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Vintage Fashion Line

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VINTAGE FASHION LINE

A Project Submitted to the Faculty of the Art and Design Department in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

At

Lindenwood University

By

Robyn Grier

Saint Charles, Missouri

October 2020

VINTAGE LINGERIE FASHION LINE

by

Robyn Grier

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Master of Arts in Fashion Business and Entrepreneurship
at
Lindenwood University

October 2020, Robyn Denise Grier

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Author's Signature Robyn Grier

Date 10/12/2020

Committee Chair Signature Dr. Chajuana Trawick

Date 10/12/2020

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: Vintage Fashion Line

Name of Student: Robyn Grier, Masters of Art in Fashion Business and Entrepreneurship, 2020

Thesis Directed by: Dr. Chajuanna V. Trawick, PhD, Endowed Chair and Associate Professor of Fashion Business & Design

This project focuses is on the history, description and current trends of lingerie fashion. The goal is to create a vintage fashion line that would appeal to today's woman. The project not only reviews historical fashion, but looks at current lingerie fashion trends and lingerie companies.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	Page 4
Project Significance.....	Page 5
Background.....	Page 6
Literature Review.....	Page 6
Current Fashion Companies.....	Page 10
Methodology.....	Page 15
Production/Discussion of Results.....	Page 19
Conclusion.....	Page 20
Bibliography.....	Page 22

Vintage Lingerie Fashion Line

INTRODUCTION

Project Description

This project focuses on research and information gathering about the history of lingerie, current and popular trends, and identifying a target customer to market and sell my clothing line, which will be vintage lingerie. I will discuss the lingerie industry and style from a historical perspective by reviewing trends throughout the 1800s and 1900s. I will also discuss literature as it relates to the biggest lingerie companies, the history of the first African American owned boutique and, finally, the top local lingerie boutiques, which will be competitors of my fashion line. The goal of this project is to identify an era of lingerie I would like to replicate, discuss the target population, and outline the steps required to complete and market vintage lingerie. I have identified the activities and components to produce the clothing. These activities will ultimately lead to a marketing and advertising plan.

What I hope to achieve

My research has been primarily focused on vintage lingerie, which highlighted the styling trends of the 1800s and 1900s. It was important to see how the fashion industry has evolved in style, socialization and culture. Like with most things, fashion lingerie styles that are cycles of what is

popular. For example, you will see in my project how the bodice from the 1800s, which was the beginning of lingerie style, has recycled amongst a lot of celebrities.

My ultimate project goal is to create a up to date version of the era where silk was very popular for nightgowns. My vision is to create a fashion line business that focuses on silk gowns, long and short, incorporating the bodice into this style. Celebrities, such as Beyonce', Cardi B, Nicki Minaj, have sported the bodice look in a lot of their videos and onstage performances.

One of the most important things for this project will be for me to identify my target population according to socioeconomic status, demographics and psychographics. Another factor in this project to review will be to look at what other fashion lines and companies that sell nightgowns are doing. The question that will require consistent research is to answer whom my competitors are. I will also discuss my competitors, which are the local lingerie boutiques in the Saint Louis Metropolitan area.

Project Significance

This project is significant because it embodies a long-lived passion and ancestral gift of fashion. My inspiration comes from generations of fashion designers, stylist and seamstresses. My great, great grandmother, great grandmother and my grandmother and great aunts made their own patterns out of newspaper and were professional seamstresses. My mother was also a seamstress and, by nature, a fashion stylist. From the 1960s to the early 1980s, my grandmother sewed in a factory in St. Louis, MO, called Ms. Elaine. She created the most beautiful silk nightgowns, sheer robes and wedding dresses. For my fashion line, it is my desire

to incorporate the beautiful, elegant gowns that my ancestors created with a modern-day appeal.

BACKGROUND

Deliverables-Objectives

- Discuss the history of lingerie and identify the era I want to replicate
- Discuss current fashion lingerie lines and companies that are successful today and would be a competitor.
- Discuss who my customers would be, based on demographics, socioeconomics and psychographics
- An outline of a marketing plan that would include advertising strategies (such as pop up shops)

Project Originality

Creating a lingerie line that encompasses the style and class of the vintage look is a niche for this market. However, the end product will definitely encompass styling trends that are popular amongst my target audience in today's world.

