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INTRODUCTION

Fashion is a business worth over a trillion dollars and a source of fascination. Its impact on other industries and influence on society as a whole is incalculable. In my book, published with Routledge, I have studied fashion entrepreneurs who created this fascinating industry. From Charles Worth to Paul Smith, we take a look at the life of these larger-than-life men and women, whose names are so well known to us as iconic brands, and some of whose stories we have seen in movies and in books. What we haven't done, however, is see them as entrepreneurs who created businesses, and were not just creative visionaries, but also had entrepreneurial skills that led to the creation of these iconic brands we know today. I hope this book showcases their abilities, not just as creative visionaries but also entrepreneurs. They often come from humble beginnings, and make it despite the odds, and end up creating not only a name for themselves but work opportunities for many who they have employed.

One of the most important entrepreneurial capabilities that I have identified in my book, *Fashion Entrepreneurship: Creation of the Global Fashion Business* (out in print in December 2021), is the ability to predict, adapt and respond to cultural changes that take place. The entrepreneurs that have created iconic brands are the ones who possess this unique ability, and through their distinct language of style are able to create clothes that respond to the times. The fashion entrepreneurs in this book have done exactly that, and have shaken up the fashion world, either by using different materials, changing proportions, or by introducing an unexpected sartorial technique. Whatever their different take was, it was bold, and truly unique, and predicted cultural changes that were taking place. Dior's New Look, Chanel's 'poor' look, or Mary Quant's mini dresses seem to come out of nowhere, but they all take the fashion by storm, and appear at the right time to define the times. Contrary to popular belief, these styles are not simply a result of pure creativity and inspiration, but often a direct reflection of the cultural changes taking place. Coco Chanel, herself, has famously said that the First World War made her, and that in 1920, she woke up famous. She has always had the right intuition and an impeccable ability to respond to cultural changes taking place, and she created clothes that reflected the times. Before Chanel, clothes were elaborate, and even ostentatious with a lot of detail and decorations, and she simply created the clothes that were extremely simple, often using jersey and borrowing from men's fashion to create fashion that was almost somber. She is said to have made the poor fashionable, and her success wouldn't have occurred if it was not for the somber mood that was brought on with the First World War. Women no longer wanted to dress in corsets, and show their wealth, when the nation was in mourning.

INTRODUCTION

The world of fashion relies both on the past and the future – many of the fashion designers and entrepreneurs borrow from the past, while thinking of the future, and being focused on creating a new silhouette. Whether they look to the past or the future, however, one characteristic they share is their ability to have a unique style, a vision that belongs only to them, and is attributed as their voice. When one sees an Yves Saint Laurent safari jacket, or a Chanel tweed jacket, or a Dior Bar jacket, there is a distinct style and a unique voice that belongs only to them. Each of these iconic fashion entrepreneurs are not afraid to have a point of view and have the ability to make a definitive decision on the direction they will go. Their unique design signature is consistent, bold, and also desirable.

The iconic fashion designers in this book are also visionary entrepreneurs who have shown entrepreneurial skills, such as tenacity, determination, and knowledge of business. Even Christian Dior, who is considered one of the most iconic and creative fashion designers of the industry, has emphasized that while creativity is important, there are figures that talk, and when he designs, he has to be aware of cost, profit, and has often voiced his concern over the livelihood of many people he employs. Fashion designers in this book have created some of the most iconic designs and turned an idea into a fashion phenomenon that is worth billions of dollars. The popularity of their brand names is indisputable, but what is even more fascinating is how they have built those businesses. In this book, when I present the iconic fashion entrepreneurs, I focus on their entrepreneurial capabilities and key success factors that have led to the creation of brands that have built an entire industry. They are the creative geniuses, the original thinkers who have made an impact as designers, as well as entrepreneurs.



CHARLES FREDERICK WORTH
1825 – 1895, Bourne, Lincolnshire, UK

BACKGROUND

Charles Frederick Worth was born in 1825 to a family of modest background – his father was a solicitor who abandoned his family of five children and left Worth's mother without any financial support and impoverished. Charles started working at the age of 11 at a printer's shop, and then moved to London to find a job as an apprentice and a clerk for two London textile merchants. He would sleep under the table, and work tirelessly during this time, gaining a thorough knowledge of fabrics and the business of supplying dressmakers. He had no formal training or even education. During his spare time, he would spend all his money on visiting museums, in particular the National Gallery and other collections to study historic portraits. Elements of the sitters' dresses in these paintings would later provide inspiration for Worth's own designs.

He moved to Paris in 1845, because he loved fashion and thought Paris its capital. He spoke no French and had only five British pounds in his pocket when he arrived. While it was a challenge for him to find a job, due to lack of French and connections, he initially worked at a small dry goods store, and later on progressed to work at Maison Gagelin, a house that sold cashmere shawls, fabrics, and ready-made coats. This is where Charles Frederick Worth began to revolutionize the world of fashion.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

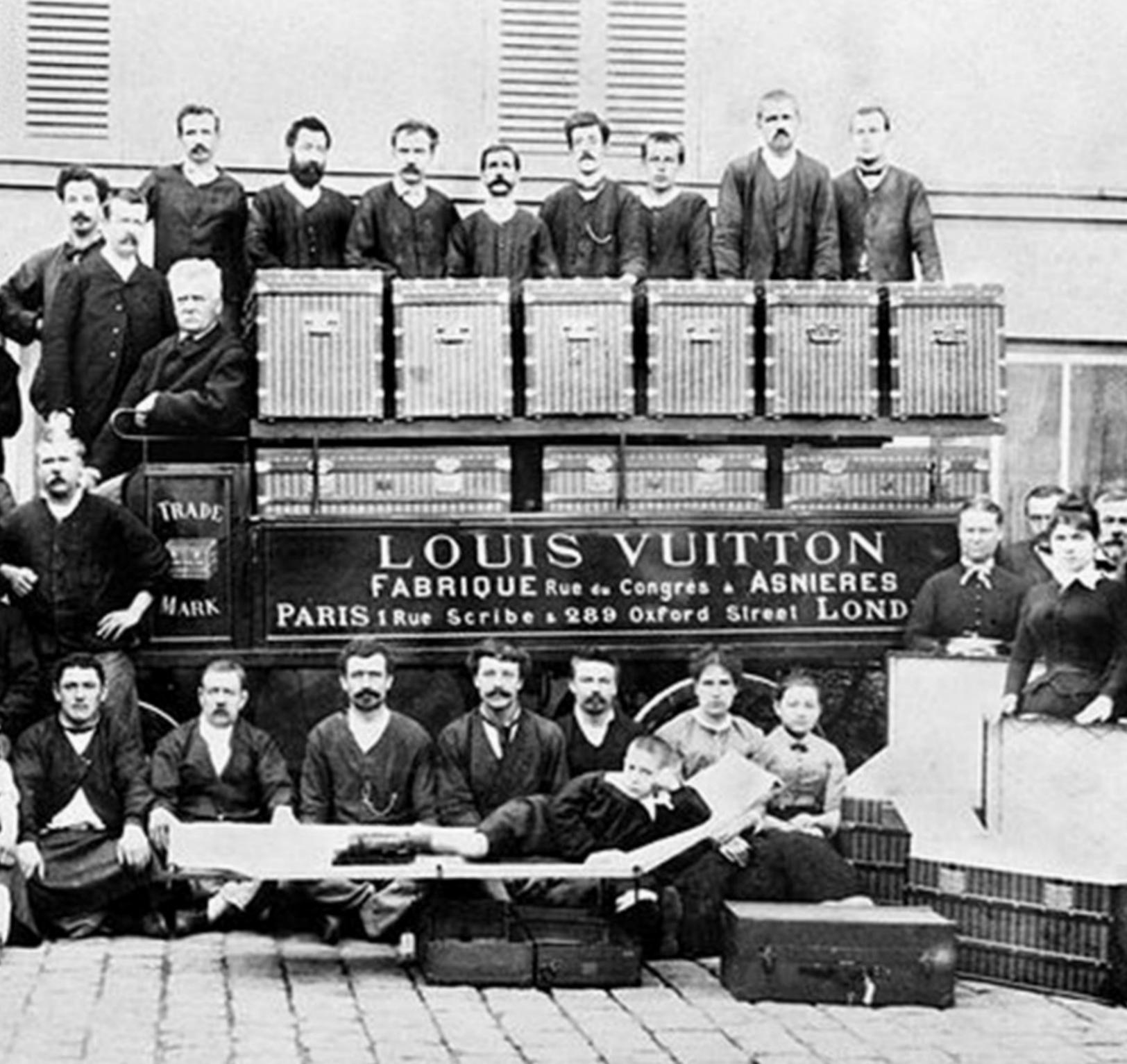
Like many of the great fashion designer entrepreneurs, Charles Worth came from humble beginnings and created a product that did not exist in the market. He was a talented designer, a visionary, and an extremely persuasive salesman. When he was working at Maison Gagelin, he experimented with textiles and designs, by creating dresses for the house model, Marie Vernet, whom he would later marry. The customers who frequented the shop included high society women, who would notice Vernet's clothes and inquire about them. This interest and demand by customers led to Maison Gagelin opening a department dedicated solely to dressmaking – a historical first for a textile retailer. However, they turned down the offer to partner with Worth in the business, which led him to collaborate with a Swedish businessman to open his own store in 7, Rue de la Paix. It was not necessarily the most fashionable and recognized street in Paris, but Worth's reputation and uniqueness grew the business to 1, 200 employees, with his creations being sold in Russia, America, and the rest of Europe.

In addition to his unique style and vision as a fashion designer, Worth was also an innovative entrepreneur, who created a production system which enabled his venture to manufacture clothes efficiently. He used sewing machines and created departments for each part of the dress, instead of having one tailor make one dress (which was the usual way to produce fashion in those days). He also wanted to reach customers at all price points, and instead of making his products available only to select few, he focused on strengthening his relationship with department stores, and even offering paper patterns of his dresses to those who could create them at home.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Worth was a true visionary, and he is rightfully credited as being the founder of haute couture and the fashion business as we know today. One of his key competencies was his radical and unique approach to the creation of couture dresses, offering a plethora of fabrics (some from his former employer Gagelin) and expertise in tailoring. What he created did not exist before, and he offered something new to women. He also knew the importance of celebrity and had high profile clients that included Princess Eugene, the Carnegies, the Rockefellers, the Vanderbilts, and the Astors, to name but a few. The importance of royal patronage was just as important then as it is today. In fact, when he had first opened his store in Rue de la Paix and was not yet the celebrated designer he would become, he and his wife actively sought out to design dresses for Princess Metternich of Austria. She wore the Worth-designed ball gown to the party given by Napoleon III and Princess Eugenie, who upon seeing Metternich's dress demanded to know the designer. This entrepreneurial characteristic of knowing your customer, and finding ways to reach him or her, is what brought the royal patronage and eventually the success to Worth's fashion house.

He recognized the importance of not only celebrity, but also press, and he formed a strong relationship with leading fashion editors and journalists. When he passed away in 1895, *Harper's Bazaar* would write that "no painter, no sculptor, no poet, no actor, no novelist of the past three decades has achieved so widespread a fame as that of this dressmaker of the Rue de la Paix."



LOUIS VUITTON
1821 – 1897, Jura, France

BACKGROUND

As with many of the most famous fashion entrepreneurs, Louis Vuitton was born in humble surroundings, the exact opposite of the image of luxury with which his name would become synonymous. His family were simple people, artisans and farmers, eking out a living in the mountainous Jura region of eastern France. His father was a farmer, while his mother, a hat maker, was an example of the sort of small-scale garment manufacturer characteristic of the pre-industrial age. As with many of the great fashion entrepreneurs, the young Vuitton's life bore some similarities to those described in the fairytales of that era; his mother died when he was just ten, and he endured an unhappy relationship with his new stepmother. Orphaned at the age of 14 by the death of his father, the poor boy fled from his strict stepmother and headed off, on foot, for the big city to make his fortune.

In 1837, after a journey that had lasted two years, Vuitton arrived in a Paris caught up in the whirlwinds of change caused by the Industrial Revolution. Like many poor country boys arriving in the urban environment, the young Vuitton found himself an apprenticeship in a trade. In his case, the trade was trunk making and packing, and his new master was a successful man, by the name of Monsieur Marechal. The apprenticeship was to be the making of Louis Vuitton.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

As with the vast majority of fashion entrepreneurs, Louis Vuitton came from a modest background. After losing his parents, he decided to chart his own path, and set his sights on Paris. When he started working with Monsieur Marechal, he was dedicated to learning his craft, and soon after starting apprenticing, he was noticed for his hard work and impeccability. Within a few years, he would gain a reputation as a master of his craft among the elites of Parisian and French aristocratic society.

