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DECEMBER 2015

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NIGHT OF STARS



1. Presenter Meryl Streep with **Superstar Award** winner Alber Elbaz, Lanvin
2. **Fashion Star** Jonathan Anderson with presenter Julia Nobis
3. **Fashion Star** Jason Wu with presenter Diane Kruger
4. **Fashion Star** Bruno Frisoni for Roger Vivier with presenter Katie Holmes
5. Presenter John Demsey with **Beauty Award** winner Karyn Khoury of Estée Lauder
6. **Brand Vision Award** honoree Daniel Partridge of Bulgari with presenter Glenda Bailey
7. **Humanitarian Award** winner Karen Harvey with presenter Lew Frankfort

Night of Stars Honorees:

Superstar Honoree:

Alber Elbaz, Lanvin

Fashion Stars Honorees:

Jonathan Anderson

Jason Wu

Bruno Frisoni for Roger Vivier

Beauty Star Honoree:

Karyn Khoury of Estée Lauder

Brand Heritage Honoree:

Daniel Partridge of Bulgari

Humanitarian Honoree:

Karen Harvey

Retail Trailblazer Honoree:

Marcelle Parrish of eBay

Interior Design Honorees:

George Yabu and Glenn Pushelberg
of Yabu Pushelberg

Sustainability Honoree:

Eileen Fisher

Technology Innovator Honoree:

Evan Sharp of Pinterest

Lord & Taylor Fashion Oracle Award:

Justin Timberlake



Members and luminaries packed the soaring space at Cipriani Wall Street on October 22 to toast the honorees at Fashion Group International's 2015 Night of Stars gala. Revolutionaries all, according to the evening's theme, they were feted for achievements that have changed "the ways in which we live in the present, approach the future and how we care for others and the earth" and of course with a fashionable bent.

Following a cocktail hour of Bellinis and nibbles, the boisterous crowd had to be scolded into quieting down as the evening got underway: **Margaret Hayes**, president of FGI opened by noting that it was the organization's 85th year—the 17 original members could be seen as revolutionaries themselves. Today, the membership has grown to 6,000 internationally.

The charming and witty **Simon Doonan**, creative ambassador-at-large for Barneys repeated his performance as emcee for the night, getting the presentations going with a whimsical recital of the revolutionary activities of the honorees, such as Superstar honoree **Alber Elbaz's** rebellious act of trimming his school uniform with grosgrain ribbon...

Although maybe Elbaz saved his most rebellious act for last, leaving from his role as creative director at Lanvin just days later. Perhaps he hinted at his plans in his speech, when he stated that the pace of fashion was too fast today. "Everyone in fashion needs a little more time," he said, adding that he preferred *evolution* to revolution: a truly revolutionary idea.

— **Katie Kretschmer**
Editor/Contributing Writer

8. **Retail Trailblazer Award** winner Marcelle Parrish of eBay with presenter Allison Williams

9. **Interior Design Award** winner George Yabu with Glenn Pushelberg of Yabu Pushelberg

10. **Sustainability Award** winner Eileen Fisher with presenter Andrew Morgan

11. Presenter Tamara Mellon with **Technology Innovator Award** winner Evan Sharp of Pinterest

12. **Lord & Taylor Fashion Oracle Award** winner Justin Timberlake with presenters Liz Rodbell and Neil Barrett





THE fashion GROUP INTERNATIONAL, INC.
ANNIVERSARY PARTY

FASHION GROUP IS 85



Don Loftus



Carolina Herrera



Ralph Rucci



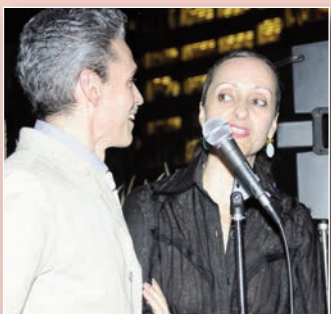
Nina Garcia



From left: Louise and Mathew Evins with Margaret Hayes



From left: Norma Kamali and Margaret Hayes



From left: Ruben and Isabel Toledo



From left: Burt Tansky and Margaret Hayes

At the crossroads of the world—with sweeping, jaw-dropping views of the city—the recently opened Knickerbocker Hotel set the scene for FGI's 85th anniversary party. (On the very swanky and luxuriously appointed roof, you look directly up at that world-famous sparkler, the dropped-at-midnight crystal ball. So, in case you were wondering, the hotel is booked for New Year's Eve more than three years in advance!) FGI president **Margaret Hayes** welcomed guests, remarking on a few of the events that made the year 1930 so remarkable. Among them, she pointed out, was the arrival, on our planet, of Supreme Court Judge Sandra Day O'Connor and the man who flew to the moon, Buzz Aldrin. Seventh Avenue coat-and-suit mogul Herbert Sondheim became the father of a musical genius, Scotch tape came in on a roll and Fashion Group came into being.

