



*amaranta* collective

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# INTRODUCTION

For this project, we were tasked with developing a complete business plan for a sustainable fashion retailer located in Manhattan, KS. Motivated by our passion for thrifting and after noticing a gap in the market, we decided to create a secondhand vintage retailer to fill the city's need for quality secondhand garments. We had to develop our retailer, Amaranta Collective, from the ground up. Meaning "a flower that never fades", we wanted Amaranta to be a retailer that addresses the environmental impact made by the textile industry, and be a solution to reducing that impact.

We began by doing a detailed analysis of the used goods industry segment and of the retail market within the city of Manhattan. We then decided on a target market for our business based on an analysis of the population of Manhattan and the varying demographics. We chose to target women that are between the ages of 25 and 35. The analysis of our Target Market breaks down the habits of this demographic, their shopping preferences, and psychographics. We also analyzed two major competitors within the used goods segment, thredUP, and Dear Society. The analysis broke down each of these companies market and product/service profiles, marketing strategies, sustainable business practices, along with their strengths and weaknesses.

To aid in developing the sustainability strategy we conducted surveys of women in our target market to understand their feelings and attitudes toward sustainably sourced apparel. Over half of the consumers, we surveyed stated that they are willing to spend more on garments that they know are sustainably sourced. We wanted to further our strategy beyond environmental sustainability and become involved in our community, assist those in poverty, and help victims of domestic violence. These strategies, along with the inherently sustainable nature of secondhand goods, satisfy the triple bottom line of sustainability.

We were tasked with developing a marketing plan for our retailer that included both traditional and nontraditional strategies of marketing. We had to decide on an opening date for our retailer and build a six month marketing plan that began prior to opening. We chose to open Amaranta Collective on September 14, 2019. We chose this date because we are targeting women who are entering or are established in the professional world and September/October is typically the last major phase of hiring for the year. Our marketing strategies focused primarily on participating in events around Manhattan and the workshops we will be offering, which fulfills our sustainability strategy.

Part of the development of our retailer is visually communicating the aesthetic of the retail space, the target market, and the merchandise offered, which we have done in the form of a mood board. We give further information regarding the merchandise we will be offering through our merchandising and sourcing plan. The general merchandising strategy for our company is focused on second-hand/vintage women's apparel with a classic, sophisticated aesthetic. The acquisition of our merchandise is unique because of our segment of the industry. The women in our target market are looking for clothing that is professional while still being representative of their personal style. This produces a conviction of conscious consuming as a consumer becomes aware of quality clothing. Conscious consuming would then mean avoiding fast fashion and looking for pieces that are strong and long-lasting.

The final part of developing our business plan was deciding on a brick and mortar space to house our retailer and to create a visual merchandising plan for the retail space. The location of our retailer will be in a residential house located at 1609 Poyntz Ave., Manhattan, KS. For our visual merchandising plan we were tasked with creating three floor plans of our space, a basic layout, a department layout, and a detailed layout, a window display, and planograms of three major walls within our retailer. Through this assignment we were able to develop a retailer that was in line with our own values and is one, we believe, that will make a positive impact on the city of Manhattan.



# INDUSTRY SEGMENT & MARKET ANALYSIS

## **Business Concept**

Amaranta Collective is a secondhand vintage retailer that provides a curated selection of merchandise that is appropriate for professional and casual settings. Our retailer will focus exclusively on women's apparel and will offer upfront payment for select merchandise dropped off by consumers. Amaranta will give back to the community through workshops and partnerships with local charities.

## **Overview of the Segment**

We will be creating a vintage women's apparel retailer. This segment is a combination of the used goods segment and women's apparel. The apparel found in retailers in this segment includes both designer and non-designer vintage pieces. This retailer will satisfy a niche within the used goods segment and will be a collection of apparel that is specially curated to fit an aesthetic that is becoming increasingly popular. The desired aesthetic has grown in popularity with the help of our target demographic of women aged 25 – 34. This age demographic is a part of the group of consumers under 35 who are currently responsible for generating 37.9% of the revenue within the used goods industry. Recently, younger consumers have flocked to used goods stores as eco-friendly and vintage clothing have risen in popularity (Guattery, 2018). In 2018, one out of every three women shopped at used good retailers and this number is only expected to rise ("2018 Fashion Resale", n.d). Although historically this segment had an inverse relationship with consumer income, it is projected to grow 2.9% by 2023 (Guattery, 2018).

Before the recent trends that have caused the rise in popularity of the used goods segment, a majority of consumers looked to three major corporations to appease their used good needs. The three major corporations, Goodwill Industries International Inc., Savers Inc., and Winmark Corporation, collectively control 28.4% of today's market. The remaining 71.6% of the market is made of smaller, specialty or niche retailers (Guattery, 2018).

## **Market Demands**

The used goods segment has seen a significant increase in revenue since 2013, an increase that is expected to continue in the next 5 years. Currently, this market, which is comprised of over 73,000 businesses, is generating approximately \$19.8 billion (Guattery, 2018). However, by 2022 the market is anticipated to expand to \$41 billion (Hays, 2018). This rapid growth is occurring at a speed that is "20 times faster than retail" (Thibodeaux, 2017). In 2017, 44 million consumers shopped second hand which was an increase of over 25% from the previous year ("2018 Fashion Resale", n.d.). These trends create an opening for more retailers to take advantage of this growing market.

However, the used goods segment is beginning to see additional competition from mass merchandise retailers. As style trends shift into the vintage aesthetic, mass merchandisers, such as Target or Walmart, are beginning to provide their consumers with apparel that fits this aesthetic at a discounted price. As these continue to drop closer to the low prices of the used goods segment, a feature that attracts many of its consumers, retailers are going to have to find new ways to combat these popular merchandisers (Guattery, 2018).

## **Business Trends**

Sustainable practices and eco-conscious behaviors are considered to be two of the largest motivators for consumers when purchasing second-hand goods. "The apparel industry accounts for 10% of global carbon emissions and remains the second largest industrial polluter, second only to oil" (Conca, 2015). Today's consumers are becoming more conscious of the effect their shopping habits are having on the environment, giving second-hand clothing retailers a huge advantage. Vintage or second-hand clothing is aiding in the decrease of apparel and textile waste by giving old pieces a second life. According to the thredUP 2018 Resale Report, buying a garment second-hand extends its life by over 2 years, on average, and will reduce carbon, waste, and water footprints by 73%. This report



also projected that by 2022 40% of a used goods consumer's closet will be second-hand clothing ("2018 Fashion Resale", n.d.). With the growing interest in resale items, there is an opportunity for more specialty or niche used goods retailers to become popular. As this segment becomes more of a staple for consumers they will be looking for retailers that match their aesthetic and offer quality goods.

Vintage brick-and-mortar retailers are discovering that they are not immune to the challenge of e-commerce competition. Today consumers are given the experience of hunting for a great piece in the convenience of their own home. Websites like thredUP, Poshmark, and TheRealReal, are bringing the thrill of thrifting right to consumer's homes. With easy to navigate websites and options to send in your own pieces for consignment, vintage brick-and-mortar retailers are facing the same problems that the rest of the industry is. To combat this they must find ways to create an experience for the consumer that will leave a lasting impression. Niche vintage stores, however, have the advantage of a curated selection of goods that will appeal to a target demographic. Offering specialty goods draw in consumers who want to feel good about the ethical choice in clothing but don't want to spend the whole day sifting through racks to find something that matches their current style.

In an increasingly oversaturated apparel retail market, vintage stores offer consumers something they are unable to find at other retailers. They give consumers the opportunity to own garments that are unique. Although the vintage aesthetic is finding its way into mass merchandisers and fast fashion retailers, consumers who are savvy and fashion forward are looking for pieces that are in style but not found in every store. A niche vintage store allows consumers to find on-trend pieces that are in line with their own personal style. Additionally, these stores give consumers the ability to buy designer labels at an affordable price.

### **Players of the Industry Segment**

The key players of the vintage/used goods segment in Manhattan, Kansas are Goodwill Industries International Inc. and Salvation Army, but there is nothing found in a curated sense. Even though these stores have used goods, we want to take into consideration the business models of companies such as Arizona Trading Company and Buffalo Exchange to see what makes them successful. These companies take second hand to a new level by going through merchandise with a fine tooth comb to ensure the quality of items for their consumer. To hit our demographic, we would need to take our fine tooth comb one more time to our inventory which would produce a boutique specialization. The biggest competitors would be Dear Society in Kansas City and Adored Vintage online.

All the elements we want to emphasize with our merchandise is putting the customer in a sustainable mindset overall. Adored Vintage takes to her blog to make this point clear which can inspire our demographic, "Here at Adored Vintage we believe you should be able to wear your clothes over and over again, season after season. This a big part of why we curate the vintage-inspired styles that we do and in colors that are timeless" (Adored Vintage, 2018). We plan to sell merchandise that is curated from vintage apparel that is refined. We want our customer to feel timeless when selecting our garments while supporting sustainable fashion.

### **Conclusion**

We have faith in our new retailer because the city of Manhattan does not have a curated retailer that is composed of refined used/vintage clothing. We believe it will be successful because our target age demographic of women in their late twenties and early thirties living in Manhattan, KS have a higher income. They could sustain the ability to look more sophisticated apart from a normal aesthetic. Since this aesthetic has grown in popularity, this age demographic is a part of the group of consumers under 35 who are currently responsible for generating 37.9% of the revenue within the used goods industry (Guattery, 2018). This is key when targeting our demographic and providing a retailer that fits this need in the Midwest.

# TARGET MARKET ANALYSIS

## Data Collection Strategy

### **Primary**

Our primary data collection strategy was a survey that was distributed to women within our age demographic in Manhattan. We reached out to women that we knew personally who fit within this demographic and requested that they passed it along to those women that they knew that fit our target demographic. Within our survey, we began by asking preliminary questions to ensure that we were collecting data from the appropriate people. We began by asking “Do you live in Manhattan?” and “Are you a woman between the ages of 25 – 34?”. Next, we asked the participants to choose which range their income best fit into. 25% stated their income was < \$32,000, 37.5% said \$32,000 – \$64,999, and the remaining 37.5% said \$65,000 – \$124,999.

Our survey then moved onto asking about the participants’ style preferences and shopping habits. 71.4% said that they are more likely to purchase quality items of clothing over fast fashion. 62.5% of participants said they commonly gravitate towards classic clothing items. 50% of the participants said they were making apparel purchases every 2-3 months and that 50-99% of the pieces in their wardrobe are classic pieces.

Finally, we questioned our participants about their feelings about sustainability and second-hand garments. When asked about their willingness to wear second-hand garments 37.5% answered that they were very willing, 50% were interested, while the remaining 12.5% were hesitant. When asked about the amount of money they were willing to spend on a quality, sustainability sourced blouse, 62.5% of participants were willing to spend \$40+. 87.5% of participants expressed interest in a retailer that offers a curated selection of vintage/second-hand garments. Only 25% of participants hadn’t considered that second-hand clothing is a sustainable practice, showing that the participants of the study had an interest in sustainability.

The data that we collected by distributing this survey gave us valuable insight into the real-life consumers who would be visiting our retailer. We were able to gain insight into their feelings about sustainability, second-hand clothing, and style preferences. Having this information will help us moving forward as we look at pricing and styles of merchandise.

