interested and follow up on finance.

**Table 12 Finance**

	Agree	Disagree
• Budget 3 years	10	5
• Investors interested	8	5
• Follow up finance	8	7
• Manage taxes	7	8
• Bank finance	7	6

**Human Resource**

One discipline that has received a lot of attention in today’s society is human resource and if a company wants to grow different aspects of human resource should be of interest. But the result of this study show that learning about different human resource issues is not an area that is of great concern to learn about. However how to combine work and family is of great concern (Table 13). Recruiting staff is no issue as 63% consider this as of least interest.

**Table 13 Human resource**

	Agree	disagree
• Work family	10	5
• Legal aspect	9	6
• Recruiting staff	5	10

**Design and Technology**

When asking what the companies would be interested in concerning design and technical issues new material sticks out as the most interesting field next to new technologies like digital pattern making (Table 14). There is an interest to expand beyond the core products of garments or shoes and develop services as compliments. Also how to take sustainability issues into account is considered as necessary to get more education on. The only issue most companies thought they have already is up-date on fashion trends.



**Table 14 Design and Technology**

	Agree	Disagree
• New materials	13	3
• Digital technologies pattern making	12	4
• Service development	11	5
• Sustainability into account	11	5
• Technical skills	10	6
• New methods in the design process	10	6
• Up-date on fashion trends	6	10

### 2.3 Information needs

Of interest for the Baltic Fashion web site is to know what information the fashion companies consider as being valuable to receive information about (Table 15). There are two kinds of suppliers who stick out in this ranking, material suppliers and wholesalers/retailers. We could group material suppliers, manufacturers sew collection, suppliers of details and producers of garment prototypes as one category of suppliers where there is a genuine interest to get more information about. Manufacturers who can sew and produce collections would be ranking second on and before wholesalers/retailers and sustainability issues if only those answering, “I agree fully” would be considered.

Ranking third is how to become more sustainable from an environmental perspective and equally important are sustainability from a social perspective. Suppliers of details, such as buttons, zippers, etc is somewhat interesting. An issue that the companies probably think they have information about already is about other companies and designers.

**Table 15 Information our company would be interested in**

	Agree	Disagree
• Material suppliers	13	3
• Wholesalers/retailers	12	4
• How to become more environmental	12	4
• Socially sustainable	12	4
• Manufacturers sew collections	11	5
• Suppliers of details	11	4
• Producers garment prototypes	8	8
• Other companies my area	7	9
• Other designers	4	12

### 2.4 Experience and formats for training

We asked how the respondents perceive their situation in general, if they are happy with their business. In general it is fair to say that a majority are quite pleased with the development of their business (Table 16). As many as 4 agree fully and 7 agree somewhat when responding to the claim “I’m happy with the development that the company has had the last 3 years”. Only 2 disagree fully 2 disagree somewhat, and 1 did not consider the claim relevant.





**Table 16 “I’m happy with the development that the company has had the last 3 years”**

- I disagree fully (2)
- I disagree somewhat (2)
- I agree somewhat (7)
- I agree fully (4)
- Not relevant (1)

### Training experience

We wanted to know what experience the respondents have of previous training programmes and asked them to describe this with their own words. When asked what experiences the respondents have of training courses or business support programs more than half of the respondents (9) were not aware of these, and just slightly fewer (8 respondents) were not aware of courses/training programmes offered in Sweden or in their region.

When asked if they have participated in any training courses lately 6 of them had. The open questions of what courses they have taken only two named these (Sales seminar organized by Drivhuset and small courses in sales, business planning; i.e basic business administration).

The reason for not participating arose more answers and the most common reason is lack of time (“No time to take time off from work due to the small size of the company. And also courses are often very expensive”). But also those courses are located too far away and lack of information. That they are too expensive were also mentioned by 2 respondents.

When asked what kind of training format would be preferred the majority (14) said seminars and it should be short, half a day or one day: long enough to get something relevant (Table 17). It was stressed that half a day is what they can afford to spend. Seminars were preferred also because these are considered “easy and anonymous”. “I can focus more on the content than on prestige in making a good result (in comparison to workshops)”. Only four respondents preferred workshops.