Don Loftus, president of Parlux and chairman of the FGI Board of Directors, did the honors as toastmaster and introduced some of FGI's nearest and dearest who spoke in glowing terms about the value of the organization and what FGI means to them. **Carolina Herrera**, **Ruben** and **Isabel Toledo**, **Norma Kamali** and **Ralph Rucci** stood up for the design community. **Michael Clinton** and **Nina Garcia** represented the media, **John Demsey** the beauty industry.

Seen (but not heard) were scores of FGI loyalists including—but not limited to—**Marylou Luther**, **Stan Herman**, **Jeffrey Banks**, **Burt Tansky**, **Louise** and **Mathew Evins** and, especially meaningful, **Liz Rodbell**, president of Lord & Taylor and The Bay, whose ancestor—in a manner of speaking—Dorothy Shaver, was among the founding members of Fashion Group. Shaver was the first female ever to helm a department store which, not incidentally, was Lord & Taylor.

— **Wendy D'Amico**

Creative Consultant, Wendy7d@aol.com



From left: Moderator Joseph DeAcetis, Udi Avshalomov, Durand Guion, Jian DeLeon, Ronnie Jefferson

On September 21, Macy's hosted an FGI Frontliner event that zoomed in on a topic generating a lot of retail buzz: the men's sneaker business. **Durand Guion**, vice president, men's fashion director, welcomed the audience and introduced the evening's moderator, **Joseph De Acetis**, creative style director at Forbes Media.

De Acetis congratulated Fashion Group International on its 85th anniversary and praised the group for its practice of inviting industry experts to share their insight on current matters of interest. He introduced the event's panel, which included Guion as well as **Udi Aushlomov**, president/CEO of The Cobbler's Kitchen; **Jian Deleon**, deputy style editor of *Complex* magazine and **Ronnie Jefferson**, EVP, merchandise manager of Finish Line stores at Macy's.

De Acetis started by mentioning that through his travels, he has noticed a change in the acceptability of sneakers: The category is permanently ensconced in our culture. He asked Deleon to discuss the reason for this change. Deleon said that men now dress from the feet up. A complementary casual dress lifestyle, consisting of baseball caps, hoodies and cuffed track pants became a natural partner to the sneaker business. Musicians and artists endorsed the trend, causing a phenomenal growth of the category in 2013. Sneakers were recognized as an authentic part of the look.

Jefferson was asked to identify the new customer. He said that the business is now coming from the mainstream. Guion said that it's no longer a young man's business but has spread to titans of industry too. They are wearing sneakers as a new dress-for-success model, opting for expensive brands to complete his look.

De Acetis mentioned how social media has changed the game. The daily shout-out about the latest shoe has greatly propelled sneaker culture forward. Constant awareness communicates newness and fosters a must-have desire.

Aushlomov, whose company consults on these issues, was asked about brand extension. He

mentioned **Michael Jordan** and Nike as good examples, as they provide the customer with what they are looking for. Proper timing is key when considering licensing, as a brand must grow organically to succeed.

Jefferson was asked how a traditional sneaker brand can compete with the constant drive for newness. He said that a brand can't remain stagnant. Yet, a traditional brand must adhere to its own DNA. Growth comes from an extension of its DNA. Shelf appeal comes by having an attractive product. Ugly sneakers do not sell. Deleon added that a brand can create a new heritage and be popular outside of its comfort zone.

Asked if new sneaker technology was important to the consumer, Guion replied that the customer is emotionally attracted to a sneaker and if he understands the technology, then it will matter. The panel was questioned about the importance of collaborations with rappers and country music stars. Those in the current popular culture spotlight, such as **Kanye West**, do have relevance. These brands must be authentic to their DNA to succeed. Others, such as **Mark Zuckerberg** will not do as well as they are not (as yet) connected with fashion status. As Jefferson mentioned, the latter does not have the required "swag" yet. He also noted that many collaborations fail when the customer is not emotionally connected. The product simply does not resonate. The rapper **Drake** is a go-to brand as his music is currently popular. Deleon said sneakers are an affordable luxury offering a connection to an out-of-reach designer label.