### **Secondary**

Our secondary data strategies included utilizing consumer segmentation tools like VALS and PRIZM. PRIZM is a service offered by Claritas that has separated consumers into segments based on demographic and lifestyle traits. We were able to look up the segments that are in the Manhattan area by using the zip code lookup feature. By seeing all of the segments that are in the area we were able to decide further which segments we were trying to market to. From this, we are able to learn more about the consumers in the area. VALS is a survey that assigns a participant with a VALS type upon completion. After completing the survey you are given a primary and secondary VALS type that is descriptive of a person’s attitude and give a description of the person’s personality and behaviors. We included completion of the VALS survey as the final question of the survey we distributed. By learning what VALS types the participants of our survey got we are able to create a even more well-rounded idea of what the attitude and behaviors of our consumers are.

## Target Market Analysis

### **Demographics**

Our retailer will be focused on the target demographic of women ages 25 – 34. According to the 2010 census, women of the ages 25 – 29 and 30 – 34 made up 7.5% of the female population in Manhattan (4.7% and 2.8%, respectively). Our target demographic is the second largest demographic

of women in Manhattan (“Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics”, 2011). Recent data has estimated that there was an average growth of 6.9% in both of these age demographics meaning the size of the population has increased since the last census. In 2017, the median income in Manhattan was \$75,900 which fits in the middle-class segment (“2017 American Community Survey”, n.d.).

This demographic is made of consumers within the Millennial age cohort. In 2018, Millennials surpass Baby Boomers in terms of spending power and are predicted to have a collective spending power of \$1.4 trillion by 2020 (“10 Facts about Millennials”, n.d.). As Millennials are moving into the stage in their life where their buying power increases they will have the ability to buy merchandise at a higher price point. Millennials value authenticity from retailers, want brands to have a mission, and they want to engage with brands on social media (“10 Characteristics of Millennial Shoppers”, 2017).

### **PRIZM**

After completing the zip-code look up on the Claritas website, we learned that there are four segments in the Manhattan area that fit into our target consumer: Striving Selfies, Upward Bound, Up-and-Comers, and White Picket Fences. The Striving Selfies consumer segment is described as consumers who are the “most tech-savvy... with some college credits under their belt”. The median household income for this segment is \$35,402. These consumers shop at Express, follow the NBA, and listen to Urban Contemporary (“Striving Selfies”, 2018). Consumers in the Upward Bound segment have a median household income of \$91,292, have a graduate plus levels of education, are typically employed in management or professional roles, and have above average household technology. This segment frequently research products online, goes to yoga/pilates, and listen to alternative (“Upward Bound”, 2018). Up-and-Comers are described as “college graduates who are into athletic activities and the latest technology”. The median income for this segment is \$68,312 and hold management or professional employment positions and may be continuing their education in hopes of owning a home or increasing their savings (“Up-and-Comers”, 2018). The White Picket Fences consumer segment is described as “the stereotypical American household of a generation ago”. The median income of the segment is \$67,476 and typically are college graduates. These consumers follow college football, listen to new country, and shop at Express. This segment is what people usually associate with middle America (“White Picket Fences”, 2018). Having the presence of all of these consumer segments in and around Manhattan gives our retailer a greater chance of attracting consumers based on the variety of consumers. Additionally, having information on these segments helps us understand the background of the consumers who shop at our retailer.

### **Psychographics**

The psychographics of our consumer is a simple and sophisticated women who values quality over quantity in her wardrobe. We found that our target market research led to some helpful conclusions. An attitude our survey revealed was that our demographic gravitated toward classic items when it comes to their personal wardrobe. There was a semi steep lean of 62.5% that had this attitude of classic pieces for their clothing. Then when we asked if they were willing to adjust and invest in their wardrobe, it was a favored 87.5% yes compared to the 12.5% that said no. Also, their attitude towards consumer care was a pleasant surprise. No one said they hand dry everything or dry everything so there was a happy medium according to our survey.

To simply say that second-hand clothing is observed as a sustainable practice was a belief that 75% of our demographic hold. This is beneficial for our retail concept since that is our main source of inventory. As for the values of our target market, they either never or occasionally buy apparel as gifts, but gifts is not the main item they buy for others. Also, they value both sticking to brands they know and exploring new ones therefore we would have some freedom in our selecting process of brands.



These attitudes, beliefs, and values of our target market helps us gain insight into what items we would place in our store.

## **VALS**

For the last question of the survey we distributed to potential consumers, we asked them to take the VALS survey and tell us what their primary and secondary VALS types were. Every participant of our survey answered that either their primary and secondary types were one of the following: innovator, achiever, or experienter. Innovators are at the top of the VALS types meaning they have the most resources and show all three motivations – ideals, achievement, and self-expression. This type is also “confident enough to experiment”, are “always taking in information”, and are “self-directed consumers” (“Innovators”, 2019). Achievers have “high resources and achievement motivation”. These consumers are peer conscious, professional, and “act as anchors of the status quo” (“Achievers”, 2019). Finally, experienter type consumers have “high resources and self-expression motivation”. These consumers “want everything”, “are first in and first out of trend adoption”, “are up on the latest fashion trends”, and “go against the current mainstream” (“Experienters”, 2019). This information helps us choose merchandise that would appeal to these types of consumers and what price points they would be willing to pay.

# COMPETITOR ANALYSIS

## ThredUp

### **Competitor Profile**

Founded in 2009 by CEO James Reinhart, ThredUP is the largest online marketplace for women's and children's secondhand clothing in the world. It began as a peer-to-peer online sharing service for men's shirts and is now the #1 secondhand e-commerce retailer. In addition to their online retailing, ThredUP opened four brick-and-mortar locations in 2017 (Mau, 2017). Within their website they state that their mission is to "style up, save up, and live up" ("About us"). This mission is indicative of ThredUP's three areas of focus – consumer style, consumer saving, and sustainability. They offer a breadth of merchandise that is focused on apparel and accessories but have deep depth of merchandise that appeals to a large demographic. The different divisions of apparel they offer make it accessible for consumers across different price points.

Being the largest marketplace of its kind, ThredUP possesses multiple advantages over its competitors. Although their headquarters are in San Francisco, CA, ThredUP has distribution centers across the US. These centers make it possible for ThredUP to continuously update their inventory giving their consumers fresh products to view every day. Additionally, as a large company, they have the resources to look through the voluminous amounts of apparel they are sent and can "triple-check items for fading, stains, and pilling" ("About us"). ThredUP also has a phone app that makes it easy for their consumers to browse their products and order kits to send in their goods.

### **Market Profile**

ThredUP exclusively offers women's and children's clothing. But they appeal to a wide range of consumers within these two target markets. Within their "2018 Resale Report", ThredUP states that 40% of women ages 18 – 24 shopped second-hand which is higher than any other age group under 45. Although millennials make up most of the shoppers for this industry, ThredUP continues to engage with their other consumer segments. Because it is also a children's retailer, ThredUP puts time into connecting with the mothers who shop with them. They have a series within their blog, ThrEDIT, called "#badassmoms" that celebrates women who are defying the norm ("ThrEDIT"). ThredUP also continues to expand its range of consumers by putting a focus on size inclusivity.

ThredUP has found success in its market, success that should continue to grow as more consumers are choosing to buy clothes second-hand. According to ThredUP's 2018 Resale Report, resale retailers are "growing 9x faster than legacy retailers" and by 2027 they project that 11% of a consumer's closet will be filled with apparel from resale retailers. In 2017, the company was valued at \$500 million dollars in a market that, at the time, was worth \$18 billion (Lieber, 2017). They are currently one of the top three resale distributors in the industry with \$130 million in funding ("Resale Report").

ThredUP creates loyalty with its consumers by curating suggestions for consumer based on their previous purchases and saved products called their "dressing room". These suggestions can be narrowed either further by consumers specifying their size preferences. Within the "dressing room" they offer suggestions for pieces that would pair well with items the consumer has previously purchased through ThredUP ("Dressing Room"). Another strategy they use to create brand awareness is a referral program. These promotions are run occasionally and offer a discount for new consumers and credits for the consumer who referred them ("FAQ"). This program brings in new consumers and ensures repeat purchases from existing customers.

### **Product/Service Profile**

As stated previously, ThredUP has a large depth of merchandise within each category. They have also separated merchandise into additional categories based on brand – clothing, premium, and designer. These categories make it easy to find popular brands consumers are looking for and help them shop within their own price range. Although these are the main category divisions, besides department, they also give you the ability to shop size, style, and price. They are attempting to make it easier for consumers to find the merchandise they want from the thousands of pieces they offer. One of the latest innovations to the products offered by ThredUP is their new line, Remade. They chose the cuts, colors, and styles for the line using the data collected from their online sales. The collection currently consists of 10 pieces (“Remade”), is size-inclusive, and is advertised to be durable, well made garments (Reints, 2018).

ThredUP has also found a unique way to provide merchandise. Advertised for “pro-thrifters”, the company offers Rescue Boxes that contain clothing that “may need a little TLC” or have been listed on the site for awhile (“Rescues”). These boxes are offered at various prices and categories of merchandise such as, “Mixed DIY Denim”, “Fun Box”, “Handbags”, and “Patterns and Prints”. Following in the footsteps of companies like StitchFix, ThredUP also offers Goody Boxes. Containing 10 pieces at \$20/each, a consumer can order a box, keep what items like and return the rest, all without a subscription. Like the Rescue Boxes, Goody Boxes have different themes for the consumer to choose from. Available themes include, “Spring Essentials”, “9-to-5 Styles”, and a “Just For You” box filled with pieces that are picked for the consumer by one of their stylists (“Goody Boxes”). These boxes are an effective way for the company to move larger quantities of inventory to make room for new merchandise.

As the largest online second-hand retailer, ThredUP handles a lot of inventory. They carry three times as many brands as Amazon, they have 1.7 million pieces of apparel stocked and they add 1,000 new items to the site each hour (“Resale Report”). To handle this quantity of merchandise, the company has 5 distribution centers across the US. These centers are used for both the collection of consignment goods and the distribution of merchandise that has been sold through the website.

### **Marketing Strategies**

As a primarily e-commerce retailer, it comes as no surprise that ThredUP focuses their marketing to online platforms. They utilize banner ads on various websites but the most effective marketing strategy is through social media. According to Similar Web, 9.42% of the traffic on their website is sent from social media. 56.49% of this traffic comes from Facebook (“Social”, 2019). Another social media platform that is a big contributor to their marketing is Instagram. Through Instagram and Facebook, ThredUP has run two effective campaigns to expand brand awareness, #secondhandfirst and #badassmoms. #secondhandfirst is a tag consumer’s use when posting photos online of their ThredUP purchases. Photos that use this hashtag have the chance of being featured on ThrEDIT and link users to other photos that feature items purchased from ThredUP. #badassmoms, as stated previously, is a series used to celebrate spectacular mothers. With mothers being one of their target demographics, it is important that they create relationships with mothers through social media (“ThrEDIT”). ThredUP is also capitalizing on the newfound fame and focus consumers put on influencers. They created an influencer program where people with a significant social media following can earn money for posting about the company. This program ensures that content that highlights their company will be seen by a wider range of social media users.