State of the Field (Literature Review)

I would first like to discuss the history of lingerie. Lingerie is a French derivative word, which means linen, and describes women's undergarments, which include brassieres, today known as

bras, lounging wear, sleepwear and lightweight robes. In English, it means women's underwear or nightclothes. Lingerie, as a word, was first used to refer to underwear and bras in 1922.

During the late 19th century, corsets became smaller, less bulky and more constricting and were gradually replaced by the brassiere, first patented in the 20th century by Mary Phelps Jacob.

(Cole&Diehl, 2015)

When the First World War broke out, women found themselves filling in men's work roles, creating a demand for more practical undergarments. Lighter and more breathable fabrics started to be used. Lingerie is made of lightweight, stretchy, sheer and often decorative fabrics. The materials are usually silk, satin, Lycra, lace, chiffon. Lady Duff-Gordon was the pioneer in developing lingerie that created less restrictive corsets. Lingerie dresses were made of cotton, linen, and, sometimes, plain silks, with underwear details, such as inset rows of lace, tucks, and small ruffles. A trend that had its roots in late 19th century styles, these dresses were worn for any number of occasions, particularly in spring and summer seasons. Especially delicate and detailed versions were worn for daytime formal events, including receptions, garden parties, and school graduations, and lingerie dresses became very common for wedding gowns. The lingerie dress was also sometimes worn for casual summertime eveningwear.

(Cole& Diehl, 2015). Bodices seems to be the beginning of what would soon be called lingerie.

In addition, as outlined in the book *The Modern Day of Fashion*, lingerie styles, including bodices, were incorporated into wedding dresses and evening wear (Cole&Diehl, 2015)

"A Brief History of Sexy Lingerie" discusses how sexy lingerie has changed over time, from the early days of whalebone corsets of the 1700s through the whale tail thongs of the 2000s. Styles known as whalebone corsets-were everyday wardrobe staples for "proper" women of the

eighteenth century. Even though today's corsets are sexier and bustier, the corsets in the 1700 were essential in molding the ideal body form. The corsets in the 1800 was more of an S- curve shape that became popular in the early twentieth century, which accentuated the hips more than previous corsets(Cole&Diehl, 2015)

In 1910, the closed-crotch drawers became a popular lingerie fashion for women. This Pre-Victorian Era boudoir represented the sexual availability of women. The Sheer Nightgown, which I would like to replicate, was first introduced in the 1900s. Bridal trousseaux always involved sheer nightgowns, sometimes with low backs, that more than hinted at the bare body underneath. Trousseau weren't just for the pleasure of the wedding night, though the more elaborate and extensive they were, the wealthier the bride's family was supposed to be. This history is great information to keep in mind as socioeconomic status and demographics will come into play when deciding my target audience. I would like for my product to be affordable.

While fashion designers like Paul Poiret and Madeline Vianet were changing the ideal shape of the woman's body from hour glass to boyish and straight, the lingerie worn underneath had to change, too. There was no need for the tight corset under the flapper dress. Undergarments had to be constructed to be as invisible as possible. Slinky slips, long and short, were worn underneath these tubular dresses.

In the 1950s, Christian Dior gave a new look, which lingerie centered on dresses, skirts and coats that created an hourglass silhouette, which meant that bras became wired and structured to push up and form décolletage set against plunging necklines.