The panel agreed that the sneaker high will continue. Guion mentioned that a dressy style cycle will happen eventually, but sneakers have not reached their peak yet, as newness and innovation continues.

Jefferson said color is now mainstream, noting how **Pharrell Williams'** sense of style showed the buyer that color is cool. Deleon said the fashion customer now even has day-and nighttime-appropriate sneakers. Sneakers today reflect the wearer's personality and their desire to

stand out. Aushlomov explained that sneaker color varies by region and originally reflected an area's baseball, basketball and high school colors. Sneakers are now chosen to complement a personal outfit rather than the colors worn by a noted hip-hop star. Asked about holiday product, the panel discussed the fact that the change of season will introduce the sneaker boot.

De Acetis then accepted questions from the audience. One question concerned the comparison between the fragrance, handbag and sneaker businesses. As the former two businesses are peaking, it was noted that the sneaker business thrives because limited releases create must-have status at retail.

Asked about the importance of 3D printing, Aushlomov said the process is being used and allows one to see the finished shoe quickly. This helps ensure speed to market. Jefferson said that it will enable the market to embrace future trends quickly.

How are women reacting to the men's sneaker success? Fashion designers are showcasing sneakers on the runways and many women are buying men's styles in smaller sizes. Women originally chose sneakers for comfort, but they, too, are now involved in sneaker culture. Athleisure wear is trending upward in the women's market as well.

An interesting point was brought up which summed up the important changes that are taking place. The panel was asked their opinion of someone coming to an interview wearing sneakers. Jefferson said it depended on how the candidate was wearing the sneakers. Guion added that the person must know the corporate culture of the company prior to his interview. That this question was even raised illustrates the changes that are afoot.

Other questions concerned the importance of T-shirts in terms of the sneaker business. Again, quality is the issue and oversaturation is the problem. Deleon mentioned that the sneaker customer is savvy and only wants a T-shirt when it complements his entire outfit.

The evening ended with audience members tightening their laces and walking out with the knowledge that (as Jefferson put it) they now possessed the information to assure their personal swag.

— Carolyn Moss

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"This is who we are," said **Josie Maran**, model, entrepreneur, beauty aficionado and chief eco-officer of her namesake cosmetics company. "Josie Maran Cosmetics is a learning and growing community of visionaries dedicated to making a game-changing impact in the world through its empowerment culture, its so-good products, and its pursuit of harmony on the planet," said Maran, who gave a powerful, yet completely unaffected presentation on the nature of her cosmetic products and her vision for women's empowerment and social change.

Mary Ann Grisz, director of special events at Fashion Group International, began the evening with a look at the legacy of FGI and its influential founders, women pioneers including Eleanor Roosevelt, Edith Head, Helena Rubinstein and Vogue editor Edna Woolman Chase, who in 1928 came together to charter the organization. This year, FGI celebrated its 85th anniversary, and the continuum was evident at its most recent Next Gen event, held September 29, as Maran explored not only the sourcing of her key beauty ingredient, argan oil, but also the community of Moroccan women largely responsible for cultivating and preparing the argan for use in Maran's beauty line.

Beautiful Beginnings

Maran, who created her natural beauty line eight years ago, just launched her "luxury with a conscience" collection that is true to her roots. Inspired by her passion for making positive change in the world, she says she is "super blessed" to be in a position to change the world for the better. She began her career in fashion and at age 17 signed with Elite Model Management, appearing regularly on the covers of *Glamour* and *Mademoiselle*. She now touts the benefits of 100 percent argan oil, a key ingredient in her line, and is the key product developer of her brand.

Maran, who discovered argan oil on a modeling trip to the south of France, confided that she had admired an older woman's skin while traveling, and asked her for her beauty secret. She was told that argan oil was the source of her smooth skin, and Maran never looked back.

