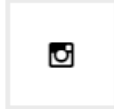


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IN PRACTICE

BREAK THE PATTERN – YOU NEVER KNOW UNTIL YOU TRY

August 24, 2016

Whether it's in sport or in your career, stretching out of your comfort zone every day builds confidence and sense of purpose. Most importantly, it shows you who you really are. This is what a team of pattern makers at adidas learned recently through taking on a much bigger role in the process of apparel creation.



Shaba
Mohseni

by Shaba Mohseni | Staff



“Do one thing every day that scares you.” ▲

Eleanor Roosevelt



Joanna Buettner and I first met for coffee. A special gleam in her eye drew me in from the minute we sat down. It was a gleam characterized by accomplishment, inspiration and excitement and for the next hour I was sucked into the story of how she took a unique challenge to stretch her boundaries and truly grow.

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Joanna experienced first-hand how empowering it is to think big and succeed in unexpected tasks.

Life presents us with all sorts of hurdles and it's our choice if we decide to hit the ground running and soar above them or side-step them altogether. The thing is we're pretty much hard-wired to avoid discomfort, yet that's where we grow the most ▲ and realize just how much we can do.

That's what Joanna and her colleagues learned. As one of the seven pattern makers working on Apparel, Joanna and her colleagues were asked to throw away the ordinary process and think big.

Mission: Possible

Usually pattern makers get a brief from the design and marketing teams with information on how the future season's patterns for apparel should be constructed. They add some input and then execute. Getting involved much later in the season, their ability to add to the creative concepts was limited. The new challenge to the team was to create a pattern concept already for the season kick-off.

“This project would require the team to go well outside of their boundaries. They were about to take the helm completely, open the creative flood gates and develop their own pattern concepts from scratch. It was a momentous chance to take the stage and step into the creative spotlight.” ▲



Never before did they have the opportunity to describe their vision in this way during season kick-off and it was a bit unnerving, but the intention was clear: highlight the team's creativity, passion, dedication, experience and confidence.

“Usually we work in a digital pattern system. This time we started with hard sketches. We were creating our patterns from draped pieces and everything was hand-made. We were putting all of our knowledge and experience to the test”, Joanna explains.

Show Time

After six weeks, it was time for each pattern maker to present their fresh concept and sample at the season kick-off, Trend Day. As I sat watching the models take their turns on the catwalk wearing these beautiful and innovative garments, I surveyed the room and saw a captive and inspired audience. Joanna and her colleagues jumped right into the unknown, believed in themselves and presented their ideas with pride and confidence amongst a highly experienced group of their peers.

“In the end, I came out more confident of my talents and that is such a cool feeling. It was worth all the effort, the extra time and exploration. The thing is, if you want to grow and get better, you will always need to adapt and stretch. This was truly an opportunity to explore, to go crazy with design ideas, to think beyond the usual.” ▲

Haven't we all been there? We're offered an opportunity but at first we hesitate as we look at the enormity of it. Soon however – as we start to stretch ourselves, as we break our patterns and build new capabilities, as we blow right past our doubts – we realize that without such trials we could never become the better version of ourselves.

I smiled as Joanna summed it up perfectly at the end of our coffee talk that day, “I'm lucky I got to be a part of it because it's true – the biggest challenge is actually your biggest opportunity ▲ !”