### **Environmentally and Socially Responsible Business Practices**

The second-hand industry is driven by consumers’ desire to buy apparel that is environmental friendly. ThredUP is no different and puts a lot of focus on maintaining environmentally and socially sustainable practices. Over the past five years the company has upcycled 52 million items of clothing



("Resale"). The culture of the company is based around giving clothing a second life. Their Rescue Boxes, discussed previously, are one of the ways that they ethically dispose of merchandise that they can't sell at the same rate as the rest of their inventory. Rescue Boxes also contribute to the company's social responsibility by donating \$5 to one of their active charity partners for every box sold ("Rescues"). They also offer a choice to consumers who are sending in their clothing, rather than earning a profit for what they send in, they can donate their garments. ThredUP will pay the charity based on the quality and quantity of clothing sent in by the consumer ("FAQ"). In 2018, ThredUP donated \$79,351 to their charity partners ("Donate").

### ***Competitor Strengths and Weaknesses***

As the largest second-hand online retailer ThredUP understands its market and has established itself as a sustainable option for trendy merchandise. The company's strengths include its broad target demographic that allows for a deep depth of merchandise. Additionally, because of its size they can handle a large amount of inventory making it easier to find quality merchandise to offer its consumers. It also has the labor resources to go through the inventory with a fine-tooth comb to ensure that the pieces they offer are authentic and of a high quality. They do, however, possess weaknesses. The large quantity of merchandise makes it tedious for consumers to browse the merchandise for apparel that fits their personal aesthetic. Also, as a primarily e-commerce retailer, consumers do not have the ability to try on garments before buying or feel the quality of the piece. Finally, because it is a collection of various pieces there is no standard sizing making it difficult for consumers to know for sure if the garments will fit.

### **Dear Society**

#### ***Competitor Profile***

As a small business, Dear Society has allowed for vintage and modern clothing to merge into one beautiful inventory. They were created in 2015 after two entrepreneurs shared the same dream. The owners, Maria Casteel and Chanel Jezek, were both moving forward in their own fashion businesses in the Kansas City area ("About Us"). After meeting at a pop-up shop, they shared their dreams and opened a brick and mortar store. Since opening their first location, they have opened a second in the Arts District of Kansas City.

The competitive advantage of Dear Society includes their approach to curating collections that allow the customer to go through their inventory with high standards in mind. The charm of one of a kind vintage pieces, but adding a modern item that has that edge to it. At Dear Society, they love the staples; a classic piece you can throw on with anything and instantly look pulled together ("About Us"). Therefore they are able to pinpoint their target market very well due to their inventory in store and online. This makes Dear Society a competitor to our retailer since our target market is also young professionals.

#### ***Market Profile***

For a brand that cares about quality, their age demographic is towards younger women even in this age of fast fashion. The vintage and modern apparel that Dear Society is targeting is towards women 21-35 years old. To reach their market, they host events with wine and panels of young women entrepreneurs in a local coffee shop, Monarch, which is right by their Midtown location. According to Reference USA, there are five retailers that sell second-hand clothing in the Kansas City, MO area (Reference USA). Once considering those retailers, the items are curated to be very retro or includes houseware items as well. Therefore, there is simply just Dear Society with this specific demographic.

Brand awareness and loyalty goes very well with their target market. Dear Society has a strong presence online since the founders were strictly online retailers until partnering together. They are very

active on their social media, specifically Instagram, with the help of their employees. If you follow them on their platforms then you can directly see what items are still available because a shop girl may post about them. As for loyalty, customers walk into a simplistic store that will give you store credit if you buy a piece then want to return it. Vintage items are unique pieces so if you know there is an item you want, better grab it quick then come back next time to find another timeless piece. There is no customer loyalty program in place currently.

### **Product/Service Profile**

The option to either purchase online or instore is the product service offerings of Dear Society. As a small business, they are limited to what all they can do regarding the breadth but do have some local jewelry and ceramic pieces despite the clothing in the store. They do not have a large depth of merchandise because of they are completely changing merchandise about every four months. The smaller depth of merchandise allows for collections they order from market week to make a strong debut. The vintage product lines found in Dear Society are one of a kind so they are sold as is with small damages included, but that is the price of unique items.

As for the pricing strategies, Dear Society marks its clothing for a lower middle-class consumer. Items are not cheap, yet a young professional could purchase a few items and value the quality over the quantity that a fast fashion retailer would suffice. There are items that go on markdown to make room for the next season of items coming in. Also, there is a difference in pricing between the wholesale items and vintage attire. If a customer is gravitating towards a vintage piece, they will pay more than a wholesale item because of the character of a piece.

The co-founders of Dear Society do go to a market week for their modern collections. Therefore, their channels of distribution are through some wholesalers then they also contract out other collections. Specifically, they partnered with Lauren Bush who founded FEED back in 2007 (Casteel, 2018). After her travels with the World Food Program, she started creating leather bags that the proceeds go back for school meals around the world. There was even a special canvas bag that was only available at the Dear Society store that gave meals to the local Harvesters. This company has many avenues of sourcing their products to make sure the customer gets quality items in store or online.

### **Marketing Strategies**

The specific combination of promotional methods used to promote Dear Society is heavily done through direct marketing on social media platforms. They use concepts such as fiatlays to arrange their point of sale displays. This allows for their visual merchandising to be a strong pull for their items. Another point of advertising are the local businesses that are around them that want to also support local businesses. Since no one is a direct competitor, a coffee shop can promote or even host a panel of boss ladies that the retail store owner has set up. The stir of a small business gets hype from word of mouth in a busy city like Kansas City. Models and local designers have access to this store so it is a win-win situation to promote the store and upcoming artists.

A central idea intended for the target market of Dear Society is women supporting women, local business, and enhancing natural beauty. This is the central, repetitive message that promotes brand awareness and is meant to provide an impact since it is unlike big name stores around it near the shopping district. Since this small business was founded by women, the products and messages go into those categories for this specific retailer. The emphasis on natural beauty is seen in their photoshoots with little or no touch ups and embracing freckles and natural skin tones or hair. They have products directed toward the menstrual cycle and embracing free bleeding (Jazek, 2018). Therefore, embracing a lot of aspects of being a woman and supporting women.

One aspect of this small business that is not lacking is their online/social media promotional

strategy. The company has an email promotional strategy and a strong Instagram presence. Since their target market is young professionals, they meet them where they are at in a convenient way. Yes, they post about their products, but then they have their shop girl post about items and even try on the products. Then address details such as how many sizes are left or how to pair items together. This goes back to the hiring process and finding an individual who also cares is the central ideas of the company.

### ***Environmentally and Socially Responsible Business Practices***

There is no information on this small business of how they are environmentally conscious. As for how they are being socially responsible, they do support other local artisans. In their about me, they specify the beauty of supporting those who are also small businesses. Dear Society writes, “We have created a space for local artisans and designers, and are continually adding onto that list to bring you a unique and beautiful selection of goods” (“About Us”). Therefore, they are using their retail space for others that may not have one to make a profit. This is socially responsible since it is sustaining the equilibrium between two small businesses.

### ***Competitor Strengths and Weaknesses***

There are many strengths when looking at Dear Society since their curated inventory is well put together. They provide one of a kind vintage apparel therefore a customer can find a dainty blouse that no one else owns. Also, they have modern collections sprinkled throughout the store as well so they can include more sizes. To include more sizes allows for a range of women to find an item that fits them instead of walking away from merchandise they may have purchased. Lastly, they support local designers and small businesses by placing collections or jewelry on display for purchase in their retail stores.

The weaknesses in this business are constricting for them because most of the weaknesses have to do with the customer being able to purchase items. Dear Society can only provide one size for their timeless, vintage pieces and they are generally smaller. This is an issue when a retailer is wanting to be size inclusive in all areas of their store. Also, they are only restricted to Kansas City if their customer wants to shop in a brick and mortar. Therefore, sales are heavily online for people that do not live in the immediate area. Finally, the hours that the stores are open are not consistent with one another and are sporadic compared to normal retailers. This creates a problem for customers who do not have time during the work day to shop and a weakness in the company.

### **Competitive Advantage**

Through completing this analysis, we have been able to see how our retailer will set apart from these competitors along with what features made these competitors successful. Resale is growing 24 times faster than retail (“Resale report”) leaving room in the market for new retailers to capitalize on this growth. In Manhattan, there are only two secondhand clothing stores, Goodwill and Salvation Army, but neither of these places offers a curated selection of goods that appeal to a more sophisticated demographic. Our retailer would directly appeal to women ages 25–34 which, according to Claritas Pop-Facts Demographics, is the second largest age segment in Manhattan, KS (“Claritas”). This demographic is overlooked in Manhattan because most apparel retailers are source their products to appeal to the dominate college-aged consumer segment. The dominating market of fast-fashion retailers in Manhattan has created a vacancy for a retailer that provides classic, sophisticated, and sustainable apparel.

One of the advantages that we would have over a company like ThredUp is that the apparel in our store would be curated to a certain aesthetic. This would make it easier for a consumer to find pieces that fit their personal style rather than wasting time scrolling through thousands of items



that don't appeal to them. This attribute is one of the weaknesses of ThredUp but is a strength of Dear Society. Dear Society is made successful by the curation of goods that our target market would gravitate towards. This is what is missing in Manhattan, but can be found in retailers in larger cities. However, one of the weaknesses of Dear Society is their lack of size inclusivity. This is something we want to focus on when curating our products giving us a competitive advantage and expanding our appeal to consumers of all body types. When working with vintage clothing, sizing can be limited, but with our retailer, we would strive to find creative solutions.

The mission of our retailer is to give clothing a second life and help reduce the effect of the apparel industry by selling primarily vintage/secondhand goods or sourcing from sustainable brands. In addition to offering this inventory, our retailer will also be a place for consumers to bring their unwanted items that are gently used. Consumers will have the option of donating their pieces or selling them at consignment and all unwanted pieces will be sustainably recycled or donated by our retailer. We also plan to feature sustainable brands that are produced locally and on a broader scale. This gives us an advantage because of consumers concerned about the environment and the impact their consumption has on it, they are interested in buying sustainable products, but do not know where to find them. By giving consumers easy access to those goods, we are creating another advantage for our retailer. The market for our retailer has expanded and it would be a unique retailer in the Manhattan area as well as people's desire to shop to find unique pieces along with sustainable practices.

# SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

## Sustainability Strategies to Confront

As a second-hand retailer, we are already more environmentally friendly than traditional retailers because of the sourcing of our merchandise. According to the thredUP 2018 Resale Report, buying a garment second-hand extends the life of the garment on average by 2.2 years which reduces carbon, waste, and water footprints by 73% (“2018 Fashion Resale”, n.d.). The secondhand segment of the industry helps reduce the immense amount of pollution that the industry is already producing. The apparel industry is the second largest polluter in the world right behind the oil industry (“Environmental Impacts”). Resale helps make a dent into the waste produced by the apparel industry. Currently, “Less than 1 percent of the materials used to create clothing worldwide is recycled into new clothing” (Chua, 2019). Although second-hand retailing is already a more sustainable way to purchase apparel, we hope to expand the environmentally sustainable practices within our business.

