

EDUCATION

Burberry Center for Manufacturing Excellence opens with UKFT support

February 11, 2020



The UK Fashion & Textile Association is helping Burberry train its factory workers in core tailoring skills. Image credit: UKFT

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

British fashion giant Burberry has partnered with the UK Fashion & Textile Association to formally launch the new Burberry Center for Manufacturing Excellence.

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UKFT will offer training to trainers and team leaders at Burberry to create a new formalized industrial sewing machinist development program at its Castleford, England, facility. It will also provide practical techniques to refresh and grow the skills of experienced sewing operatives.

"We have created some of our most iconic products in Castleford and Keighley in Yorkshire for over 100 years," said Lise Edwards-Warrener, vice president of internal manufacturing at Burberry, said in a statement.

"We firmly believe in protecting artisanal skills, nurturing talent and investing in British fashion manufacturing through programs including the Burberry Center for Manufacturing Excellence," she said.

"Partnering with UKFT has been key in bringing this initiative to life and we are proud of the impact the program is already having, and will continue to have, on our local community."

National organizations such as the UKFT and the Prince of Wales' Prince's Trust are among the strongest supporters of training youngsters to consider careers in textiles, fashion and craftsmanship. They also encourage the use of locally sourced fabric and materials.

Moving the needle

Burberry is exploring bold themes, designs and imagery under chief creative officer Riccardo Tisci, capturing the imagination of consumers worldwide, especially China, where the brand has a large following.

The London-based company, however, has cautioned sales might be impacted in this quarter if the coronavirus situation in China continues to see a drop in footfall to its stores, which like many brands, are closed in key locations.

That said, Burberry is investing in homegrown talent to ensure that sewing, cutting and tailoring skills are kept alive

in its home market. That is where a trade association such as UKFT helps.

The association works with employers and training providers to tackle the skills gaps in the British fashion and textiles business.

UKFT is also about kick off a three-year project to inspire young people across the United Kingdom to consider a career in fashion and textile manufacturing, as well as offer post-education job guidance.



Burberry's new Nevis backpack, named after the tallest peak in the British Isles. Image credit: Burberry

EFFORTS SUCH as the alliance with Burberry count as ties as cemented with industry players.

"We are delighted to partner with this iconic British luxury brand, which is committed to manufacturing here in the U.K.," said Celia Thornley, skills and training manager at London-based UKFT, in a statement.

"Improving the training skills on the factory floor is key to ensuring that our industry remains competitive against global competition," she said.

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