It was this reputation, and the quality of his work, that led the Empress of France, Eugenie de Montijo (the wife of Napoleon III) to hire him as her personal trunkmaker. Vuitton was responsible for packing her clothes as she moved from palace to chateau. This appointment gave Vuitton enormous access to an aristocratic and wealthy clientele, creating a loyal and profitable customer base. At the age of just 33, he opened his own store, and hung up a sign outside that said: "Securely packs the most fragile objects. Specializing in packing fashions." His timing was impeccable, travel for leisure was becoming more popular at the time; the first overseas package tour in history, operated by Mr. Thomas Cook of Leicester, visited France one year after Vuitton opened his own business.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Louis Vuitton was an innovator as well as an entrepreneur. He designed the world's first pick-proof lock and introduced a rectangular trunk made of waterproof canvas (at the time, the majority of trunks were round and made of leather). His rectangular trunks responded to the needs of a new age, they were stackable for ease of transport on the increasingly popular passenger trains. He also created a signature pattern called *damier*, which still defines his brand to this day. He was a visionary but above all a hard worker. His company would not exist if it were not for his early years of apprenticing and learning his craft under Monsieur Marechal. Instead of outsourcing production, he also had the vision to create his own atelier and manufacturing. He also used technological innovations for the success of his own brand and company. Another key success factor has to do with Vuitton's adaptability to change. When the Franco-Prussian War broke out in 1870, he lost his business, many of his tools were stolen, and production was halted. Immediately after the war, he rebuilt, but this time even better, using the unique design and pattern that remains the signature of his house today.



JEANNE PAQUIN
1869 – 1936, Saint Denis, France

BACKGROUND

Jeanne Paquin was born Jeanne Marie Charlotte Beckers in 1869, to a physician father. She was one of five children. When she was a young teenager, she trained at a dressmaker on Boulevard Haussman, where she quickly rose through the ranks to become in charge of the atelier. Even early on, she displayed an eye for fashion, being a talented dressmaker, as well as having good management skills. In 1891, she married Isidore Rene Jacob, who owned a couture house called Paquin Lalanne et cie – originally a menswear shop.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

Jeanne's entrepreneurial skillset would be revealed when she started to work with her husband on the now renamed couture house Paquin. While Isidore was in charge of business operations, and Jeanne focused on designing and creating clothes, she had a vision for the business too. Shortly after becoming part of the business, together with her husband, they opened their first boutique under the name Paquin, rebranded and renamed, next to the already famed House of Worth, on Rue de la Paix. Jeanne focused on pastel colors initially, and eventually introduced black as a color in her haute couture collections. This was unusual for the time because black was only worn during mourning. Just like Worth, and other fashion entrepreneurs of that age, she also knew the importance of using celebrity in order to gain publicity and grow the popularity of her business. She was the first couturier to send models dressed in her apparel to public events such as operas and horse races for publicity. She also collaborated with illustrators and architects, as well as working with the theatre, at a time when other fashion entrepreneurs did not yet do so. She had an entrepreneurial instinct, and the *New York Times* described her in 1913 as "the most commercial artist alive." Jeanne also was revolutionary in the way she internationalized her business. Paris was indeed a cosmopolitan city, but she recognized the importance of expanding and growing her business abroad. She opened boutiques in London (which employed the young Madeline Vionnet at one point), New York, Buenos Aires, and Madrid.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Jeanne Paquin was known for her modern and innovative style. Alongside Charles Worth, she is considered to be one of the pioneers of the modern fashion business. She was a visionary in the way she conducted and ran her business. On one occasion, she took her clothes on an exhibition tour around the world, charging money for visitors to just view them. She collaborated with and was a member of the couture institutions in Paris and recognized the importance of fashion media, securing exclusive deals to provide leading fashion magazines with her illustrations.



PAUL POIRET
1879 – 1944, Paris, France



BACKGROUND

Paul Poiret was born in 1879, the son of a cloth merchant in the poor Les Halles neighborhood of Paris. His parents sent him to work at a very young age at the workshop of an umbrella maker, where he would collect scraps of the silk used for the umbrellas, to create dresses for his sister's dolls. As a teenager, he would draw sketches and sell them to the most prominent fashion houses, and he ended up being hired by Jacques Doucet. Whilst working for Doucet, he created a red wool cloak lined in a grey *crêpe de Chine* that would end up becoming a bestseller for the house, selling 400 copies. What made him noticed, however, was the black mantel of tulle over a black taffeta, painted by the famous artist Louis Billotey and worn by the actress Réjane in a play called *Zaza*. This combination of art, theater, and celebrity would later become one of Poiret's key marketing strategies.

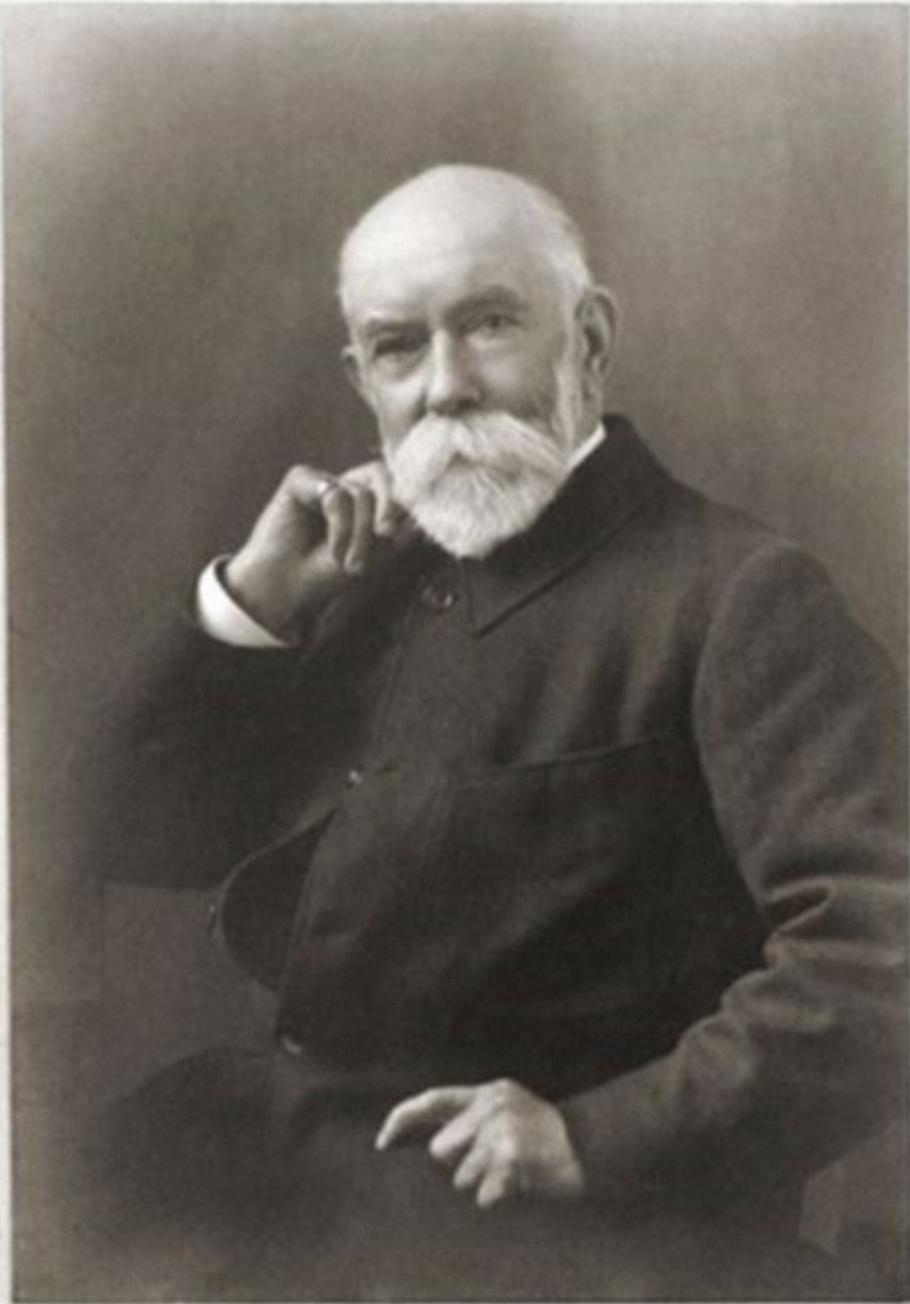
In 1901, Poiret moved to the House of Worth, where he was responsible for designing simple, practical dresses, described by Gaston Worth (Charles's son) as "fried potatoes" because they were considered side dishes to Worth's main course of "truffles." The brazen modernity of his designs, however, proved too much for Worth's conservative clientele. The difference of styles and perspectives on fashion led Poiret to open his own *maison*.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

Poiret exhibited an entrepreneurial spirit at a very young age, personally taking his sketches of fashionable dresses to the prominent fashion houses of Paris. His creativity was matched by his capacity to work hard. While Worth may have founded haute couture, Paul Poiret had a different way of expressing fashion; he was a pioneering couturier, bringing new vitality to the Parisian scene at the beginning of the twentieth century. When he personally funded his own fashion house in 1903, he already had business knowledge from working with Doucet and the House of Worth. More importantly than that, he was a visionary who foresaw that women would want to be freed from the constrictive corset. He liberated the body by eliminating the petticoat and the corset, and he used classical and easy lines such as those of Greek drapery and the Japanese kimono.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

He had an acute sense of reading and translating the needs of the society and creating clothes that would be considered as revolutionary in the early years of the twentieth century. He was a unique designer who stood out from the rest. He had an unmatched instinct for marketing and self-publicity, designing flamboyant window displays, staging his own fashion shows, and throwing sensational parties to draw attention to his work. His accurate instincts, marketing skills, and business acumen made him so famous that in 1909, Margot Asquith, the wife of the British prime minister, invited him to show his designs at 10 Downing Street. He expanded his success by putting his name to interior designs and fragrances. He was, indeed, the first French couturier to launch a fragrance, which he named Rosine after his daughter, and he created publicity for it by organizing the most lavish party in his own home, complete with lanterns, golden cages, and birds. His entrepreneurial skill also helped to grow his business in new markets. He travelled extensively to Russia, Asia, and America – at a time, when it was not easy to do so – and met with some of the leading figures of fashion, building his brand's reputation and also becoming one of the first haute couture entrants in those markets. He was fearless, both in how he designed clothes and in how he built his business as a visionary fashion entrepreneur. In 1913, his success had reached America, with *The New York Times* calling him "Poiret, Creator of Fashion".



Thomas Burberry

THOMAS BURBERRY
1835 – 1926, Surrey, England

BACKGROUND

Thomas Burberry was born into a farming community in Surrey, southern England. As was the case for many fashion entrepreneurs, he came from a modest background. In his youth he apprenticed at a local draper's shop. At the age of 21, he opened his own clothing store in Basingstoke. Initially, he designed and sold clothes that were for everyday life, but as his store was frequented by clients from rural England who were keen on fishing, hunting, and horseriding, he began to experiment with different types of material to meet their needs.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

In addition to being celebrated as a successful fashion designer, Thomas Burberry was an inventor and innovator. As with any good entrepreneur, he recognized the needs of his customers: which in his case meant clothing that would withstand temperamental climates and fulfill the demands of the country life. He made his name by inventing and patenting a material that he called gabardine. It was lightweight, durable, breathable and performed the way that other heavy materials did. Once he had the patent for gabardine, he started to sell it wholesale to other fashion businesses, growing his capital to the extent that he opened stores in London and in Paris.

He was also clever in the use of celebrity endorsement. Explorers who mapped the Arctic circle, the first aviator who flew between London and Manchester, and the first person to reach the Arctic Pole all wore something in common: Burberry clothing.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

What made Burberry successful was not only his business and design acumen, but his ability to observe human nature, ask questions, and understand necessity and what his customers were looking for. This enabled him to create one of the world's first performance fabrics: the gabardine. Following his successful expansion and clever use of endorsements, he created one of the most timeless items of fashion: the trench coat, which was worn by army officers in the First World War. While many fashion businesses had to close at the time, his business was able to succeed. His style, even today, is associated with Britishness and the signature check, but it was his innovative mind that led him to create a line of clothing that adapted to the temperamental climate and fulfilled the needs of people.