**Table 17 what training format do you prefer and why?**

- Seminar 14 (Easy and anonymous, focus on content, no prestige to produce)
- Workshop 4
- On the job 3
- Individual guidance 1
- How long? ½ - 1 day (most prefer ½ day “because it is the easiest format to fit in the calendar”)

Fashion is a female business but the respondents did not want anything special for women. “Nothing special for women! Interesting speakers, with relevant and modern knowledge of the subject they are telling about is the important thing”.



When asked if there was anything else that the respondents wanted to add to these issues we got two answers:

“We would need more training/information/inspiration about marketing, new media, growth plans and scalability”

“It's very hard for new designers in Sweden to actually make it and survive and often I think that it would be good to have something like the British Fashion Council who actually have money and great contacts to support new designers. Because designers accepted in the incubator program at London College of Fashion often make it to the top. Also Top Shop has the NewGen designers whom they sponsor with fashion shows at one of the world's biggest fashion weeks. Sometimes Scandinavia feels a bit shy. If we want the designers to succeed they need a lot of help and finance in the beginning to become lucrative quite fast.”

## 2.5 Summary of the questionnaire

As the majority of those who answered the questionnaire are micro and small companies as well as quite young the need for training is quite logically wide but also little time to spend on training despite a great interest and a perceived need for it. Most of the responding companies have designers as founders and hence design is a core competence and they do not consider any further need of training in design or for instance such an issue as fashion trends. However, those who answer the questionnaire have a varied background and also varies when it comes to considering what training the companies need or is interested in.

Marketing and sales, as well as retail and distribution, in particular on-line business, are those fields that rank highest when asked for what subjects would be prioritized for more knowledge and training. Especially on-line business sticks out as being of great interest and need for training. This is no surprise as the trend is that on-line business is increasing in importance.

As the respondents come from young micro and small companies finance is of great concern, and even if bank relations is not the most prioritized area budgeting and understanding of financial aspects are of great interest.

Sustainability, internationalization and Human resource rank the least important areas for training. This is probably a reflection of the daily problems that these companies face. It is difficult to reach the market and sales are urgently important. That distribution is ranked as number three can be interpreted as the difficulties these companies have to either find a retailer or how to develop on-line sales which is most likely a daily concern. But it cannot be interpreted that other issues like for instance sustainability is not important. On the contrary, when asked in detail about issues related to sustainability most companies want to learn more.

Internationalization is often discussed as necessary for enabling growth. In the ranking internationalization comes very low, but when asked about specific issues related to internationalization it is obvious that this is something the companies indeed consider important, for instance legal aspects are of great importance for training. One could also state



that ranking is not easy and does not always reflect how you view needs. The process of going international is dependent on finding the right agents and often it said that this is not anything you can learn, but certainly, to know how to negotiate and form contracts is essential once you have an agent.

When asked for which format a training programme should have the most preferred choice was half-day seminars, maybe one day, but not any longer. Everybody feels stressed about being away from work and hence want to spend as little time as possible on seminar, and when they attend seminars it has to be worthwhile with real good lecturers.

### 3. Roundtable discussions

To find out more in-depth about the need for training and development we organized two roundtable discussions on the theme “How can Swedish fashion companies grow?” More information about how we organized the roundtables can be found in Appendix 2.

The issues we brought to the table concerned what problem and competence areas these companies consider the most important for triggering or preventing expansion. We did not ask directly what training they need, as we wanted to have a more in-depth discussion of what areas they think are problematic. These areas could be developed through training and educational programmes.

To start the discussion three issues were used as guides:

- What bottlenecks and problems are the most urgent ones to overcome for growth and development – for their own business and for the fashion industry in general?
- How do companies collaborate regionally, nationally to achieve development?
- What kind of training/education is your company interested in?

