

Design with a Client in Mind: Using an Abstract Model for Apparel Design

INTRODUCTION: The purpose of this project was to design a line of three nontraditional women's business wear jackets that successfully met the needs of a specific target market according to Lamb and Kallal's Functional, Expressive, and Aesthetic (FEA) Consumer Needs Model (1992). The jackets explored creative silhouettes, Computer Aided Design (CAD) software, and computerized embroidery embellishment.

FUNCTIONAL, EXPRESSIVE, AND AESTHETIC (FEA) CONSUMER NEEDS MODEL DEFINED: The FEA models is the breaking down of the three considerations in design: functionality, expressiveness, and aesthetics for a specific target market. If a target market is to accept the design project has to comply with the target consumers cultural beliefs, sociological ideals, and personal values. If the design does not comply with one of more of the culture's beliefs, then the design is rejected and sent back to the preliminary stages of design (Lamb & Kallal; 1992).

The FEA Consumer Needs Model considers the target consumers, the culture of the consumer, and

DESIGN PROCESS:

1. Target Consumer: Identify a Target Consumer at the core of the model.

A. My Target Consumer is:

Sex: Female

Age: 30-52

Race: Multitude of different ethnicities

Demographic Locations: United States metropolis in locations which experience cold weather seasons such as: Boston, Seattle, Detroit, & Denver.

New York City,

Psychographic Information: Woman who is a leader within her career field. She perseveres in all goals, yet keeps a level head about herself. She is enjoyable to be around, keeping the attitude of conversations positive and enjoyable.

She is enjoyable to

Physical Characteristics: Active body type with no physical disabilities

Activities: Full time business woman who needs business apparel. Enjoys wearing expressive and functional clothing which demands these women may include creative professionals, business professionals, Doctorates, Professors.

attention. Careers of

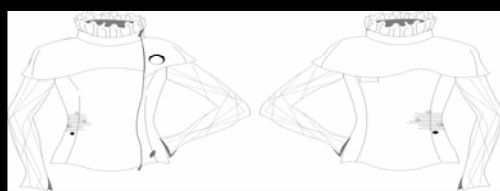
Preferences (user needs and wants within the context of a use-acceptable for the work environment. She needs a durable jacket. She is looking for unique business wear pieces that her co-workers will admire.

situation): She desires a modern alternative to the traditional suit and jacket silhouette, but a garment that is still

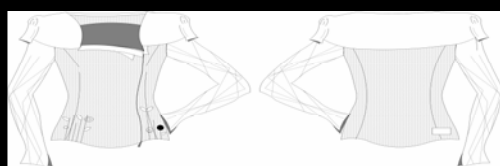
VISUAL DOCUMENTATION :



Jacket One Technical Sketch (above) & Final Garment Front and Back (right)



Jacket Two Technical Sketch (above) & Final Garment Front and Back (right)



Jacket Three Technical Sketch (above) & Final Garment Front and Back (right)



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DESIGN PROCESS Cont'd:

2. Culture: In the FEA Model, culture encircles the target consumer.

A. The culture of my target consumer does not have any specific dress limitation, however the target consumer prefers to be modest and sophisticated in dress practices.

3. Design Criteria: Identify the needs and wants of the target consumer to create designs.

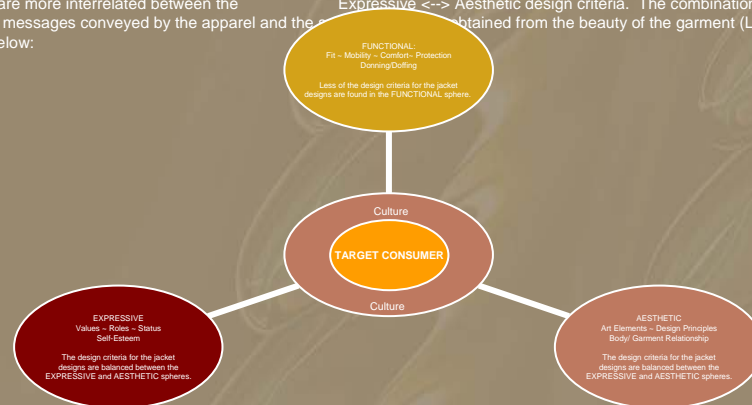
A. Functional Considerations: Functional considerations of the jackets include fit and ease of movement. The jackets have to be comfortable, not confining to the wearer, plus be modest and conservative for the work environment. Each jacket must also be durable and easy to care for between dry cleanings. The jackets I have created are semi comfortable to wear with some ease in the lining. They are form fitting so some movement is restricted but are perfectly acceptable to wear the entire work day. Because of the 100% wool fabrics the jackets are not suitable for warm weather conditions, but should be worn in a cool weather environment. In Jacket Two, the Camel colored jacket, I added a 2-way zipper to create different closure positions for comfort and also aesthetics.

