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New Fashion Innovation Partnership Unveiled By PDS And FFA

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Future Fashion
Assembly platform...
**FUTURE FASHION
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Stuck in the back of a car for three hours in Mumbai traffic, Paul Wright and Ankur Agarwal from PDS—one of the world’s largest fashion sourcing businesses—attempted to right some industry wrongs. They eventually arrived at a pervasive bottleneck—low uptake of process and **product innovation**. For all their speed-to-market and trend obsessions, fashion companies struggle to

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update the systems and materials that go into their products, meaning churn reigns and improvements are consigned to that oft-uttered utopian destination known as ‘when there’s time’. Fashion innovations exist, they’re just not being adopted.

What if, the duo from PDS pondered, a digital platform could unite brands with vetted, stress-tested solutions and the supply chain partners to implement



them? 'Sofia [Strazzanti] has already built that' is reportedly what Yael Gairola, non-executive director at PDS, said when Agarwal floated the idea, and so a partnership was forged between her Future Fashion Assembly (FFA) platform and PDS to close fashion's innovation adoption gap.

Why Fashion Innovation Rarely Reaches The Factory Floor

At the time
(March last
year),
Strazzanti,
CEO of FFA,
was operating
version 1 of her
digital
platform,
offering
subscribers
access to a
digital
showroom of
technology and
material
solutions that
she had vetted
as being
“scaled,
growing, and
with proven
customer
service
[success]”.
FFA is a global
innovation
platform
designed to
connect

fashion brands, retailers, and manufacturers with proven technology and sustainability solutions. The company serves brand clients, some of whom have entered the orbit of snake-oil purveyors and overly enthusiastic, but ultimately out-of-depth, startups with buzzy but as-yet-unproven solutions. In addition to a digital showroom within the FFA platform, Strazzanti offers one-to-

one diagnostic
assessments of
brand
businesses,
including
British
menswear
brand Oliver
Spencer, to
identify
innovation
needs and
opportunities.

The Hidden Cost Of Fashion Innovation Discovery

“As business
gets a lot more
complex, with
Brexit, Covid,
and
[managing]
brick and
mortar retail,
channeling
better practice

while remaining commercial is a challenge,” says Tom Bodaly, General Manager of Oliver Spencer. “Sofia’s experience has helped us by giving a full audit to identify necessary steps and the various solutions”. A major challenge the brand faces, like others, is the rate of returns on eCommerce sales, which Bodaly says hovers at “25-30 percent”.


With
eCommerce
representing
30 percent of
the business's
revenue, the
general
manager says
any tech
solution to
reduce returns
should offer
wins across
their priority
areas: "boost
site
conversion,
minimize
shipping costs,
and [unlock]
hidden value
in customer
satisfaction".


Back in March
2025, when
the Oliver

Spencer audit was completed, several projects were started, some requiring system changes that Strazzanti explained were too time-consuming and resource-intensive for a brand needing to deal with immediate commercial realities.

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By contrast,

the adoption of [Measmerize](#) to address online shoppers' size selection to avoid placing orders in multiple sizes (and the inevitable returns) was targeted. "From the initial workshop to

implementation
deployment
end-to-end will
take around 2
months,” says
Strazzanti.

Previously,
Bodaly says
they struggled
to select the
right tech
solutions. “We
did a [tech]
project that
cost a lot of
time and
money [and
didn’t
materialize],
which in a
small lean
team was
frustrating. We
were an early
adopter of
sustainability
in British
Menswear, so
we were used

as an opportunity to test tech solutions. You have to kiss a lot of frogs... It's easy to be sold [on the promise rather than performance]”.

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Oliver Spencer,
Autumn Winter 2026
JOSH UPTON



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Fashion Innovation Doesn't Have A Creation Problem. It Has An Adoption Problem

The success of the FFA audit service for Oliver Spencer coincided with the PDS interest in the platform and desire to partner to improve deployment rates. PDS sources

production of
apparel,
homewares,
and
accessories for
more than 300
brands
globally, and
its investment
arm, PDS
Ventures,
invests in
software,
hardware, and
materials
solutions at
varying stages
of
development
that all seek to
solve fashion
industry
problems. But
even the
proven ones
struggle to get
over the line
with time-
strapped,
innovation-

immature
brands.
Complex
supply chains
and poor
communication
between
brands and
innovators on
scaled
solutions with
calculable
benefits make
for a noisy and
confusing
'ecosystem'.