#### 3.1 Participants

Three companies participated in Borås (2012 04 19) and they represented sportswear (two companies) and work-wear with a series of jeans. Seven fashion companies participated in Stockholm (2012 04 26). The main product for these companies is women’s wear; some have a mixture of collections for women and men as well as accessories. One company is also offering interior products. The companies are mature in the sense that they have been on the market for at least five years; some have been on the market for more than ten years. They are all small companies, i.e more than 10 but less than 50 people employed. The issues that were discussed at the two roundtables were similar and are integrated in the report below.

Christine Sundberg Carendi, Association of Swedish Fashion Brands, who helped us to engage the fashion companies participated in Stockholm, as well as Anita Radon from THS and two students from Borås who took notes: Erik Wall and Fredrik Karlsson.

Representatives from the Fashion Incubator in Borås (Modeinkubatorn) participated, Emma Ivarsson in Borås and Gesica Tawakkoli Gunmalm in Stockholm.

#### 3.2 Themes

The companies were asked to write down key words for their concerns and issues they think prevent a growth. Four areas stick out as the most important for preventing growth.

- Finance and access to risk capital
- Production
- Sales, distribution and on-line business
- Internationalization



### Finance and access to risk capital

It is difficult for most fashion companies to raise risk capital. One reason is the mature, over-established market with intensive competition. It is difficult to come up with new ideas based on clothing that differentiate one company from another. Banks are reluctant to give loans to fashion companies and when they do, it is only after the companies have received funding from for instance Almi a governmental agency for support of new and young companies and established SMEs. But also Almi is considered rather bureaucratic and provides very limited funding. Very few entrepreneurs find risk capitalists willing to invest in fashion start-ups.

There are different ways of finding finance and have a cash flow. One possibility to finance the start of a company is to get a long credit time from the manufacturing company. Good relations with manufacturers are therefore essential because it makes it possible to have longer credits.

Generally the manufacturer do not want to take the risk and the lead-time from development, production to sales is very long. Most of the companies have experienced difficulties to finance the cash flow during this period. This also prevents an expansion internationally as they cannot finance larger volumes. Even if there are shorter seasons the two main seasons, spring/-summer and fall/winter are still dominating the industry and consolidates the long lead-times.

Another possibility mentioned as a way to finance the production of collections, if the collection is already sold, is to sell the invoices to factoring companies providing this service. It reduces the income but enables a cash flow.

It was also mentioned that there is a lack of finance for strategic thinking, which means that even if the company wants to expand the problems with the funding is a barrier for planning more long term and re-think how to reach the market. Marketing requires capital regardless of which market you aim for. But here is also mentioned that there is a general lack of strategic planning among the small fashion companies.

Economic issues require a lot of work and – as one company mentioned – it is essential to have this competence in the company.

### Production

Being small is no advantage in the fashion industry. Almost all production is outsourced to Asia, Turkey, Portugal or the Baltic countries but if there would be production opportunities in Sweden many would try these. Many of the Asian producers have large fashion companies and retailers as prioritized customers, which means that they squeeze in the collections' from the small fashion companies in-between those from the large companies. Some companies also find it problematic with Chinese producers who not only require large volumes but also have raised the prices. One of the sportswear companies continues with production in China because of the producer's competence, not because of lower cost. To find the right producer with the right competence that enables good quality is limiting the number of possible producers. The fashion system with seasonal collections also lowers the flexibility of production.



The access to a good producer is very valuable and no company would reveal which manufacturer they work with. "I would not give anyone a producer's name, but if I get the question about one specific producer I would say what I think about this producer," said one of the company representatives.

The companies lack opportunities to produce in Sweden and also perceive a lack of production knowledge in Sweden. But also with a local production the supply time for fabrics, yarns etc with the right colour are expected to be long. The expectations that production opportunities would arise in Sweden were very low. However, some companies have tried to develop collections that can use Swedish materials, like wool and linen and thereby enable production in Sweden.

### **Sales, distribution and on-line business**

The reduced number of multi-brand stores is forcing fashion companies to open their own stores. Another trend is that private labels, the stores' own brand is prioritized and put in the front-line in the store, which reduces the visibility of the other fashion brands. Competition and how to reach the market is considered a difficult matter.