While she says she talks all night long when she appears on QVC, she is not a "professional talker," and preferred to do her presentation in an informal and interactive way. She began with a story that illustrated her interests from an early age. "When I was 12 years old, I saw **Christy Turlington** modeling in a Maybelline commercial and I loved her light and energy and I knew I wanted to be a Maybelline girl," said Maran. When she turned 18, she got a Maybelline contract and realized then that she could dream big and accomplish what she wanted. Her 10-year Maybelline contract helped her realize her dream and she invested every penny she had in her own company. A Sephora contact bought a lot of inventory and enabled her to put her argan oil in a lot of places in the store. She later moved to QVC to promote her brand.

For the past two years, she has been reinventing the brand, changing its tag line to: "Life, love, and the pursuit of harmony," with a focus on creating a "massive transformative purpose for the brand." Her credo is direct and simple. One, she is creating products to delight the senses, enabling women to experience optimal aliveness. Two, she has designed her products around alternative modalities of care. Three, she is tying sensory-delight to ritual, to further enhance a woman's well-being, enabling her to come into greater harmony with the world. Through the experience of sensory rituals, Maran has named her vision Profound Plus.

Brand Vision

Maran cited the brand's core assets, which include sensory delight, sensory ritual, natural ingredients and health, creating the best products possible, argan oil, artistry of design, artisanal and handmade to ensure that each product provides an experience of love and personal attention, innovation and a contribution to making the world a better place. She notes that her company's value proposition relies on a "less is more" principle, in which a higher quality experience is a prime goal of product usage. "Products and usage should be simple and clear, emphasizing the 'root-to-fruit' equation, where the healing properties of argan oil are honored," says Maran. Finally, she notes that

her value proposition emphasizes self worth, so integral to the overall understanding of her brand.

Maran, who was recently honored with an Eco-Conscious Award at the United Nations, says, "It's been a long journey to get to this point, and our overarching goal is to change the world with a high-end natural cosmetics brand. She explained how businesses can implement these solutions, noting that she "wanted to go big or go home," with her concept, which includes a call for businesses to "accelerate the evolution of humanity so all of our children can enjoy the bounty of the planet."

Maran plans to accomplish her transformation by investing proceeds from the sale of products. Her initiatives include women's empowerment through the Imagine initiative, requiring commitment by all stakeholders; climate change, through the Cool City initiative, which includes the creation of a carbon-neutral environment; and social change, creating businesses that do social good and implement social change.

Maran hopes that using ritual will empower women to become more intentional with their rituals and connect with themselves. "This brand emphasizes its healthy aspects, while it is easy and beautiful to use," said Maran.

Future of the Brand

Ultimately, Maran says, "My dream is that people live in their truth and their passion." She says that things are happening easily in her brand today because of that belief. Asked how she is breaking through the clutter in today's marketplace, she responded, "I never think about it. I just believe I can do it. Big dreams create big things. I really love to learn and navigate my way, and I listen to the clues."

She notes that her argan oil comes from one place in Morocco. "It is totally sustainable and comes from a women's cooperative in Morocco. We have a beautiful process with the women there, and we have given agency to the women to empower them to overcome obstacles and tap into their dreams."

As for her business and the future, Maran said, "It's very important to have a clear intention. It doesn't need to be complicated to be big or good. Simplify with baby steps." She said her current plans include "creating more intentional products, learning, and getting smarter."

— Nancy Jeffries

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From left: Jane Larkworthy, Brooke Jaffe, Marylou Luther, Roopal Patel, Kyle Anderson and Mickey Boardman



The Fashion Industry thrives on the vibes prescribed by popular culture. Nowhere was this more evident than at Fashion Group's November 11th trend presentation.

FGI president, **Margaret Hayes**, applauded creative director, **Marylou Luther**, and thanked sponsors **Derek Lam**, Ecco Domani Wines of Italy, M.A.C. Cosmetics, LIM College and Hearst Magazines. Movin': The event was moved from the Time Life building to sponsor Hearst's modern tower. Groovin': We all danced to the presentation's finale featuring **Lady Gaga's** musical romp of **Tom Ford's** Spring 2016 video. And the panel discussion was influenced by the plight of today's fashion designers' need for speed. Lastly **Heidi Klum's** tag line on *Project Runway*, "One day you're in and one day you're out", could not be ignored as we pondered the recent departures of **Raf Simons**, **Albert Elbaz** and **Alexander Wang**.

Luther opened the panel discussion, introducing moderator, **Mickey Boardman**, editorial director of *Paper*, who introduced **Kyle Anderson**, fashion market and accessories director, **Marie Claire**; **Brooke Jaffe**, fashion director, Bloomingdale's; **Jane Larkworthy**, beauty director, *W Magazine* and **Roopal Patel**, fashion director, Saks Fifth Avenue.

