

For more details of the collaborations, see [WWD.com/fashion-news](http://WWD.com/fashion-news).

in exchange for a VIP pass to the event, a bottle of liquor and a Flip cam, without proper disclosure of the pay for play.

As long as a relationship is disclosed, readers don't care, said Barneys' Kaminetsky. "It's business — just tell the user, and they get that," she said.

Even with the surge in collaborations with bloggers, the traditional online display ad is not going away. Ads can reinforce a campaign with other, more interactive elements. When brands ask bloggers to create custom content around their brand or product, they typically run banner ads on the sites at the same time. For contests, ads on blogs can spur users to create content that spreads virally around the Web, creates engagement and increases followers on e-mail, Facebook, Twitter and other sites.

Not every brand or agency wants to do integrated advertising or advertorials. Federated, for example, will not arrange advertorials in which a blogger endorses a product.

David Lipman of the Lipman agency, whose many fashion clients include Diane von Furstenberg, David Yurman, Burberry, BCBG, Lord & Taylor and St. John, prefers to work with bloggers as editorial outlets rather than as advertising ones. "We're in a multimedia world, and you need to communicate on all cylinders," he said. "I think the best way of working with a blogger is to get them deep into a brand [and] let them understand the brand and what the brand is doing that moment."

Most of the time, he is not a fan of sponsorships, advertorials, product placement or giving away

# Fashion's Gate

**AN ARTICLE IN THE WALL STREET JOURNAL LAST WEEK** discussed in considerable detail the Fashion GPS technology that will be in widespread use during the New York collections at Lincoln Center. The system is a multifaceted, Web-based check-in program that includes Evites, techno kiosks and bar code scanning all integrated into a single system. Back in April, *WWD* wrote about Fashion GPS' foray into the shows as well, in *Least Detail*.

It all sounds terrific, a logical step in the fashion industry's ongoing embrace of existing, and the development of new, technologies to streamline complicated processes wherever possible.

In this case, sidling up to a kiosk to scan a bar code for one's seat assignment sounds like a riff on the airport system. Given that ring of familiarity, the published details read as interesting but well below the marvel threshold, at least at this desk. There's the possibility, too, that I remain too technologically ignorant to realize I should have been awed. Either way, I wouldn't have thought about it again until perusing my first-day-of-shows Evite printouts.

Then came a phone call from KCD's Rachna Shah, who offered an addendum to the *Journal's* techno piece. Make that two addenda. On the news front, Rachna noted that KCD senior staffers, who will work the front of house at more than 20 New York shows and parties this season, will wield shiny iPads in place of paper-laden clipboards. These will feature an interactive seating-chart app,

## fashion front by Bridget Foley

developed by Fashion GPS and exclusive to KCD through this season, with a touch screen that allows for easy scrolling from one seating section to another. With all users connected, as the front-of-house staff notes arrivals, those working inside will be informed instantly. A simpler check-in app

that lists guests, their affiliations and seat assignments, is launching more broadly.

This isn't the first time KCD and Fashion GPS have collaborated. As noted in the latter firm's own press materials, founder and chief executive officer Eddie Mullon "developed Fashion GPS after being approached by KCD, a renowned fashion-lifestyle public relations firm, to develop a technology to manage their sample inventory." According to Rachna, who was interviewed for and edited out of the *WSJ* piece, KCD was later instrumental in developing the front-of-house show technology. "What IMG has done," she explained, "is embrace the GPS technology and given the tents the infrastructure, with equipment, staffing and Wi-Fi capabilities, so that front-of-house management can utilize all of the GPS functions. IMG has also provided funding so that all of the designers in the tents can use the software program, which is terrific."

"For the fashion industry, it's like going from the Stone Age to 2090," IMG vice president Peter Levy told the *Journal*.

"I didn't think we'd been doing such a bad job all these years," Rachna told me.

Anyone who's been through a collections season grasps instantly the extreme understatement of that thought. For those who haven't, a little background: A network of highly skilled professionals whose roles are to produce, promote and run various aspects of the shows is an integral part of this industry. KCD has long set the gold standard for many aspects of this process, certainly when it comes to working a door — perhaps the most harried and exhausting drill of all. Despite her still young years, Rachna is the gold standard's gold standard. Invoking her name at a badly handled door — and there are plenty — is like saying Kleenex when you mean tissue: "This place needs a Rachna." (No deification of KCD nor its profession intended. In fact, during couture I had a small phone spat with Rachna's boss, Ed Filipowski. I'm not sure if we're still in the fight.)

