

What It Takes to Win Over the ‘New Fashion Consumer’

In today’s fashion business, the acronym is consumer-to-business, with the customer co-creating with the brand.

By [WWD Studios](#) on April 26, 2019



📷 Philippe Ribera, vice president of innovation at Lectra, shared his vision of fashion's future.
Kaley Roshitsh/WWD

Seated in an angular, sun-soaked den atop colorful cushions, with [apparel](#) projects bestrewing tabletops, vice president of innovation at Lectra Philippe Ribera shared his vision of [fashion](#)’s future, which builds the same playfulness and experimentation into every solution. In an extensive first look, WWD tours Lectra’s “experimental” and “collaborative” Innovation Lab in the Bordeaux-Cestas campus in France during its annual global VIP fashion event, held at the same time.

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Lectra’s annual global VIP fashion event explored how [technology](#) is aiming to break down the barriers of the existing supply chain to entice the new fashion consumer. The program, titled “Winning Over the New Fashion Consumer” commanded attention toward a “co-created” [fashion](#) future whereby Lectra hopes to serve as a key partner.

Since 1973, Lectra has emphasized digitalization of industry, with the fashion industry as a top priority, and partner. The two-day event was held April 10 and 11, celebrating international VIP fashion clients with live solution demos, expert sessions, as well as a guided factory and innovation lab tour.

Each session was tailored to how brands can win the fashion consumer — diving into personalization in fashion, agile production at scale and automation across the supply chain. Keynote speeches were given by Peter Jeavons, managing director, Europe at First Insight on “The Hyper-Connected Consumer,” and Craig Crawford, founder and strategist at Crawford IT on “The New Fashion Landscape” and “Personalization in Fashion.”

Experimenting in the Lectra Innovation Lab

And according to Ribera, that fashion future, or Fashion 4.0, relies on collaboration across industries, rejecting siloed thinking, and promoting an agenda “to think, and to think large.” That’s the hope for the Lectra Innovation Lab.

With more than 22 years at Lectra, Ribera’s latest initiative captures the intent to bridge the talent and resources of research-and-development centers, textile mills, promising start-ups and fashion companies. In line with the VIP fashion event, “co-creation,” or the C2B model, remains a priority. For brands to earn customer loyalty, meeting consumer demand directly and quickly necessitates the right [technology](#).

From 3-D body-scanning to Pantone color-matching, (the machine allegedly is the most expensive of its kind), the Lectra innovation team tests concepts with ease, to better meet the demands of today’s new fashion consumer.



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Will “magic mirrors” continue appearing in retail settings?
Kaley Roshitsh/WWD

With an oversaturated landscape of promising start-ups, Lectra must operate a selective vetting process to determine which start-ups can be sanctioned into the Innovation Lab. Experimental and collaborative, but maintaining intimacy, the Innovation Lab showcased a range of technology relevant to automating the design and product development stages for fashion companies.

Proof-of-concepts are piloted in what Lectra calls its “Experience Zone,” an open space with endless potential. Lectra pilots ideas by developing a scenario and hypothesizing solutions, in what a team member reduced to “asking as many questions as possible.”

A spacious alcove lined in green designates the virtual reality testing space in the Experience Zone. One or more guests can interact with virtual garments, perhaps in a simulated living room, rendered from real garments. Right now, a royal blue fitted dress is the subject, appearing in the virtual reality zone, on the “magic mirror” digital screen a short few steps away and swatched in the fabric library, also accessible by the touch-screen display.

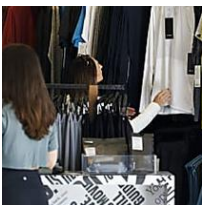
The fabric library is what bolsters Lectra’s realistic fabric and clothing renderings — capturing even transparent synthetic fabrics with visual accuracy and precise drape. The only limitation is fabric pattern repeats being limited to 20



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centimeters. In the demonstration, the same blue dress appears on the dress form, allowing the customer to swatch fabrics with a large touch-screen icon, or further interact by twirling the form around or replacing the form with a 3-D body scan of themselves.