GUCCIO GUCCI
1881 – 1953, Italy



BACKGROUND

Guccio Gucci was born in 1881 to an impoverished milliner. When he was a teenager, he left his home in Florence and travelled to London to look for work opportunities. When he was in London he worked in various jobs, but also as a bellboy in the Savoy hotel, where he witnessed many of the elite clientele arriving with well-made leather suitcases. His dream was to return to Italy and start his own company making leather goods that will blend the English aristocracy with the Italian craftsmanship. When he returned to Italy, he worked in a leather craftsmanship atelier, called Franzi, where he learned the art of the leather crafts making.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

Just as many of the fashion entrepreneurs in this book, Guccio Gucci also came from humble beginnings, and had the desire to create a better life for himself. When he left Italy as a teenager to look for his fortune, his idea was not just to find jobs in order to make a living, but his early days show an openness to identify a need. He sees the international and elite clientele of Savoy Hotel, arriving with sophisticated accessories, and when he witnesses the luggage collection and the leather accessories, he has the idea to create his own company one day. It is therefore no coincidence that upon returning to Italy, he starts working in a leather atelier, called Franzi, and few years after apprenticing there, he starts his own store in Florence. His early customers are horse-riding nobility, and their demand for the horse-riding accessories leads to the horse-bit symbol, that is one of the most enduring symbols of the brand to this day. He is an astute businessman and entrepreneur, who invests in the growth of his brand, expanding into other products, such as shoes, belts and wallets, and opening a second store in Rome. When there is shortage of supplies in the 1940s, he experiments with alternative materials, such as bamboo and linen, which is in line with sustainability principles. Just as it is the case with the other fashion entrepreneurs in this book, he expands into the American market, by opening a store in New York, recognizing that this market has potential for growth.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Guccio Gucci has an innate ability to first recognize a need in the market and focus on the needs of the customers. He is a true visionary not only when it comes to recognizing needs, but also market growth (i.e., expanding internationally into the American market, and opening Gucci's first store in New York). He is someone who invests in quality, as well as experimenting with new materials, and also quickly introducing new product lines when he recognizes that there will be a demand for that. Guccio's innate ability of observation has been one of the key success factors that created a brand that has stood the test of time. He has introduced symbols, such as the interlocking double G, the bamboo handle, and the horse bit. His investment in quality, craftsmanship and exclusivity has helped the brand to grow from a small Florentine saddlery shop to an iconic brand that is recognized and desired worldwide.



GABRIELLE "COCO" CHANEL
1883 – 1971, Saumur, France

BACKGROUND

Chanel was born in rural France in a poor house hospice, one of six children. Her mother died when she was only 12 years old, and her father dropped his three daughters in the grounds of an orphanage and disappeared. Despite the challenging circumstances and the odds stacked against her, she remained optimistic and resolved to take control of her life as soon as she could. She learned how to sew in the orphanage, and when she left, she found a job as a seamstress and, in order to support herself, sang in bars.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

The desire and ambition to create a better life for herself and survive despite the odds is an entrepreneurial characteristic that formed the business of Coco Chanel. After working in different jobs, as a singer and seamstress, and even being a kept woman of a notable businessman of the time, Coco met Arthur "Boy" Capel, who agreed to finance her millinery shop, which opened in 1910 in a tiny street called rue Cambon. She was good at what she did, but most importantly she was not happy with the extravagant way of dressing post-war and created a style that captured the moment and the time. Women responded to her dresses and knitwear which borrowed from the ease and casualness of men's wardrobe. She expanded to sportswear in 1913, couture in Biarritz and Paris. She formulated the iconic Chanel No:5, where she used clever publicity and marketing, heralding it to become a bestseller as well as carrying her name and success to other markets, with her opening her first fashion house in London in 1927. Hollywood followed with her being asked to create costumes for Gloria Swanson. When the war broke out in 1939, she closed her operations and went into retirement. She could have kept the doors of her fashion house closed, but her decision to reopen after the war ended and start anew is one of the main reasons why Chanel has lived until today, and her style and brand name continue to be celebrated. She was the one to adapt fastest to change and never gave up.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Her great strength was her ability to read the times and the moods that changed them — and usually do so before anyone else did. She was a true catalyst for fashion change, despite not being a very original creator. As the century morphed into the '20s, Chanel was acknowledged as one of the great fashion leaders not only in Paris, but across the globe. Her style and palette seem as modern today as they did then: chic and sporty during the day, based on crisp, flattering linearity, and romantic at night. It is often forgotten that in the '20s and '30s, she created feminine evening dresses of lace that gave women as much authority as her daywear did. She went against convention by borrowing from men's clothing and created a modern and powerful woman who would feel free and comfortable in her clothes, instead of dressing for someone else.



ELSA SCHIAPARELLI
1890 – 1973, Rome, Italy

BACKGROUND

Elsa Schiaparelli was a visionary and a talented designer, who broke the boundaries of fashion. She was born in Rome to an aristocratic family, but she was dissatisfied with a lifestyle that was comfortable, but stifling, cloistered and unfulfilling. She travelled to Paris, lived in New York, and after divorcing her husband, worked as a translator and a seamstress to make ends meet.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

Schiaparelli was a very sociable, gregarious woman who was open to life. This particular characteristic allowed her to meet and become friends with Marcel Duchamp, Man Ray, Paul Poiret, and Francis Picabia. When she moved to Paris, it was Paul Poiret who encouraged her to open her own atelier, and she did so on the rue de Seine, designing knitwear and sportswear. It was the right trend, and the right product for the time. She had many notable designs, with one of them being the wrap dress (a great influence on Diane von Furstenberg, who used it as the backbone of her own venture), as well as techniques of incorporating zips into a series of separates and popularizing the fastener in the context of high fashion. Her business was successful, thanks to her ability to choose the right collaboration, coupled with her unique vision and style. However, after the war, fashion changed; a new type of designer and a new look was emerging (Christian Dior with his New Look), and Schiaparelli struggled in the austerity of the post-war period. She discontinued her couture business in 1951, and finally closed her heavily indebted design house in December 1954, the same year that her great rival Coco Chanel returned to the business.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Elsa Schiaparelli had a tremendous imagination, and she was not afraid to turn a shoe into a hat or acrobats into buttons. She was heavily influenced by art in her creations, as she was close friends with Man Ray, Christian Bérard, Salvador Dali, and Jean Cocteau. She did not have a formal training of pattern making and clothing construction, but was encouraged by Paul Poiret, who she called a dear friend and mentor, to transform her love of knitwear into a collection of *trompe-l'oeil* images and double-layered stitching. One of her key success factors was her network, her friendly and outgoing nature allowed her to be in the right circle, but this was not sufficient to put her name on the map as one of the most successful and influential designers. Her successes can be attributed to her unique vision, collaborative work with artists including Dali and Cocteau, and the astute business sense that led her to diversify into lingerie, sunglasses, interior design, and handbags. She embraced innovation and in 1937 introduced a signature color, called 'shocking pink', the first designer to do so.



JEANNE LANVIN
1867 – 1946, Paris, France



BACKGROUND

Jeanne Lanvin was born in 1867, the eldest of 10 children. Her father was a journalist. Aged 13, she became a dressmaker's errand girl. Her teens were spent as an apprentice milliner, from which she moved up to be a dressmaker's assistant before she felt ready to work for herself.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

At the age of 18, after securing an investment from a wealthy client, Lanvin opened her own millinery shop in *rue du Marché-Saint-Honoré*. It was the clothes she designed for her daughter that resulted in demand from her clients. She ended up creating mother-daughter versions of outfits, which differentiated her business in the market. She focused on romance and on clothes that made women feel beautiful.

Lanvin was not just a designer, but also a very smart businesswoman who knew how to place herself in the burgeoning couture market of the early 1920s. Interested in medieval and Renaissance art, along with Egypt and antiquity, she created a soft but vibrant blue, guaranteed to flatter most skin and hair types. Called "Fra Angelico blue," it became almost a trademark. She later on expanded her lines to include interior design, lingerie, sportswear, menswear, and beauty. But her biggest success in extending her brand name came from the perfume she created, called Arpage. Unsurprisingly, the bottle featured a mother and a daughter. She used press and celebrity cleverly, with clientele that included the queens of Romania and Italy and actresses Marlene Dietrich and Mary Pickford.

The house of Lanvin remains the oldest French fashion house still in existence.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

In addition to her business skills, and her ability to grow her fashion house with smart line extensions, the key differentiator was her style. In the 1920s, as the haute couture market was booming, she made a name for herself because of her distinct style of romanticism. Her signature of subtlety and femininity were underlined by inventive embellishments. She added decorative effects to her clothes (unlike Chanel, who pared down) in the form of flowers, ruffles, embroideries, roses, appliques, quilting and free flowing ribbons. Called the fairy godmother of *jeune fille*, she combined sophisticated fabrics with an air of youthful refinement.



MADELEINE VIONNET
1876 – 1975 , Loiret, France

BACKGROUND

Born on 22 June 1876 into a poor family in Chilleurs-aux-Bois, Loiret, Vionnet moved with her father to Aubervilliers at the age of five. Having already left school, Vionnet began her apprenticeship at age twelve as a seamstress. After a brief marriage at age 18, she left her husband and went to London to work as a hospital seamstress. While in London, Vionnet worked as a fitter for the celebrated British dressmaker Kate Reily.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

Vionnet was only 17 years old, when she joined the House of Vincent in Paris, and within two years she became the head seamstress. Later, she worked for *Callot Souers* and Jacques Doucet. She often clashed with other designers who employed her because she had a style and vision that was different from theirs. For instance, at Jacques Doucet she used barefoot models and loose garments, which was not in line with the house's style. Eventually, she set up her own salon when she was 36 years old. However, the timing coincided with the outbreak of the First World War, which led her to close the businesses. She reopened after the war with a new look and a logo designed by the Italian Futurist artist Thyaht. She was not only a talented designer but also an astute business owner, who has 21 workshops and pioneered practices such as providing dental and medical care, dining, and childcare facilities. She launched her first fragrance by using single letters, echoing her modern approach to fashion. She refused to sell her name and, despite having 21 ateliers, and a thriving business, she liquidated her assets, and donated the vast majority of her archive to the *Union Francaise des Arts du Costume*.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Alongside Coco Chanel, Vionnet is credited with a move away from stiff, formalized clothing to sleeker, softer clothes. Unlike her rival Chanel, Vionnet did not seek publicity and did not use her social network in order to further her business. In fact, she often remarked how much she disliked fashion with its seasonality and need to discard and create anew. She did, however, benefit immensely from the support of entrepreneur Theophile Bader, the co-founder of Galeries Lafayette, who played a decisive role in helping her business to grow and succeed.

In her designs, Vionnet eliminated everything except the finest fabric and the most exquisite cut, an approach that would influence generations of designers to come. She dispensed with the standard elements of accentuation and instead celebrated the female form. She was inspired by Greek drapery and modern dance, and she believed in fluidity and freedom of movement. Her key differentiation point and success factor was indeed her design, which looked uncomplicated on the surface but revealed a true genius. Her trademark – the bias cut – was her basis for these designs, and it made her one of the most celebrated designers, despite her not using marketing or publicity techniques. Her style and design answered to a demand that many women wanted and appreciated. Issey Miyake once remarked that on seeing Vionnet's work for the first time, "the impression was similar to the wonder one feels at the sight of a woman emerging from bathing, draped only in a single piece of beautiful cloth."



MAINBOCHER
1890 – 1976, United States



BACKGROUND

Born as Main Rousseau Bocher in Chicago, he studies at the Lewis Institute, now the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts, and serves in intelligence during the First World War, where he was based in Paris. Once the war ended, he remained in Paris, and started working as a fashion illustrator for Harper's Bazaar, and eventually as an editor and editor-in-chief of the French edition of Vogue magazine. His decision to become a fashion designer grew out of his years as the editor of Vogue, realizing he had a keen eye for fashion.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

Known as Mainbocher, the designer defined the post-war American fashion. His experience with fashion started when he was a fashion illustrator, and then became the fashion editor and eventually editor-in-chief of Parisian Vogue. His favorite designer was Madeleine Vionnet, and he noticed he had a keen eye for fashion, as well as an educated eye having studied at the Lewis Institute. With the financial backing of investors, he opened his fashion house on 12 Avenue George V, in 1929, and his success was almost immediate. He had a key signature style, with the infamous Mainbocher corset, that has been famously photographed by Horst P. Horst. In 1940, with the start of the Second World War, he relocated in America, where despite the war, fashion industry was booming, and he dressed the elite of Manhattan society, as well as celebrities. His most famous client was Wallis Simpson, who chose to wear Mainbocher for her wedding to Duke of Windsor. His price points were the highest of any fashion designer at the time.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Just as he was able to identify himself, Mainbocher's key success factor was his keen sense of fashion, having an eye and innate understanding of the fashion industry. He was an American, who studied fine art, lived and worked in Paris for many years, which allowed him to know what the global fashion clientele wanted. When he moved to America, he became even more successful, and especially at a time, when other fashion entrepreneurs struggled. He had a celebrity clientele, that he knew how to nurture, and knew the way the fashion system, particularly communication worked, and this allowed for the longevity and success of his brand. He closed his New York salon after 40 years in business and donated his collection of drawings to the New York Metropolitan Museum.



