



### CLOTHING LABELS

Labels are a source of information about the garment for the consumer. They are designed to provide information that will protect the consumer from the use of fraudulent fibers and care disasters. Many times they also identify the manufacturer or give other information. (Refer to Unit VI Topic A, Option 9 of the Dynamics of Clothing I curriculum.) Some of the types of labels found on garments are described below.

#### BRAND NAMES

The goal of all manufacturers is to establish their own brands in such a way that consumers will prefer them over other brands of similar products. Retailers will often purchase specific brand name merchandise for their individual stores because they are sure of selling it.

#### PRIVATE BRAND LABELS

Many clothing manufacturers are commissioned to make garments for large department and chain stores that wish to sell the garments under their own brand or private label. They may put one store name on everything they make or use different names for each line. For example, most hosiery producers manufacture both their own brand and an unbranded line for a retailer. The customer usually does not know the manufacturing source of private brand items.

#### DESIGNER LABELS

Until the 1940s, when France fell to Germany during World War II, the world center of fashion was Paris. During the war years, it wasn't possible for Paris to retain leadership of fashion, and manufacturers, retailers, and consumers discovered that there were excellent fashion designers in the United States. Although Paris has regained fashion stature since the war, American designers have kept and increased their worldwide leadership. Lord and Taylor, a major fashion store based in New York, was among the first to establish a policy of promoting the names and work of American designers. Today there are many American fashion designers. Some of their names are well known to the public and are featured on garment labels. Other designers work behind the scenes and design clothing that will carry a manufacturer's name or brand name.

A few designers own, in whole or in part, the companies and labels that bear their names. Some of these designers are Gloria Vanderbilt, Calvin Klein, Bill Blass, Laura Ashley, Ralph Lauren, and Liz Claiborne. The garments produced by designer-owned firms are usually very high-priced. However, some designer names also appear on lower-priced lines. Designers may "license" the use of their names on jeans, sunglasses, jewelry, perfume, scarves, and even household linens. For example, designer jeans are often manufactured by companies that pay for the right to use the designer's name on their labels.



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### UNION LABELS

If the garment is made by people who belong to a union, a label with the name of the union is often found in the side seam. An example is the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU), which was founded in 1900 to improve working conditions for workers in the women's apparel industry. The ILGWU has been a model that others have followed.

### COUNTRY WHERE MANUFACTURED

Some manufacturers in the United States have all or some steps in the manufacturing of their line done in a foreign country for the purposes of cutting labor costs. The United States also imports ready-to-wear clothing that is totally produced in foreign countries. These clothes may be cheaper or may be unique and especially desirable—Scottish cashmere sweaters and English tweeds, for example. Currently, there is a move in the apparel manufacturing industry to specifically label clothing made in the United States.

### HANG TAGS

Hang tags are larger, more colorful, and easier to locate than the sewn-in labels attached inside a garment. A potential customer may be attracted to one specific garment on a rack of many garments simply by seeing and reading the hang tag.

Frequently a hang tag will supply information beyond what is required by law. This can aid the consumer in choosing and caring for garments. Examples of this additional information are:

- **Guaranteed performance labeling.** The manufacturer sets standards for quality and performance of the product and sees that the quality is maintained.
- **Wear-dated programs.** Some garments carry a "wear-dated" tag that means the garment is guaranteed for a specific time under normal wear conditions. If it doesn't survive, the item can be returned (with the tags and the sales receipt) for a refund or replacement.
- **Licensed trademark programs.** Textile manufacturing processes can be licensed by the investor and let out for use by other companies. The term "licensed trade mark" or a symbol ® or ™ appears on a label, it indicates that the fiber, fabric, or finish has been produced under quality control conditions regulated both by the original manufacturer and by any other manufacturer using the license.

Source: Cooperative Extension Service, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign,  
College of Agriculture