

Driving Innovation and Resilience in the Garment District

IMPACT AND INSIGHTS FROM YEAR 2 OF THE
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COLLABORATIVE



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About the Garment District Alliance (GDA)

The Garment District Alliance (www.garmentdistrictnyc.com) is a not-for-profit corporation established in 1993 to improve the quality of life and economic vitality of Manhattan's Garment District. Through programs in the areas of streetscape improvements, sanitation and public safety, marketing and promotions, economic development, and community service, the Garment District Alliance partners with local building owners and businesses to enhance the vibrancy of this storied Midtown Manhattan neighborhood.



About Resilient Cities Catalyst (RCC)

Resilient Cities Catalyst (RCC) is a global nonprofit founded by members of the 100 Resilient Cities leadership team to drive catalytic change and help communities solve their greatest challenges. We work towards a vision where cities ensure that all residents, especially the most vulnerable, are safer and healthier through everyday stresses and can recover quickly after shocks.



Business Development Collaborative: Program Overview

The Garment District

New York City's Garment District is the living center of American fashion design. It is home to the greatest concentration of fashion designers in the country and a tight-knit network of fashion-related businesses, many with deep ties to the industry that span decades. Beyond fashion, a growing diversity of businesses - from restaurants and hotels to professional services - also contribute to the vibrancy and richness of the district.

Since its founding in 1993 the Garment District Alliance (GDA) has served this storied Midtown Manhattan neighborhood. Working in partnership with local building owners and businesses, GDA offers an array of programs and services that improve the quality of life and economic vitality of the neighborhood.

The Business Development Collaborative Program

The Garment District Alliance (GDA) launched the Business Development Collaborative Program in late 2019 with a goal of catalyzing business development in the district, ensuring the neighborhood's workforce remains competitive, and fostering the ongoing dynamism of the district now and into the future. This multi-year, multi-million dollar programmatic investment offers a unique opportunity to bring together a cohort of innovative partners - selected annually through a competitive Request for Proposals process - that offer training, one-on-one consulting, networking opportunities and advisory services to the district's ecosystem of businesses, entrepreneurs and workers.

While the first year of the Business Development Collaborative focused squarely on helping businesses navigate the acute and immediate challenges of COVID-19, the second year of programming centered on fostering economic stability and driving growth for district businesses. The Year Two program partners provided the district ecosystem with a robust suite of services, including expert guidance on digital marketing and lead generation, support on workforce recruitment and retention, and workplace innovations in sustainable operations, digital design and beyond. Collectively, this year of programming aimed to:



GATHER INSIGHTS on work-force and business needs and challenges through interviews, assessments, and survey



BUILD COMMUNITY among district businesses and peers through networking events and leadership forums



STRENGTHEN THE CAPACITY of business owners, entrepreneurs and workers through trainings, consulting services, and job placement programs



ELEVATE THE GARMENT DISTRICT through marketing programs and events that uplift the district's unique identity

Year Two Program Partners

GDA partnered with a cohort of artisan- and worker-focused collaboratives, university industry innovators, and expert consulting organizations to deliver its second year of programming.



ITAC: An expert manufacturing and technology advisement firm that connects New York City small and medium-sized firms to ideas, resources, and experts to help them improve how they work.



Custom Collaborative: An entrepreneurship and workforce development organization that trains and supports women from low income and immigrant communities to launch fashion careers and engages with businesses to understand their workforce needs.



Made in NYC: An initiative of the Pratt Center for Community Development that supports local manufacturers and makers in New York City by providing skills-building programs, marketing services and promotional platforms, and small business assistance and resources for free to the Made in NYC community.



E-Com Fashion: A niche agency providing consulting, design/branding, and development services designed to help businesses grow their brand and e-commerce business in the online digital space.



Nest: A global nonprofit organization dedicated to building a connected and visible handwork community by identifying overlooked or excluded skilled workers and providing resources and training needed to fully leverage handwork and craft production as part of local small business development efforts.



Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT): An internationally recognized college for design, fashion, art, communications, and business known for its rigorous, unique, and adaptable academic programming, experiential learning opportunities, academic and industry partnerships, and commitment to research, innovation, and entrepreneurship.



Resilient Cities Catalyst (RCC): To lead design and delivery of the Business Development Collaborative, GDA partnered with RCC, a global non-profit organization of urban practitioners and resilience experts that helps communities solve their most pressing challenges.

Program Impact at a Glance

The Business Development Collaborative program has provided both a breadth and depth of support to businesses, entrepreneurs and workers over the past two years. New participants continue to join the program each quarter, while others have taken advantage of multiple program services across diverse partners.



415+
Businesses and/or
Entrepreneurs
Engaged



5,100+
Hours of
Programming
Delivered



126
Businesses that
Received at least
2 Unique Program
Services



79
Businesses that
Collaborated with
at least 2 Program
Partners

A participant-wide survey confirmed that businesses are seeing positive change and growth as a result of their engagement in the Business Development Collaborative.

Businesses and entrepreneurs **value program collaborations:**



97%
of program participants are likely to recommend the program to a colleague or a friend



92%
of participants are likely to collaborate with program partners in future services

And participating businesses and entrepreneurs are **experiencing positive growth** in sales, brand visibility and team capacity:



52%
of businesses have experienced increased visibility of their brand



46%
of businesses have reported an increase in their team's technical skills, knowledge and innovation



33%
of businesses have experienced an increase in connections and networks



32%
of businesses have seen an increase in sales



22%
of businesses have hired new staff

District Business Spotlights

Long-standing businesses with decades of experience, as well as new, emerging entrepreneurs and artisans, equally found opportunities to engage with diverse program offerings. From technical trainings and website upgrades to business line expansion and networking events, the six program partners collectively delivered support that ensures district businesses are able to weather the challenges and leverage the opportunities of today and into the future.

Quality Patterns

markinggrading.com

Quality Patterns is a 2nd-generation, family-owned Garment District business offering a state-of-the-art facility and master markers and graders who work with established and emerging designers to bring designs to life. Over the past 50 years, the owners of Quality Patterns have relied almost exclusively on word-of-mouth referrals throughout the close-knit district. When COVID-19 hit, they were faced with the reality that they quickly needed a strong online presence in order to continue growing their business and acquire new customers.

ITAC partnered with Quality Patterns to create and launch a company website, strengthen search engine optimization, and bolster Quality Patterns' digital presence, increasing brand awareness and providing a consistent lead source. Simultaneously, **E-Com Fashion** supported Quality Patterns to develop a lead generation strategy that included email outreach and access to a directory of international brands and designers. They also helped Quality Patterns explore methods for increasing team capacity to help execute on the new marketing strategies. Quality Patterns secured professional photographs of its services and goods for use in online marketing through **MINYC's** product photography session, and they were featured in **Nest's** Artisan Showcase and **Sourcing Directory**, as well as **ITAC's** [Faces of the Garment District](#) campaign.

Quality Patterns is now receiving five new online inquiries per week, including from overseas factories, and they are communicating with customers through their website and Instagram accounts. They have begun working with many new businesses, and sales growth has been positive. Driven by their new digital presence and increased visibility, Quality Patterns has built an even stronger foundation for their business today and into the future.

Atelier Amelia

Atelieramelia.com

Atelier Amelia is a full service design, pattern, sample and productions studio supporting established and emerging designer labels. Similar to many businesses in the Garment District, they have been impacted by the "Great Resignation" and are working to recruit, train and retain skilled staff to ensure they can meet growing demand, while also developing a first-ever social media presence.

Custom Collaborative worked with Atelier Amelia to understand their hiring needs, and identified a trainee from their Apprenticeship Program who was able to join the Atelier Amelia team to provide additional capacity for production administration operations, quality control, client interface and other special projects for the owner. Simultaneously, Atelier Amelia also received equity and inclusion training from **Custom Collaborative** as they prepared for a growing team. **ITAC** partnered with Atelier Amelia in the development of a new website and the creation of a digital marketing and social media strategy. They were also featured on **ITAC's** [Faces of the Garment District](#) campaign, **Nest's** Artisan Showcase and **Sourcing Directory**, and **FIT's** [City Source Trade Show](#), all aimed at increasing Atelier Amelia's visibility and industry connections. The Atelia Amelia team also received training from **FIT** in the development of 3D garment design. Taken together, the support provided to Atelier Amelia has put the business on stronger footing for the future and opened up new business lines to help this district innovator grow.