In addition to being environmentally sustainable, our retailer will also be focusing on two social sustainability issues in the city of Manhattan. First, we want to help reduce the poverty rate in the city. Currently, Manhattan’s poverty rate is at 24.9% which is over 12% higher than the state of Kansas (“Manhattan, KS”). Additionally, we want to be an ally to those women who have suffered domestic abuse by partnering with The Crisis Center which offers women leaving domestic violence safe shelter, food, subsistence, support groups, and children services. In 2018, 85% of domestic violence victims are female and in the U.S. 35.6% of women report having experienced domestic abuse (Kellner, 2018). Our target market is included in the age range of women that are typically affected by this kind of abuse, and as a retailer, we want to continually serve those in our target market outside of providing merchandise.

## Sustainability Practices and Strategies

To expand on our environmentally sustainable practices, we plan on exclusively offering paper bags and reusable canvas bags for purchase. To incentivize, if the customer uses our canvas bag or their own reusable tote, we will offer a 10% discount. We are choosing to use paper over plastic because paper bags take one month to decompose whereas a plastic bag can take 10-100 years (Kavalkovich, 2014). We want to avoid the amount of packaging that is commonly used in retail as it is a significant contributor to pollution. We plan on sourcing our reusable bags from the online wholesaler Tote Bag Factory which sells 500 bags for \$395 (“100% Cotton Lightweight”) and our paper bags from Paper Mart online which sells 500 Vogue bags for \$111 (“100% Recycled Kraft”). Also, consumers will have the option to receive receipts via email rather than having them printed and we will be using eco-friendly lighting throughout our space.

We also plan on educating the public through workshops about how to launder their clothing in a more sustainable way. We will educate the consumer on the monetary value they can save by following sustainable practices. By switching from a dryer to a drying rack, the average household can save \$96 a year (Verchot, 2014). This switch also preserves the longevity of their garments. We will also teach customers how to make their own detergent which would then cost them \$0.08 a load vs. the \$0.21 a load it costs to use store bought detergent (Sharp, 2016). We will also teach participants tricks to keep clothing fresh in between washes reducing the need to wash each garment after only one use. In addition to the monetary savings of these practices, we will also be reducing the pollution caused by unsustainable laundering practices. You can consume up to five times less energy by wearing your jeans at least three times, washing them in cold water, and skipping the iron or dryer (Verchot, 2014). By making small changes like this we can greatly reduce the energy and water consumption per

customer.

In our attempt to reduce the poverty rate in Manhattan and aid the victims of domestic abuse, we will host professional development workshops every other month. We plan on reaching out to addiction centers, the Crisis Center, the Manhattan Emergency Shelter, and local law enforcement to bring in participants who would benefit the most from these workshops, as well as having this event open to the general public. These workshops would include resume and cover letter critiquing, mock interviews, and discounted professional dress. The classic pieces our retailer offers makes it perfect for job interviews and general professional settings. These workshops will be led by professionals in the area who are willing to donate their time. We plan on reaching out to the KSU Career Center for additional materials and professionals to volunteer. We will also be offering restyling workshops to help women learn how to make the most out of their current wardrobe. We will offer tailoring workshops to benefit those in need by teaching them how to mend and tailor garments at home. These workshops will be in partnership with the Apparel, Textiles, and Interior Design department to provide students with the opportunity for volunteer hours and experience. In addition to these workshops, we will be giving customers the option to donate items and their consignment earnings to the local shelter, Manhattan Emergency Shelter, Inc.

### **Conclusion**

These sustainable practices and strategies will be effective for our target market and our business. The low cost of the paper bags and their quick decomposition time makes them the best alternative to the plastic packaging that is used in retail. By offering reusable bags we are giving consumers the opportunity to reduce their plastic consumption at retailers beyond our own. By promoting our environmentally sustainable practices we are appealing to the 75% of consumers who are more likely to purchase from sustainable brands ("2018 Fashion Resale"). Our social sustainable practices are appropriate for our brand because we want to be a retailer that has a hand in our community. The workshops that we offer appeal to the age of our target market. With the prevalence of domestic abuse and poverty in Manhattan, we provide a hand up through the workshops we offer. Also, with partnering with Apparel, Textiles, and Interior Design department at Kansas State University, we are interacting with consumers outside of our target market as well.



# MARKETING PLAN

## Marketing Strategies

We wanted to have a marketing strategy that lined up with our values and desire to connect with our customers and our community. It is important for us to be recognized as an asset to the city that is making a positive contribution to the community. We want to be seen at events across Manhattan and use our social media presence to connect with our consumers.

### ***Traditional Marketing***

As a retailer and a small business, being heavily involved in our community is a focus of our sustainability strategy. Part of this is becoming a member of the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce. By becoming a member, we will have the opportunity to become part of committees like the Women of Business and the MHK Young Professionals. These committees will open the door for future collaborations with other retailers in Manhattan. Additionally, we will be participating in the Chamber of Commerce's Business Showcase in August. The Business Showcase is an event that is open to Chamber members and the public where businesses share materials and services ("Business Showcase"). The event occurs two weeks before the opening of our store so it is a perfect opportunity for us to raise awareness of our retailer.

Additionally, we will be running a two-inch ad in the Collegian once a month from August to December, with the exception of September when we will be running two ads to promote the opening of our store. We chose to advertise through the Collegian because of its large audience, some of who fit within our target demographic like graduate students and professors. We are also going to be working with the career center to find volunteers for our professional workshops so we want to have a strong following within KSU.

In terms of in-store services, we will be focusing primarily on consignment. This is not only environmentally conscious but also helps provide merchandise for our retailer. Consumers will have the opportunity to bring in their unwanted garments and we will assess them and pay them for the pieces we would like to sell within our store. They will then have the opportunity to donate the remaining clothes for us to recycle, donate, or use in our workshops.

Our loyalty program will also be environmentally sustainable. Instead of having a punch card or some other sort of loyalty card, our loyalty program will be through the LoopyLoyalty program. Consumers are able to download the app and track their point progress, making. This also gives us the ability to send targeted messages to our consumers and have automatic messages sent based on their proximity to our store.

The final part of our traditional marketing strategy is our postcards. On August 27th, two weeks before the opening of our store, we will be sending out postcards to all women in Manhattan that fit in our target market. The postcard will feature our social media pages, the date of our opening, our store hours and location. Consumers who bring in the postcard during our first week will receive 10% off their purchase.

### ***Non-traditional Marketing***

The biggest part of our marketing strategy will be based around event marketing. Our first event will be Third Thursdays on July 18th. Because this event is two months prior to our opening we will focus on passing out fliers and directing people to our social media pages. The August Third Thursday event will also be used to pass out fliers. The final Third Thursday event is in September and it is the week after our store opens. During this event, we will extend our store hours and offer wine and sangria to shoppers. To stay in line with our focus on environmental sustainability all fliers will be created through Vista Print and are printed on recycled materials. During July we will also have a booth at

the Riley County Fair from July 26 – July 28. The booth will offer iced coffee from the Kansas City-based roastery Messenger Coffee, which is the coffee that is offered at MHK local coffee shop Arrow. The booth will have flyers for the business and will be set up for people to drop off clothing donations. Each person that donates clothing receives a 10% off coupon. This will help us acquire merchandise and demonstrate our focus on sustainability. On Black Friday, we will have a booth serving coffee and selected merchandise at the Festival of Lights: Lighting Ceremony. We will also be offering 20% off merchandise as our Black Friday sale.

As stated previously, we want to have a strong connection with Kansas State University. Our target market includes emerging professionals and our merchandise is curated to be appropriate for the workplace while still being trendy. We will be participating in the KSU Career Fair. We want to team up with the career center to help teach students about professional dress. Additionally, the KSU homecoming parade passes by our store location on Poyntz and we will be offering a 10% discount to customers who come into the store wearing sporting KSU gear that day.

We will also be offering three different workshops from September to December. Starting in October, we will be offering a tailoring and laundering class on the first Tuesday of every month. These classes would be limited to 20 people but would teach participants the basic of tailoring clothing at home and sustainable laundering practices. Each participant would go home with a travel size sewing kit and instructions to make their own laundry detergent. We want to coordinate with the Manhattan Crisis Center to offer these classes to women who have experienced domestic abuse. The classes would be offered to these women first and then to the public if there are remaining spots. We would reach out the KSU Apparel and Textiles department to find students in the design program to help volunteer for the workshops, as well as, local businesses that offer tailoring services. In September and October, we will also be offering our professional workshop. As discussed in our merchandise and sourcing plan, this time of year is the last major hiring season of the year. The professional workshops would include resume building, practice interviews, and professional dress tips. We will be asking other members of the Chamber of Commerce to volunteer their time to aid in these workshops. The workshop in September would occur the week before the KSU career fair so we will work with the Career Center to advertise this event to students as well. The final workshop we will be offering is the Upcycling Workshop in November. This workshop will teach participants how to restyle the clothing they already have. This is apart of our mission to decrease textile waste. We would have pieces in the store that are found in most people's closets and show the different ways of styling them. Participants would also have the chance to bring in their own clothing for tips on how to restyle their own wardrobe. Hosting these events is a way for us to give back to the community, as well as, bring a wider range of consumers through our doors.

We will be focusing our social media marketing strategies to two platforms – Instagram and Facebook. With our demographic being women ages 25 – 35 years old, we have strategically picked two social media to cover our target market. In 2018, 68% of people in the US reported that they are Facebook users and 74% of those people use Facebook daily. Additionally, 35% used Instagram in 2018 and 60% of those people were daily users (Smith 2018). We will begin running paid ads on both platforms on August 11<sup>th</sup>. Our Facebook platform will be used primarily to communicate and promote. Therefore, we will link our other platform, Instagram, to Facebook so all posts will be shared to our Facebook feed. Facebook is the best source to create event pages for our workshops and other events as well to promote our company and offer store information. Our Instagram platform will be our main focus due to its ability to engage, promote, and share effectively with our target market consumers. The focus on our stories will be a benefit since we will share daily and show new merchandise through this feature. Regular features include inspiration photos once a week, images of merchandise and store

interior, and images from in house photo shoots will be added periodically throughout our feed as well. We will be utilizing the hashtags – #AmarantaCollective, #AFlowerThatNeverFades, #VintagelsOurVice, #CuratedClassic – on images of merchandise, inspiration, and store interior. We will be using the hashtag #ShopLocal to promote Third Thursdays and other local events we will be attending. Lastly, our special content will include monthly sustainable brands spotlighted to help our customers engage with more conscious companies. For these posts, we will be using the hashtag #SustainableShopping. We want our social media to be a tool for us to interact with our consumers and to express the aesthetic of our retailer.

## MOOD BOARD





# MERCHANDISING & SOURCING PLAN

## Trend Analysis

After researching forecasted trends provided by WGSN, the Autumn/Winter 2019/2020 season fits perfectly with our store's mission and aesthetic. The Purpose Full - forecast is the key driver of our merchandising and buying decision for our store's opening. "Purpose Full explores a push back to a slower pace of life and designs that celebrate craft and longevity. Focus shifts to items that embrace timeless styles and classic materials" (Walters, 2018, p. 2)

The Purpose Full colors that we will be featuring in our retailer are composed of comforting and muted tones. It also has a casual wear focus that is relevant for the US market. US-specific tones are brightened and less muddy in comparison to those for Latin America, Europe, and Asia. Distilled Aqua is clean and calm, and works well with neutrals, while Cool Caramel is a luxurious take on brown that helps to anchor the more retro tones in the palette (Craggs, 2017). The core colors of brown, grey, and dark blue elicit feelings of calmness.



