

Fashion entrepreneurship

with Dr Samii Kennedy Benson

Talking points

Knowledge

1. What percentage of small businesses in the US are owned by people from minority backgrounds?
2. List three fashion skills students can learn at the FAB Lab.
3. List three entrepreneurial skills students can learn at the FAB Lab.

Comprehension

4. How does the FAB Lab improve the entrepreneurial self-efficacy of its students?

Application

5. If you wanted to start your own fashion business, how could you benefit from the FAB Lab? Which aspects of the FAB Lab training do you think you would find most useful, and why?
6. Imagine that you are interviewing a successful fashion entrepreneur. What questions would you ask them to learn about their fashion designs and career journey?

Analysis

7. How is Samii using the FAB Lab to tackle issues around diversity and representation in the fashion industry?
8. What are the motivations behind running a sustainable and ethical fashion brand?
9. Why do you think small fashion businesses can be more creative than high-street brands?

Evaluation

10. How important do you believe fashion is for empowering people?
11. Samii mentions ethical issues in the fashion industry, including labour practices, environmental concerns, lack of diversity and the promotion of an unobtainable beauty ideal. What problems do each of these issues create for society? To what extent do these issues impact you? For example, are you aware of them when you buy clothing? How do you think individuals and the fashion industry can best address these problems?

More resources

- Visit Fashion Society (www.fashionsociety.co), a creative hub for students aged 13-18 with a passion for fashion. This is an online course that can help you learn more about the fashion industry and how to succeed in it.
- Explore Tailornova (tailornova.com/designer), an online 3D clothing design software that lets you style your own creations.
- 'Black Girls Sew' is a book by Lesley Ware (www.lesleyware.com) and a non-profit organisation to teach and empower young girls (www.instagram.com/blackgirlssew)
- To learn more about ethical issues connected to the garment industry, read this Futurum article: futurumcareers.com/tackling-modern-slavery-a-sustainability-accounting-perspective

Activities

Create your own fashion brand!

1. Design your fashion line

Fashion is a great way to express yourself. Have a go at designing and creating clothes and accessories that express your creativity and individuality. Sketch out a few items of clothing or accessories that represent who you are and, if possible, try creating some of them. Experiment with colours, shapes, patterns and materials. Each of your items can be unique, but there should be an overarching theme or idea that connects them all.

2. Create your brand

Your brand is your business's identity. Create a brand for your fashion line that communicates what you want to express through your clothing and accessories. Come up with a name, logo and slogan that advertises this message to your potential customers and design a poster or website homepage for your brand. Think about what makes your designs unique, who will want to wear your clothing and accessories, what type of business you want to be and how to communicate all this information in a clear and engaging way.

3. Write a business plan

With an innovative fashion line and exciting branding, you can now create your business strategy that will help you sell your products and develop a successful fashion business. Be creative when writing your business plan, and consider the following:

- How will you make your clothes and accessories?
- Where will you sell them?
- How much will your items cost to make and buy?
- How will you advertise your brand?
- How will you ensure that your business is ethical?
- How will you ensure that your business is sustainable?

4. Pitch your business

To get funding to start your new business, you need to pitch your new fashion brand to investors. Create a short presentation to introduce investors to your brand. Include the sketches and samples of your fashion line, your ideas for branding and advertising, and your strategy for running a successful business. You not only need to convince them that your brand is unique and exciting, but also that it is supported by a well thought out business plan.