Boardman asked panelists, all just back from the semi-annual, four-city fashion trek, to list their favorite shows. Anderson chose Gucci in Milan and Chloé and St. Laurent in Paris. When quizzed about New York, Anderson felt that New York was more commercial, but did call out the many looks at **Derek Lam** and the fun ideas seen at **Marc Jacobs**.

Jaffe, looking for trends, liked the interesting format from the new designers at Courreges who zeroed in on specific items and then featured them in many variations. Larkworthy liked **Ralph Lauren** and **Thom**

Browne. For beauty direction she called out **Jason Wu** in New York and **Martin Margiela** in Paris.

Patel chose **Proenza Schouler** and **Altuzarra** in New York, **Alessandro Michele's** Gucci in Milan and Chloé, Céline and the breathtaking beauty of Valentino in Paris. Saks is very excited too about London's Erdem.

As to what of the importance of "pre" collections, as opposed to what is seen on the runways, Jaffe explained that pre-collections have a longer shelf life, but the die-hard consumer still waits for the items seen on the runway. Patel said retailers always choose items that are appropriate for their stores, but pre-collections are important too, as stores must offer new and great fashion all of the time.

Speed has been on everyone's radar of late, Anderson explaining that a buyer must clarify the actual season in a timely manner for the store's customers; an editor must cover newness as fast as possible in order to remain relevant. So is a trend over before the consumer actually has a chance to see it? Anderson said that items appear in magazines as they are hitting the stores, but runway live streaming is often confusing to shoppers as a six month wait is often misunderstood.

Larkworthy mentioned the recent frenzy caused by the Balmain collaboration with H&M. Boardman mentioned that the early appearance of a trend on the red carpet offers a challenge, Patel adding that seeing fashion on a celebrity doesn't keep the consumer from wishing to see and touch the garment in person.

Jaffe said that her customer reacts slowly to a new trend. Runway items actually have a longer life span than one thinks. There is a place for fast fashion but the diehard fashion girl is more loyal.

Boardman mentioned the fact that Moschino offers some items from their runway show immediately available for sale. Jaffe said that more designers

would do this if they could, Patel adding that the trick is always offering something new.

As for the effect of speed on today's designers, Boardman asked who would be a good fit to replace Raf Simons at Christian Dior? Anderson said it would be hard to say, but someone with cool ideas could expand Dior's accessory collections. He chose Marc Jacobs but added that Alber Elbaz loves accessories too. The others seemed in favor of Elbaz as well.

What runway trends would make it to retail? Jaffe says Bloomingdale's considers their customers and chooses items they'll relate to. She likes the off the shoulder trend which will add new luster to categories such as shoulder duster earrings and neckerchiefs. She endorsed ruffles, color, the classic jacket and stripes which can be expanded to include many families of businesses. Patel loved Gucci's quirky, vintage charm, a romantic look Saks will interpret for their shoppers.

On beauty, Larkworthy mentioned the treat of going backstage and seeing the hair and make-up artists at work. She called out **Issey Miyake** the **Martin Margiela** teams. Of note, too, was the appearance of transgender models; definitely an on-going trend. Anderson noted that the feminine clothes on the runways had a cool edge. Mixing romantic looks with a modern vibe is key.

Boardman then turned to the audience for comments and questions. Social media was on many minds. Anderson said that every day brings new ideas. Instagram is gaining in popularity but with so many new options, it's hard to keep up. Boardman asked whether people are posting too much. Larkworthy feels there's room for all of it, while Jaffe said that the sites are conduits to style and all the girls in her office are being trained to use Snapchat. The sites are not edited and therefore showcase a real possibility. Patel says these sites offer virtual reality.

A member of the audience mentioned that she doesn't go to runway shows, but enjoyed the aforementioned Tom Ford video. She asked if the use of videos would replace live shows. Anderson said he would like to see more of them. Jaffe said they capture the essence of fashion. Boardman said that not everyone needs to do a show, but all agreed that seeing the clothes in person allows retailers to editorialize the season. And, on that note, he closed the event.