E-commerce and the on-line store is an increasing phenomenon even if few believe it will replace the physical store. It will however change the role of the store. Fashion companies need to re-think the store concept and it is not only about viewing the store as flagship stores. The combination with offering a coffee shop is well known for other product categories, for instance bookstores; or to look into the concept of pop-up store. All agreed though that sales on-line also requires that you are present in a physical store.

A problem that can occur when developing an on-line store is the conflict with retailers as they see the on-line store as a competitor. It is therefore importance to have a strategy for the on-line business that does not harm the relations with retailers, for instance harmonize price levels, very short campaign prices, sales on garments after they have been on sales in the physical store, etc. There is a lack of competence how to develop e-commerce strategies and the companies asked for more training and education for this field.

Another aspect is the competence of sales personnel. Many of the companies perceived that there is a lack of competence or that it is difficult to find people who are really good at selling.

Also logistic knowledge was mentioned as a field where it was difficult to find people with the right competence.

### **Internationalization**

The barriers for expanding internationally are language, culture and climate. Most companies choose to expand gradually, starting with expansion in Sweden and then to the Nordic countries followed by Germany. Most of the companies considered Asia as a difficult market. They all agreed though that growth requires export or internationalization. Some meant that it is a coincidence which country you choose for export, it also has to do which agent you can find. Good agents are essential if it will be a success on another market.



Many of the present companies have chosen to participate in different fashion weeks abroad, for instance Copenhagen and Berlin. Support from government for creative and cultural industries to enable export was asked for. But it was also emphasized that it is important to have internal competence for internationalization, either in the daily operations of the company or among the members of the board.

### 3.3 Summary of discussion and conclusion about the need for training

The obvious concern for all companies is access to capital for expansion. The different solutions that are offered on the market are not satisfying and enough for the needs of the companies. It is important to have competence in economy internally. This is something that all companies want to employ not develop. Some training about finance in their basic education would be fine for the purpose of understanding economic issues. The companies did not see any special need for new training, not for themselves, rather education about fashion enterprising for those who are potential financiers. They also emphasized the importance of having someone in the company who has the expertise of finance and economy; even those companies being rather small.

Production is a bottleneck and if there would be equivalent production competence and opportunities more locally it would be an advantage. There is a notion that there is a lack of production competence in Sweden after most textile manufacturing was outsourced in the 1970s. They still look for possibilities and are willing to use Swedish raw materials to enable a local production. One company who found a producer with a special machine and knowledge started collaboration with this producer.

Marketing is essential for the companies but they found it easy to find competence, especially in branding and PR. More difficult, and where they saw a need for education and training, is in sales and distribution, especially when it comes to the development of e-commerce.

Internationalization is important and the companies think they need this competence internally. But they also think it is better to employ (when they can afford it) or consult someone already an expert rather than developing this expertise.

In general the companies were more likely to employ or consult expertise than train the existing personnel. The fashion companies did not mention innovation or development except the notion that strategic thinking for development was something they needed. The sportswear companies on the other hand are eager to learn about new materials and they use their material suppliers for education about new materials. With their focus on function of the products this is quite logical.

Sustainability was not a topic that evoked a lot of interest when asked for areas that are problematic for growth. Despite this it is an area where they believe they need to increase their competence. One reason why it has not been mentioned at the roundtable discussion before we brought it to the table could be that sustainability issues do not prevent them from growing or cause them any larger troubles in their daily operations. They do not feel any pressure from



their customers to become more sustainable, although they do feel a pressure from themselves and a need to become more sustainable. Many of them use organic cotton and are searching for sustainable materials, but most of them would not claim that they are sustainable, as they do not have total control of the production process.

The roundtable discussion confirmed many of the issues from the questionnaire and brought more knowledge about the reasoning behind the answers. Sales, logistics and on-line sales are of great concern, and also marketing, but there is no special need for training marketing, especially not when it comes to marketing and PR as there is so many people with this expertise.