B. Expressive Considerations: The expressive considerations for the jacket include the user's work environment and user's personality. The jacket design should not distract clientele from the business being conducted, however the jackets still need to provide visual and nonverbal clues about the wearer to send a clear, concise professional message to the client about the personality of the wearer. In my case, my jackets should send a positive, stern, and unwavering message about the user, yet they are fun, interesting, and bold which relates those aspects of the user's personality, as well.

C. Aesthetic Considerations: The aesthetic considerations for the jackets included machine embroidery detailing that enhances the silhouette of the garment, adds visual interest, and balances the overall design, maintaining appropriateness for a business setting. I chose 100% wool fabrics because of the hand and moldable qualities of the fabrics. The embroidery also sits well on top of the suiting weight wool. The embroidery is a simple modern floral design which captures the femininity of floral motifs and the no-nonsense essence of the work place. The embroidery is strategically placed to emphasize different areas of the body. The embroidery on all three jackets emphasize the waist line in a unique way. The design principles of the jackets create an unique silhouette. The fabric manipulation at the neck lines of Jacket One (Navy) create an interesting alternative to a shawl collar. The visual interest at the shoulders on Jacket Three (Green) create a nontraditional puff sleeve, and the caplet of Jacket Two combines two modern silhouettes.

4. Multiple Concerns: The three types of considerations (functional, expressive, aesthetic) for design are not mutually exclusive, but interrelated.

A. Designs may not exclusively be targeted to one of the three design criteria for the end use, but rather a good design will try to balance all three design criteria: function, expressive, aesthetic. My jackets, although they are functional as a semi-comfortable, somewhat non-restricting garment, are more interrelated between the Expressive <-> Aesthetic design criteria. The combination of these two design criteria deal with the messages conveyed by the apparel and the beauty obtained from the beauty of the garment (Lamb & Kallal; 1992). Please see model below:



CONCLUSION :

1. Following the FEA Consumer Needs Model enabled a design process to take place which successfully achieved the purpose of designing a line of nontraditional women's business wear that met the needs of a specific target market. The jackets provide a functional garment that is appropriate to be worn in a business setting. Figure 1. The jackets conform to all of the FEA consumer needs model (Lamb & Kallal; 1992).

The jackets provide an expressive garment that conveys the personality and self-esteem of the user. The jackets send a clear and concise professional message to the clientele yet the garment silhouette convey the fun and interesting aspects of the users personality. And the jackets provide an aesthetic garment which combines an elements of machine embroidery and design principles of the silhouette to create an attractive garment. The machine embroidery adds visual emphasis to the waistline while the silhouette creates an interesting design principal.

2. Overall I would say following the FEA Consumer Needs Model is an effective way to produce garment for a target market. I was pretty successful in accomplishing my goals for an aesthetically pleasing and expressive garment, however I would have liked to be more balanced on the functional aspect of the garments. Although the garments are comfortable there is some limited mobility due to the fabric and design principles. With a garment under the jackets, there will be even more limited mobility. However, this limited mobility is still acceptable in the business setting because there is little physical activity. As I mentioned earlier, I am really pleased with how the machine embroidery, of which I have a background in, and the silhouette of the garments. From preliminary sketches to finished garment I was able to achieve the silhouette I desired for my target consumer.

3. In the future I would like to create more mobility in the garment by adding more ease in the patterns. I would also like to add a back vent in the lining of the jackets for more comfort and I would like to add 2-way zippers to all of the designs for more donning options. Another change I might make for future jackets is the fabric. If I were to use a cotton blend fabric the garment could be worn year round, and a spandex blend would add more mobility to the garment. I am happy with the silhouette of the current jackets, but it would be interesting to create visual interest through fabric manipulation on other areas of the garments other than the neckline.

4. To expand on this project I might consider designing a line of coordinating pants/skirts to wear with the jackets so my target consumer may have a suit set. I would also like to take similar fabric manipulation techniques and machine embroidery and apply them to evening wear by using sheer silks and other lightweight fabrics.