

VELVET *edge*



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Ethnic Fashion's Glocal Ambitions

In today's global fashion industry, ethnic fashion brands have a unique opportunity to showcase their original designs to a wider audience. Making ethnic designs more appealing and wearable for a global audience requires a balance of respect for cultural heritage and an understanding of global fashion trends.

In 2023, the global community is more culturally cojoined than ever. The fashion world is catching a global Korean fever, culturally awakened BIPOC communities are fostering an ethnic fashion renaissance, and next-gen shoppers are disrupting consumer behavior in ways not seen before. The question is, how do ethnic brands navigate these maelstroms?





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To transcend the lines of cultural reservation in the minds of today's adventurous consumer, business and creative leaders of ethnic-based brands must consider three key approaches:

Allow the world co-own your brand story: The journey to showcase original designs to a global audience begins with a compelling brand story, one that is cultivated from an authentic brand DNA. By highlighting the cultural inspiration behind its designs, emphasizing craftsmanship and quality, and being mindful of cultural sensitivity, ethnic brands can create a strong cross-cultural story around the brand. That story can be further amplified by embarking on a cross-cultural collaboration with other designers, brands and influencers, allowing the brand to position itself as a savvy player in the global fashion market.

Allow the world co-own the design: A strong brand isn't enough though, the uniqueness of ethnic brands does not remove them from the demands consumers place on modern mainstream labels. Irrespective of cultural underpinnings, consumers expect versatility, functionality, practicality, and durability. To achieve this, ethnic fashion brands can create versatile pieces that can be worn in different ways, use neutral color palettes to service customers needing simplicity, create designs that are practical for everyday wear, offer a wide range of sizes to cater to different body types, and incorporate a timeless aesthetic in offerings, for customers who value longevity and durability.

Allow the world to co-own the outlook: All told, the brand story speaks to the origins of the brand and the brand's design speaks to its journey. Yet, even with the past and present addressed, the brand still requires a compelling outlook that speaks to a bright future. Consumers want to feel like that future involves them. Ethnic fashion brands should also be mindful of the models and influencers they choose to represent their designs. And while staying true to their cultural heritage, ethnic fashion brands can also incorporate global fashion trends into their designs, using modern cuts, fabrics, and silhouettes that are popular in the global fashion market.

For ethnic fashion, there is an oyster-laden market everywhere. The pearls of the global fashion market, however, favors the open-minded for whom a sense of shared journeying and shared discovery remains a core design ethos.

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