#### 4. Training programmes offered to fashion companies

We have tried to identify existing training programmes that are offered to the Swedish fashion industry and to differentiate those directed towards start-ups and those directed towards established companies. Table 18 below is not a complete picture of all training programmes that exist.

*Table 18 Training programmes in Sweden*

Theme	Start-ups	SME fashion companies
Finance, economy and budgeting	<p>The Entrepreneur Foundation (Drivhuset) <a href="http://www.drivhuset.se/">http://www.drivhuset.se/</a></p> <p>Generator (Advice and coaching for creative and cultural enterprises) (<a href="http://generatorsverige.se/">http://generatorsverige.se/</a>)</p> <p>Minc, Malmö <a href="http://www.minc.se/">http://www.minc.se/</a></p> <p>Brewhouse <a href="http://brewhouse.se/">http://brewhouse.se/</a></p> <p>Transit Cultural Incubator (Transit Kulturinkubator) <a href="http://transitkulturinkubator.se/">http://transitkulturinkubator.se/</a></p> <p>The Fashion Incubator (Modeinkubatorn) <a href="http://www.modeink.se">http://www.modeink.se</a></p> <p>ESPIRA <a href="http://www.espira.se/">http://www.espira.se/</a></p>	<p>Almi Företagspartner AB <a href="http://www.almi.se/">http://www.almi.se/</a></p>
Marketing and branding	<p>Proteko (courses in purchasing) <a href="http://www.proteko.se/">http://www.proteko.se/</a>. Also tailoring courses for the needs of companies.</p> <p>Berghs School of Communication <a href="http://berghs.se">http://berghs.se</a></p> <p>Association for Design and Advertising (ADA) <a href="http://www.adasweden.se/">http://www.adasweden.se/</a></p> <p>Association of Swedish Fashion Brands (ASFB) <a href="http://www.asfb.se">http://www.asfb.se</a></p> <p>The Swedish Association of Designers (Sveriges Designer) <a href="http://www.sverigesdesigner.se/">http://www.sverigesdesigner.se/</a></p> <p>Swedish Textile and Fashion Companies (Sveriges Textil- och modeföretag, TEKÖ) <a href="http://www.teko.se/">http://www.teko.se/</a></p> <p>The Swedish Fashion Council (Moderådet)</p>	



	<a href="http://www.moderadet.se/">http://www.moderadet.se/</a> The Swedish Society of Crafts and Design (Svensk Form) <a href="http://www.svenskform.se">http://www.svenskform.se</a> The Swedish Industrial Design Foundation (SVID) <a href="http://www.svid.se">http://www.svid.se</a> Marketplace Borås <a href="http://www.marketplaceboras.se/">http://www.marketplaceboras.se/</a>	
Sales		
Retailing and e-commerce	Svensk Handel (Swedish Trade): open courses and company tailored courses (only in Swedish) <a href="http://www.svenskhandel.se">http://www.svenskhandel.se</a>	
Logistics and Supply chain management	Swedish School of Textiles. Name of course: Fashion Logistics: Accessibility: Open course part time, day time, academic course, 7.5 credits (in English), <a href="http://www.hb.se">http://www.hb.se</a>	
Internationalization and export		Swedish Trade Council <a href="http://www.swedishtrade.se/">(http://www.swedishtrade.se/</a>  Svenska Institutet <a href="http://www.si.se">http://www.si.se</a>
Sustainability strategies	Swedish School of Textiles: Name of course: The responsible company. Accessibility: open, distance course, 7.5 credits <a href="http://www.hb.se/">(http://www.hb.se/)</a>	Sustainable Fashion Academy <a href="http://www.sustainablefashionacademy.org">http://www.sustainablefashionacademy.org</a> )  Swedish School of Textiles: The responsible company. Open academic course, 7.5 credits, distance learning

## 5. Identified gaps between need and education offered

There are several courses in how to start companies and this is further supported by the incubators activities. We have only looked at the needs for training among fashion companies, which means that we have not investigated the needs of retailers and producers. The courses and programmes that are available on the market for these companies generally have a wider audience, and we have therefore looked at those courses that cover the topics and have companies in general as a target group. Some courses do specialize in filling the needs of either fashion companies or companies in the creative and cultural industry, which also include fashion companies.

