



“Measures” For New Product Development

Muditha M. Senanayake and Trevor J. Little
North Carolina State University

ABSTRACT

Current measures for apparel product development are presented and described. The evolvement of the types of measurements are examined through the 1990's. The increase in the interest and changing emphasis in the area of product development is examined by analyzing the patent activity from 1971 to present. Published papers on the subject of textile and apparel product development show an increase throughout the 1990's. New trends, technologies and business practices are discussed in relation to the new era of product development competitiveness.

KEY WORDS: Product Development, Benchmarking, CAD, Digital Printing, Body Scanning, Rapid Prototyping, Whole Garment Knitting, Computer Integrated Manufacturing, Internet Commerce, Automatic Language Translation

Innovation

The development of new textile and apparel products is rewarding and this activity is necessary to sustain a profitable organization. A product undergoes a product life cycle of introduction, growth, maturity, and finally decline (Kotler, 2000). In the maturity or decline phase, an organization must take an active role to expand the apparel product line and either extend the apparel life cycle, re-align the apparel product to make it superior or develop a new apparel product to maintain revenue.

If new apparel products are not developed, sales and profits decline, technology and markets change, or innovation by other firms makes the original product obsolete. The resources needed for new apparel product development include R&D, engineering, and test marketing. Since all product ideas are not successfully developed and tested, substantial funds are spent on apparel products that never reach the market. The successful product must not

only return its unique development cost but contribute to the development costs of unadopted or shelved products. The return on investment in new apparel products will be attractive only if risks can be minimized and profits maximized.

An apparel firm is continually aware of the marketing system and the macro-apparel business environment that impact on the organization. The firm learns to recognize factors in the market, which initiate new apparel products. The firm initiates new products because of financial goals, sales growth, competitive position, product life cycle, regulation, material costs, inventions, customer requests and technology.

Growth in sales is an important goal for many apparel corporations; in many cases it is absolutely necessary if profits are to be maintained. While sales growth is a continuing force for innovation, the emphasis has shifted to profitability as the prime concern (Urban & Hauser, 1980).