SALVATORE FERRAGAMO
1898 – 1960, Bonito, Italy

BACKGROUND

Born to a poor family as the 11th of 14 children, Salvatore did not go to school, as it was the norm during those years. He was 9 years old when he made his first shoe for his sister's communion, and knew as early as then, that he had found his calling. He studied shoe making in Naples, and even opened a small shoe store in his parents' home. In 1914, he immigrated to Boston, to join his brother, who worked at a shoe factory. He was already an accomplished shoemaker at the time and had bigger dreams than working at a factory. He convinced his brother to move to Hollywood, and open their own shoe making atelier.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

Ferragamo had the vision and determination from a very young age about what he wanted to do in life. When he immigrated to United States, he did not only want to work at a shoe factory, but his aim was always to be where the stars were – in Hollywood. When he was told his shoes were beautiful to look at, but uncomfortable to wear, he went to University of Southern California to study anatomy. He was determined and relentless in creating a beautiful, but also comfortable to wear shoes. After 13 years in America, he decided to return to his homeland, and opened a shop in Florence. He already had an impressive list of celebrity clientele, which included the infamous names such as Eva Peron and Marilyn Monroe. Just like Guccio Gucci, he also experimented with alternative material, such as wine corks, which showed he was an innovator and a visionary. Just as it is in the nature of entrepreneurship, he faced financial challenges during the Great Depression, and had to file for bankruptcy. In 1938, he reopened his business once again, and this time, having learned the lessons from his failure, and he would end up hiring 700 artisans, producing 350 pairs of shoes per day. He opened a boutique on Park Avenue, further cementing his status as the shoemaker of the stars. He collaborated with other fellow fashion designers, such as Christian Dior and Elsa Schiaparelli.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Ferragamo was relentless when it came to creating beautiful and desirable shoes that were also comfortable. He also knew very early on the power of celebrity, and hence the decision to want to move to Hollywood and open a small shoe repair and a made-to-measure shop. Eventually, the celebrity clientele followed, but it was also Salvatore Ferragamo's pursuit of such customers. He was an innovator, who created revolutionary designs, and his flat ballerina pump that he made for Audrey Hepburn will come to define the shoe industry to this day. More than just a designer, he was an inventor who had more than 20,000 models in his shoe library and held over 350 patents, some of which are the cork wedge, the ballerina flat, and the gloved arch.



CHRISTIAN DIOR
1905 – 1957, Granville, France

BACKGROUND

Christian Dior was born in Granville, a seaside town in Normandy, to a well-to-do family. When he was five years old, the family moved to Paris, but they would return to Granville every summer. His family hoped he will grow up to be a diplomat, but he was too interested in the creative arts, and started to sell his fashion sketches to fashion houses. His interest in art led him to open an art gallery with his friend, with Dior's father financing, where they sold Pablo Picasso and various other renowned artists. During the Great Depression, his father's business suffered, and eventually, Dior had to close the art gallery and designed for Robert Piquet, who was transformational for Dior's career as a designer. When the war broke out, he was called to the army and upon his return, he started working at the fashion house of Lucien Lelong, who played a key role in keeping the French fashion industry in France, instead of it moving to Germany, during the Second World War. After the war ended, Christian Dior started his own brand in 1946, backed by the financier Marcel Boussac. When he presented his first collection – the celebrated New Look – it was transformational for the entire industry, and enough to secure Dior's position as a legendary fashion designer.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

While not obvious to those who speak or read about Dior, one could argue that he showed an entrepreneurial spirit at a very young age; in front of his house, he sold his fashion sketches for 10 centimes each. Later he opened an art gallery with a friend, and approach Robert Piquet in order to design for him. While not obvious at the outset, these are characteristics of a fashion entrepreneur. Later on, he became the renowned designer of the New Look, which came to define an era and revive the French fashion industry. These are synonymous with entrepreneurship: having a vision, taking risks, daring to do something different. He was a self-proclaimed introvert and did not court publicity, but he had an astute awareness of how fashion industry worked, understanding, crucially, that fashion is a business. He worked closely with his suppliers, couturiers, and finance people in his brand, and ensured that every creative decision also made sense financially. A creative vision and an astute business mind put Dior on the map of fashion as an iconic fashion designer.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Dior had an acute understanding of what women wanted. He famously said, I brought back the neglected art of pleasing, and created a look that stunned the public and grabbed the attention of key fashion figures. He was a bold risk taker, who believed in his vision and did not hold back when executing it. As *Time* magazine reported, “never in the history of fashion had a single designer made such a revolution in his first showing.” A decade later, he was featured on the cover of the magazine. His ability to be a creative visionary while also paying attention to financial figures and understanding that fashion after all is a business allowed his brand to succeed and survive for generations to come.



HATTIE CARNEGIE
1886 – 1956, Vienna, Austria-Hungary



BACKGROUND

Hattie Carnegie was born in Vienna, the capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, to a poor Jewish family. Her family would immigrate to the United States and settle in the Lower East Side of Manhattan. She was the second of seven children, and in addition to the challenging life of being an immigrant, she would also lose her father as a young girl and find herself in a position in which she was required to support her family. Aged only 13, she found a job as a messenger at Macy's department store. When she was 15, she worked for a millinery manufacturer where she modelled and trimmed hats. At the age of 20, she had decided to change her name to Hattie (from Hannah) and take on the last name of Carnegie, as a homage to Andrew Carnegie, the richest man in America at the time. Just like many other fashion entrepreneurs, she had the desire to create a different life, a better story for herself, and the name change is an indication of that.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

Building on her own experience of working at the milliner store, she decided to launch her own business in partnership with Rose Roth, who was a dressmaker. After a few years, Roth left the business, leaving Hattie Carnegie as the sole owner of the company. Carnegie was a smart businesswoman and had run the business successfully enough to have a good working capital, which allowed her to travel to Paris to buy the dresses of renowned French designers and start making copies under her own brand. By 1929, her business had sales of \$3.5 million a year. Her astute business skills and entrepreneurial vision proved successful once more during the Great Depression, when she decided to create an accessibly priced line, called Spectator Sports. She was the first fashion entrepreneur to recognize the importance of a second, less expensive line. She also expanded into fashion accessories, such as bags, furs, hats, and cosmetics and even launched her own brand of chocolate. In addition to her success as a fashion entrepreneur, she also had picked a then unknown model, Lucille Ball, who credited Hattie Carnegie for teaching her how to pose. Even after she became a famous actress, Lucille Ball continued to support Carnegie. Despite not having any formal training as a fashion designer and not knowing how to sew, draw, or cut, Carnegie had an unmatched ability in the skill that any fashion entrepreneur needs to have: recognizing and responding to needs in the market. She advanced this skill later on, as her company would become what today is known as a venture capitalist firm. She discovered and launched the careers of many renowned American fashion designers, such as Norman Norell, Pauline Trigere, Jean Lous, James Galanos, and Clare McCardell.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

In addition to her entrepreneurial skills, Carnegie's key defining style was the Carnegie Suit. It was an exercise in sophisticated tailoring and praised for its designer's immaculate execution. It featured the signature Carnegie blue, and while it still had the hallmarks of the wartime figure, with its long silhouette, it also featured color and a feminine silhouette. Carnegie was very much in tune with the changes taking place and knew what her customer wanted. She wanted to give the American women clothing that they could afford and that they would feel beautiful in, while also having practicality. Her vision of knowing her customer and creating products accordingly cemented the success of Hattie Carnegie.



CLAIRE MCCARDELL
1905 – 1958, Maryland, United States

BACKGROUND

Born in Maryland, to a southern-belle mother and a banker father, Claire McCardell was a self-confessed tomboy who applied the principles of fitness and sports to her design approach. She attended Parsons school of Design, and specialized in illustration, and in her second year, she came to the school's Paris branch. When she returned to New York, she worked with the designer Robert Turk, and worked briefly with Hattie Carnegie as well.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

When Claire McCardell started working with other American fashion designers, after her graduation, she was opposed to the fact of copying Parisian designers' work, which was very common approach at the time. After stints with Robert Turk and Hattie Carnegie, she decided to launch her own line of fashion separates, which was a new phenomenon. She blurred boundaries between high end fashion and everyday wear and is one of the first designers to do so. She had an innovative and a completely unique way of designing fashion, and had a very pragmatic approach, where women should move freely in their clothes. She is considered a precursor to Donna Karan, who will also emphasize ease of wear and practicality in fashion. In 1942, McCardell will become an established designer who sold more than 75,000 pieces of her denim Popover dress and earned the praise of fashion insiders. She will come to define the post-war era of American fashion and encourage women to dress more freely.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Her groundbreaking approach was adding functionality and practicality to fashion. She was pragmatic and had a keen eye for what women wanted. She was influenced by Madeleine Vionnet, and Claire McCardell will come to influence many other designers, many of whom she mentored under her fashion business. She is credited with creating an all-American wardrobe and style, and her key success factor was creating clothes that she would like to wear.



CRISTÓBAL BALENCIAGA
1895 – 1972, Getaria, Spain

BACKGROUND

Balenciaga was born in a small fishing village of Getaria to a father who was a ferryboat captain, and a seamstress mother. He was also an altar boy growing up, and it is said that his mother's profession had an influence on his future as a fashion designer. When he was still living with his parents, he started to sew for others, and his first wealthy client, Marquessa de Casa Torres, was the one to support him financially enabling to leave grammar school and move to Madrid to study tailoring.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

Balenciaga has caught the eye of not only his wealthy clientele, but of the fashion world when he first came to Paris in 1937 to open his boutique. Before Paris, he was already an established designer in his hometown, but had to close his store in San Sebastian, when the Spanish War started. In Paris, he found immediate success but also recognition from his peers, who praised his sophisticated style that respected proportion and was precise. He was a designer's designer and a complete perfectionist. He had a clear understanding of who his ideal customer was and will cherry-pick his clients. He also nurtured young designers at the time, such as Hubert de Givenchy, who will become his protégé, as well as Emmanuel Ungaro and André Courrèges. His entrepreneurial skill laid in his unique visual style that respected form and fabric and created a silhouette that was undeniably his.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Balenciaga is considered one of the most talented fashion designers, and has been revered by Coco Chanel and Christian Dior, who respected his technique and skill. He had an unmatched eye for proportion, and his key success factor was in respecting both fabric and form.



JACQUES FATH
1912 – 1954, Paris, France



Background

The son of André Fath, an Alsatian-Flemish insurance agent, Jacques Fath came from a creative family. His paternal great-grandparents, Caroline and Georges Fath, were fashion illustrators and writers, and his paternal grandfather was a landscape painter. Unlike the other fashion entrepreneurs in this book, Fath had a relatively affluent upbringing, and grew up in a family of intellectuals and creatives. In fact, he grew up learning about art and history, and would attend many museums and art galleries with his family – a habit that would come to influence him to become a fashion entrepreneur.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

Jacques Fath did not study fashion, but had a keen understanding and exposure to the world of art and creativity, and learned about fashion from books. He was a self-taught designer, who started his own venture from a small studio on Rue de la Boetie and hired well known designers to apprentice with him – Hubert de Givenchy, Guy Laroche and Valentino Garavani. He was a popular designer, particularly known for dressing the young Parisienne, and had the ability to add seductiveness to fashion. He appealed to the Parisian socialites, as well as the American celebrities and the jetsetters. He had a keen understanding of what his customers wanted, and while his contemporaries were focused on creating new silhouettes, he was more concerned with styling and courting new clients. When he was drafted as a gunner during the Second World War, and after the war, he was one of the few fashion entrepreneurs to restart his business, and continue his operations from he left off, and set his sights on a newly booming market: America. While he was not established and well-known by the American consumers, as well as the other Parisian designers, he still secured a deal to produce ready-to-wear cline with the Seventh Avenue manufacturer, called Joseph Halpert. He dressed Rita Hayworth, when she married Prince Ali Khan.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Jacques Fath's trademarks were his slender cut waist and fitted bodice that emphasized feminine curves, and made women look sexy. He had the ability to add seductiveness to fashion, and similar to Christian Dior made the feminine form be the centerstage in his creations. He was not schooled in fashion design, but he did not let that hold him back from becoming a fashion entrepreneur, and eventually proving that he had a keen eye for fashion and talent, by employing young fashion designers, who will eventually make their mark in the industry. He courted press and had a good understanding of the communication process that fashion depended on, eventually dressing the Parisian elite, Hollywood celebrities such as Rita Hayworth, being in the pages of leading fashion magazines.



PIERRE BALMAIN
1914 – 1982, Savoie, France



BACKGROUND

Balmain's father, who died when the future designer was seven years old, was the owner of a wholesale drapery business. His mother Françoise ran a fashion boutique called Galeries Parisiennes with her sisters, and would dress young Pierre Balmain in flamboyant outfits. He went to school at Chambéry and his interest in couture fashion was inspired by society women he met when growing up. Balmain began studying architecture at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in 1933, as well as working as a freelance fashion designer to Robert Piquet. He will end up working for Dior, as well as Lelong, and in 1943, the dress he will gain fame as a fashion designer, when the dress he designed for Lelong will become a bestseller.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

Balmain started his own company in October 1945, a month after his dresses were photographed by Cecil Beaton for Vogue. His success was almost immediate and having already gained experience working with Lelong and Christian Dior, he was well known among the fashion editors. Soon, the demand from clientele followed and his name was on the map as a successful fashion designer. He was a trained architect, and this reflected in the way he designed, but also conducted his business. It was meticulous and well thought out.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Spoken in the same breath as some of the greatest designers of his time, Pierre Balmain had trained as an architect, and had a great eye for proportion and scale. This reflected in his impeccable design. When we look back at the way he approached design, we see the similarity of how he also ran his business. His key success factor was more about evolution and taking small and steady steps in his venture. First, he gained experience by working as an apprentice to some of the most well-known designers of the time, and learning about fashion design, but also about the fashion business. When he opened his own atelier in 1945, his success was almost meteoric, but only because he took many years to build it.