### 5.1 Three good examples of training programmes

There are an extensive number of educational programmes and courses aiming at people in the fashion industry. Organizers are academic institutions, private education companies and foundations as well as public support organizations.

In this part we describe three good examples of courses or programmes that support fashion companies to develop in a good way. We have chosen

1. Sustainable Fashion Academy because they have developed courses with the aim to make fashion companies more innovative for the purpose of becoming more sustainable and the course/programmes they have developed are highly appreciated by the participants.
2. Swedish School of Textiles – The responsible fashion company – a distance learning course.
3. Hyper Island

#### **Sustainable Fashion Academy.**

The organization: Sustainable Fashion Academy is a private and member based foundation that organizes programmes, seminars and workshop for companies in the fashion industry

#### *Name of programme*

Design and Sustainable Performance (In Swedish)

#### *Aim*

The participants should understand and be able to communicate the scientific, morale and business cases for sustainable fashion and textiles; assess the social and environmental impacts of their products' from a lifecycle perspective, identify ways to better manage their supply chain from a sustainability perspective, explore potential product concepts, and build a network of like-minded professionals.

#### *Target group*

Senior managers, designers, product developer, quality manager or purchaser; i.e people responsible for integrating environmental and social criteria into their daily work in a fashion or



textile company. There is a limit of 30 participants. This year's programme has around 28 participants. It is recommended that each company has two participants to support each other in the realization of the new ideas that are developed during the programme.

#### *Structure of course work:*

The programme consists of seven workshops and two coaching sessions over an eight months period. The workshops take place once a month, starting in March 2012, ending in November 2012. Coaching sessions are provided in the beginning of the period (in April and in the mid (September)). These are individual and allow the company to develop a plan for increasing its capability to become more sustainable. The workshops are organized so that relevant guest give lectures and then the participants have exercises that brings the ideas further.

#### *Content*

Sustainability issues and how these can be practiced; certifications and labelling, the use of design and sourcing for achieving better social and environmental performance, transportation aspects as well as communication to the market, and responsibilities for end-of-life of products.

#### *Fee*

The programme fee depends on the size of the company; the highest fee is SEK 38.000. For small companies and entrepreneurs a grant can be applied for.

#### **The Swedish School of Textiles**

The Swedish School of Textiles (THS) is a department at University Borås and offers educational programmes and courses on all academic level, primary for students, but also for practitioners. THS has developed several distance-learning courses in design and other fashion and textile related courses. One of these courses is aiming at practitioners with the goal to increase their knowledge in sustainability. The distance-learning format enables people to choose their time for learning that fits their work as well as private obligations. The courses are sometimes offered in English.

#### *Name of course:*

The responsible fashion company (Det ansvarsfulla företaget)

#### *Academic level:*

Undergraduate

#### *Credits:*

7,5 credits

#### *Aim*

The responsible fashion company is a course within Corporate Social Responsibility applied to the textile- and fashion industry.



### *Structure and format*

The course is a distant course taught part time during one semester with individual studies and three seminars. It is divided into four modules where the first three have whole day seminars with required presence at two out of three. The last module is the realization of an own project, preferably at a company. The three first modules all have the requirement of active participation in the online discussion forum as well as handing in essay questions.

### *Content*

The four modules are: Introduction to Corporate Social Responsibility and the fashion industry; Environmental aspects; Social aspects; and independent individual project.

### **Hyper Island**

The fashion companies mentioned Hyper Island as a new, very good education for web production and also e-commerce. Hyper Island claims themselves to be a “world-leading life-long learning experiences for creative professionals and talents all around the world”. For more than 16 years, Hyper Island has been developing and providing programs and courses with a special in-house methodology, developed from experience-based learning. Hyper Island has campuses in Karlskrona, Stockholm and Manchester with office presence in New York and London. Hyper Island has 50 co-workers and more than 400 students from 30 different countries are studying at Hyper Island’s campuses.