The 1940s nightgowns looked like a slip-they were made of silk, rayon, or rayon satin that flowed nicely over the body in a bias cut. This is the decade I have chosen to model my line after. Nightgowns cut on the bias are more form fitting, yet stretch with movement. A sturdier and more spacious straight cut with, gathers under the bust or waistline, was more practical, although less pretty. Nightgowns were usually ankle-length and were fitted in the bodice and flared out to an A-line shaped skirt. These types of nightgowns had a low V-neck that was often decorated with lace and were usually sleeveless or had thin straps. They also sometimes had very short cap sleeves. An empire waist was popular-there would be stitching or lace underneath the bustline and the dress would flow out from there. Soft pastel colors were popular-white, peach, ivory, light pink and light blue were most often worn. Women also often went for comfort in their sleepwear, choosing nightgowns in cotton or warmer cotton flannel. These were boxy fitting, often without a defined waist. They could be sleeveless or have short cap sleeves. Some also had long bell sleeves for extra warmth. More casual nightgowns like this were sometimes decorated with lace or eyelet at the neck and sleeves. Baptiste and cotton crepe were nice summer weights, as well as rayon or silk crepes and sting. Soft colors were still used and large and small floral patterns were popular as well. Sleeved nightgowns often buttoned up the front to a high, rounded collar. Sleeveless ones could button up the back and have a rounded or small v-neckline. They were primarily ankle-length, although many only came to mid-calf. 1940s robes, often referred to as house jackets, were worn all hours of the day. Many women chose to wear a house jacket in order to save wear and tear of day wear clothes, and they were also worn in the evening over the nightgown.

As the 1960s and 1970s start to approach, the fashion trend for nightwear become the long silky gowns with matchings robes. The Early 1960s became the bra free era during the Women's liberation movement. In the 1980s, the Teddies became the styling trend of lingerie. This lingerie clothing item was a one-piece silk base with lace. The working woman usually wore this under male-inspired suits to represent their femininity.

Understanding the history and trending of the lingerie fashion will help me to create my plan and product to achieve the look and the target population I desire. In reviewing illustrations, I gravitate towards the 1920s long silk gowns, which re-surfaced in the 1960s and 1970s, combined with the corset look.

CURRENT FASHION COMPANIES

The next steps in reviewing literature were to look at current styles and trends and companies that are selling lingerie.

One of the biggest companies that has been known for its lingerie is Victoria's Secret. They were founded in June 12, 1977 in Palo Alto, California by Roy and Gaye Raymond. This company was sold to Leslie Wexner in 1982. Leslie Wexner was responsible for expanding the Victoria Secret brand into American shopping malls, growing the company into 350 stores nationally, with sales of \$1 billion by the early 1990s. As a result, Victoria's Secret became the largest lingerie retailer in the United States. From 1995 until 2018, the Victoria's Secret Fashion Show was an essential part of the brand's image, featuring an annual runway of models who wore the company's apparel. They were named fantasy Angels. Throughout the 1990s to the present,

they have expanded to Body by Victoria and then, in 2002, they launched PINK, a brand that targeted teenage girls. Victoria's Secret expanded internationally in 2008. The lingerie market at the turn of the 21st century was driven by the modern technology and fabrics that help in designing innovate products, such as seamless bras and molded t-shirt bras. The global lingerie market in 2003 was estimated at \$29 billion, while in 2005, bras accounted for 56 percent of the lingerie market and briefs represented 29 percent. The United States' largest lingerie retailer operated in North America and Europe. Victoria Secret was known for their annual catwalk show but that was recently cancelled, due to low viewer ratings. By 2016, the company's market share started to decline, so they started branding athletic wear combined with leisure, labeling it athleisure(Workman, 2016). As of this year, May 2020, with over 1, 070 stores, Victoria's Secret remained the largest lingerie retailer in the United States.

Zelda Barbour Wynn Valdes was born on June 28, 1905 in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania and was an African American fashion and costume designer. She studied her grandmother's work as a seamstress and also worked in her uncle's tailoring shop. Valdes began working as a stock girl at a high-end boutique around 1920 and worked her way up to become the boutique's first black sales clerk and tailor. Valdes was the first black designer to open her own boutique and was also the first black-owned business on Broadway in New York City, New York in 1948. She called her shop Chez Zelda Boutique. She designed for celebrities, such as Dorothy Dandridge, Josephine Baker, Marian Anderson, Josephine Baker, Ella Fitzgerald, Mae West, Ruby Dee, Eartha Kitt, Sarah Vaughan and Mary McLeod Bethune(Momodu, 2017).

