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## **START A DESIGN CLOTHING BUSINESS**

**What you will be doing.** It takes money and the right people to have your fashions seen on runways in New York and Europe. If that is where you want to go but don't live in a big city like that, start with marketing and selling your own designs or those of other designers in a boutique or as a home based business.

Clothing designs can be created using your skills as a designer and some computer software. You can sew your own creations if you have the knowledge or partner with a seamstress to make the designs a reality. Creating patterns from your designs allows customers to make their own clothing in the color of their choice in the convenience of their own home.

If you plan on offering designer clothing, buy in bulk for a lower price. Try to acquire the most popular sizes for your target market. If you will also offer your own designs, develop a label and have it copyrighted to avoid theft.

**How to start.** Visit boutiques and department stores to see the latest trends in designer wear. As a designer, you can choose where you want to specialize. A specialized market keeps the costs low at the beginning and your business focused.

For a business start that will bring in some money, stock designer clothing and sell it on eBay or at flea markets. You will gain a bit of cash to fund your design process for your own clothing line.

**Start up costs.** Taking out a small business loan is doable with the proper business plan. Include ideas for your own line. Outline a plan that brings money into the business through sale of patterns of your line or the selling of designer clothes at discount prices, while you develop other clothes.

A computer, printer, design software, and furniture can run you about \$2,000-\$3,000. If you already own many of these supplies, the cost drops significantly. Begin a swatch book that will serve you well throughout your business.

**Skills needed.** A designer needs to be able to communicate well. You will be passing your designs on to another who will make it come to life. Designer clothiers need a working knowledge of fabrics and what works well together. You wouldn't use worsted wool to make a summer outfit. If clothing is to be worn for summer, the fabric needs to hold up in the sun without fading.

Marketing skills are essential if you want to get boutiques and department stores to take a chance on your clothing designs. Developing a rapport with those in the local fashion community will help you get noticed.

**Marketing.** Showcase your fashions wherever you go. Wear them out and see the reaction. Outfit friends and family members with a free sample of your work to see how the clothing holds up. Flea markets are a great place to sell clothing. Everyone is looking for a bargain so advertise yours as the best.

Sell designer clothing on the Internet on your own website or through eBay. If people like your prices and the types of designer clothing you offer, they may be willing to take a chance and buy some of your own personal designer items.

If you can latch onto an idea or a product that becomes a staple of the fashion industry, you will have a business base that will continue to profit long after the fad clothing has died out. This is true of other people's designer clothing that you promote and sell and of your own fashion line.