— Carolyn Moss

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From left: Mindy Grossman and Michael A. Clinton

On November 18th, Fashion Group presented another edition of its famed Tastemaker Series. Held at New York's iconic restaurant, Le Cirque, guests were treated to an intimate conversation between **Michael A. Clinton**, President/Publishing Director, Hearst Magazines and **Mindy Grossman**, CEO of HSN.

Margaret Hayes, FGI president, opened the program with a welcome to all and a shout out to Le Cirque for again serving as host. She then introduced Clinton, the event's moderator.

The success of the Tastemaker series is due in part to a genuine warmth between moderator and "conversationalist"; a warmth palpable between these two who actually use the same elevator bank in their New York apartment building. Clinton asked Grossman to share some personal history. Adopted, and first in her family to graduate from college, at nineteen Grossman abandoned both fiancé and law school, deciding that she wanted to follow a different path and thus moved to New York; a risk that would become the mantra she continues to follow. She mentioned that today's young professionals are often afraid of change and encourages them to investigate all options and alternatives before settling on a final career path. Clinton agreed as his career followed a similar direction. Growing up in Pittsburgh as the eldest of six, he, too, took the chance to move east and the rest, as they say, is history.

New York proved rewarding for Grossman and it is here where she began her rise in companies such as **Ralph Lauren**, **Tommy Hilfiger** and Nike. In 2006 she joined the troubled HSN which, today, is a four billion dollar business and includes eight brands.

Clinton started the dialogue by mentioning that Grossman has the disruptive gene. HSN sits on the vortex of three major disruptive moments: media, technology and retail which, Grossman said, she tackles with passion, purpose and eventual impact.

Asked how she teaches people to take risks, Grossman said creating a culture wherein people can take risks is key and, further, it's more important to teach self-confidence and awareness

which includes recognizing the difference between risk and suicide. If something is not working just let it go. Collaboration and a support system are the heart of a company's success and feeling less structured allows employees to feel more comfortable when attempting a calculated risk. Having similar values assures this comfort zone. Companies today, staffed with millennials, must strive to keep this new sector engaged; important as competition is strong from companies such as Google and Facebook who offer perks and a compatible culture that older companies struggle to rival.

Did she ever imagine she'd be so successful? Grossman said no and went on to say that she owes much of her success to the fact that she is committed to helping others succeed. Educating women in the workplace is very important to her. Although being a woman hasn't held her back, she pointed out today's lack of diversity in the *Fortune* 1000 companies where there are only fifty-four women CEOs. This can only be corrected, she said, by creating a responsible platform which will strengthen the dynamics of the next generation of women.

Who inspires you? Grossman mentioned Wharton professor, **Adam Grant**, and his book, "Give And Take: Why Helping Others Drives Our Success." So impressed with the book, she bought it for her whole team. The book identifies three categories: givers, takers, and people who do things because they don't have to. She is looking forward to "Originals", his new book about every day entrepreneurs.

As to the question of celebrity relevance, HSN has created its own celebrity, designer **Joy Mangano**, whose story will be portrayed in the new movie "Joy" starring **Jennifer Lawrence**. Celebrities are only important if they provide authentic relevance and value. She used **Keith Urban** and his program of teaching children how to play the guitar as a positive collaboration.

Clinton, again noting the disruptive phase, asked Grossman how she manages in this age of smartphones and other mobile devices. As HSN is in the lifestyle business, they are engaged in building one-on-one relationships with their customers using technology to strengthen editorial

content via mobile devices rather than remaining solely TV-centric. Consumers have so many options today, and if they're not satisfied, they will move towards a more satisfying experience. Content, relevance and positive engagement is key. Staying focused on the future means being nimble while respecting the individualities of your target audience.

HSN produces same day streaming. With seven studios, their stores constantly change, offering great product and story tellers who create different levels of emotional attachment. Social media, in all its guises, is part of the mix. An eventual app offering direct access will provide convenience and customization. Content is the element that propels the business. The customer will not buy if the offering isn't reliable. Seventy percent of HSN's products are exclusive offering value beyond price.

Clinton then turned to the audience for questions, the first asking how one determines the culture of a company. In joining HSN, on the heels of eight CEOs in ten years, Grossman saw the challenge and knew she had to create a new culture. A company's success is dependent on its people and, in creating her vision, she recognized whom she would need to strengthen this new undertaking. She mentioned three types of people you meet when forming a new team: the supporters, the wait-and-see group and the toxic blockers who are resistant to change and again mentioned that everyone must be on the same page from the onset. Now, she said, HSN's campus is secure, successful and collaborative. Everyone knows the mission, feels part of it; all moving in the same direction.