The point is that, as in every profession, when it comes to making fashion shows happen, there are those who excel and those who don't. IMG has done much to increase the profile of the shows and thus of American fashion. Unlike the great p.r. firms, it also promotes itself at least as much as it does the designers showing under its auspices. Fair enough. Fashion is nothing if not a capitalist system. But long before this coming season at Lincoln Center, KCD and a relatively small number of its stellar competitors — you know who you are — achieved near seamless entrée for the show-going throngs using the best available resources, which for years meant clipboard, pen and headset. It also meant careful attention to a client's individual needs and image. It still does.

"There's an important part of the conversation that hasn't been covered yet," Rachna noted. "Every designer and show are different, with different needs. No single system or technology can solve all of the issues. It's important for front-of-house management to figure out solutions on a per designer basis."

Take for example the whole e-ticket, kiosk, bar code check-in concept. Who can argue with a techno time-saver when appropriate (even if scanning 400 bar codes can't possibly be faster than pre-seating)? Conversely, "imagine," Rachna said, "if we sent out e-tickets for the Marc Jacobs show. Do you think some extra copies might get printed up and handed out to friends?"

Jane Aldridge



Jennine Jacob



## “Blogs are starting to amass the numbers.”

— Jennine Jacob, Independent Fashion Bloggers

merchandise in exchange for coverage. "I find that disingenuous," he said. "It loses integrity. I think that's the whole point of the Internet — the freedom of it, the genuineness of it. It's believable, it's real, and that's the best way to go about it. If it's meant to be, it's meant to be. Otherwise, if you force feed it like that, and you pay for it — bloggers have to make a living — but if you pay for it, it becomes an advertorial. Advertorials are the lowest form of advertising."

Indeed, not every blogger-brand partnership is a success. Some efforts seem to get very little in the way of traffic or few views. Multiple mentions probably do move the merch, but not all influence can be directly measured. Some tie-ups, especially in the case of video bloggers, can appear cheesy or overly corporate or weird.

Hits alone do not necessarily translate into a success online. A message needs to be consistent across all channels so it is believable, or people will not buy, said Lipman.

"Bloggers are very, very influential," he continued. "They're a big part of our culture today, and they're only going to grow. The blog is here to stay in a big way. We know how to advertise in magazines, but we're still learning our way [online]."

## FASHION SCOOPS

**LIGHT BRIGHT:** Louis Vuitton's holiday windows worldwide will have an Indian flavor this year. Starting Nov. 5, displays will pay tribute to Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights, an ancient and joyous occasion to light oil lamps, wear new clothes and distribute sweets. The French luxury brand's



A special Diwali dress by Louis Vuitton.

ties to India stretch back almost a century. Vuitton teamed with Indian artist **Rajeev Sethi** to conceive the windows, which will feature hand-painted paper trunks glowing from within. Special products will include limited edition dresses made of vintage sari fabrics.

**SOUND OF STYLE:** Plenty of pop artists have jumped on the design bandwagon, so it was only a matter of time before music stores started selling rock-inspired fashion along with CDs and DVDs. HMV, the U.K. music retailer, will reveal today that, as of next week, 38 of its largest stores will start carrying men's streetwear labels including Boxfresh, Lee Jeans, Eastpak and Fly 53. **Shawn "Jay-Z" Carter's** label, Rocawear, also will be sold at HMV's Oxford Circus, London, flagship. The ranges will launch in HMV stores Wednesday, and will be housed in a department branded The Studio, which also will carry licensed entertainment products, such as band T-shirts. A spokesman for HMV said the store will focus on men's wear to begin with, but plans to add women's wear "in due course."

**WEEZER WARDROBE:** Speaking of rockers and apparel, indie-rocker band Weezer is jumping into the fray with a capsule collection produced

by action-sports brand Hurley. Launching Sept. 10 exclusively at teen retailer Pacific Sunwear of California, the nine pieces for men and women include a puffer jacket designed by Weezer front man **Rivers Cuomo**, graphic Ts, green plaid button-up shirts, hoodies and knit hats, all retailing from \$29 to \$79. The new wardrobe is the latest collaboration between Hurley and Weezer. Not only did the band record some songs for its new album earlier this year at Hurley's headquarters in Costa Mesa, Calif., but shoppers who buy a Hurley or Weezer product at PacSun between Sept. 10 and Oct. 15 can enter a contest to have Weezer play a concert at their school. Plus, Weezer plastered the rotund mug of the character named Hurley from the TV series "Lost" on its LP cover. **Laura Wasser**, vice president of marketing at Nike-owned Hurley, said while the name of Weezer's album is coincidental, "music is a really big part of the [Hurley] brand."