"Thank you, ITAC, and the GDA for so much support in recent years. Helping us improve our website has been such a big help! I hope it will capture new customers' attention to our factory. Thank you again! We really appreciate it."

- My best, ZhuRu, Atelier Amelia"

Dana Cooper Design

www.danacooper.net

Dana Cooper Design is a chic island style collection of swimwear, beach wraps, kaftans and scarves by Bermuda born Dana Cooper. As businesses bounce back post-pandemic, Dana has been eager to grow her brand and connections, and ultimately increase sales and wholesale clients. As a solo entrepreneur, she also wanted to address the challenges associated with executing on all business operations herself, a feat that is not sustainable as her business grows.

Through tailored consulting, **E-Com Fashion** developed a marketing and lead generation strategy for Dana Cooper Design, and provided support to Dana as she created new marketing campaigns, developed digital coupons and newsblasts, upgraded her website with more effective tools and created landing pages to boost online traffic and sales. E-Com Fashion also provided Dana with strategies for increasing her capacity through internship programs,

freelance consultants and contractors. Dana also participated in **MINYC's** DIY Photography training and their Design for Sustainable Manufacturing course, and partnered with **Custom Collaborative** to explore the possibility of a future Apprenticeship placement as her business operations grow.

“E-Com Fashion, in partnership with the GDA, was so helpful to me and my business during these incredibly difficult times. The E-Com Fashion team was a beacon of light and provided essential information to help my business recover and renew during Covid. They have a wealth of knowledge, were a great teacher and were always there if I had questions -- and their cheerful demeanor really helped when I was frustrated about some technical issue that I could not figure out. I learned a lot more about e-commerce from these sessions. Thank you for providing E-Com Fashion and their knowledge.”

**- With heartfelt gratitude, Dana Cooper,
Dana Cooper Design**



In Style USA

www.instyleusa.net

For over 30 years, In Style USA has been providing quality domestic fashion garment design, development and production to many of the best retailers and designer labels. Eager to ensure that they continue attracting and retaining top-notch staff, they partnered with **Nest** to formalize their employment practices and move beyond reporting systems and policies that were shared verbally and set up informally to creating more formal, written structures and procedures. As a participant in **Nest's Ethical Handcraft Program**, In Style USA received an onsite assessment, training and a customized set of recommendations and tools to guide the business in the development of policies that strengthen their employment practices and overall worker rights.

In Style USA now has an employment manual with clear and comprehensive policies that promote transparency and accountability across the business, while increasing workers' awareness of their rights and their workplace agency. They have received formal certification and the **Nest Seal of Ethical Handcraft**, a consumer-facing hang tag, that will be leveraged in their marketing and branding campaigns to bring heightened awareness to ethical production of garments.

Beyond workplace transformation, In Style USA participated in **MINYC's** B2B Lead Generation Program, which provided wraparound marketing services including factory photography, one-on-one marketing and business development consulting, a designed and printed **Factory Profile**, and the creation of a **promotional video** highlighting their services. They were also featured at **MINYC's** *Made Here, Meet Here* networking event where they were introduced to designers, other manufacturers, and new clients. In Style USA increased visibility of their brand through participation in **FIT's** *City Source* Trade Show, including being featured on the *Factory Stories* panel, where they shared details about their work with emerging and established designers to help them build their brands. In Style USA also received tailored consulting from **ITAC** to develop a new website, create a search engine optimization strategy, and implement a marketing strategy, and were featured in the *Faces of the Garment District* series.

Taken together, In Style USA has emerged from the pandemic more strongly positioned to succeed in the district for another 30 years and beyond.



