



Pitti Immagine Bimbo
Exhibition Report
28th -30th June 2012

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In 30th June 2012, PITTI IMMAGINE BIMBO—a fantastic trade show for Children's Clothing and Accessories Collections has concluded in Firenze, Italy. I am honored to participated in this big event, and record it down.

1. About Pitti Immagine Bimbo

Pitti Immagine Bimbo is one of the most important international trade fairs for children and youth fashion and presents the latest collections by renowned designers and manufacturers. Connected with Baby's World, Kid's Design and apartment also has an exhibition for baby clothes, fittings and accessories. The frequency of the trade show is twice a year.

Pitti Immagine srl is the trade show organizer in charge of Pitti Immagine Bimbo. The company was founded in 1983 and is based in Florence, Italy. It engages in the production and management of trade fairs and fashion events in Europe, offers services in the areas of fashion, design, architecture, entertainment, and art. The company serves exhibitors, buyers, and journalists.

In this trade show, there're 491 brands were present and 195 brands are from abroad (39% of total), 11,000 visitors attended in total, and over than 7,000 buyers, in which 2,600 come from abroad. These foreign markets include Germany, UK, France, Switzerland, United States, Spain, Japan, The Netherlands, Turkey, China, Austria, Denmark, Russia, Sweden and Hong Kong, all of which makes this fair more international. Besides DR KID, FENDI, FUN & FUN, MISS BLUMARINE, MISS GRANT, MONNALISA, TWIN SET GIRL, etc as before, there are also new entries and returns at this edition include CRUCIANI, JOTTUM, STILLINI, UNLIMITED, GAUDI, NEW GENERALs, FIAT 500, DUCATI, FIORUCCI, 813 and COME NELLE FAVOLE.

2. Background of children's fashion

Before 1960s, children's clothes are just the small size of adults and always following of adult trends.

The primary reason of designing children's own clothes is letting them express their own interest but not the follower of their parents. Also, the development of new technology is an important aspect which facilitates this emerging business, and boom of 1950s had lead to less poverty and consumption was increasing, which make it possible to consume more clothes. Children's clothes were a part of the new social and culture change. From stereotypic gender design to unisex styles, from young girls' pink skirt to short black dresses, the growth of children's fashion showed the social development and diversification.

There are also some problems going with the changing in children's fashion. Customers and producers of children clothes have the different view on how children's clothes should be designed and communicated. Customers' voice is getting high awareness because of the social media. This discussion is generated from the conflict between political correctness and profitability and still going on.

3. Features of this exhibition

a) Companies are innovative.

Attending companies showed their new collections for spring/summer 2013 in their stands (some of them have their own showroom or the catwalk). These brands have combined the modish elements and consistence style with creative idea, which have refreshed the visitors.

They not only focus on the production innovation, but also working on the process innovation to reduce the cost and management innovation to sale or even produce their production to new markets.

b) Guard strictly for accessing

Not only the entrance of the exhibition is strict, but also entering each stands need to show the visitor card. Most of the stands are only allowed visitors to enter, exhibitors are forbidden to inspect the new collections. Through these approaches, companies are trying to avoid the imitation, especially piracy.

This means that piracy is still a big problem for the fashion line, but at the same time, companies have realized its mischief and are trying their best to avert this issue. How much is this approach going to be helpful is still unknown. Maybe, spending more effort on the innovation and continuously developing new generation product will be the better way.

c) Internationalism

As we said at the beginning, the present exhibitors and visitors are from many different countries, which make the exhibition more international. It builds a broader platform for the brands to collaborate with distributors, producers from many other countries.

Nowadays, internationalism is the trend and getting more and more important for integrating the global resources efficiently. Like Monnalisa locates in Arezzo, Italy, but collaborate with the distributors in Brazil, Dubai, Canada, Australia, China, London etc.

4. Revelations

- a) There is a good opportunities for Children's clothes industry

From this exhibition we can see that, almost all the famous garment brands are producing children' clothes, and this line has accounted for a large proportion of their turnover.

Children have stronger and stronger awareness to show their personal style. They have their own taste, and would like to distinguish from the others, clothes is one way to show this. And they're not only the consumers but customers now. older children influenced their parents in their purchase decision and allowances that were save up made children consume clothes with their own money.

Also, emerging economies are becoming the important markets, such as China, India, etc. These countries have high economic growth, and large population, which create the requirement for good brands with high quality and novel design. This is a large opportunities for this industry.

- b) Innovation is always the source for success.

In fashion line, the design is the main element of being successful, which can help to meet the changing requirements and increase the share in the market. On the one hand, firms have to encourage the designers create freely; on the other hand, they need always imagine they would be buyers, and know their potential demand.

These successful brands have the passion and motivation to innovate continuously. That's why they're accepted by the consumers all over the world. The ones which are focusing only on the short-time profit but not the sustainable development might imitate or even pirate the others 'design. These companies with bad reputation will never reach the pinnacle of success.

- c) Collaboration is an important strategy.

Internationalism is the trend. But promoting the brand abroad is not easy. It requires the knowledge of foreign markets, adequate budget, and flexibility. Since most of Italian companies are small and medium enterprises (SMEs), satisfying all of these requirements is not possible. So, the advantage of collaborating with local manufactures or distributors becomes obvious: they have the knowledge of their markets, the capability to adjust the changing of the demand, and if they are confident with the brand, they can even invest in the brand promotion. Until now, this is the most efficient way to introduce the brands to foreign market.

Innovation also needs producers to collaborate with other related industries, like machine-building industry, which can offer advanced and efficient production line; raw materials supplier, new designs are based on the support of the materials; collaborating with designers is a way to keep the innovation continuously and the consistent pattern of the brand,etc.

d) New ways of sales and promotion in electronic age—e-pitti.com

Opening shops in the department store, multi-brands store or mono-brand store are the traditional way to sale the productions, but in this days, e-business is becoming more popular. People used to buy low-cost products online. But nowadays, the luxury brands like CUCCI, LUIS VITTON are selling in the online-shop. E-business is more efficient, selling online can help both sellers and buyers save time and money.

Not only for B-to-C sales, but also for B-to-B business, electronic payment, online ordering and online meeting are playing a more important role now.

Facebook, Titter are used widely by companies to promote their brand. Some other countries have their particular way, like in China, they have microblog, which is similar with Titter but only in Chinese, have a large number of participant. These new ways came within manufactures' range of vision and are considered to be the efficient approaches for enlarging their market in this electronic age.

5. Conclusion

In short, fashion line is still a blooming business even during the period of economic crisis, but being successfully accepted is not easy. Companies need the passion to innovate, efficient producing management and strategic brand promotion to get well-known all over the world. Until now, Italian brands are doing a good job (like MONNALISA) both in the domestic market and foreign market (like China, Australia, etc). Still, many companies have a long way to go to be successful, what they can do might be learning the lessons from the previous companies, following their own advantages and finding their unique way.