Retro knits are forecasted to drop mid-autumn and we are expected to see a resurgence of slouchy cardigans and fitted sweaters (Craggs, 2018). This trend will fit our target market who will be able to find comfort in the sweaters while looking put together. Additionally, oversized shirts and belted waist trousers are forecasted to be a dominant style. In terms of fabrications, wholesome tweeds, floral fades, candlewick plush, vintage silks, and crafted layers will all be featured during this season. These trends will include combinations of silk or linen with soft wools, wrapped yarns, painted warp silks, velvety plush, and printed cotton (Palmer, 2018)

The Purpose Full trend and the design developments forecasted by WGSN provide excellent forecasts of apparel in each of our major merchandise categories. The following apparel forecasts are some of the trends that we want to reflect in our retailer.



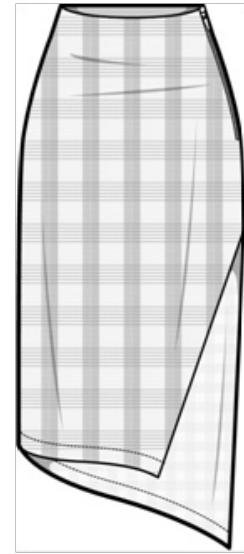
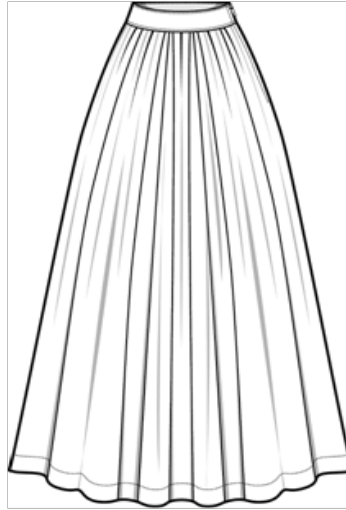
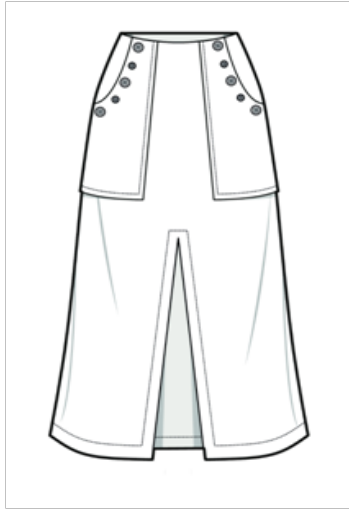
Design Development A/W 19/20: Woven Tops, by WGSN Womenswear Team, April 6, 2018 (WGSN, 2018)

Three of the tops we are choosing to feature are a shift top, fiounce blouse, and pajama top. The shift top is defined as the ultimate layering piece and can feature contrast buttons to add detail. The fiounce blouse allows for an easy transition between day and evening wear. The pajama top is a current style that is forecasted to stay around. However, for A/W 19/20 the style will take on a more formal look (“Woven Tops”, 2018).



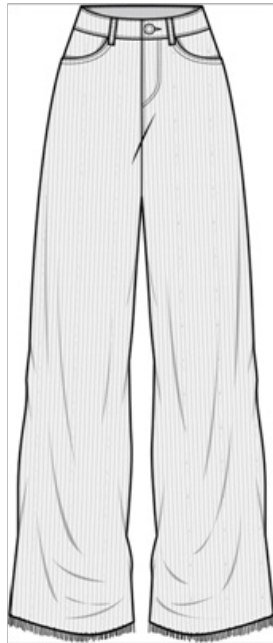
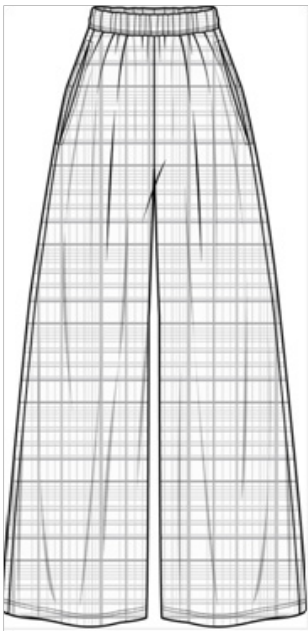
Design Development A/W 19/20: Knitwear, by Charlotte Casey, March 21, 2018 (WGSN, 2018)

The above examples of forecasted knitwear are a boxy cardigan, elevated crew sweater, and a party turtleneck. With our retailer opening in autumn we wanted to be sure to highlight innovative sweaters for the season. The boxy cardigan is versatile and works with a range of style. The elevated crew sweater with its statement volume sleeve creates a dressier focus. The party turtleneck is a great piece for layering. With features like full-gathering sleeves and narrow-fitted cuffs, this top can be dressed down for the office or accentuated for evening wear (Casey, 2018).



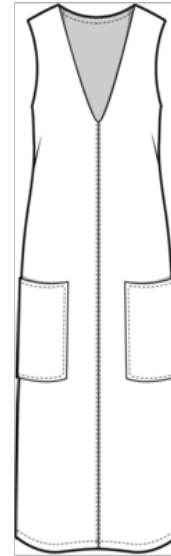
Design Development A/W 19/20: Skirts, by WGSN Womenswear Team, April 3, 2018 (WGSN, 2018)

For skirts, we have seen a trend forecast in button-front A-line, maxi, and spliced check pencil skirts. The button-front A-line is an innovative take on the classic A-line. The front split of the skirt gives a modern take and contrasting buttons add detail. The maxi is another great transitional piece from day to evening. The skirt featured has gathering at the waist which gives it volume. The spliced check pencil skirt is a modern take on another classic piece. The asymmetry and splice add interest and the high waist makes it a flattering silhouette (“Skirts”, 2018).



Design Development A/W 19/20: Trousers, by Polly Walters, March 22, 2018 (WGSN, 2018)

Three of the forecasted trends in trousers that our retailer will focus on checkered wide-leg, raw-edge cords, and slim tapered. The loose-fitting wide legs have an elastic high-rise waist with a slight gathering and pair well with heels or sneakers. The raw-edge cords is a great alternative to denim during the autumn. They have a loose-leg silhouette with frayed hems. The slim tapered trouser has a high-rise waist, slim leg, and front-pleat detailing had has a polished look.



Design Development A/W 19/20: Dresses, by WGSN Womenswear Team, March 26, 2018 (WGSN, 2018)

In dresses, the above designs are examples of three trends that fit our retailer's aesthetic. The trends are the kimono-sleeve shirt dress, robe midi dress, and minimalist shift dress. The kimono-sleeve shirt dress has a slightly oversized fit and statement kimono-sleeves. The robe midi dress has a slight kimono-sleeve and falls right above the ankle. It also includes an adjustable self-fabric belt. The minimalist shift dress is a great layering piece that has a flattering silhouette. It has a V-shaped neck and falls right above the ankle ("Dresses", 2018).



Design Development A/W 19/20: Jackets & Outerwear, by WGSN Womenswear Team, March 20, 2018 (WGSN, 2018)

Jackets and Outerwear play a big role in fall fashion trends. Three of the trends we will featuring are the cocoon overcoat, cape-collar shacket, and puffed sleeve blazer. The cocoon overcoat is a timeless piece that is a staple for every woman's wardrobe. It is single-breasted with a relaxed silhouette and can feature contrast stitching for detail. The cape-collar shacket has puritan inspiration and has a clean modern look. The puffed sleeve blazer is a play on the classic blazer that adds a modern flair to this classic piece.



## Merchandise Assortment Plan

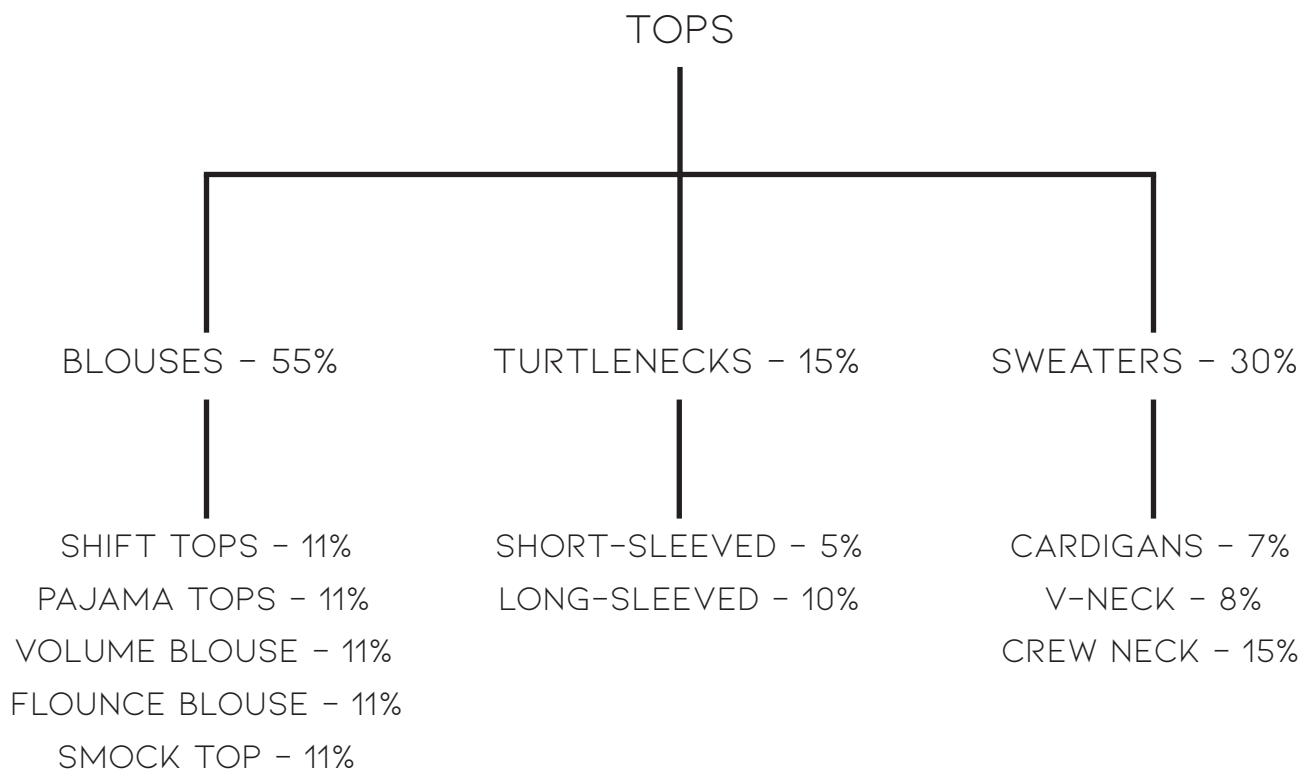
Our retailer will carry exclusively women's apparel with the potential accessory if something comes in through consignment that we cannot pass up. Manhattan currently only has two second-hand retailers, Goodwill and Salvation Army, and would benefit from a vintage/second-hand retailer that provides a curated selection of goods. Additionally, many of the retailers in Manhattan target the college-age demographic and overlook our target market. We chose to focus primarily on apparel because of the difficulty we may have in sourcing our merchandise. The following breakdown of merchandise categories is our ideal percentages but we understand that these are subject to change due to the nature of our retailer. When deciding on the division of stock between our product categories, we kept in mind the season we were buying for and our goal to aid women in building their wardrobe.

