Report on Business Relations established during the Baltic Fashion Business Cooperation Events:

• October 2011 in Vilnius
• October 2012 in Riga
• July 2013 in Gdynia
• October 2013 in Rostock


The matchmaking event took place in the conference hall. 45 registered Lithuanian, Latvian, Swedish, Danish and Finnish companies had a table with their company name and a meeting table for meeting with pre-registered companies (mostly fashion SMEs from Lithuania) in appointed time slots.

The Baltic Fashion trends areas served as a place for designers from BSR countries to contact Lithuanian textile and home textile fabrics producers. 25 Lithuanian companies presented samples of their fabrics in the Baltic Fashion trends area. This opportunity was well appreciated by young designers not only from Lithuania, but also from Latvia and Estonia. They were able to find the most suitable fabric sample for their collections and later on they could contact the producer directly.

The Business Cooperation Event Vilnius was a great success. In total 160 companies from Baltic Sea Region countries, i.e. Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Sweden, Denmark, Germany as well as from St. Petersburg (Russia) and Norway, were present.

1.1. Some impressions

“The matchmaking event was excellent, I felt very privileged having a table of my own and a meeting timetable made for me. It was very helpful. I look forward to start collaborating with my new Lithuanian connections.”

Lina Tegman, Designer, Linnesand (Finland)

“My impression of the event was very good and I got some good contacts for the future. Its very nice to now have contact with the textile industry in Lithuania and I got very inspired to design something with linen.”

Julia Bristulf, Designer, byBristulf designstudio (Sweden)

1.2. Results of the Business Cooperation Event in Vilnius

40 Lithuanian Fashion SMEs have been visited or contacted by phone in November 2013 to learn about the results of their participation Business Cooperation Event Vilnius 2011.

The following questions were asked:
1. What were your main interests in business cooperation event?
2. How many contacts were made during the Business Cooperation Event Vilnius 2011?
3. Which type of companies did you contact during the Business Cooperation Event Vilnius 2011?
4. What was the average contract value?
5. With how many partners do you still cooperate after 2 years since the Business Cooperation Event took place?
6. Have there been other possible developments after cooperation event?

The aggregated answers of companies are presented below.

The majority (65 percent) of interviewed Lithuanian Fashion SMEs indicated that their main interest in Business Cooperation Event Vilnius 2011 was to find potential cooperation partners in Scandinavian countries to buy their ready-made products. Other interests included:

- identifying designers for their collections,
- finding production cooperation partners to develop their new products ideas,
- contacting schools and R&D specialists to develop new innovative ideas.

Main interests of Lithuanian Fashion SMEs in participation in the Business Cooperation Event Vilnius 2011

The average number of contact made per company during the cooperation event amounts to three.

The following chart shows which type of companies were met during the Business cooperation event in Vilnius.
Companies were mostly reluctant to mention contract volumes as these are business secrets. Some companies have indicated that their contract volumes were ranging between 5,000 and 7,000 Euros. However, companies' names cannot be disclosed due to confidentiality reasons.

Most companies interviewed said that they still cooperated with most of the partners they have met in Business Cooperation Event Vilnius 2011. However only few companies responded stated that they are planning to develop longterm projects/clustering activities.

Generally the Business Cooperation Event in Vilnius was well appreciated by the representatives interviewed as it offered the possibility to make new contacts, but also to get new ideas as well as to exchange opinions with other companies.
1.3. Photos
2. Business Cooperation Event in Riga (30-31 October 2012)

The Business Cooperation Event Riga took place on 30-31 October 2012. The event included a visit to two of most innovative Latvian manufacturers and presentation of their production possibilities to foreign and local fashion SMEs representatives. 15 people participated in visiting the innovative Latvian manufacturers SPECTRE Latvia (city of Kalnciems, Latvia) and AMERI (Riga, Latvia) on 30 October 2012. Attendees represented mostly small fashion companies.

The workshop „Eco-innovations and the production process” was attended by 69 people out of which 38 represented small and medium fashion businesses, 27 were students from different schools in Riga and 4 persons represented local authorities and public sector.