EMILIO PUCCI
1914 – 1992, Florence, Italy



BACKGROUND

Emilio Pucci was born to an aristocratic Italian family, and lived and worked in the 14th century Palazzo Pucci for most of his life. With a lineage that stretches back to the Renaissance, he had the perfect pedigree for fashion, as he would start designing for an elite clientele that jet-setted around the world.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

As Emilio Pucci himself described, he became a fashion designer and an entrepreneur almost by accident. He was skiing in Switzerland, when Toni Frissel – a Harper's Bazaar fashion photographer liked Pucci's ski outfit and asked to photograph it. When she discovered, it was Pucci himself who designed it, she commissioned him to design a capsule collection that appeared in the Winter 1948 issue of the magazine. The design caused an absolute sensation in the fashion world, and the demand for his creations was almost immediate. He set up his first studio in Capri and started to also design swimwear. In 5 years, his name will be in demand, particularly by the likes of Marilyn Monroe and Sophia Lauren. While he was almost an accidental fashion entrepreneur, he showed a great instinct that is a characteristic of many of the fashion designers, and an ability to recognize that fashion is also a business.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Pucci personified the 1950s Florentine chic, with his vivid color, psychedelic color composition and swirls. He had an impeccable understanding and use of color, and a unique symbolic language that has established Pucci as a brand. He was not just creative, but also very intellectual when it came to designing. He had an ability to place pattern in the correct proportions, without having had any training for it. He is said to go through days and weeks before selecting the right color and pattern for his design, only picking 16 colors out of a palette of 80.



PIERRE CARDIN
1922 – 2021, Treviso, Italy

BACKGROUND

Pierre Cardin was born in Italy, to a wealthy wine merchants, but his family will end up losing their fortune during the First World War, and end up immigrating to France together with their ten children. While his father wished that he would study architecture, Pierre Cardin showed great interest in fashion even from an early age. He studied in central France and began his career at the age of fourteen when he did an apprenticeship at a clothier in order to learn about making apparel. He left his home in 1939 to work in Vichy under a tailor.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

Pierre Cardin moved to Paris in 1945, and worked for Jeanne Paquin, and then with Elsa Schiaparelli. Despite interviewing several times, he was rejected to work with his hero, Balenciaga, but will eventually end up working with Christian Dior, and will apprentice on the New Look of 1947. By the time he was 28 years old, Cardin had set up his own label, presenting his haute couture collection followed by ready-to-wear. He was a futurist from the onset and created a fashion business model that will become the template for the industry today. Cardin is the first designer to put a designer's name on virtually any consumer product – from furniture to a hairdryer. He was a true fashion entrepreneur in the sense to reinvent the way fashion was consumed. He signed his first men's shirts and ties licensing contract in 1956, and a decade later contract with Cadillac, private jets and boats. He is the first European designer to open a showroom in China, and launch his brand in post-Soviet Union, despite the volatile and uncertain market at the time.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Pierre Cardin was a true visionary, and known to be a futurist designer, and he designed for the world of tomorrow, rather than looking back to the past. This is also one of his key success factors, when it came to putting his name on almost every product imaginable, creating a fashion empire that included anything from clothing to cigarettes, thereby, creating an entirely different business model for the fashion industry.



HUBERT DE GIVENCHY
1927 – 2018, Beauvais, France



BACKGROUND

Count Hubert James Taffin de Givenchy was born in Beauvais, Oise into a Protestant family. He was the younger son of Lucien Taffin de Givenchy, Marquis of Givenchy, and his wife, Béatrice Badin. The Taffin de Givenchy family, which traces its roots to Venice, Italy was ennobled in 1713, at which time the head of the family became Marquis of Givenchy. He had an elder brother, Jean-Claude de Givenchy (1925–2009), who inherited the family's marquessate and eventually became the president of Parfums Givenchy.

After his father's death from influenza in 1930, he was raised by his mother and maternal grandmother, whose husband was the owner and director of the historic Gobelins Manufactory and Beauvais tapestry factories. Artistic professions ran in the extended Badin family. Givenchy's maternal great-grandfather, Jules Dieterle, was a set designer who also created designs for the Beauvais factory, including a set of 13 designs for the Elysée Palace. One of his great-great-grandfathers also designed sets for the Paris Opera. He moved to Paris at the age of 17, and he studied at the prestigious Ecole des Beaux-Arts.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

Hubert de Givenchy started his own fashion brand in 1952, and for seven years prior to that, he worked as an apprentice at Jacques Fath, Robert Piquet, Lelong and Elsa Schiaparelli. When he launched his brand, he also launched a unique idea of separates. Success was quick to follow, and his biggest rise to fame was when he was invited to dress Audrey Hepburn in *Sabrina*, and all the movies that followed after. She has always stated that she felt most comfortable in Givenchy's clothes. She will become a lifelong client, and the working relationship will extend off camera too. In addition to Audrey Hepburn, Givenchy's celebrity clientele included Maria Callas, Greta Garbo, Marlene Dietrich, Jacqueline Kennedy, and the Duchess of Windsor. The infamous celebrity roster helped the brand to become successful, but it was Givenchy's elegant designs that kept it successful, and desired by the Parisian and international clientele.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Givenchy was the epitome of chic and elegance. He focused on creating the most beautiful clothes, and while financial figures were of secondary importance to him, the House was still financially successful. His keywords were perfection, understatement, and refinement. He defined an era where elegance was of outmost importance.



YVES SAINT LAURENT
1936 – 2008, Oran, Algeria



BACKGROUND

Born in 1936 in Oran, Algeria, to a French family, Yves Saint Laurent, grew up in a villa with his two sisters by the Mediterranean. Even in his childhood, he had a sensitive, fragile look, and a shy manner. He would create paper dolls, and by his teen years, started designing dresses for his mother and sisters. At the age of 17, fascinated by fashion, he moved to Paris and enrolled in the prestigious *Chambre Syndicale de la Haute Couture*, where his talent was immediately noticed. The editor of French *Vogue*, Michel de Brunhoff, introduced Saint Laurent to Christian Dior, who hired him on the spot to work in his fashion house. Although Dior recognized Saint Laurent's talent immediately, he ended up working on smaller tasks, some of which included decorating the studio.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

While Saint Laurent was an incredibly talented fashion designer, his entrepreneurial skills were supported by his partner Pierre Bergé. It is a business model that has been proven to be successful among other fashion designers (partnering with someone who knows the business side of fashion, while the talent is left to do what he or she knows best). While Saint Laurent is celebrated for his talent as a designer, and Bergé has been credited for the success (as well as being criticized for controlling Saint Laurent). Saint Laurent also had the vision and knowledge of what it takes to run a business. It was his idea to start a ready to wear line, titled Rive Gauche, which was sold exclusively in his boutique on the Left Bank of Paris. When the May '68 protests were taking place, he knew how to cater to his clientele, who were very much haute couture customers, while also acknowledging the revolution taking place among society and in fashion. In fact, it is the enigmatic nature of Saint Laurent that has captivated the interest of many. He was described as painfully shy, yet he had a quiet command. He was the embodiment of a haute couture designer, but he also managed to bridge both worlds: young and old, haute couture and ready-to-wear. He created collections that were both masculine and feminine. While Bergé has been credited with business acumen, it was also Saint Laurent's instinct - a key capability of a successful entrepreneur - that could be attributed to the longevity and iconic status of his brand.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Deeply shy, highly creative, and regarded as a visionary and a designer of genius, Saint Laurent was the epitome of quintessential French style and would come to dominate the fashion industry for almost half a century. His paradoxical personality reflected the way he designed and managed his brand. He had an unmissable, unique style, but his most revolutionary look was the 1966 collection, and the introduction of 'Le Smoking'. He catered equally to two groups of women – his high society haute couture clientele as well as the young bohemians, who followed elegant street fashion. He also managed to blend in artistic influences, such as Mondrian, Cocteau, Braque, Van Gogh, and Picasso, into his design. Similar to other fashion entrepreneurs, he ventured into the beauty industry, by creating perfumes to match his collections.



MARY QUANT
1930 – Present , London, UK

EARLY BACKGROUND

Born to schoolteachers, who came from mining families, Mary Quant pursued an Art Education at Goldsmiths College, where her enthusiasm for fashion was born. She received her early experience by working as an assistant in a prestigious millinery shop in Mayfair. When she was at college, she had met Plunket Greene (who later become her husband), with whom she decided to start a business despite having little initial financial capital. They opened a shop called Bazaar near the King's Road, and only with a sewing machine, and some fabrics purchased at Harrods, Quant set on to make clothes that defined the 1960s fashion and beyond.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

Like many of the other fashion entrepreneurs featured in the book, Quant did not have business knowledge, or even fashion design training. However, she was very much attuned to the cultural and societal changes taking place in the 1960s. She proclaimed that the young were taking over, and London was the place to be, as she set out to create clothes for her and her friends that did not exist in the market. Her design was very much reflective of the time, and as fashion anticipates the future, she also reflected changing attitudes towards fashion. This was the post-war era, Britain, along with the rest of the world was on the brink of social change. Fashion was no longer about couture but about expressing one's individuality and freedom. Her vision, and being attuned to this historic change, allowed her business to flourish and create an influence not only in UK but also in America. Despite starting out with limited capital, and no knowledge of business or entrepreneurship, Quant and Plunket Greene opened a second boutique in Knightsbridge, and within three years, they secured a deal with Henri Bendel and JC Penney. The small boutique had become a global brand. She extended her brand into cosmetics and makeup, and once again, being ahead of her time, she even launched a men's makeup brand.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Quant's visionary outlook on fashion, and ability to be in tune with the revolution that was taking place in the 1960s, created a global brand that has influenced the fashion industry for decades. She and her brand have become synonymous with the mini skirt and hot pants. She has made clothes that were considered free and rebellious at the time, celebrating feminism and youth. Part of the strength of the Quant brand came from the fact that she designed for herself and would only create clothes that she and her friends would wear. In fact, just like her predecessors Chanel and Schiaparelli, she modeled her own clothes. Her key success factor was that she was uncannily contemporary, and she paved the way for future British fashion entrepreneurs, helping make London the creative capital of a type of fashion that is energetic and celebratory of street-style. Today, designers such as Molly Goddard and the Dublin-based Simone Rocha continue to take risks and embody the female fashion entrepreneurship that Quant celebrated and made center-stage in her work.



ANDRE COUREGGES
1923 – 2016, Pau, France

BACKGROUND

Andre Couregges was born to a butler father, and a homemaker mother. He wanted to pursue design and study at an art school from a very early age, but his father wanted him to become an engineer. He studied engineering, and even served as a pilot during Second World War.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

The Couregges story began when he started working for Cristóbal Balenciaga, who not only mentored him but also provided him with a loan in order to open his first fashion house in Paris. While the collection was well received, it won't be until 1963 when the brand, Courreges, will make fashion history with its futuristic design, go-go boots, miniskirts and goggles. What he introduced was groundbreaking, causing Vogue to commission Irving Penn to do a photoshoot with his collection. Couregges was also a visionary when it came to business, and launched his more affordable diffusion line, because he knew that his target customer will not be able to afford the pricier haute couture line.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Despite having worked at Balenciaga, Couregges had his own stylistic language, which set him apart as a designer. He was fascinated by functionality, practicality and freedom of movement. He mixed luxury with logic, and despite criticism from the previous generation designers, such as Chanel, he did not waive from his signature style. Running parallel with the youth movement of the 1960s, he claimed it was not Mary Quant but him who invented the mini skirt. Regardless of who was the originator, it was indeed true that Courreges combined modernity with a masterful approach to craft. Even after he stepped down from his brand, having run it for 20 years, his design signature remained unchanged.



OSCAR DE LA RENTA
1932 – 2014 , Dominican Republic

BACKGROUND

Born and brought up in the Dominican Republic, de la Renta studied at the Academy of San Fernando in Madrid Spain. He was an accomplished artist, who became fascinated with fashion and wanted to create his own brand one day.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

Oscar de la Renta wanted to pursue becoming a fashion designer, and despite not having connections to the industry, he started to show his portfolio of drawings to fashion designers in Madrid, and will eventually secure a position of 'picking up pins from the floor' at Balenciaga in Madrid. He also interned and assisted the head designer at Lanvin in Paris. He was not afraid to approach people who could potentially make introductions for him, and it was a chance meeting with Elizabeth Arden in New York led to a job offer. He relocated from Paris to Manhattan, and it was thanks to Elizabeth Arden's right connections and introductions that he was talked about in Women's Wear Daily. He started his own line in 1965, two years after moving to New York, and it was not only the right connections, but his ability to run a successful business, knowledge of his customers, and the right 'key' fashion insiders that led to a creation of a billion-dollar company, with fragrance lines, and multiple license deals.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

One of the key characteristics of the fashion entrepreneurs in this book is that they all have a point of view, a unique look, and a signature. This is also what put Oscar de la Renta on the map as a successful fashion entrepreneur. He also knew how the fashion system worked, and was dubbed as the party animal himself, knowing which New York socialite to approach, and how to speak to the fashion designers. Indeed, his key clientele early on was the New York elite, with whom he socialized and created clothes for. It was his proximity to his clientele that was his key success factor. His key signature style lay in emphasizing the feminine silhouette.