CATEGORY	PERCENTAGE OF STOCK
TOPS	45%
DRESSES	10%
SKIRTS	10%
PANTS	20%
JACKETS	10%
OUTERWEAR	5%
TOTAL	100%

## Tops

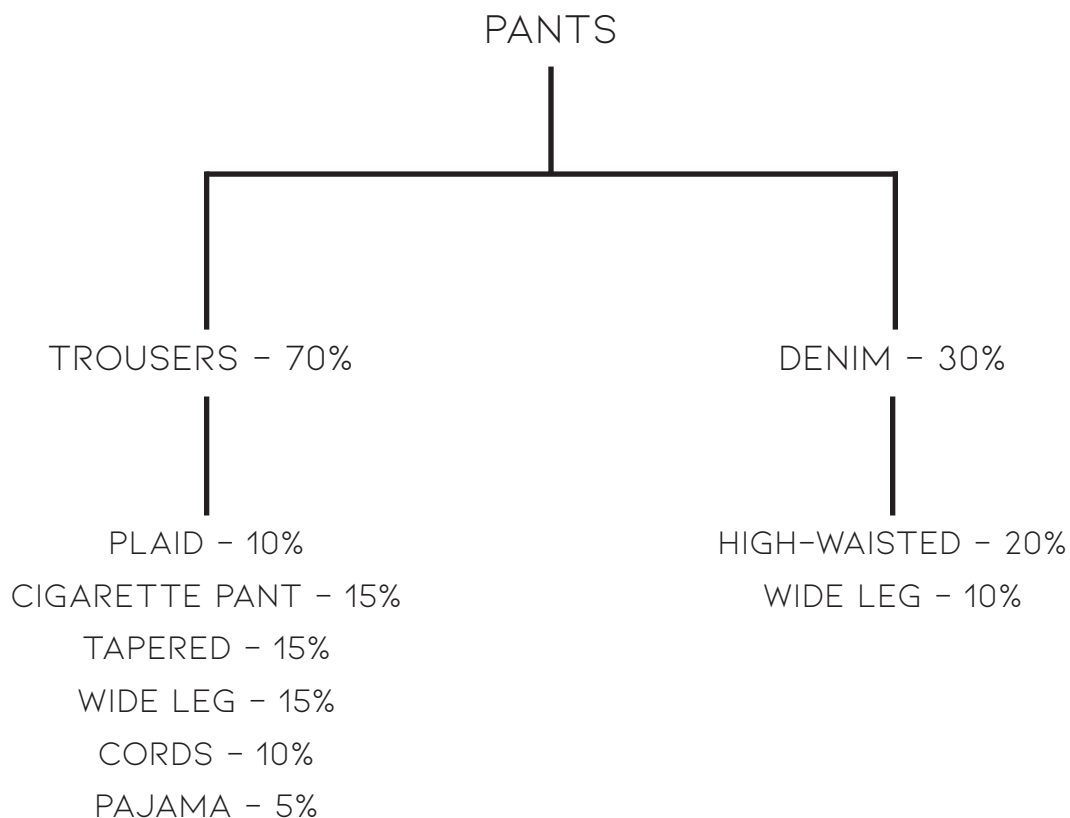
Tops represent 45% of our overall product assortment. We wanted tops to be the largest portion of our product assortment because consumers are more likely to impulse buy tops and buy tops more frequently when looking to spice up their wardrobe. Additionally, bottoms typically have a longer style life and the stock does not need to be refreshed as frequently. Of the tops category, 55% will be made up of blouses. Blouses will then be equally split between five different styles – shift tops, pajama tops, volume blouses, flounce blouses, and smock tops. Each of these styles was chosen based on the WGSN forecasting for the A/W 19/20 season. Each of these styles is transitional between day and evening and will be appropriate in professional settings.

A further 15% of the tops inventory will be turtlenecks – 10% long-sleeved and 5% short-sleeved. The turtleneck can be used for layering or independently. The short-sleeve turtle neck is seeing a resurgence and is a popular piece in autumn as it is perfect for transitional weather. Finally, the remaining 30% of the product category is reserved for sweaters. Within this subcategory, 15% would be crew neck sweaters. As we discussed earlier in this report, the elevated crew neck is one of the trends forecasted for the season. In addition to the elevated crew, we would be carrying a variety of other crew neck styles. The crew neck is a flattering choice for many figures and looking effortlessly polished. 8% will consist of v-neck sweaters and the remaining 7% will be dedicated to cardigans. V-neck sweaters like crew necks are versatile and come in a wide variety of styles. Cardigans come in multiple styles as well, such as slouchy or boxy, and are a great piece for layering.



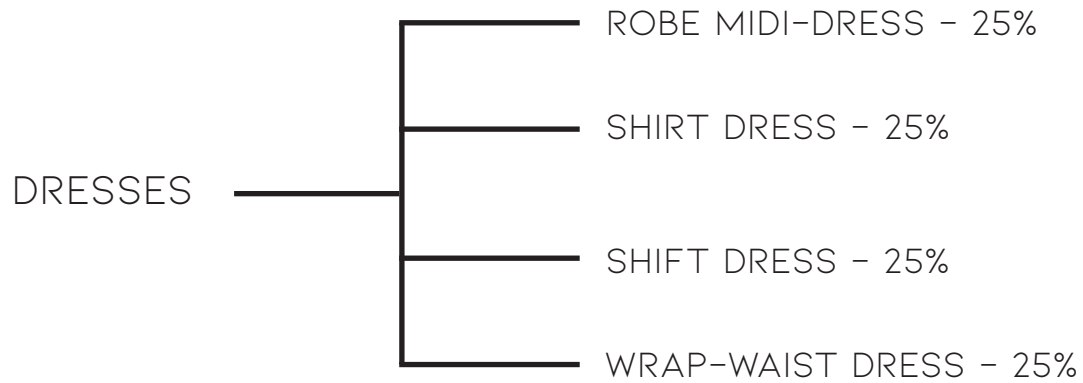
## Pants

Pants represent the second largest category in our product assortment at 20% of our total inventory. Within this category, 70% will be made of trousers and 30% will be denim. We chose to provide a large selection of trousers because we are appealing to a target market of professionals. Additionally, trousers are seeing a resurgence in popularity in streetwear and they fit the aesthetic of our retailer. Within the 70% of trousers, cigarette pants, tapered, and wide-leg trousers each make up 15% of the stock. These three categories were forecasted trends in WGSN and are appropriate for most work environments. Plaid trousers and cords each made up 10% individually and pajama trousers make up the remaining 5% of the trouser inventory. Both plaid trousers and cords are both statement pieces and fit a certain personal style which is why we will only carry 10% of each. Pajama trousers are typically only worn with a pajama top which is why they only make up 5% of our trousers. For denim, we will offer 20% high-waisted straight leg and 10% wide leg jeans. High-waisted straight leg has been a popular style for the past two years and the trend is projected to continue. Wide-leg jeans are forecasted to be popular during this season but because of the nature of consumers relationship with jeans and the bold style, they will only make up 10% of our denim.



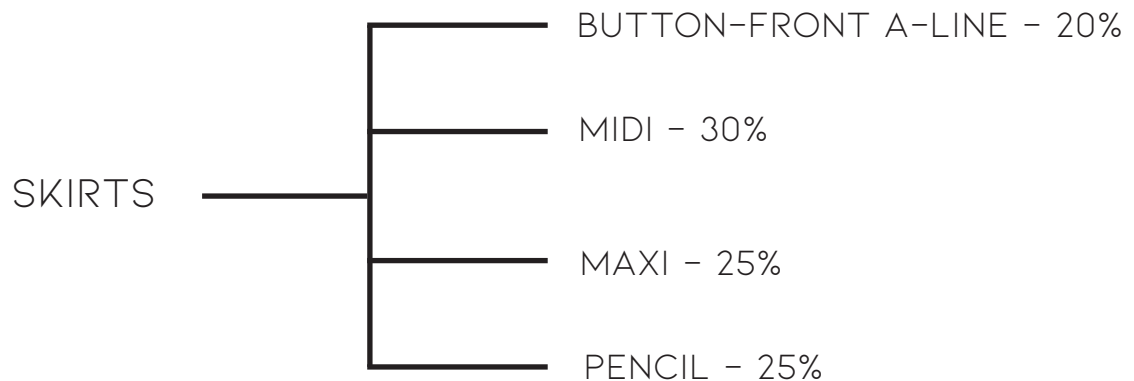
## Dresses

Dresses make up 10% of our total product assortment. This category will be equally split between four styles – robe midi-dresses, shirt dresses, shift dresses, and wrap-waist dresses. Each of these styles was forecasted by WGSN. They can either be layered or are long-sleeved and appropriate for chilly weather. The styles are also transitional between day and evening wear and are appropriate for professional environments.



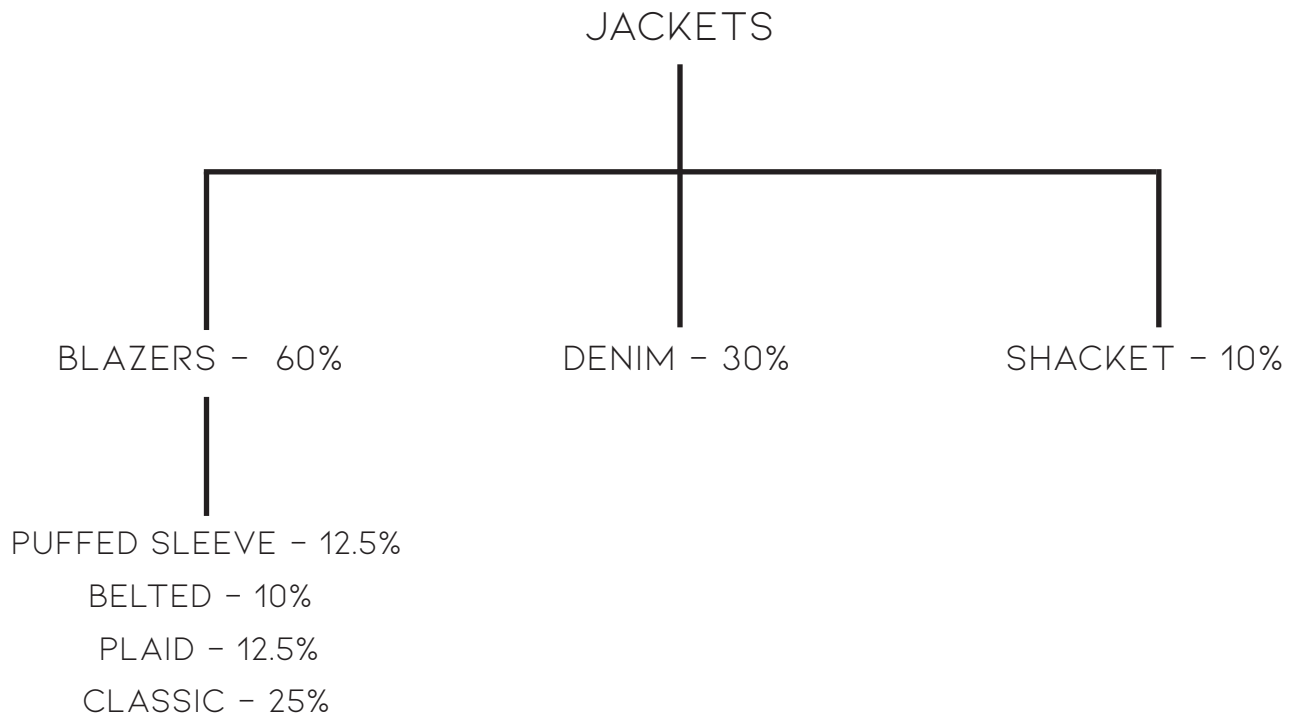
## Skirts

Skirts account for 10% of our total product assortment. Within this category, 30% will be midi length skirts. The midi length is perfect for the autumn season which is why it is the largest portion of this category. This length can come in varying styles, prints and colors to fit within our aesthetic and offer variety to our consumer. Both maxi and pencil skirts account for 25% of the category. Maxi skirts in this season are forecasted to have a fuller silhouette than previous seasons. The pencil skirt is a classic piece, especially for professional women. The pencil skirt is forecasted to see some adjustments to modernize the garment. The remaining 20% of skirt inventory will be of button-front a-line skirts. The A-line is a flattering silhouette for most consumers and the button-up style adds interest and detail.