Generally, BCE participants gave very positive feedback on the event as the figure below illustrates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of satisfaction with the BCE Riga</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(on a scale from 1=dissatisfactory to 4=very satisfactory)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Usefulness of presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speakers' ability to handle questions</td>
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<td>Speakers' presentation skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speaker's knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall event</td>
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2.1. Some impressions

The answers of BCE participants on a questionnaire distributed show that there has been great enthusiasm to follow up the input gained and contacts made. A few examples are listed below:

Has your interest / intention to cooperate with the companies you met in Latvia grown during the workshop? Will this experience have influence on your business plan?
“I got very inspired to work with a knitting company we met. I will also forward the information about this company, because the interest for knitwear is very big.”

Dils / Fashion Incubator

“I am going to contact production companies in Latvia in the coming months.”

Aome Ltd (Sweden)

How will you use the information gained at the event to cooperate with companies in Latvia?

“To develop garments for test-collection and hopefully further collaborations.”

Dils / Fashion Incubator

“Presentation of NJAL had a number of good points that could be used to develop sales, export and PR.”

One Wolf (Latvia).

“I will contact one Latvian manufacturer in order to develop some prototypes.”

Koolabah (Sweden).

2.2. Results of the Business Cooperation Event in Riga

6 Latvian fashion SMEs have been contacted by phone to interview in November 2013 about results of their participation Business Cooperation Event in Riga 2012. Also in the retrospect, most of interviewed companies said that the Business Cooperation Event in Riga was very valuable. The majority of interviewed Latvian fashion SMEs indicated that their main interest in Business Cooperation Event in Riga, 2012, was to find potential cooperation partners in BSR countries searching for production possibilities to develop their new products and innovative ideas and also possibilities to make prototypes.

Two companies that have met in Riga were willing to talk about their resulting business relations. The company NARCISS Ltd which got to know SPECTRE during Business Cooperation Event in Riga in 2012 concluded an agreement with company SPECTRE (Latvian-Danish company) six months after the cooperation event. SPECTRE had won a government procurement competition on making working cloths for the Latvian State Forest Inspection. The procurement comprised of a set of clothes for autumn, a set of clothes for winter, an office jacket as well as thermo underwear for 520 employees. NARCISS Ltd designed these clothes produced by SPECTRE.
2.3. Photos

At the Business Cooperation Event Poland 50 companies from the fashion industry (including designers, institutions, businesses) had the chance to meet and discuss further possibilities of cooperation. The main aim of the Business Cooperation Event Poland was to show that Poland and the Baltic Sea Region have a great potential in the area of design and manufacture. Another aim of this event was to establish inspiring contacts and new business relationships through creating an opportunity for the participants to present themselves and show their products as well as to provide an environment in which participants could discuss the current situation of the Polish fashion industry.

3.1. Some impressions

“The event was a chance to learn about new technologies which are still developing in Poland. It was also an opportunity to establish some useful contacts, with the Design Alive magazine and the designer Aleksandra Gaca. I also look forward to start collaboration with new partners from Finland, Norway, Sweden and Germany.” Representative of LaDeco, Gdynia (Poland)

“My impression of the event was great, it was a good opportunity to learn about current trends. I’m interested in starting cooperation with other companies from BSR countries.” Representative of SIBU DESIGN, Nowiny (Poland)

3.2. Results of the Business Cooperation Event in Gdynia

50 Polish Fashion SMEs have been contacted by phone and interviewed about the results of their participation in the Business Cooperation Event Poland 2013.

Questions asked with aggregated answers of companies are presented below:

1. Was the event useful for your business? Why?

The Majority (89%) of interviewed Polish SMEs indicated that the Business Cooperation Event was useful for their business since the event was a great opportunity to learn about other companies, designers and their products as well as new technologies. It was also a great chance to discuss current trends and inventions. SMEs claimed that they have established new contacts for further cooperation. A few of them also managed to set up promotional contacts with media.

Main benefits of SMEs in participation in the Business Cooperation Event Poland 2014:
2. Do you have any interest or intention to cooperate in future with the companies you have met at the event? If yes, what kind of cooperation is it?

98 percent of companies interviewed said that they are interested in starting cooperation with other companies, not only from Poland, but also from other countries of the Baltic Sea Region. Most of the interviewed Polish SMEs want their cooperation to be based on promotion of their already existing products or technologies through publications in design magazines. They also would like to participate in international projects to share their knowledge and to develop new products or services as well as to organise internships for young designers.