Elevating the Garment District

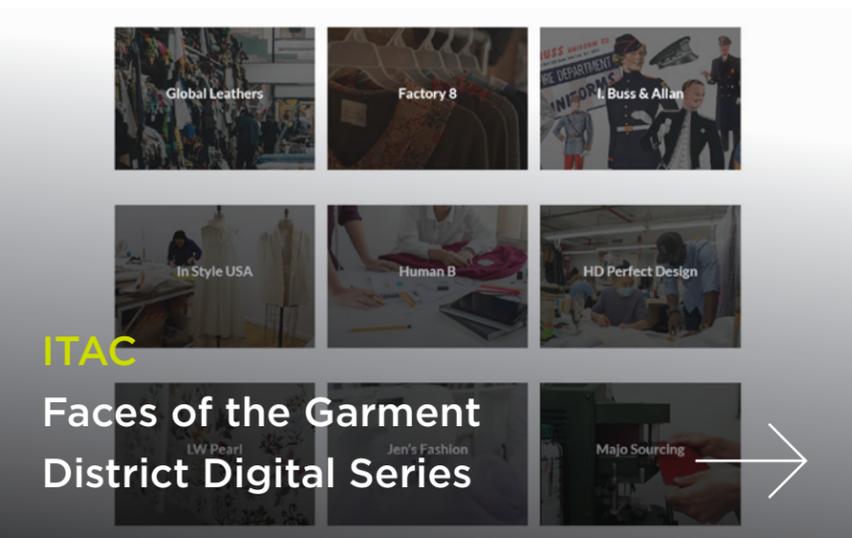
For many businesses, being physically located in the Garment District is a critical part of their success. The ability to tap into the vibrant ecosystem of collaborators and clients ensures that they have a deep understanding of current needs and how to innovate in response. To support these businesses, the Business Development Collaborative partners developed custom and group collateral that both highlight the unique value that comes with being locally made and aggregate the wealth of expertise that can be found in the district. Such examples include:



Nest
“Benefits of Working in the Garment District”

“The Garment District still remains the most important part of New York’s fashion scene. Just being able to be here really puts me at ease and makes me feel like the business that I’m doing is transparent and fair and equitable.”

- Anthony Galante,
 ANTHONY THOMAS GALANTE



ITAC
Faces of the Garment District Digital Series

Global Leathers, Factory 8, Buss & Allan, In Style USA, Human B, HD Perfect Design, LW Pearl, Jen's Fashion, Majo Sourcing

“I’ve been walking the Garment Center for over 25 years.”

- Boaz David,
 HUMAN B



M&S SCHMALBERG FLOWERS
 242 W. 36th St. 7th Fl. New York

Woman, Immigrant Owned
 Family Owned

Nest

Garment District Sourcing Directory, representing a community of manufacturers, suppliers, wholesales, and retailers.

M&S Schmalberg is a 4th generation, family owned company. For over 100-years, M&S Schmalberg’s custom fabric flowers are made in New York City.
 CONTACT: Adam Brand
 adam@schmalbergflowers.com
 schmalbergflowers.com
 vimeo.com/569904723

PRODUCT CATEGORIES: Trims / Embellishment, Flower Brooch, Headpieces, Millinery Leaves, Bouquets, Packaging, Uniform



MINYC
District Business Profiles and Promotional Videos

“As the last glove factory in New York City’s Garment District, Wing and Weft Gloves’ mission is to preserve and nurture craftsmanship in New York City.”

- Katie Sue Nicklos,
 WING & WEFT GLOVES



FIT
Designers from CLO’s 3D Garment Visualization Certificate course featured in Digital Fashion Week



Looking Ahead

The impact and insights gained from the second year of the Business Development Collaborative reinforced the ever-evolving nature of the Garment District and the continued resilience of the neighborhood, its industries, and the people who make this vibrant district what it is.

As the Garment District Alliance looks ahead to future programming, it will continue to prioritize support to businesses, artisans and entrepreneurs that ensures they are equipped to thrive today and contribute to the vitality of the neighborhood well into the future.

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GARMENT DISTRICT ALLIANCE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COLLABORATIVE