HALSTON

1932 – 1990, Des Moines, Iowa, United States



BACKGROUND

Roy Halston Frowick was born on April 23, 1932, in Des Moines, Iowa to an account father, and a stay-at-home mother. He developed an early interest in sewing from his grandmother and he began creating hats and altering clothes for his mother and sister. He briefly attended Indiana University, before enrolling at the School of Art Institute of Chicago. During his years as a student, he worked as a window dresser, and started his own side business making hats.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

Halston was the epitome of a fashion entrepreneur, because in his student years at Chicago, he started making hats, and charmed the hairdresser at Chicago's Ambassador Hotel into displaying his creations. Shortly after, a full-page feature in the Chicago Daily News led to him making hats for celebrities such as Hedda Hopper and Kim Novak. Aged 25, he decided to try his luck in the Big Apple, and moved to New York, securing a position as a head milliner for Bergdorf Goodman. At Bergdorf, he met with some of the leading designers of the time, such as Coco Chanel, Hubert de Givenchy, and was the first to witness Yves Saint Laurent's first collection. But it was his pillbox that he made for Jacqueline Kennedy that epitomized Halston as a fashion designer. Soon after, he opened his first boutique inside Bergdorf Goodman, and later his own flagship store on Madison Avenue, with the backing of a wealthy Texan socialite. His identity was inseparable from the Studio 54 nightclub that he frequented often, and his own name was on par with the celebrities that he dressed. He defined the 70s fashion, and by 1978, he had a total of 30 licensing deals, and a superstar status as a designer. His business was worth \$150 million, but by the summer of 1984, his business, including his brand name was bought by Revlon cosmetics and he was no longer the President of his company.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Halston eliminated zips, fastening, and made dresses that just glided over the body. It was not only his free, simple and sensual signature look that defined Halston but also his superstar persona. His shows were described as an art form, mixing the Studio 54 disco set, celebrities and New York socialites. His name was, in fact, inseparable from the 1970s disco lifestyle and the Studio 54 nightclub that he often frequented. He had an innate understanding of the era he was dressing for, but failed to make the change in the 1980s, when the culture around him was changing.



EMANUEL UNGARO
1933 – 2019, Aix en Provence, France



BACKGROUND

Emanuel Ungaro was a child of Italian political refugees, who settled in Provence. Ungaro's first toy was a Siemens sewing machine. His tailor father, Cosimo, encouraged and taught him to sew at a very young age, and when he was a teenager, Emanuel Ungaro started working alongside with his father at the family workshop. He moved to Paris at the age of 23, and after working with several tailors, he became an intern to Cristóbal Balenciaga.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

He learned the craft of tailoring at a very young age, but it was when interning with Balenciaga, that he learned couture skills from the master that was Cristóbal Balenciaga. He spent six years perfecting his craft, and after a brief stint at Andre Couregges, he opened his own house in 1965, with the financial backing of Swiss artist Sonja Knapp and Elena Bruna Fassio. His first collection and even subsequent collections that followed received mixed reviews from press, but despite that he persevered presenting romantic, frilly dresses that garnered praise of a celebrity clientele, such as Jean Seberg and Catherine Deneuve. He later on introduced a menswear with impeccably cut suits, as well as women's perfumes.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

He was a master tailor and a technician, who was known for his polka-dots, ruffles, floral patterns, and was regarded as a romantic designer who infused his design with sensuality. Despite receiving initial rejection and criticism from the key fashion insiders, he stood behind his vision, and within few seasons, he will garner a loyal clientele who appreciated his romantic and feminine dream-like silhouette.



KARL LAGERFELD
1933 – 2019, Hamburg, Germany



BACKGROUND

Lagerfeld was born on 10 September 1933 in Hamburg, to Elisabeth and businessman Otto Lagerfeld. His father owned a company that produced and imported evaporated milk, while his maternal grandfather, Karl Bahlmann, was a local politician for When Lagerfeld's mother met his father, she was a lingerie saleswoman from Berlin. His parents married in 1930. As a child, he showed great interest in visual arts, and former schoolmates recalled that he was always making sketches during class. Lagerfeld visited museums, and his great inspiration came from French artists. He claimed that he only stayed at school in order to learn the French language and live in Paris one day. He finished his secondary school at the Lycée Montaigne in Paris, where he majored in drawing and history.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

At the start of his career, Lagerfeld entered a coat design competition sponsored by the International Wool Secretariat, where he won the coat category and befriended Yves Saint Laurent, who won the dress category. Soon after, he was hired by Pierre Balmain, then worked at Jean Patou and Chloe. He remained as the head designer for Chloe for more than a decade, and for Fendi until he died. When he was invited to reinvigorate Chanel, it was seen as an almost impossible feat, but he managed to revive the brand into the iconic luxury fashion brand that is today. Karl Lagerfeld also started his own eponymous line in 1984, a year after he started working for Chanel. He was a true fashion entrepreneur and a visionary, who collaborated with brands such as Diesel, H&M (the first designer to do so), which has proven incredibly successful and created a different fashion business model in the industry. During his tenure at Chanel, he not only reinvigorated the brand, but also introduced humor and youth. In addition to being a fashion designer, he was also an artist, photographer, writer, illustrator, and even a weight-loss guru. In 2001, he reinvented himself by losing 40 kilos, following a diet that was created for him, and he spent time promoting the book called, *the Karl Lagerfeld Diet*. His talent was his ability to use the dynamics of the fashion business in a modern context.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

In addition to being a talented fashion designer, Karl Lagerfeld also knew the importance of creating a persona. The same way a talented actor will command attention on the screen, Lagerfeld had the unique ability to dominate the fashion screen for decades. With his fingerless gloves, white ponytail, signature sunglasses, and the Hedi Slimane suits that were tailored for him, he designed not only fashion but also a persona. One of the entrepreneurial capabilities is knowing the process of communication fashion depends on, this communication process is much more than public relations, but also about creating a certain dream, a look around the face of the fashion brand. Karl Lagerfeld was a genius when it came to that.



PAUL SMITH
1946 – Present, Nottingham, UK

BACKGROUND

Born in Nottingham, Paul Smith's early ambition was to become a professional cyclist. He left school at the age of 15 and started to work at a clothing warehouse, while practicing cycling as a hobby. Following a serious accident, at the age of 17, Paul Smith was inspired by his friends to pursue art and fashion. His love and passion for cycling came to influence his design aesthetic later on, but he had to give it up to concentrate on a full-time career in fashion, as he started to take classes in tailoring, eventually finding work at a Saville Row tailors.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

In 1970, together with his girlfriend (now wife) Pauline, Smith opened his very first boutique, a three-square metre backroom, named Paul Smith Vetement Pour Homme. The small space allowed his customers to feel more comfortable and "if you would place a cool object on a little table, a small work of art, a poster of Giacometti on the wall, people would feel more comfortable if there is something to have a conversation about." This approach to running a fashion boutique was revolutionary and was maintained in the way Paul Smith came to organize his business, as all his shops around the world have a very unique interior design – a blend of art, lifestyle, and fashion." Paul Smith initially started with menswear clothing and was only based in Nottingham. His unique style in fashion as well as shop design, would help to create a fashion empire that is now in 73 countries.

Japan has also become one of the most important markets for Paul Smith. His respect for the Japanese culture and his customers there has made him one of the most famous fashion designers in the country. In fact, he has said "when I walk down the street in Japan, it's like being a rock star. People would stop and ask me for autographs."

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

In addition to being a talented designer, with a signature stripes to his brand, Paul Smith's key success factor has been in creating an experience when shopping. Having a unique window display, with a home-like feeling of an interior space, where one could just go not only to shop, but also look has been the key to success in growing Paul Smith brand. It is not unusual to find talking wristwatches, piggy banks, vintage vases and scarves in one of his stores.

When asked for his success secrets as an entrepreneur, he identified keeping an eye on cashflow and knowing the importance of press. For example, his shows once included a pink colored men's jacket, which caught press attention and featured on the cover of GQ. But Smith went on to produce the pink jacket in lesser numbers than the black jacket in the same style, which would shift more units. He has also focused on his competitive advantage of retail management, creative and quirky design with a sensible aesthetic, and has refused to go into brand extensions in different industries, such as mobile and hospitality.



VALENTINO GARAVANI
1932 – Present, Voghera, Italy

BACKGROUND

Born near Milan, in the north of Italy, Valentino became interested in fashion when he watched movie stars Rita Hayworth and Gene Tierney at his local cinema. On leaving high school, he was adamant he wanted to pursue fashion design education, and he left for Paris to study at the prestigious *Ecole de la Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne*. His talent was starting to be noticed when he won the International Wool Secretariat award. Upon his graduation, he worked as an assistant designer at Jean Desses for five years, before moving on to work at Guy Laroche.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

Valentino returned to his home country in 1959 and opened his very first fashion boutique in the prestigious Via Condotti, with financial backing from his father. His store had the influences of Parisian haute couture, and even models were flown in from Paris. Despite his initial and almost immediate success as a fashion designer, he lacked the business acumen that was necessary to sustain a successful business. It was by chance that he met his partner Giancarlo Giammetti at a café in Rome. Giammetti would provide the business acumen and entrepreneurial vision for the Valentino brand for years to come, while Valentino focused on his competitive advantage: style and fashion. In fact, Valentino once said that he only knows how to do three things: “make a dress, decorate a house, and entertain people.” The 1960s were a period of particular excitement and expansion for his brand, as he made clothes for movie stars and put together visually beautiful and unique fashion shows. His truly global success came with Jacqueline Kennedy, who noticed his all-white spring presentation of 1968 and wore one of his dresses for her wedding with Aristotle Onassis. After this moment, Valentino became a global brand with new lines introduced, including accessories, perfume, cosmetics, and interior design.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Valentino embraced the glamorous aspect of fashion and created a style that is synonymous with elegance, beauty, and passion. He captured attention and built a reputation by dressing some of the most captivating beauties and stars, including Elizabeth Taylor, Gina Lollobrigida, Sophia Loren, and Audrey Hepburn. He embraced the Italian passion and married it with his utmost perfection and precision, resulting in a long-lasting brand with impeccable standards.



GIORGIO ARMANI
1934 – Present, Piacenza, Italy

BACKGROUND

Giorgio Armani was born in Piacenza, a small town outside of Milan, to a poor family (his father was a shipping manager). Giorgio and his two siblings experienced the hardships of the Second World War as children. He lived through difficult and challenging times, and years later, would say that the cinema in Milan was a refuge, where he fell in love with Hollywood glamour and the idealized beauty and style depicted on the silver screen. At a very early age, he developed an interest in anatomy, making dolls out of mud, which led to him going to medical school for two years. He had to take a break to complete his mandatory military service, and during a visit to Milan, he saw the Italian fashion scene there and knew that he wanted to enter the industry. Through a friend, he got a job at the renowned department store, *La Rinascente*, designing windows, and would eventually move to work for Cerutti.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

Giorgio Armani is one of the most successful designers in history, having defined decades of fashion and made moves that have proven to be very successful from a business point of view. In his early years, before starting his own venture, he already had a very keen understanding of what customers wanted and could identify the societal and cultural changes taking place. He worked in *La Rinascente* for seven years, initially designing windows. His vision was ahead of its time, especially for the rather conservative Italian consumers, because he would design windows that were exotic, blending different cultures. But what his experience at the department store gave him was the chance to observe how customers dressed and purchased fashion. It was, however, his work as freelance designer to Gruppo Finanziario Tessile (GFT), a company with a long tradition of working in textiles and making revolutionary innovations in manufacturing, that would serve as the turning point in Armani's career as a fashion entrepreneur. As one of the largest Italian clothing firms, with the most modern structure, the company provided Armani with manufacturing skills which allowed him to fully exploit his creative talent. In fact, the unstructured jacket was the result of the partnership between Armani and GFT which began in 1978 and continued to be a key success factor in establishing Armani as a successful fashion business.