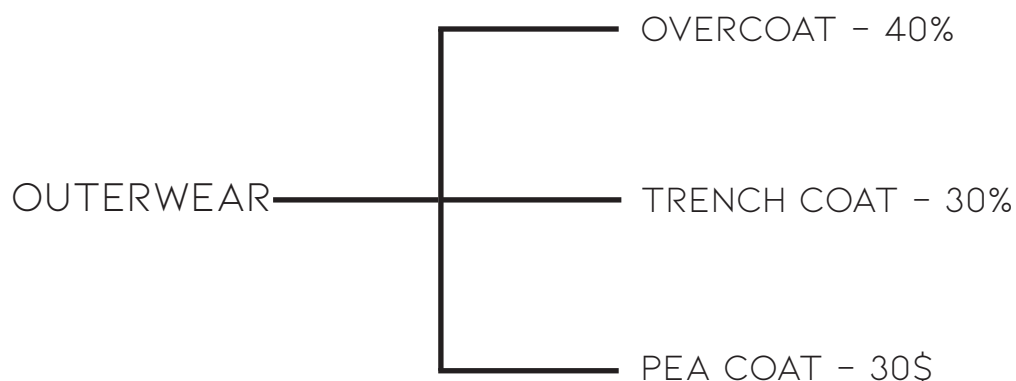
## Jackets

Jackets represent 10% of our total product assortment. Jackets are an integral part of any autumn wardrobe, especially in Manhattan, as layering is essential with the unpredictable nature of Kansas weather. Within this subcategory, 60% is represented by blazers. Of this 60%, puffed sleeve and plaid blazers each represent 12.5% individually, classic blazers represent 25% and belted represent the final 10%. Blazers have always been a popular garment for professional women but they have been seen more frequently in casual wear and on the runway in recent years which is why they represent a large percentage of the jackets we carry. 30% of our jackets will be denim of varying sizes, washes, and styles based on availability. The final 10% of the jackets we carry will be represented by the shacket. The shacket is a shirt jacket hybrid that is becoming increasingly popular and can lean closer to a shirt or closer to a jacket.



## Outerwear

The final 5% of our overall product assortment will be represented by outerwear. Within this subcategory, 40% will be represented by overcoats. Overcoats can come in varying styles, like the cocoon overcoat mentioned above, and varying weights. The remaining 60% of the category is split evenly between trench coats and peacoats. Both coats styles are classic and are important to build a wardrobe depending on one's personal style.





## Sourcing

The nature of secondhand retailing makes it difficult to predict what brands of merchandise we will be carrying. We will not accept any secondhand intimates, swimwear, or athletic wear, this includes any merchandise by brands like, Victoria's Secret, Nike, Adidas, Supreme, etc. Pricing for merchandise will be based on the quality of the garment, the designer or brand of the garment, how the garment fits into current trends, and the historical significance of the garment. Designer brands will be marked higher, as well as, pieces that are original and iconic from their decade.

Our merchandise assortment is consistent with the sustainability/triple bottom line strategies of our company by providing garments that had a purpose and still do. We will primarily sell secondhand clothing, but we will have a brand to supplement inventory. The economic, social, and environmental aspects of our products have depth and show our values as a company. Since we source from wholesalers of clothing that is secondhand, our sustainability strategies are consistent from the beginning. As a company, we do understand that the items we get when sourcing are not consistent like a regular retailer. We will be sourcing from two major secondhand wholesale companies on both sides of the country.

First, the vintage wholesaler based out of Philadelphia called Bulk Vintage. Bulk Vintage Clothing, Inc. was started in 2009 by the owner, Amanda Saslow, when her \*slight\* addiction to purchasing mass quantities of vintage clothing threatened to suffocate both her home and the basement of the vintage store she had opened a year earlier (Bulk Vintage Warehouse). This is the beauty of secondhand clothing that we want to source from since we are able to gather items that are one of kind and sell to our consumer. Second, the vintage wholesaler based out of California called Torgom Vintage Clothing. They pride themselves on being a company founded that values vintage clothing in all its eras of life (Torgom Vintage Trading).

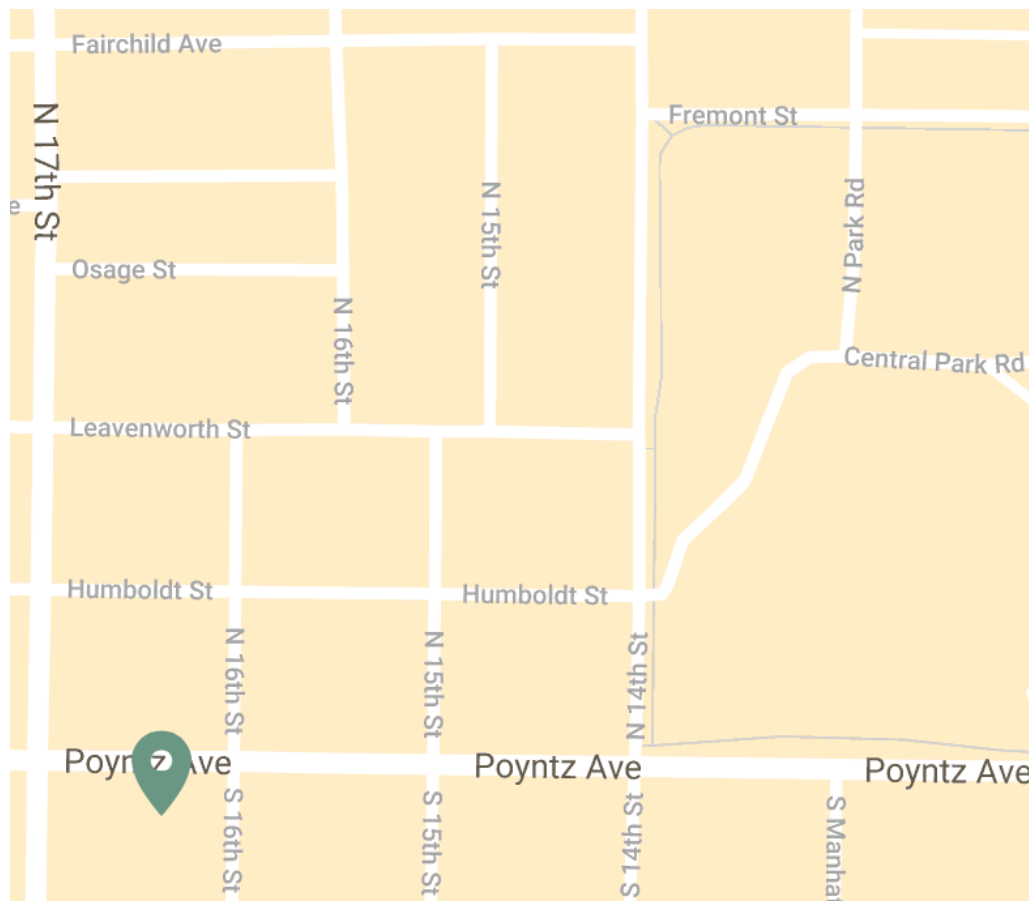
The brands we will source from if we need to supplement inventory would be House of Sunny which is based out of East London. They say that their products are designed for an easy every day, each product is carefully crafted to become a wardrobe staple; the perfect addition to elevate any wardrobe and can transition through the seasons ("House of Sunny"). Also, that quality and sustainability are always foremost in thought along with ensuring affordability is never sacrificed to achieve this. Therefore, our retailer will stay true to sourcing clothing that has the consumer becoming someone who cares about the product more than it looks, but also its journey before hitting the store.

Additionally, we will be accepting pieces from customers and the Manhattan community. While marketing at events prior to and while we are open, we will be accepting merchandise from customers at our booths. We will also accept walk in drop offs for purchase during business hours. The merchandise we accept from consumers will be bought from them up front and resold at our retailer. Consumers will also have the option to donate their clothing and we will go through it and decide what garments we want to resell. The remaining garments will be donated to local shelters or recycled.

# LOCATION

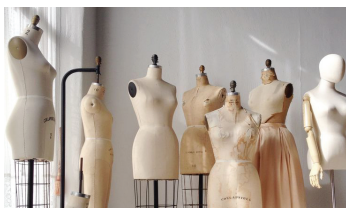
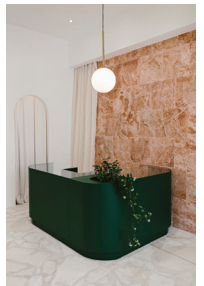
The location of our retailer will be in a residential house located at 1609 Poyntz Ave. Manhattan, KS. Our reasoning behind choosing this space is that it is near the downtown area, which is the major shopping district for our demographic. We do not want to disrupt the neighborhood around us so that is why we fine-tuned our location to areas with Poyntz and Anderson as our barriers. Additionally, there are two other businesses located in homes on either side of this location which will help increase foot traffic. There is a charm to being a street over from the normal strip of stores. This allows us to keep the style of downtown for our customer yet have a more personalized shopping experience.

Our deciding factor to move away from a traditional retail space is to build a strong relationship with our customers. As we scouted the surrounding areas, this space is on a well traveled road. This location would allow us to highlight our strengths as a second hand/ vintage retailer and add small features such as hot coffee at the door. We would create a low key atmosphere as the customer sifts through the vintage/second-hand apparel. The need to transform areas of the home would be evident to make it look like a retailer with the bones of a comfortable space. We would be on brand with using what is already there instead of remodeling a whole building. This emphasizes the beauty of the secondhand or vintage apparel that would fill garment racks in our retailer.