One of Victoria Secret's up and coming competitor is Rihanna's Fenty, which is a fashion house. Rihanna's fashion line was founded in 2017 and launched in May of 2019. Her label was under the luxury fashion group LVMH, also known as Hennessy Louis Vuitton. The fashion label made Rihanna the first woman, and also the first woman of ethnicity, to be added on the LVMH group. Rihanna launched her own Savage X Fenty lingerie in 2018. On May 10, 2019, Rihanna announced her partnership with LVMH by uploading the name and logo of the venture through her Instagram and Twitter accounts. She also stated a thankful caption commending LVMH in working with her. The CEO of LVMH, Bernard Arnault said that Rihanna will be supported with a team and resources. He also spoke of her as a true entrepreneur, a real CEO and a terrific leader. Fenty was previewed on T: The New York Times Style Magazine, where Rihanna wore several garments and accessories from her first collection. The venture made Rihanna the first ethnic woman to lead a house under the LVMH brand and the first woman to create an original brand for the group. Fenty is the first new producer of clothing shoes, and accessories under the LVMH brand since 1987, which follows the seventy LVMH brands, including Louis Vuitton, Givenchy, and Christian Dior. Fenty was initially launched as a pop-up store on May 22, 2019, in Paris. It then opened worldwide as an online store on May 29th. The store took over the first two floors of the Webster in Soho, New York, and was open until the 30th of June, 2019.

Boutiques in St. Louis

After my review of Lingerie boutiques in St. Louis, there would be five major competitors, which are described as the top lingerie boutiques in the St. Louis area. These resemble elegance, class,

and a range of sizes, which is my goal to do with my lingerie fashion line. The first one is Clair de Lune Lingerie which originated in Kansas City, but has recently expanded to St. Louis. This company markets their product as a high-end luxury lingerie, which includes European apparel. The pieces range from everyday wear to fancy, lacy pieces. They also have lingerie for pregnant mothers, both maternity and nursing line, and a post-surgery care department. This boutique has lingerie for women of all sizes.

The second lingerie business is Sugar Magnolia Boutique. This lingerie boutique has a wide selection of sizes all the way up to an N cup, which means that customers are guaranteed to find their size. They also have a burlesque section, with lingerie that have garters, the frills and corsets.

Jule Lingerie & Loungewear is the third lingerie and they offer a very personalized shopping experience. They sell designer pieces, and their goal is to sell comfortable garments. Their apparel ranges from bras, teddies, and nightshirts. They also have a section of perfumes and lotions.

Marie Angelique Bra and Lingerie has a wide variety of selections, from casual to bridal wear. Just like Sugar Magnolia Boutique, Marie Angelique has bra sizes from A to N cups. This boutique hosts bridal showers, which is a nice niche. They offer private shopping events as well. They also offer a boutique's loyalty program, which gives the customers offers and deals.

Lastly, the Image Choice is a lingerie store that specializes in bras designed for women who have had mastectomies. There is personal fitting by certified mastectomy fitters and considered experts. They also have a swim line, which is a nice twist.

Some other smaller boutiques in the Saint Louis metropolitan area focus on age 40 and older woman. Cupid's Closet: Sexy Lingerie for Women Over 40 is an online lingerie company that focuses on the middle-aged. Their motto is to never pass up an opportunity to wear a gown, even if it's only to go to bed. Their focus is to make knit gowns with lace detail and the leopard print slip look. These designs are created by Mary Marino Designs. Another online company is Chic creations, whose promotes niche nightdresses to cozy bathrobes and pajamas.

Explain how all examples relate to the scope of your project

For my project, it was very important for me to understand the history of vintage wear. My research into the early 1800s and 1900s helped me identify the fashion trends in lingerie. Because history repeats itself, the long silk gown and robe style was popular in the early 1940s and then again in the 1970s. There were other styles, but this is the style I desire to replicate with my fashion line. As I mentioned in the introduction, the corset has been worn by celebrities in the entertainment industry. In addition to the vintage silk gown, I would like to incorporate the corset into my vintage fashion line. I reviewed literature as it relates to the current companies and trends to review who my competitors would be. I did not find companies that primarily focused on the niche of the long silk gown. However, it was important to understand who my competitors for nightwear would be. As of today, Victoria Secret is still the biggest lingerie company and Rihanna and joined forces with Louis Vuitton, which has created a fierce competition between two companies.