It was in July 1975, upon his friend Sergio Galeotti's encouragement, that the two would partner and start the Giorgio Armani brand, initially launching a menswear collection followed, a year later, by womenswear. The revolutionary style of Armani's clothes earned him widespread recognition. He introduced a natural fit, a casual elegance, and timeless classics with a subtle color palette. His was a unique style, which caught the attention of the fashion press and was also a great success with customers. Expensive and instantly recognizable, Armani would become the label of choice in the late 1970s and 1980s. His success was further fueled by the American consumer's interest in his style; when Hollywood featured his clothes in movies, Armani would come to be the most sought after label. Such was Armani's influence on the red carpet that in 1989 the Oscar ceremony was dubbed as the "Armani Awards". His entrepreneurial vision was cemented when Armani extended his brand into lifestyle products. In addition to complementary products, such as beauty and homeware, he also ventured into hotels.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

In the years that followed the war, the Italian fashion industry was characterized by the *dolce vita* lifestyle and excess. When Giorgio Armani launched his label in 1975, it was the opposite of the extravagance that had come to define the Italian fashion designers. His unstructured jacket attracted the attention of the fashion press and the public, helping him to be noticed as a revolutionary fashion designer of the time. Armani's minimalist style stood out in a sea of maximalist culture. Armani fashion shows were also a respite from the extravagant runways that were a norm in the industry in that era. He presented wearable, chic clothes with neutral palettes. His ability to underplay yet, at the same time, appear highly desirable and immaculate was the key to his success.



KENZO TAKADA
1939 – 2020, Himeji, Japan

BACKGROUND

Born to a family of seven siblings, Kenzo Takada showed an early interest to fashion through reading his sisters' fashion magazines. He studied literature at Kobe University but left to take up fashion at Bunka Gakuen University in Tokyo, when the university started to allow male students to study fashion. During his time at Bunka, Takada won a fashion design competition. At this time, he also gained experience working in the Sanai department store, where he designed up to 40 outfits a month as a girl's clothing designer. He idolized Yves Saint Laurent as a designer and Paris as the fashion capital, so he bought a one way ticket to Europe, eventually arriving in Paris in 1964. He showed his designs to fashion houses and was hired by Pierre Cardin as a freelancer.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

Takada was a foreigner, who wanted to make a name as a designer in Paris, and this was no small task. His first few years in Paris were a struggle, despite selling some of his sketches to fashion designers, and working as a stylist for a textile manufacturer, Pisanti. Takada, was however, determined and worked hard to give himself a chance. In 1970, a woman he met at a flea market offered to rent him a small space at Galerie Vivienne, where he opened his first boutique. With very little capital, he created his first collection out of textiles he found in the market in Montmartre. His collection was colorful, creative, and accessibly priced, and it was presented on real women, since he couldn't afford to hire models. He was inspired by the painter, Henri Roussault, and ended up painting his shop in colorful, jungle-like colors, naming the shop Jungle Jap – a name that would also bring controversy. Takada's talent, despite being an unknown designer at the time, was noticed by the fashion media; in 1970, Elle put his designs on its cover. As a designer, he remained true to his unique style, and his success would result in several boutiques, international recognition, as well as expansion into the beauty business.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Capturing the spirit of the early 1970s, Kenzo Takada, embodied the spirit and mood of the moment. He combined kaleidoscopic colors and cultural diversity with Eastern sensibility. He had a unique ability to clash prints, mix textures and use vibrant color palette, which earned him the nickname, “the Little Prince of Fashion.” He promoted cultural diversity and unity, and it was a signature style of Kenzo to clash color, texture and print, using Peruvian wraps, florals, and pompoms. He became known for his irreverence, taking the basis of a kimono and translating it to an unexpected fabric. He dismissed the classic approach to tailoring and seasonal color palettes. To him, fashion was about fantasy and creating a dream, and he took inspiration from around the world – African boubous, British raincoats, and Portuguese purses. Kenzo’s talent was considered “second [only] to Saint Laurent,” by *The Times*.



ISSEY MIYAKE
1938 – Present, Hiroshima, Japan

BACKGROUND

Issey Miyake was born in Hiroshima and was seven years old when the atomic bomb was dropped. He lost most of his family, including his mother, to radiation exposure. This tragedy would not, however, come to define him, as he was adamant to not be labeled by his past and be known as “the designer who survived the atomic bomb.” He studied graphic design at Tama Art University in Tokyo, and upon his graduation, he moved to Paris to work for Guy Laroche and Givenchy.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

Miyake returned to Tokyo in 1970 to start his own fashion brand, and the following year, he presented his fashion collection in New York (a city where he had previously worked in fashion merchandising). He chose to showcase in New York deliberately. Having experienced both cities, he found Paris to be too stuffy and static for his vision. His strategy for success has been to create unique clothes that do not exist in the traditional fashion sphere, which has garnered the attention of influential fashion figures, celebrities, and customers. He has run his venture with precision but also fluidity, which are key signatures of his design too. In 1993, he extended his brand with the “Pleats Please” collection, and he also has ventured out into the perfume business, which has proven to become a highly profitable part of the Miyake business.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

For Miyake, fabric and textile are fundamental. He considers them to be the starting points of his design. He has cited the kimono and the raincoat as two of his favorite fashion items. He was inspired by Madeleine Vionnet’s single piece of clothing design and started to experiment in the 1980s with the pleating technique (using Mario Fortuny as an inspiration). The pleating technique allows both flexibility of movement for the wearer as well as ease of care and production. The garments are cut and sewn first, then sandwiched between layers of paper, and fed into a heat press where they are pleated. The fabric’s “memory” holds the pleats and when the garments are liberated from their paper cocoon, they are ready to wear. This unique technique was the cornerstone of his success and came to define the Miyake brand. As with most fashion entrepreneurs, Miyake introduced a perfume into his brand, called L’eau d’Issey, produced by Shiseido Group.



RALPH LAUREN
1939 – Present, Bronx, United States

BACKGROUND

Born Ralph Lifshitz in the Bronx to a family a Belarussian and Ashkenazi Jewish immigrants, he is the youngest of four siblings. He grew up wanting to become either an artist or a basketball player. He attended day school followed by the Manhattan Talmudical Academy and went to Baruch College at the City University of New York, where he studied business, but dropped after two years. He settled on a career in selling ties, at the Allied Stores.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

Ralph Lauren started his career in fashion as a tie salesman, and reigned supreme in the art of marketing. A decade after working at the Allied Stores, he started his own company, calling it Polo Fashions Inc, and had an extraordinary ability of storytelling. He himself is known to say that he doesn't design a dress, but designs dreams, and this was reflected in the way he conjured up aspirational images via his marketing campaign, or stores that reflected an aristocratic quality and a lifestyle one aspired to live. He had a training and experience of retail and had an inherent understanding of the customer. His clothes were chic, classic, desirable and very wearable. With each collection, he created a lifestyle that his customers wanted to buy into. Each collection has had recurring themes that became the hallmark of the Ralph Lauren brand: the all-American family, polo player, the Ivy League student, the English aristocrat, and the prairie pioneer. His design philosophy has been about creating a lifestyle, and he extended that into his business, where the Ralph Lauren brand can be found in luggage, eyewear, homeware, underwear, sportswear, and tableware.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

His key success factor has been his understanding of how retail works, what customers ultimately want to buy, and after identifying a clear need in the market, he has had the ability to meet that need with a product that signified not only a desirable lifestyle but was also timeless. It was not about trends, but about longevity.



AZZEDINE ALAÏA
1940 – 2017, Tunis, Tunisia

BACKGROUND

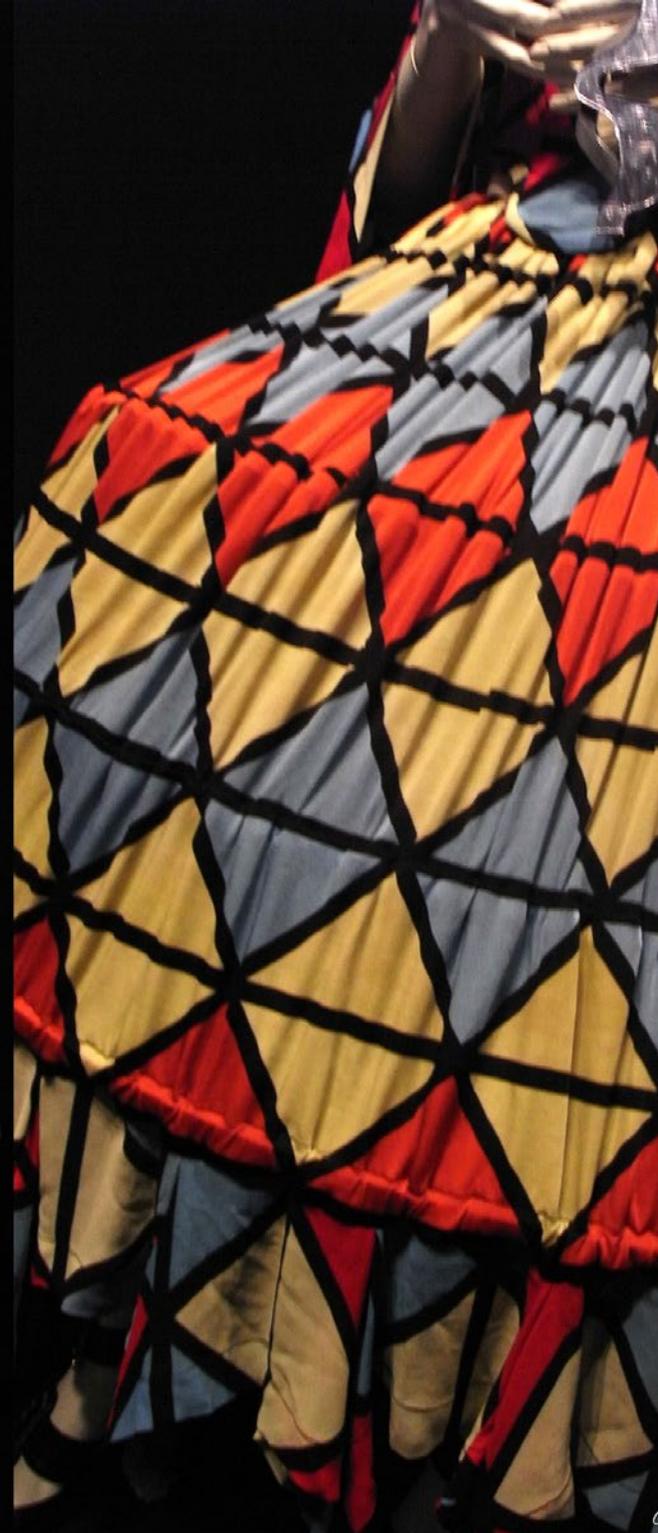
Alaïa was born in Tunisia on 26 February 1935. His parents were wheat farmers, but his glamorous twin sister, Hafida, inspired his love for fashion and haute couture. A French friend of his mother, Mrs. Pineau, fed Alaïa's instinctive creativity with copies of Vogue magazine. He lied about his age to get himself into the Tunis Institute of Fine Arts, where he gained valuable insights into the human form and began studying sculpture. He worked as a dressmaker with his sister to pay for his school supplies.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

Alaïa came to Paris at the age of 18, and spent only 5 days at Christian Dior, before being fired. He worked at Guy Laroche, Thierry Mugler, and was fiercely independent not only when it came to designing, but also how he ran his business. When he launched his own atelier, he did so in his own apartment, and from this tiny space, he will go on to create groundbreaking collections that will gain critical appraisal, and dress some of the most well-known celebrities. In 2000, he went into a business agreement with Prada, and he said the motivation was not a financial one, but to secure his archive. Alaïa's personal collection – one of the most comprehensive in the world – includes examples of couturiers such as Charles James and Madeleine Vionnet. In fact, he is known to buy dresses from renowned designers and spend hours studying them.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Alaïa was known for a silhouette that closely followed the woman's body, and he was a complete contradiction in the mainstream fashion industry. He refused to conform to industry standards, foregoing seasonal collections and presented his collections outside of the fashion calendar. He did not court the fashion press and yet received praise and acclaim from the industry insiders. He had a cult-like following, and a loyal clientele who appreciated his body-conscious style that reflected a powerful, fearless and unashamedly sexy woman.