### *Name of course:*

eCommerce Business

### *Academic level:*

Undergraduate

### *Aim*

This program prepares the students to lead change and innovation with a focus on how to do business online through research, creativity and insight driven business development.

### *Target group*

Hyper Island looks for a diverse group with a diverse foundation of experience. The eCommerce Business program requires a minimum of one year of relevant industry experience or equivalent within the field of business development, strategy and management. The eCommerce Business program also requires High School Diploma (Gymnasium) or foreign equivalent.

### *Structure and format*

The programme, which is 45 weeks long, is taught through lectures, workshops and projects as well as a 15 weeks internship, most likely with one of the 600 companies in Hyper Island’s global network



### *Content*

The program covers for instance:

- eCommerce market and industry research
- Trend analysis and forecasting
- Legal and ethical aspects of digital business
- Business Development
- Group dynamics & personal development
- Store development and – marketing plans, strategies, and campaigns
- Idea and concept development
- Entrepreneurship

### *Fee*

**Nordic Applicants:** For persons with a legal residency in any of the Nordic countries (Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Iceland or Faeroe Islands), regardless of nationality or citizenship, it is possible to apply to one of the governmentally funded (AVET/HVEC) seats, these seats are free of charge. Please note that applicants eligible for governmentally funded seats are also able to apply to International seats with a program fee.

**International Applicants:** For International Students the 45-week program fee is 125.000 SEK

## Appendix 1

### The production of the questionnaire

The questionnaire was developed in collaboration with Estonian and Finnish partners and has been sent to fashion companies in all participating countries in the Baltic Fashion project. The questionnaire was tested in Finland. This report is only presenting the result from the Swedish research.

We identified 40 Swedish fashion companies who design and produce fashion garments and shoes. We also included sportswear and workwear. The reason for picking this number of companies is because we wanted to know that we have a certain balance of companies in size, product categories and age. Three students from the Fashion Management master program conducted the questionnaire.

The head of the company or the person responsible for marketing were contacted and asked if they were willing to answer the questionnaire. In the first round we had 25 respondents and more than 20 answered positively. A link to the web-based questionnaire was then sent by e-mail to the respondents. Despite their promise to answer the questionnaire and 2-3 reminders on phone and e-mail we did only get 8 respondents. The list of companies was then expanded to 40 companies and the same procedure with contacts on phone and reminders we achieved another 8 respondents; in total we had 16 respondents. Although this is 40 per cent of our company list it is still a small number considering the total population of fashion companies in Sweden, which we estimate to be around 300 based on a previous study in 2006 (Sundberg, 2006).

The questionnaire gave input to the roundtable discussions where ten companies participated; three in Borås and seven in Stockholm. These companies represent Swedish fashion; most have been on the market for more than three years and are also working internationally.

Some of those who did not answer the questionnaire blamed it on lack of time and too complicated questions. Most of those who answered are young, micro companies and one can expect they experience a great need for training as they lack a lot in this initial phase of their business. Still, we have some interesting views from these companies and with the discussion from the roundtable meetings with more established and Swedish fashion companies we believe we have quite a good view of the situation for the Swedish fashion companies and their need for support and education.

## Appendix 2

### The organization of roundtables

We organized one meeting in Borås at the Swedish School of Textiles to reach the fashion companies in the western region and one in Stockholm to reach the fashion companies in



Stockholm, also where most of the fashion companies are located. The Stockholm roundtable was organized together with Association of Swedish Fashion Brands who also contacted the companies of which most of them also are members of the association.

In the Borås roundtable four companies accepted the invitation but one cancelled the same day. The three companies who participated were two in sportswear and one in jeans and work wear. They have been on the market for more than ten years. In the Stockholm roundtable eleven persons from ten companies accepted but four cancelled in the last minute so we had seven fashion companies participating. These fashion companies are good representatives for the Swedish fashion companies and they all share a desire to expand both in Sweden and internationally.