“We are very interested in starting cooperation with other companies. Right now the Institute of Design Kielce is creating the database “Fabric Library”. Thanks to sharing fabric samples during the event we can promote other textile companies among designers and become a bridge between business and design”

*representative of Institute of Design Kielce*

“We during the event we managed to establish contact with a company producing various kinds of seats, which we hadn’t heard about before. It is called SITAG Seating Forms. We also had a chance to talk with representatives of Allcomp Poland about their automatic cutting machine we are interested in. We are planning to buy furniture from SITAG for our newly-built facility and right now we are negotiating with Allcomp.”

*Łukasz arepresentative*

3. Was the event inspiring for developing your business internationally? If yes, please explain why.

Some companies indicated that the event was an inspiration for starting to extend their business internationally since they had a chance to get to know other companies and their products. Other respondents have already started international cooperation and are promoting their products in other countries so they are willing to find new business partners.
“We have been looking for new partners to cooperate with due to our newest project. Participating in this event inspired us to change our business model so it can be more international.”

_BCE participant_

4. Are you interested in cooperating with companies from Germany, Finland, Sweden, Estonia, Lithuania or Latvia? If yes, which countries are most interesting? What kind of cooperation are you looking for?

78 percent of interviewed representatives are interested in starting cooperation with companies from other countries such as Sweden, Finland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia or Germany. They want to start common projects by sharing their technologies or products.

3.3. Photos

4.1. General remarks and results

From October 28 to 29 2013, the Baltic Fashion project hosted the Baltic Fashion Event in Rostock with an offer of 20 workshops, presentations and panel discussions connecting small and medium sized textile and clothing enterprises throughout the Baltic Sea Region. As lead partner and organizer of the event, the Kaiserbäder Isle of Usedom focused on current industry trends such as smart textiles, sustainable fashion and the return to local production. The two-day event was divided into the Final Conference and the Business Cooperation Event bringing together 80 participants from seven countries and more than 20 exhibitors from the Baltic Sea Region. On both days, exhibitors represented their businesses in a trade show and the Baltic Fashion partners showcased their accomplishments in an exhibition. The participants represented diverse sections of the fashion industry, such as design, textile, IT, education, politics, and marketing.

At the Final Conference, which was executed by s.Pro on behalf of the lead partner, the Baltic Fashion project partners presented what they had developed in the course of the funding period. The conference was divided into three round-table discussions on the topics fashion innovations, business skills and support structures and was concluded with a panel discussion gathering an eclectic circle of experts from the BSR fashion industry, among them Illona Platonova (Ministry of Economy Latvia), Henrik Jansson (Incubator Borås), George Stoenchev (European Fashion Council) and Max Hogeforster (Hanse Parlament). Together they discussed the different challenges and opportunities the BSR-fashion sector bears.

On the second day, the Business Cooperation Event offered speeches, presentations, panel discussions and workshops. Acclaimed experts shared their knowledge: Magdalena Schaffrin (founder of the GREENshowroom), Niels Holger Wien (DMI/German Fashion Institute), Victoria Ringleb (Alliance of German Designers) and Alexandra Baum (novanex). Moreover, our partners talked about new ways to enhance the consumer-producer relationship, to incorporate cultural tradition into modern design and to use Barbie dolls to brainstorm business ideas. Guided tours through the exhibition “Baltic Fashion Innovations” introduced visitors to projects such as Fashion Empowerment, Trash To Trend and From Idea To Money.

The programme of the Business Cooperation Event served as a source of inspiration. Participants used the time during coffee breaks to get to know each other, renew contacts and to make plans for joint business projects. The time between end of October 2013 and the end of the Baltic Fashion Project on 16 December 2013 was too short to put any business projects into practice. However, a number of companies stated they would cooperate with other institutions they had met at the Business Cooperation Event in Rostock.

The Latvian company “Sapnu Studija” is in contact with a German designer association on how the company can establish contacts to German designers.
The German fur and leather designer “Weidner Pelze & Leder SN” will work together with the German University of Applied Science “Hochschule Wismar” on advertising materials. 3rd semester students will design flyers, roll-ups, business cards, stickers in winter semester 2014 “Weidner Pelze & Leder SN”.

COLD//by will buy fabrics for its products at Upcycling Fashion Store in Berlin.