

Chapter 11

Information and Knowledge Management Perspective Contributions for Fashion Studies: Observing Logistics and Supply Chain Management Processes

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ABSTRACT

In this chapter a focus on practical organizational aspects is considered: how to understand the development of concrete, objective processes such as logistics and supply chain management for fashion production and commercialization, with the help of information and knowledge management (IKM). For this study, some restrictive fundamentals are applied. The basic methodological aspect is to consider a “collection” as a line of artifacts of clothing produced according fashion concepts and propositions, resulting in several tangible products – as the clothing itself, complementary accessories, usage-oriented implementations – and intangible factors – such as image, communication messages, brand, artistic and cultural propositions, among many others (Sauro, 2009; Godart et al., 2015). It is a remarkably complex result, resulting from an intense creative process that receives internal and external influences, regarding organizational boundaries, which has to be limited to a focus for a particular study, as it is considered for this chapter. It is important also to mention that “collection” as referred here, approaches mainly clothing, although the term is also related to several other artifacts and products, such as shoes, jewelry, particular accessories, etc.

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INTRODUCTION

Recent studies around information and knowledge management have focused on how these relevant contents are produced and applied for several business decisions over a broad scope of organizational issues. A provocative sector for this observation is fashion. As a complex, dynamic and disseminated industrial, cultural, artistic and social scenario, fashion involves themes such as communication, design, industrial, commercial, marketing, cultural and several other aspects and processes, where information and knowledge management could play a significant role. This situation generates the perspective, as affirmed by many authors, of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary researches, when conceptual background from various fields contribute to understand fashion production phenomena. In a correlated opportunity, it shows a potential arena for scientific and academic dialogue, resulting in another prospective situation where a new cooperative context can be further produced, with unfolding benefits for productive researches.

In this chapter a focus on practical organizational aspects is considered: how to understand the development of concrete, objective processes such as logistics and supply chain management for fashion production and commercialization, with the help of information and knowledge management (IKM). For this study, some restrictive fundamentals are applied. The basic methodological aspect is to consider a “collection” as a line of artifacts of clothing produced according fashion concepts and propositions, resulting in several tangible products – as the clothing itself, complementary accessories, usage-oriented implementations – and intangible factors – such as image, communication messages, brand, artistic and cultural propositions, among many others (Sauro, 2009; Godart *et al.*, 2015). It is a remarkably complex result, resulting from an intense creative process that receives internal and external influences, regarding organizational boundaries, which has to be limited to a focus for a particular study, as it is considered for this chapter. It is important also to mention that “collection” as referred here, approaches mainly clothing, although the term is also related to several other artifacts and products, such as shoes, jewelry, particular accessories, etc.

It is opportune, at a first glance, to observe that IKM emerges in various interesting points in this context, as one can consider the following moments in the production of a commercial fashion result, as one particular clothing collection:

- As main fashion designers consider their actual views of the specific moment where a collection should be developed – in terms of different factors such as artistic conceptual, cultural conception, brand tradition (as the fashion organization already expressed its image in former productions), innovation, etc.
- Technological issues around production, as materials – fabric, accessories – machinery, workmanship intervention, production processes, etc.
- Technological aspects and resources to offer fashion production, as web-based image dissemination (for example, on-line broadcasting of collection launching events), commercialization (for example, encompassing simple, accessible digital marketing websites to virtual reality supports), etc.
- Marketing-related information and knowledge provision and generation, as those contents where a dialogue is produced with final customers – from different cultures, parts of the world – and productive, interactive and dynamic information and knowledge can also be observed for the industrial arrangement.

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