After researching boutiques, it will help me to accommodate pregnant and nursing mothers, surgical prostheses and women of all sizes. The wider range of services, the more I can expand my target population.

Literature research on current companies brought to my attention that I must decide if I want a boutique location or if I want to do pop up shops. This will require more research leading to my final project. The history of lingerie has helped me identify the era I want to replicate. Review of the current trends has broadened my understanding of the competition and review of local boutiques helps me to position my fashion line and market my niche of vintage lingerie.

METHODOLOGY/METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

Project Approach

My approach for my Fashion Vintage Line will start with a Marketing Plan and advertising strategies. It is very important for my marketing plan to be strong because fashion is a very saturated industry. This plan is innovative because of the vintage long gown and robe with corset based-lingerie niche. After reviewing lingerie shops, most of them focused on bras, panties, and teddies. Branding this niche will be very important from distinguishing the line from my competitors. I have chosen a brand name and will still need to choose a logo and a market profile. I am still indecisive if I will use a slogan.

I first have to identify my target population. I would create a more refined social media audience by running social media campaigns. This will help me identify potential buyers. I would target relevant audiences by their interests and, based on feedback, determine

specifically the audience that would be interested in this product. Campaign ads and online advertising would help me identify the emotional triggers for my potential target population. It will always be true what one person finds fascinating and enticing, another may not like at all or consider offensive. Psychographic data can reveal information and guide you as to whom you should market. Another idea to identifying my target population would be to create conversion pathways in search engines, such as Bing and Google. This would be helpful in identifying people who may be interested or initially show interest and then fall off.

My goal is to create this line to focus on women like myself. Using techniques of psychographics will help me to see if I need to alter or expand this target population. This age range would be women from age 40 to 60 years old. The household income target would be \$50,000 and above. These are women that are married and, also, women who are very comfortable being single, but like to wear pretty gowns with pretty colors. The sizes would range from petite to xxl, but would be for all body types. My goal is to create a sensual and classy, opulent lingerie line. This age range is comfortable in their skin and may like to indulge into trendy wear. I would like for this product to stand out as, even though vintage, it will accentuate and compliment the natural curves of a woman. My target population would be women who enjoy their time at home, have a morning routine of meditation, coffee or tea, and enjoys television when off of work and wants to be comfortable but feel pretty. Brides who are going on honeymoons, newlyweds, maternal and new mothers would enjoy this product. Women with a breast prosthetic need will be accommodated as well. The education range of the target population can be from high school graduate and above. All occupations are welcomed. This Vintage Lingerie line may be even more appealing to women who work predominantly male

jobs, such as police officers and firemen, and, women who are in healthcare and wears scrubs for work. Coming home and connecting with their femininity by wearing beautiful gowns will be a Zen for these different groups of women. My goal is to make this line affordable.

Once my target population has been refined, I will next create a detailed marketing plan. As I begin to create my outline for marketing, I review the key components of a marketing plan. I already have my product, which is a vintage lingerie nightgown, robes, and corsets replicating styles from the early 1900s. I have created this line with my targeted customer in mind. I will develop a brand image that will be appealing to this market, but remain open to change to broaden my target audience.

Next, I will use social media to conduct surveys and other psychographic activities to determine pricing. I will also review competitor pricing. I plan to use fine silk, satin, lacing and cotton material. Materials and production cost will factor into pricing as well. Once I decide if I want a boutique or pop up shops, I can price and compare the cost of each. I will incorporate events such as bridal showers, and other “girl time” events into pricing.

Once I have identified my product, target population and pricing, the advertising component can be developed. The next action is to develop a plan on how I will promote my fashion line. This will include identifying effective tools, such as email marketing, search engine marketing, utilizing social media, commercials and fashion shows. It is important that realistic sales and distribution goals are set. I would also consider a clothing distribution professional to partner with.

Advertising and print media are very powerful tools. These are visuals when people are sitting in waiting rooms and reading magazines, or scrolling on social media and seeing an ad that catches the eye. Public relations are very key in the fashion industry when promoting your product. I will venture out to attempt to get a celebrity or a model to market my product. Developing a publishing marketing plan that encompasses marketing and public relations in magazines, and all relevant fashion blogs sentence fragment. Fashion blogs and other social media are having an increasing number of readers and followers.