“When we get
excited about a
solution, we
send an email
to [brand]
clients and
contacts, but
how many
emails must
they be getting,
and how do
they decipher
what to do,

and how to
differentiate
and filter
[these
solutions]?”
asks Ankur
Agarwal, Head
of VC
Investments at
[PDS Ventures](#).

“We were
looking for a
frictionless
way of
connecting
end-users with
these
innovations”.

Building The Missing Layer Between Startups And Brands

But innovation
platforms that
connect

brands,
innovators,
and
manufacturers
do **already**
exist. “We are
partners with
Fashion For
Good; they are
catering to
broad
innovators and
finalizing
projects where
brands have a
buy-in [but]
it’s not a
discovery and
evaluation
process, and
the brands
need more
hand-holding,”
explains
Agarwal. “We
want to do that
with the vetted
and ready-to-
scale
innovations

that we have,
put forward
proactively.
Sofia has a
ready-to-go
platform
where they can
help brands
immediately to
evaluate their
problems and
the viable
solutions”.



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Why Fashion Innovation Platforms Must Unite With Supply Chains

What **PDS**
brings to the

party is a scaled portfolio of companies within its venture arm, a network of global suppliers capable of deploying solutions, and a slew of industry experts in daily conversation with brands and manufacturers.

On the brand side, fashion businesses tend to operate in siloed departments—the enemy of diagnosing the integrated solutions with

commercial
and
environmental
returns,
according to
Strazzanti.
“Working
holistically
across the
value chain,
instead of
siloes, we need
to think
commercially
from ideation
through to
sourcing,
supply chain,
country,
merchandising,
and customer.”

Solving For The Real Constraint:

Paul Wright,
Group
Executive
Director of

PDS, says:

“Budgets are under pressure, and the innovation and sustainable materials focus has moved to legislation and compliance.

[This platform] is a more cost-effective way [to identify solutions] and the bar to entry is low”.

Wright adds that saving the cost of one speculative business trip could be equivalent to the fee for finding and deploying the right and already proven

solution via
FFA.

FFA's version
2 of their
digital
platform,
which its CEO
says has
successfully
digitized the
framework
that Oliver
Spencer
followed in
adopting
Measmerize,
went live
today. For
PDS's part, the
partnership
they entered
into with
[Future Fashion
Assembly](#)
toward the end
of 2025 led to
a fee-sharing
arrangement.
The platform

operates a SaaS business model with a monthly subscription for innovators costing from \$130 (£99) per month, and for brands, from freemium to Pro access at around \$79 (£59) per user per month, as explained by Strazzanti.

Bodaly says they will continue to use the platform on a subscription basis. “The thing I’m most excited about is creating a dynamic approach to

bring together thought-leaders and brands to solve problems—I'm really interested in the community and learning space [within the working groups on the platform] to help update and evolve the culture here at Oliver Spencer and to bring more solutions". In the general manager's experience, everyday constraints make it especially difficult for SMEs to find and implement

solutions.

“As the cost of doing business and the pressure and amount of work everybody is having to do increases; having Sofia and FFA helps to stress test and sell solutions [internally]”.

The Rise Of Fashion Innovation Infrastruct

Further drawing comparison on resource grounds,
Bodaly adds:
“Within

corporate
company
culture, there's
usually a
department
assigned to
push
technology and
innovation
forward, [with]
full oversight,
cross-
department, to
do what FFA
has helped us
to do, and
understand the
[risks] of
inaction". He
concludes that:
"[FFA] can
help us make a
collective
decision as to
where to act
first to deliver
longer-term
value."

From

Fashion Innovation Marketplace To Operating System

As FFA version 1 gives way to version 2, Strazzanti reflects: “Partnering with PDS [gives us] the operational platform, the factories, subsidiaries, sourcing companies, and the clients; we have the innovation knowledge, the tools, and the pathway.” The CEO likens the partnership to a meeting in

the middle
where the
combined
structure for
implementation
“is simply
providing that
[necessary]
connective
tissue”. Next,
that
'connective
tissue' should
ideally unite
fashion
innovation
with
operational
deployment.

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