Vancouver Fashion Week | Interaction Design Methods

This three-month project employed methods of interaction design — ethnography, personas, participatory workshops, prototyping — to provide Vancouver Fashion Week a content-driven website design. My involvement in this project included developing the research methods and content strategy of the website, in addition to bringing soft leadership to the team.

Team

Linda Liu, Rebecca Lu, Danny Lee, Michael Su

Vancouver Fashion Week showcases emerging fashion designers, bringing global and local talent together to the international hub of Downtown Vancouver bi-annually for one week of fashion celebration.

Their shows had downscaled to three days of ninety-minute runway livestreams since adapting to digital formats in the global pandemic of 2020, losing a significant portion of their audience engagement, particularly from content creators — photographers, music artists, influencers — who are not affiliated with traditional fashion institutions.

Our team conducted several rounds of ethnography research totalling approximately thirty survey participants, eight interviews, and two virtual co-design workshops with Vancouver Fashion Week and prospective audiences.

*Research Insight 1.*

Fashion content creators sought more collaborative and paid opportunities. They believed that opportunities for networking with the local fashion scene and a curated platform for discovering and sharing talent would help them succeed.

*“I’m having trouble looking for clients of my own, and it’s difficult to create work without the support of a paying client.”* — anonymous creator

*“I want a platform that is focused, curated, and allows for the discovery and sharing of ideas or talent.”* — anonymous creator

*Research Insight 2.*

Social media and websites are the first touchpoints for content creators who want to discover fashion communities. However, the current brand identity confused and put off content creators from further participation with Vancouver Fashion Week.

Why are there food pics

I thought that Vancouver Fashion Week would have a classy image to maintain, but their Instagram posts are kind of funny because it is not the vibe at all — there are random food posts, but they are not a food Instagram.

Influencers???

It reminds me of the Instagram model aesthetic, which is not my aesthetic.

Problem-Framing

How might we build a loyal online community surrounding Vancouver Fashion Week that uplifts content creators and provides opportunities to showcase their work?

Initial design concept

The creator’s hub: a one-stop solution hosted on Vancouver Fashion Week’s website for featuring content creators, facilitating job search, and promoting local events or networking opportunities.

Yet as our team was developing this concept, one question kept bothering me: why should it be the role of Vancouver Fashion Week, an event organizer, to implement a creator’s hub — especially when there were pre-existing services and resources of this kind?

It occurred to me that our research insights surfaced what content creators valued in a solution, but our team was attempting to satisfy those creators simply by designing what they described at face value, resulting in an initial concept that differed from the nature of Vancouver Fashion Week.

After presenting my arguments to our team, we agreed to re-work our proposal.

Final design concept:

A content strategy and visual design approach for the Vancouver Fashion Week website, improved through choice visuals that showcased Vancouver Fashion Week’s talent and established a sense of community on the site.

Rationale — Vancouver Fashion Week can offer value to content creators because fashion week is a superior destination for networking, which in turn enables creators to seek collaborative and paid work. All Vancouver Fashion Week required was a way to effectively communicate their value on their website, the most common touchpoint for new audiences discovering the brand, to drive audience participation.

Falsely constrained by “virtual only” solutions, could have considered phy-gital solutions.