Social media is a necessary tool for promoting this product line. Facebook, Instagram, twitter and linked-in are the most prevalent as of today. Once I have completed research of my target customer, I can determine the most popular social platforms for those demographics. It is important that I am very actively involved in this page. Constantly putting new and eye-catching advertising on my social media page sentence fragment. The strategy will be to quickly respond to comments, queries, and posts. Information will always have to be fresh and updated. Developing a website for my brand will be a part of the marketing plan as well.

Lastly, with the Marketing Plan, I have to make a decision on the logistics. Will my product be an online store and a boutique, or will it be the new concept of pop-up shops? As I spoke of in the literature review, Rihanna's new Fenty line has been very successful with the Pop-up shop concept. Cost analysis between the two will be factored in when deciding on a place. I will establish all my criteria, review cost, and the most effective way to brand the vintage lingerie will factor in on location. The ultimate goal is for the product to be seen by the masses. Sales are very important, but it is just as important to me that my product line makes customers feel good about themselves.

Production of goods and activities will include drawing fashions, purchasing material, identifying a production and manufacturer, assessing all associated cost, and using adobe graphics software.

Tools to be used to produce the product

As I am working on my Business Plan-marketing and advertising, I will start doing the drawings of the actual designs of the nightwear. I will use supplies, such as drawing paper, drawing pencils, and a drawing board, Adobe Graphic Design software and Photoshop. Once I have the designs completed, I will purchase the materials, which include silk, satin, lace and cotton to start with. I will need thread, zippers, snaps and all other items to sew designs together.

For the next step, I will find a clothing manufacturer to partner with to make quantity of supply. I will need to identify a fabric supplier as well.

I will start a soft launch, and then look for more investment and partnerships. Once I have a confirmation that the lingerie can sell, I may can get business partners and co-investors. In the meantime, once I am done sewing my product, I will assemble a small group of women who fits the description of my target population. I will ask them to wear the product and give me feedback so I can make the necessary changes and improvements. Once final touches are done, I can start promoting on social media and other advertisement platforms.

PRODUCTION/DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Researching the history of fashion trends of vintage lingerie has really helped decide on the era of my product line and a profile of who my target population will be. Gaining knowledge about who the key competitors are in my target city will help me research how I can create a winning

brand with my niche. I am in the process of drawing my designing and drawing my styles. I am also in the process of researching the best social media platforms to focus on. I will start with 8 styles in 5 different colors and 5 sizes. Through my research and methodology, I was able to identify my style of dress, the number of styles and the colors I would like to use. My methodology identified that I will start identifying manufacture production companies, and setting up social media platform.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this project has given me the background and knowledge base to create a Marketing and Advertising Plan for my Fashion Lingerie Line. Taking historical fashion trends from the early 1900s to replicate and make current will be my ultimate goal. This project has given me the structure, outline and information I need to build from. I can market my line as a Vintage wear with the comfort of modern-day material and style. I also have the option-- or I can do both--to open a boutique or do pop up shops. Every single competing boutique that I discussed had a specific focus and something extra they did to draw in customers. I love the idea of hosting theme-based socials via in person or platforms, such as Zoom or Microsoft teams.

I have a foundation for the “footwork” that it takes to start a clothing line. As a result of my project, I have made a “list of things to do” and next steps. There is a lot more work entailed than my original thought. One idea that came up as I was researching this topic was the idea of partnering with an existing business or vendor. The first African-American boutique owner, Zelda Barbour Wynn, spent a lot of time learning, studying and working for others, and it paid off when she was able to open her boutique. Rihanna is the first African American to partner

with Louis Vuitton, and her pop-up shops and fashion shows are very successful. So, in preparation for Graduate Seminar II, building from what I learned this project, and taking more courses, I will be ready to create the second part of my project leading to the Vintage Lingerie Fashion Line.

I will continue to study the world of boutiques and pop up shops to get the pros and cons to both and make a determination which is best for my line.

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