

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Thomas Pink puts faces to its shirts in craftsmanship content

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Thomas Pink's "Meet the Shirtmakers" campaign. Image credit: Thomas Pink

By SARAH JONES

British apparel and accessories label Thomas Pink is investigating the nonverbal signals given by clothing to explain the importance of quality tailoring.

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The brand tapped the expertise of former FBI behavioral analyst Joe Navarro to delve into the body language and sartorial cues associated with the powerful. Further differentiating its garments from others, the brand took consumers behind-the-scenes at the workshop of Smyth and Gibson, which has been making Thomas Pink's shirts for about 10 years.

"When people can put faces to a brand in terms of who is making their items, it showcases a passion for what that person does and humanizes the purchase," said Kimmie Smith, fashion Stylist and co-founder/style director of **Athleisure Mag**, New York. "It showcases the depth of their knowledge and the commitment to maintain the heritage of the process of making these shirts for those that covet the brand.

Ms. Smith is not affiliated with Thomas Pink, but agreed to comment as an industry expert. **Thomas Pink** was reached for comment.

Clothing communication

Thomas Pink's "Why Your Shirt Matters" effort features two films.

One is an interview with Mr. Navarro, who explains some of the patterns of movement and expression seen across leaders. The founding member of the FBI's behavioral analysis program talks about how details including cufflinks or a choice of shirt change how the wearer feels as well as how he is perceived by others.

While not only communicating power, body language and dressing can endear an individual to others.



Thomas Pink shirts. Image courtesy of Thomas Pink

After establishing the difference wardrobing choices can make, Thomas Pink took consumers inside the workshop where its shirts are made in a second short video.

This film gives a voice to the artisans at Smyth and Gibson in Londonderry, Northern Ireland, who share their stories and perspectives. One worker talks about his four-decade career in the industry, while another shares that the workshop employs multiple sets of siblings, contributing to the overall feeling of family at the factory.

The workers also speak to their passion for their jobs, which led one woman to start sewing her own clothes at home. In addition to passion, the workers display a sense of pride and support of the traditional craft.

Meet your shirtmakers

Smyth and Gibson's 50 employees combined have more than 1,000 years of experience. According to the workshop's co-founder Richard Gibson, what separates one shirt from another is in the details, such as button holes that are dense yet hand trimmed or the alignment of a patterned fabric on the button placket.

"The brand is one about details, heritage and craftsmanship," Ms. Smith said. "These are items that those in the know are aware of due to its quality.

"The nonverbal powers of the shirt are aligned with this thought process as they enhance the person who wears it whether they are a political figure, executive or an individual who simply wants to be clothed in items that will amplify his/her stature," she said.

Employee closeup

Craftsmanship content frequently features no dialog, as sometimes faceless artisans craft meticulously made luxury goods. Some brands are turning this format around, making their display of expertise more about people than

process.

For instance, British fashion label Mulberry not only built up its image of craftsmanship and quality, but also of intimacy and family in a recent video.

"Meet Our Family" is the fashion brand's campaign to build more of a connection with fans and consumers by showing its intimate company atmosphere. The video brings users behind the scenes at Mulberry's Somerset factories, where the ethos of the brand begins ([see story](#)).

British apparel label Turnbull & Asser similarly celebrating its 130th anniversary with a digital campaign focusing on the personalities within its company who uphold the brand's British heritage.

A series of seven films released over a period of weeks took consumers into the inner workings of the royal warrant holder, from the bespoke tailoring consultations to the seamstresses who create the garments. Turnbull & Asser's campaign blended nostalgia and history with a look into the future of the brand, making sure consumers know that it will continue in its handmade tradition for many years to come ([see story](#)).

"Having the face allows you to hear personally from the creator and solidifies why the brand is so strong due to various voices and creators that allow themselves to participate in the brand," Ms. Smith said. "When it is faceless, you see the brand as one with endless factories or one that does not encourage the spirit of those that work with them."

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