VIVIENNE WESTWOOD
1941 – Present, Derbyshire, United Kingdom

BACKGROUND

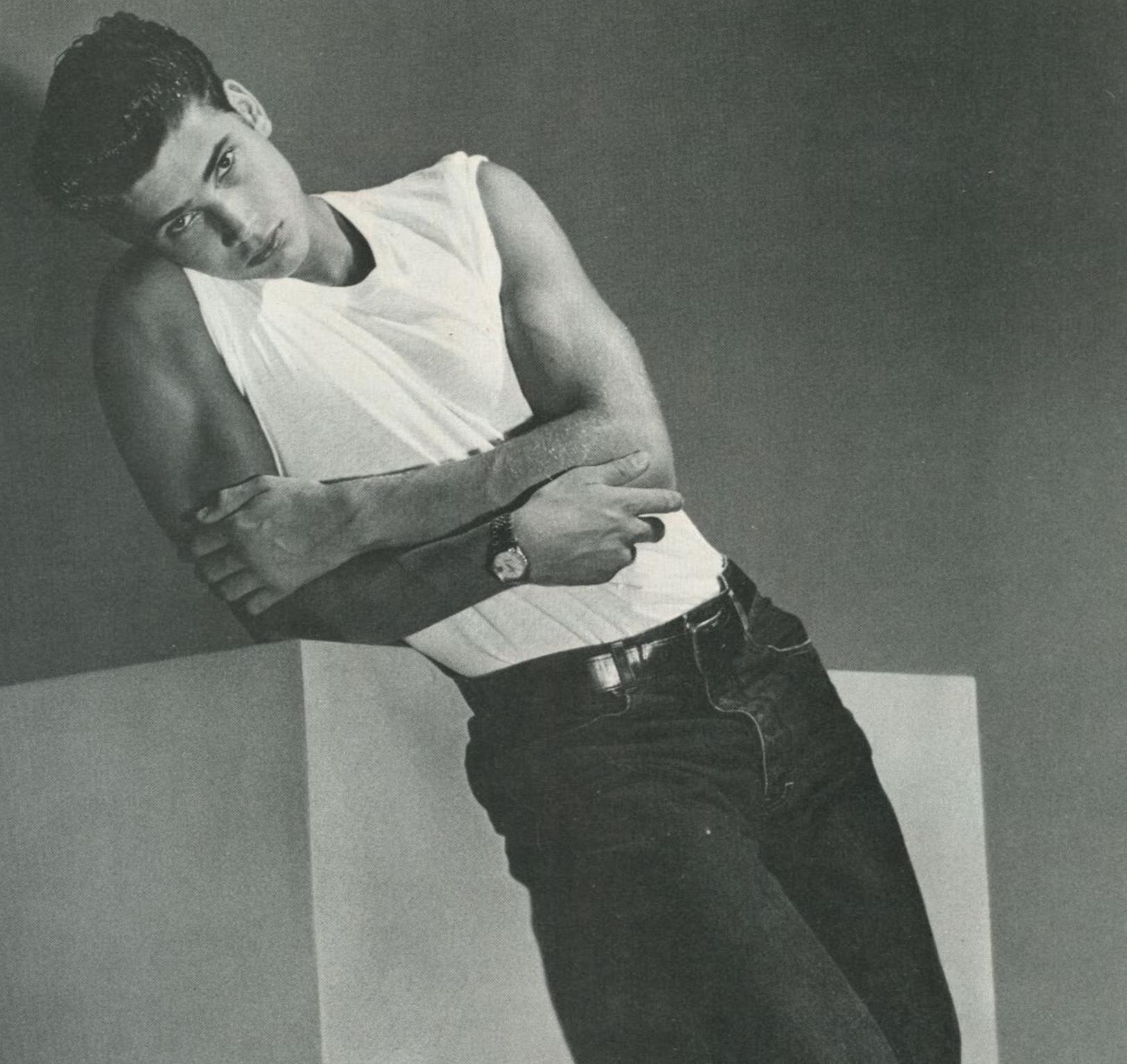
Vivienne Westwood started off as a primary school teacher to become a renowned fashion designer. She was born in 1941 in Derbyshire and moved to London as a teenager when her parents relocated due to work. She married an airline steward Derek Westwood, and a year later, her son was born. It was a fateful meeting in 1965, when a chance meeting with a situationist artist Malcolm McLaren will transform Vivienne Westwood from a teacher to a fashion pioneer whose creative drive will change the British fashion industry.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

Malcolm McLaren convinced Vivienne Westwood to launch a radical retail store in London's Kings Road, called Let it Rock, Too Fast to Live, Too Young to Die, Sex and Seditious. In 1976, they will create the most revolutionary street style: punk. Often decades ahead of her time, Westwood launched her eponymous collection in 1981, called Pirate, and then followed by Buffalo Girl, Witches and Punkature. Her collections were groundbreaking not only in their pattern-cutting technique, but also in the thought process behind them. She would borrow from Dior's New Look, and combine it with British aristocracy, rewriting the rules on tailoring. She reinvigorated the interest in British fashion and has become one of the most celebrated British designers and paved the way for the younger British fashion designers who followed in her footsteps.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

She was not afraid to play with the rules of fashion, and experiment with different pattern-cutting techniques, textile and fabric. She was a complete revolutionary who unleashed her imagination by borrowing and being influenced from different eras, whether it is 19th century Parisian fashion or Greek mythology. She is therefore considered an equal parts of fashion historian, as well as a creative visionary.



CALVIN KLEIN
1942 – Present, Bronx, United States

BACKGROUND

Calvin Klein was born in Bronx to a family of immigrants (his father was Hungarian, and his mother Ukrainian). He was one of the fashion designers to be raised in the Jewish community of Bronx, which included Ralph Lauren. Although he went to Fashion Institute of Technology, he never graduated and after becoming a well-known designer, he received an honorary degree.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

As much as a fashion designer, Calvin Klein was a businessman, and even a better advertisement guru who knew how to create both desire and a controversy. He worked in the art department at Women's Wear Daily, and apprenticed with a coat maker, Dan Millstein. In 1968, with a \$10,000 loan from his friend Barry Schwartz, and a \$2,000 of his own money, Klein established Calvin Klein Ltd. The success was immediate and in his first year, he made half a million dollars. The year after, a Calvin Klein was featured on the cover of Vogue. He introduced fragrances, jeans, and transformed the men's underwear market by putting his name on the elasticated waistband. In 1989, Calvin Klein was turning over \$1.2 trillion. He had an impeccable ability to predict cultural changes, and this was reflected in his clever advertisement that had sexual undertones (which will be utilized by the new generations of designers to come, particularly Tom Ford).

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Calvin Klein was synonymous with American understatement, but also with his seductive and groundbreaking advertisement campaigns. He knew how to provoke, and garner attention. From the controversial heroin chic look, to Marky Mark's Calvin Klein boxers, to Brooke Shields and her Calvin Klein jeans, he had an impeccable ability to create controversy and interest in his brand. He knew fashion depended on advertisement, and from the inception of his business, he also started an in-house brand agency to help with the communication process of Calvin Klein.



GIANNI VERSACE
1946 – 1997, Reggio di Calabria, Italy



BACKGROUND

Versace was born in the city of Reggio Calabria on 2 December 1946, and grew up with his elder brother Santo Versace and younger sister Donatella Versace, along with their father and dressmaker mother, Francesca. An older sister, Tina, died at age 12 because of an improperly treated tetanus infection. Versace was strongly influenced by ancient Greek history, which dominates the historical landscape of his birthplace. He attended Liceo Classico Tommaso Campanella, where he studied Latin and ancient Greek, without completing the course. Versace's introduction to tailoring started at a very young age, at his mother's sewing business in their hometown, where she employed a dozen seamstresses. He became interested in architecture, before moving to Milan at the age of 26 to study fashion design.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

Versace started his career designing for a Florentine fashion house, called Florentine Flowers, but moved to Milan shortly after and specialized in knitwear, securing freelance contracts with Genny and Callaghan. He designed for Byblos, and made his name designing a collection for Complice. With the encouragement of his brother, Santo Versace, he launched his own label in 1977 and a year after that opened his first boutique in Milan's Via della Spiga. He epitomized the 1980s with his sensual and exuberant style that celebrated curves and left little to the imagination. He was instrumental in promoting the supermodel concept via his shows and using the celebrity status as part of his business models. His fashion shows were frequented by celebrities, who became his clients including Elton John, Madonna, Princess of Wales, Elizabeth Hurley and David Bowie. He credited prostitutes of his hometown, as a source for his influence when it came to blend sexuality with fashion and luxury. He defined the era that celebrated ostentation, and never resting on his laurels, Versace expanded his creative energy to designing costumes for opera, ballet and theatre. He was a creative force, and a clever businessman.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Versace had a fearless vision for how his brand wanted to look – from supermodels to celebrities, from clothes that were opulent and seductive, to the use of Greek symbols, such as the Medusa head that will symbolize the brand. In the way only Italians can, Versace brought excess, glamour and palatial retail proportions to fashion. He created exuberant clothes and had a unique point of view when designing for the Versace woman. His bold style and vision are what put him on the map as a fashion entrepreneur, and who left an iconic brand behind.



DONNA KARAN
1948 – Present, New York, United States



BACKGROUND

Karan was born Donna Ivy Faske to mother Helen “Queenie” Faske and father Gabriel “Gabby” Faske (born Faskowitz in Queens, New York. Karan’s mother had been a model and had also worked in designer Chester Weinberg’s showroom. Her father was a tailor who died when Karan was only three years old. Karan and her older sister Gail were raised by their mother. Growing up, Karan took pleasure in softball, volleyball, and basketball, cut classes in high school, and passed much of her time in the art department. She graduated from high school in 1966, and then went to the Parsons School of Design.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

Prior to launching her brand, Donna Karan gained extensive experience in the fashion industry, working as a head designer for Anne Klein for 14 years, and learned the art of blending practicality, wearability and desirability. With financial backing from her husband, she launched her own brand that had interchangeable separates and was called ‘Seven Easy Pieces’. Her collection was antithesis to the power suit of the ‘80s and targeted the executive woman who wanted to celebrate her curves. Her statement on business fashion instantly was a hit with the female careerist who wanted to combine professional dressing with sex appeal. It was very much a ‘New York look’ that translated globally, and her brand was a success not only in America but worldwide. Her business and entrepreneurial success lay in her ability to recognize a need in the market and fulfill it. Years of working in the fashion industry, at Anne Klein, had also prepared her with an understanding how the industry worked, but most importantly, what was missing in the fashion world.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Donna Karan’s design philosophy has been straightforward, no-fuss, elegant, and easy to wear pieces that solved a problem in the modern women’s wardrobe. This innate ability of understanding what customer wanted was also her key success factor that resulted in a brand that became eponymous with elegance, ease, and timeless style.



MIUCCIA PRADA
1949 – Present, Milan, Italy



BACKGROUND

Born Maria Bianchion 10 May 1949 in Milan, she took the name Miuccia Prada in the 1980s, after being adopted by an aunt. Her biological parents were Luigi Bianchi and his wife, Luisa Prada. She has two older siblings, Albert and Marina. She attended Liceo Classico Berchet high school in Milan and graduated with a PhD in political science from University of Milan. She trained to become a mime and performed for five years. She was also a member of the Italian Communist party and was involved in women's rights movement during the seventies in Milan. In 1978, she decided to enter her family business of leather luxury bags, a company that was established in 1913, by her grandfather. It was around this time when she met Patrizio Bertelli, who will become her future husband, and together they will create a billion-dollar fashion company.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

Miuccia Prada is the only fashion designer to have a doctorate in political science and to be a political activist. Her unique background has allowed her to create by instinct, but also by understanding the cultural shifts that take place, and her unique ability has been in considering issues that influence how we consume fashion. In 1984, she introduced the infamous black nylon Prada backpack that will have a groundbreaking effect on the industry and pave the way for the designer handbag revolution. Made from the same heavyweight material used by the Italian army, it was an instant hit with its recognizable triangle Prada logo and card verifying its authenticity.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Prada's success lay in her extraordinary ability to predict and respond to cultural changes, and it was this ability alone that has resulted in the creation of an iconic brand. She continues to adapt to changes taking place today, with an investment to digital transformation, sustainability efforts by re-introducing older collections, as well as investing into art projects.



FRANCO MOSCHINO
1950 – 1994, Abbiategrasso, Italy



BACKGROUND

Moschino was born near Milan, in a rural town called Abbiategrasso. His family owned an iron foundry that his father hoped he would work. However, Moschino was interested in fine art and aspired to be a painter. In 1968, he ran away from home to Milan where he enrolled at the Marangoni Institute. He did not have emotional or the financial support of his family, and in order to finance his studies, he worked as a freelance fashion illustrator for fashion houses and magazines. After completing his schooling in 1971, Moschino became an illustrator for Gianni Versace, and continued to work for him for another six years. From 1977 to 1982, he designed for the Italian label Cadette.

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

Franco Moschino could have followed his family into their iron foundry business, but his mind was set on becoming a fashion designer. After working for Versace and Cadette, he started his own company called Moonshadow and launched the Moschino brand in 1983. Five years later, he presented the more affordable version, Moschino Cheap and Chic, with despite its lower price was still impeccably made. He was very much influenced by the Surrealist movement, and with a style that was reminiscent of Elsa Schiaparelli. He was known for bringing humor to fashion, and this lack of pretension was refreshing in the industry. He criticized fashion and the way fashion system was set up, and often will use his sense of humor in order to show the absurd side of fashion. Moschino himself was surprised by his success, particularly in Italy, where fashion was taken very seriously.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Similar to Elsa Schiaparelli, Franco Moschino brought humor to fashion and never took it seriously. This was reflected in his collections, where he decorated a dinner suit with real cutlery, or when he sent down the runway a Chanel jacket with the words 'waste of money' where the signature gold chain would be. He was aware of the paradoxical nature of fashion, and will extend his humor to his own self, admitting that his approach to fashion is one of contradiction, and despite being in the fashion business, he did not embrace the rules of it.

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