

Good Practices in the Global Apparel Industry



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Good Practices in the Global Apparel Industry

About the guidebook

Good Practices in the Global Apparel Industry provides valuable insight on ways for small and medium-sized enterprises to move up the value chain and away from low-value contract manufacturing. The practices cover areas such as design development, merchandising and sourcing, quality management, productivity improvement, social and environmental responsibility, branding and e-commerce. Real-life case studies demonstrate how these good practices have been put into action and their resulting benefits. This International Trade Centre publication also provides good practices for management of trade support institutions and educational institutes.

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Foreword

Global apparel trade has witnessed significant changes over the decades. Due to constant pressure on consumer prices, the profitability of manufacturers has suffered. And with low profitability higher objectives such as ensuring decent work and environmentally friendly processes might suffer.

To overcome this, apparel manufacturers need to develop new capabilities and provide value-added service to their customers to remain competitive and profitable. In fact, apparel manufacturing has become a service industry and manufacturers need to add capabilities in pre-manufacturing areas like research and development, design, product development, material sourcing and logistics; as well as in post-manufacturing processes such as distribution, logistics, marketing and retail.

To improve, companies need benchmarks and good practices, especially as small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). So do business-support organizations (BSO) that play an important role in developing the competitiveness of the sector. Industry associations, education and training institutions, and standard bodies also need to adopt best practices to improve the quality and effectiveness of their services to SMEs.

The COVID-19 pandemic also has had an important impact on the apparel sector, including changes in business practices and the loss of millions of jobs worldwide. As the apparel industry recovers, manufacturers and exporters need to adapt to the ever-changing business scenario. This requires an efficient use of all the resources available to them.

In this context, the International Trade Centre (ITC) has compiled this guidebook of good apparel industry practices that can help SMEs and BSOs address all critical areas along the value chain, including adapting to the changes imposed and accelerated through the pandemic. It also provides guidance on how to improve against industry standards. Each good practice described is supported by an illustrative real-life case study.

I am confident that small and medium-sized apparel enterprises around the world will benefit from this publication. I believe the guidebook will spark thoughts, commitment and action within the apparel SME community, leading to the adoption of good practices. These will then have a wider impact on ensuring decent work and environmentally friendly production practices.

At ITC, we support many developing countries in improving the overall export competitiveness of their apparel sector with a view to creating decent jobs for people to build a sustainable industry. The guidebook will be a valuable tool used in our Global Textile and Clothing (GTEX) programme. It will be regularly updated with new good practices and case studies that can be accessed through our Textile Academy Virtual Learning Space. We encourage small and medium enterprise in the apparel industry to come forward to share their good practices with us so that we can highlight what companies are able to achieve.



Pamela Coke-Hamilton
Executive Director
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Rajesh Bheda Consulting, an India-based consulting firm, was entrusted with the responsibility of developing the publication. Contribution of Dr Bheda as the lead author is appreciated. The Rajesh Bheda Consulting team included Maneesha Sharma, who supported the first editing, while Priyesh Deep coordinated diverse contributions from industry professionals. Editorial support of Richa Bansal is also acknowledged.

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Case Study 1: Creating an in-house design studio to cater to customer requirements	R. Sabhari Girish
Case Study 2: Establishing product development capabilities to move up the value chain	Venkatesh Nagan
E-fit simulation for product development	Rajesh Bheda and Dipanwita Ray
Case Study 3: Using E-fit software to reduce production turnaround	Rajesh Bheda and Priyesh Deep
Optimizing costs by saving fabric	Rajesh Bheda
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Welfare initiatives retain and motivate workers	Rajesh Bheda
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Rajesh Bheda, Priyesh Deep and Dipanwita Ray

Case Study 20: No Water, No Life: Water-saving practices of DBL Group

Rajesh Bheda with support from DBL

Case Study 21: Deploying sustainability practices in apparel manufacturing facilities

Naresh Tyagi and ABFRL team

Community engagement enhances economic, social and cultural well-being

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Case Study 22: Roundtable group strengthens management of migrant workforce hiring and retention

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Case Study 23: Friends from Syria project works on skill development and rehabilitation of Syrian refugees in Jordan

Sridhar Rajagopal

Operational health and safety profiling and risk assessment flags electrical and structural safety issues

Maneesha Sharma and SEEDS

Case Study 24: A proactive approach to worker safety in a garment manufacturing unit

Rajesh Bheda and Anshu Sharma

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Branding helps a manufacturer move up the value ladder

Rajesh Bheda and Gagan Kapoor

Case Study 25: Creating the 'Alcis' sportswear brand

Rajesh Bheda and Priyesh Deep

Using the D2C model to develop a brand and move up the value chain

Rajesh Bheda and Priyesh Deep

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Shreya Singh, Zashed Fashion Tech

Innovating the business model creates new opportunities

Rajesh Bheda

Case Study 27: Setting up a micro-factory to address the needs of designers, fashion brands and retailers

Rajesh Bheda with input from Marta Miller

Overcoming crisis through quick management actions

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