Such product innovations that are birthed from the Bordeaux technological campus, or the Innovation Lab, are crucial to Lectra’s fashion client partners, which include up to 90 percent of the industry. While garment design, patternmaking, grading and cutting are easily automated or improved by the aid of technology, the question remains as to how much manipulation can occur at the sewing stage.

When asked whether a traditionally labor-intensive step such as sewing can be fully automated, Ribera said, “Some part can be automated, but not everything.” And those who are doing it now are only able to operate on a small scale. Studying designs from Issey Miyake, and others skilled in alternative methods of construction, Ribera suggests glue as a way of automating the sewing step. Ultimately, it’s a “combination of pattern and fabric know-how.”

Experimentation is evident in the lab, and in every new product at Lectra. Among the collective vision in Lectra’s design lab, there is agreement on the following: “If we don’t experiment, it could be a problem,” as Ribera reiterated.

For an industry fueled by agility, technology allows brands to enhance speed-to-market, upending previous norms in production. As Lectra’s Ribera suggests, the question isn’t whether to “think outside the box,” but to break down the barriers of the existing supply chain.

Upending the Traditional Supply Chain

In today’s fashion business, the acronym is C2B, with the customer co-creating with the brand. “Products are ‘pulled’ into the market based on actual demand,” according to Crawford. One of Crawford’s keynotes covered the “new fashion landscape,” reflecting on his perspective of the digital evolution at Burberry during his time there, and what opportunity exists — for all industry stakeholders — right now.



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act of fashion on the environment is bad, longtime environmental champion Katharine Hamnett is optimistic about sustainability. “We have to reexamine the business from top to bottom and where is our worst impact. In addition to reexamining the materials we’re using and continuously changing to sustainably produced materials, we’ve got to look at our energy footprint, how our energy is actually made,” Hamnett said. She goes on to say, “I mean, fashion has got such an incredible opportunity to change. You’ve got acres and acres of desert. You could make 10 times the amount of electricity that America needs just from solar power. So you have to look at things like that. Companies need to commit to green energy. It’s very radical but it’s the only choice.” Tap the link in bio for more. Report: [The New York Times](#) by Kristin Foley . . . #wwdfashion #sustainability #katherinehamnett

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For a brand such as Burberry to create a customizable trenchcoat today at scale means “creating unique garments very quickly (or in a few days’ time),” according to Christine Dandieu, sales director for fashion at Lectra. She elaborated on the benefits in full during a presentation at the event.

When striving for exactness in body measurements, Lectra customers Balsan and Groupe Marck shared the complexity in delivering “uniformity” at scale while in conversation with the event’s master of ceremony, Mark Antoine. Serving industries with uniform attire whereby sizes must fit an individual’s exact measurements, such as the military or fast-food industry, it’s all about getting the right fit at scale.

The right technology matters. Revolutionizing production capacity with “Fashion on Demand” cloud software from Lectra, Dandieu shared how the technology cuts production time from two hours and 45 minutes to a mere 12 minutes — revitalizing what’s possible for standard products, customizable goods and made-to-measure garments.

Lectra’s global VIP fashion event revealed opportunities in leveraging technology and software to deliver more personalized and customized product offerings, as well as experiences, without forfeiting human control.

Hitting Lectra’s “Cutting Room 4.0” floor, attendees witnessed further digitalization of processes, how the denim industry is improving size gradation by utilizing production data in a live denim demo or dropping into the lean factory or exploring Lectra’s new Innovation Lab.

As the event revealed, fashion’s future is increasingly built on technology, which deconstructs aged supply chain norms, to reveal an industry ideal that is experimental, co-created with the consumer and personalized at every stage.



The demo revealed capacity for cutting up to 67 ply of denim. Kaley Roshitsh/WWD

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