Another question involved changing content to appeal to the younger customer. Grossman said that HSN does not chase a particular age group, but introduces relevant products by people who relate to different segments of the audience. Case in point is the new fragrance by **Nicki Minaj**. Of concern, too, is providing new product. Grossman stated that HSN depends less on selling and more on storytelling in order to foster a compelling reaction to a product.

Program over, the audience left with a deep respect for Grossman and her personal philosophy of giving back to society that will guide all of the company's future endeavors.

— Carolyn Moss

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AND WHAT OF THE...
FUTURE



From left: Johnnie Rush, Chris Beauchamp, Kevin Wassong, Erica Orange, Jared Weiner and Don Loftus

A panel of retail experts assembled at Fashion Group International's New York City headquarters on November 3 to discuss how the industry can adapt to cultural and societal shifts and rapidly-changing technology. **Don Loftus**, president of Parlux and Chairman of the FGI Board, conceived the idea for the panel and was on hand to welcome guests and introduce the panel. **Kevin Wassong**, CEO of ONE Mobile, served as the moderator for the discussion which included **Chris Beauchamp**, the founder of Monster Media; **Johnnie Rush**, VP of Retail Innovation at HSNi; **Erica Orange**, EVP and COO of The Future Hunters; and **Jared Weiner**, EVP and Chief Strategy Officer of The Future Hunters.

One of the first questions Wassong posed to the panel is how retailers can connect with different generations. Weiner said it's becoming increasingly difficult for brands to target marketing programs to specific generations since they are fundamentally changing every two to three years right now. "When you're lumping into 15 year segments, you miss nuances," he said. Weiner gave the "cybrid" generation as an example; explaining this generation has a symbiotic relationship with technology. Beauchamp said he calls this younger, more technologically advanced group, "Generation Text." He suggested that brands offer free Wifi in their physical stores or venues in order to capture important metadata about your audience. Orange added that we're currently witnessing the first generation to be physiologically changed by technology. "Technology is rewiring their brains for attention and boredom. Generation Z gets bored so quickly. How do we keep them not bored?" said Orange. At HSNi, Rush said they're at an advantage since they are targeting a very specific demographic of women between the ages of 35-40.

Wassong then asked each panelist to speak about their backgrounds and how it helps them merge the digital and physical aspects of retailing. Having spent several years at The Walt Disney Company, Rush comes from a background of creating immersive retail experiences and "imagineering." While he believes the collision of physical and digital has both positive and negative effects, at HSNi they are trying to connect the TV, digital and mobile channels into one experience. They are also creating physical retail stores for some of their brands.

Beauchamp said that he advises his clients "to proceed with caution" when rushing to integrate a new technology into their business. He said retailers and brands can become like "kids playing soccer, all rushing toward the ball" when they are eager to use the latest the technology. He has experience developing and executing successful programs based on a 50 second attention span for large retailers like Walmart and 711. He said a successful program should engage consumers, so they're willing to share information like a phone or email address. Beauchamp said the key to integrating physical and digital retail experiences to drive sales is creating an engaging instore experience that leads to digital amplification and ultimately digital purchases.

At The Future Hunters, Orange and Weiner said they warn their clients against using a new form of technology as a gimmick if the the interaction won't be meaningful for the consumers. According to Weiner, the experience created by the technology has to be immersive and add value for the consumers.

The next topic of discussion was how to balance creativity and data. Weiner said that while data is helpful, retailers need to be careful to make decisions that also take into account human instinct. Beauchamp said that the value of data is having other data to benchmark it against. At Monster Media, they look at the online data, the social data and the event/real-time data. "Comparing all three helps us find the magic bullet," said Beauchamp.

Finally, Wassong asked the panelists to make their predictions for the future of retail. Weiner said the number one currency for consumers is time, so in the future, retailers should strive to save and optimize time for consumers to add value to their lives. Orange said she sees huge possibilities for 3D printing to change manufacturing and allow for more creativity and customization for consumers. Meanwhile, Beauchamp predicted that drones will revolutionize the in-store experience. Finally, Rush said advances in quantum computing will impact the retail industry. "When a computer can think for itself and create, it will be a huge change to society as we know it," said Rush.

— **Melissa Pastore**

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