

Can you explain waterless dyeing?

The term waterless dyeing is being used for a few different processes. The most interesting is called DryDye by the Yeh Group. DryDye is a process that uses special equipment that for the time being is exclusive to the Yeh Group. It allows fabric to be dyed using supercritical carbon dioxide which acts as both a liquid and a gas. This process requires no water and provides the same quality as conventional dyeing. Another process described as waterless dyeing is called AirDye. Basically this process uses digital printing which colors the fabric similar to printing. Both of these processes are relatively new and limited in terms of volume but growing. ●

OUT OF CONTEXT | KURT GRAY

Make Here, Make Now (part two): The MSRP Dilemma

so if the cultural, environmental and financial incentives supporting the making of consumer goods in the united states are so apparent, why don't we do it?

the accepted cost of making apparel, or FOB price, is about a fifth of the conventional, built from the ground up, 'manufacturer's suggested retail price'. this MSRP price is really the pole that holds up the entire retail tent. it is an agreement between retailers and brands that, among other things, assures both players will get their keystone plus margins. since the pricing is based on a percentage of the production cost, domestic make multiplies out to ridiculous retail prices. current use of cheap off-shore production makes it possible for both camps to make their money.

and there lies the rub.

that rich, double margin landscape, is also the spoils in the current guerilla war between those same retailers and brands. the retailers sell against MSRP with their house-branded goods, enjoying the high price ceiling and a full margin while continually being 'on sale'. the brands increasingly sell product directly via the internet and

infiltrate the physical retail world through corporate stores of their own. their retail operations happily bank the entire product margin that they themselves have defined and their competitors defend. MSRP is in some ways like printing money, and both sides want to capture the dollars inside the tent.

however, the post-recession consumer is increasingly unwilling to pay 'full price'. they use MSRP as only as a rough guide and most of them avoid it like the plague. increasingly aware of the broad based social and environmental ramifications of apparel manufacturing, the conscience consumer produces a steady wind in the marketplace that pushes the idea of positive consumption. thrifty and green is the new morality.

in response to the consumer pressure on price and product, a new kind of brand emerges, one that circumvents traditional retail and uses the extra margin to forward an unconventional aspect of their business. lululemon sells directly over the net and through their own brick and mortar. they take that big margin between sewing machine and cash register, and spend it on

quality materials and full-on lifestyle education. their customers adore them. another example is cabi. they sell good quality, reasonably hip, and modestly priced clothing to women, tupperware style. the solid margin supports the vast array of fabric and development in a line that evolves continuously. both are examples of product reaching consumers in an alternate way. both use the cushion of comparative MSRP to support their product. they are a new kind of merchant, they understand that 'high-value' is in the eye of the consumer.

i'm waiting for a warren buffet like character to figure this out. make clothing domestically and leave the double margin system behind. an american apparel company could promote a basic, environmentally-friendly product, be innovative in distribution, and use the extra margin dollars to support sourcing american fabric and manufacturing. right now traditionally priced retailers and brands hold the customer's expectations of price high enough that another kind of maker can slip in there and sell another kind of clothing. something with meaning, apparel that is cradle to grave, american.

bring it on home. ●