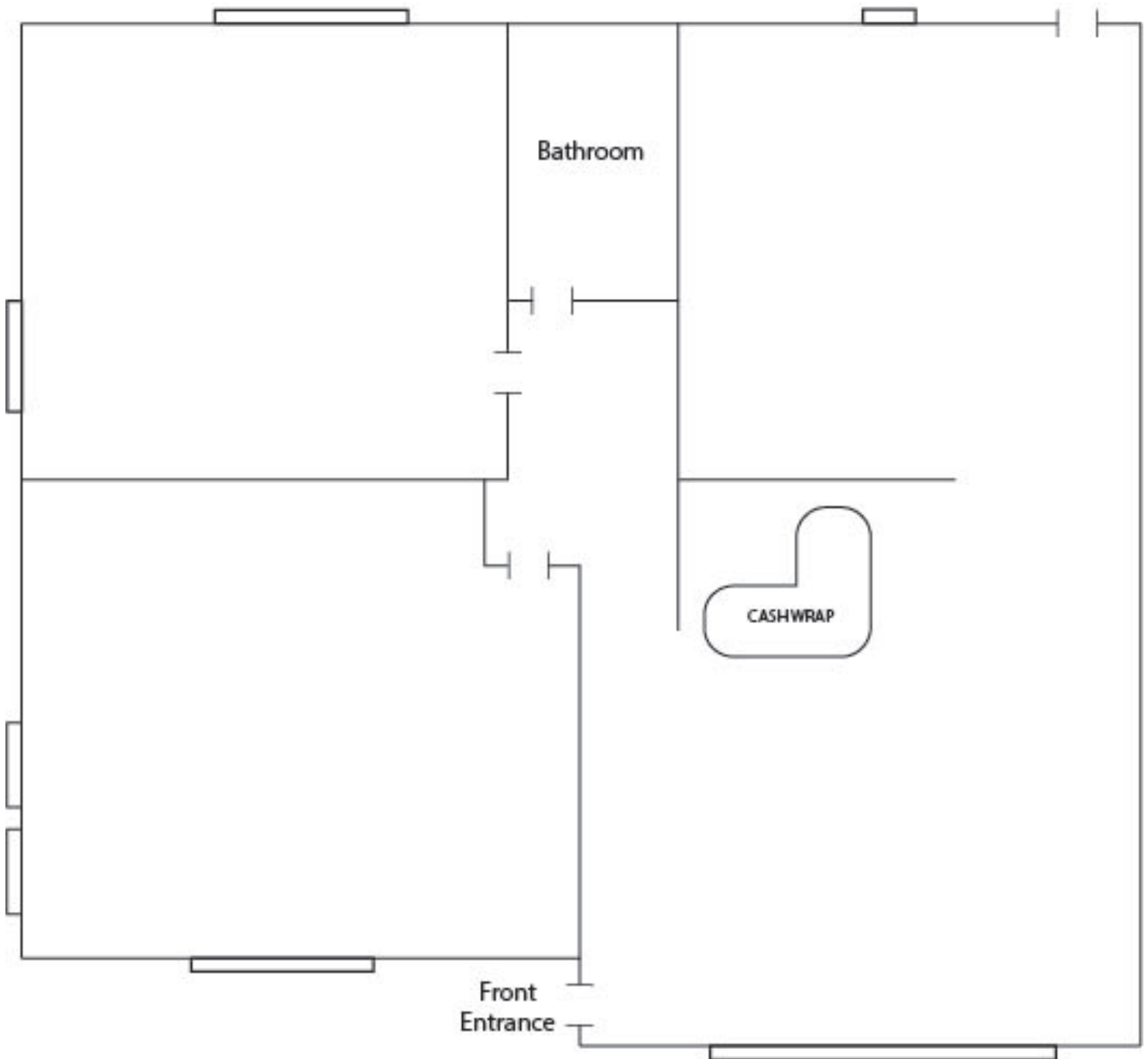
# VISUAL MERCHANDISING PLAN

## MOOD BOARD



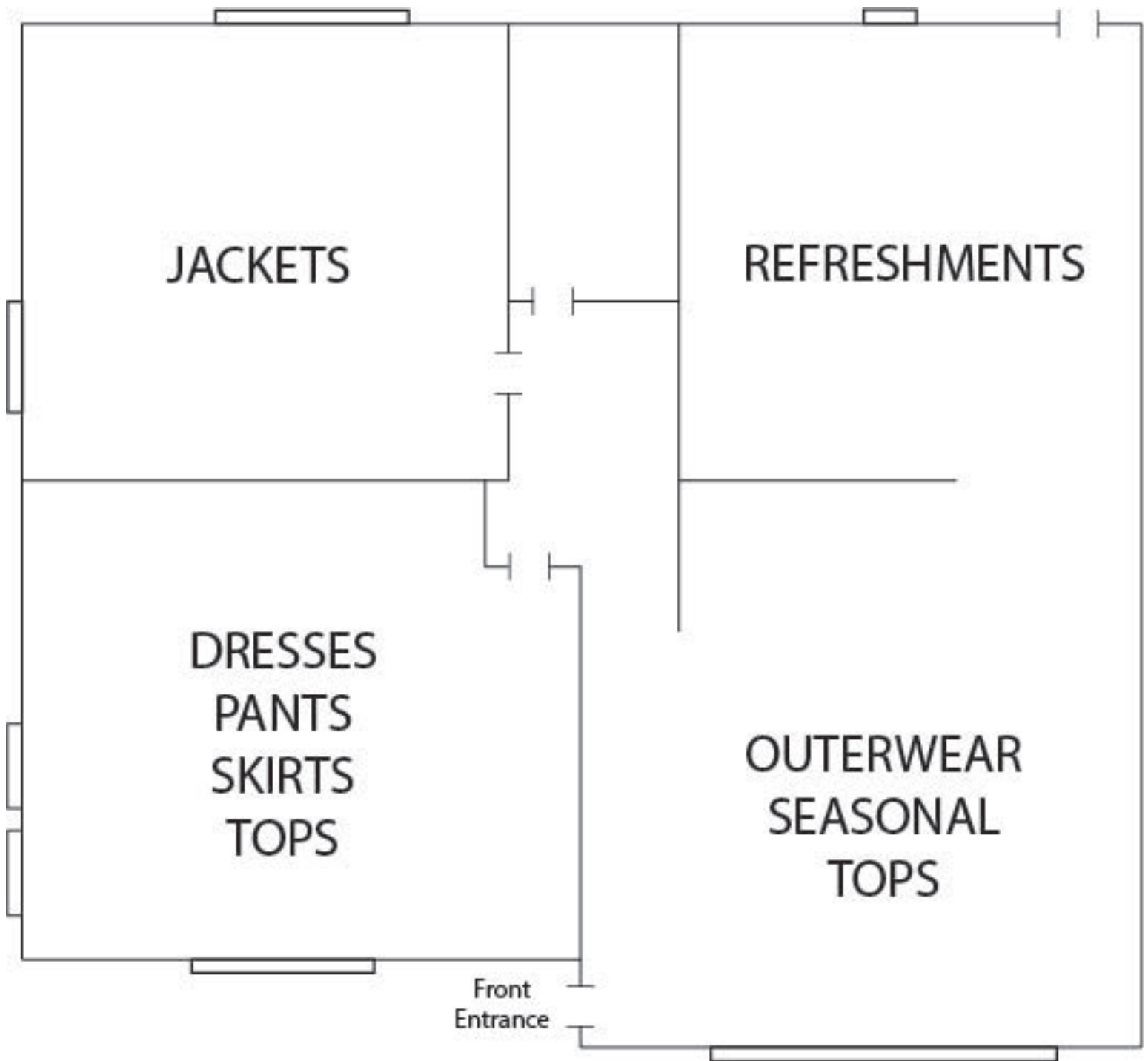
# BASIC STORE LAYOUT

BACK



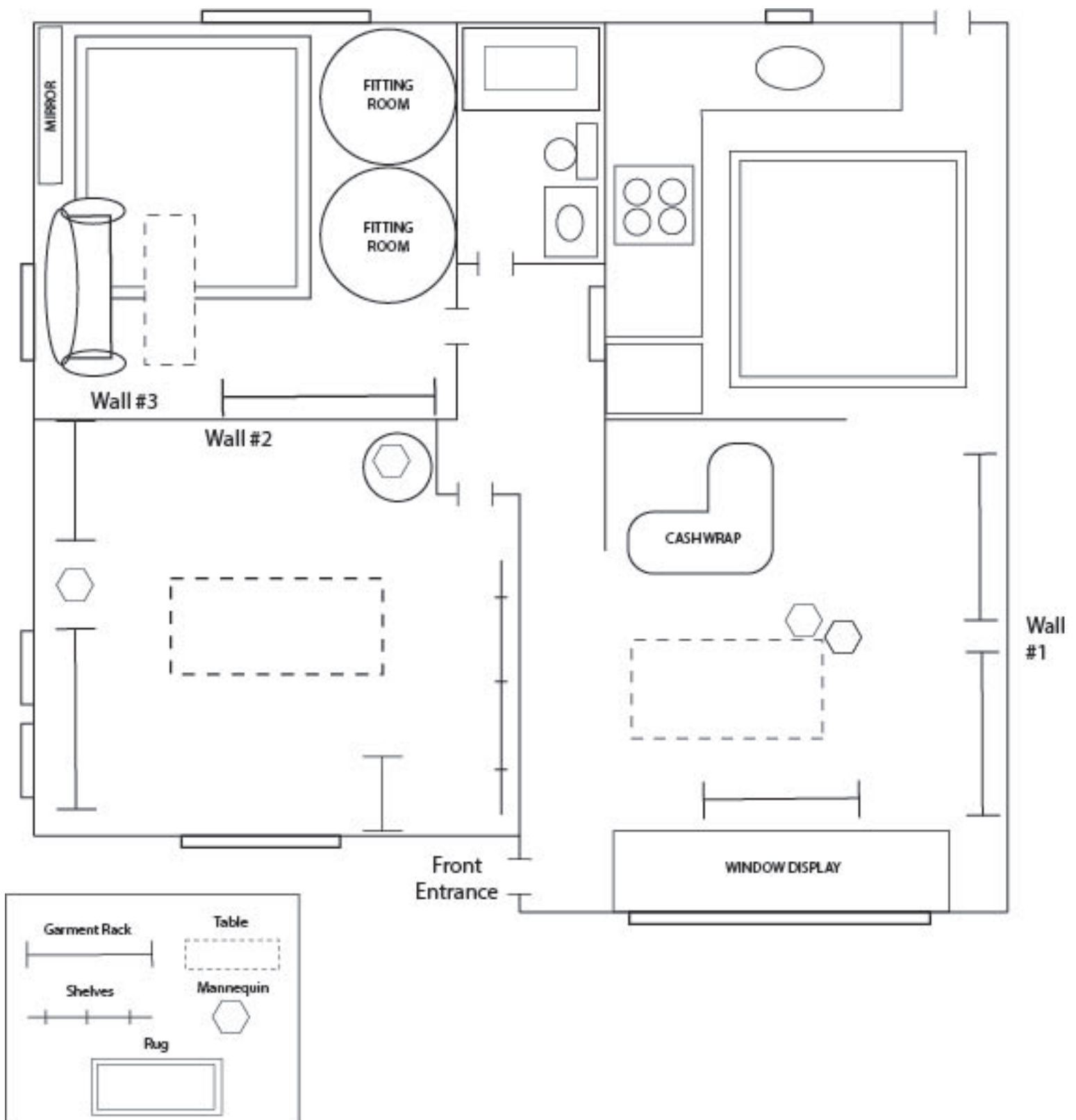
FRONT

# DEPARTMENT LAYOUT





# DETAILED STORE LAYOUT



# WINDOW DISPLAY



# WALL #1 PLANNOGRAM

wall 1



# WALL #2 PLANNOGRAM





# WALL #3 PLANNOGRAM





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