MAKE TECH PACKS IN VIETNAM

FOR FASHION START-UPS

BY CHRIS WALKER & MEG FISHER

FIBR.
VSOURCE
With Chris Walker
Manufacturing Consultant

START YOUR FASHION BRAND TODAY!

Hi, we are Chris Walker and Meg Fisher. We are here to help you design your garments, create your tech packs and produce in Vietnam.

In fact you can make your tech packs anywhere in the world because every major city has fashion professionals that can assist you. We recommend making them in Vietnam because that is where we do our production for our clients and we know tech pack freelancers that will make your basic tech pack for few hundred dollars per style.

We wrote this book together based on our combined 15 years experience in the garment manufacturing industry. Tech packs are the key to success when producing any kind of apparel. We will explain why tech packs are vital to your brand and share expert tips on how to make tech packs yourself.



Chris Walker based in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Hi, my name is Chris Walker and I have been working in the garment industry in Vietnam since 2008. I live in Vietnam and work directly with factories making sportswear, outerwear, lingerie, swimwear, children's clothing and more. Learn more about me on my website.[1]



Meg Fisher based in Sydney, Australia

Hi, my name is Meg and I am an experienced fashion designer, garment technician and tech pack creator. I live in Australia and work with clients all around the world. I explain design and construction options. I describe fabric choices. I help my clients choose trims and accessories. Finally I document all their choices in a tech pack which you can send to Vietnamese factories to get price quotes, samples and production completed. Learn more about me on my website.[2]



Both of us are serious about sustainable fashion and ethical manufacturing. If you need sources of Eco fabrics and certified sewing factories in Vietnam then ask us and we will introduce you. You can also read our book about Buying Eco Fabrics.[3]

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1. www.fashion-start-up-consultant.com
2. https://fibr.online
3. Purchase Buying Eco Fabrics https://fibr.online/products/buying-eco-fabrics-for-fashion-start-ups

TABLE OF CONTENTS

START YOUR FASHION BRAND TODAY!	3
WHAT IS A TECH PACK?	9
ADVICE FOR START UPS	12
WHERE TO BEGIN?	16
TECH PACK PRICING	20
COVER SHEET	22
BILL OF MATERIALS	27
TECHNICAL SKETCHES	32
CALL-OUTS	35
CONSTRUCTION PAGE	38
COLORWAYS	46
ARTWORK	49
LABELS	51
HANG TAGS	53
PACKAGING	54
FOLDING	56
SAMPLE REQUEST	59
MEASUREMENTS	61
EXAMPLE TECH PACKS	65
TECH PACK SOFTWARE	67
FORMATTING TIPS	69
TAKE AWAYS	71
ABOUT MEG AND CHRIS	75
WHERE TO GO FROM HERE?	78

WHAT IS A TECH PACK?

A garment tech pack is a multi-page document that illustrates, describes and lists all the technical details that a factory needs to quote a price and make a sample. Using tech packs for garment production is an industry standard practice - but no one tells us that when we first start out. If you approach a factory *without a tech pack,* they will know that you are unprepared and amateur. There is a high chance that they will smile, say yes and then never answer your emails. Use tech packs, command professionalism and proceed quickly to save time and money.

In a nutshell here is what tech packs contain:

- Fashion illustrations (optional)
- Technical drawings called flats
- Garment construction details
- Breakdown of colorways
- Material and trim details
- Measurement and sizing information
- Label and logo placements
- Packaging details
- Cut sheet (optional)
- Bill of materials
- Sample request form (optional)

Tech packs tend to be 6 to 10 pages long. The amount of detail that goes into a tech pack is overwhelming. However, if you do NOT choose the details then the factory will guess. An incorrect guess can lead to delays, more costly rounds of sampling and all around frustration. It is best to add as much detail as possible.



A tech pack is a working document that should be carried with you when working in the factory.

A tech pack also acts as a contract between you and the factory. Problems are inevitable and when they do happen you can always refer back to the tech packs to decipher who is at fault. For example, if a garment is made but doesn't fit right, then either the measurements in the tech pack are wrong (your fault) or the factory did not follow the measurements (factories fault.) Or, if the goods are rejected by customs authority because the main label is missing the RN number then you can reference the tech pack to see if the RN number is missing or not in the tech pack. If the RN is in the tech pack then the factory is at fault. If the RN number is not specified in the tech pack then you are at fault. Tech packs make it easy to arbitrate costly mistakes.

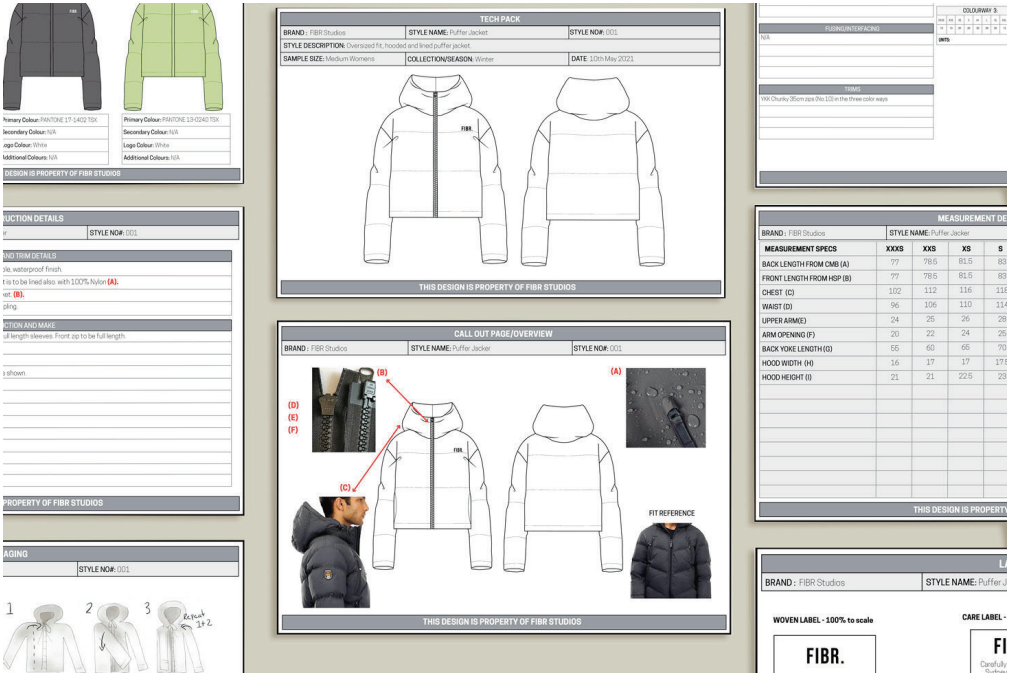
ADVICE FOR START UPS

Create your tech pack first and then ask for samples based on your tech pack.

Spend the time and money upfront to design and document your designs before you start asking for samples. We understand that start-ups have limited budgets and want to get product to market quickly. And we know that jumping on Alibaba.com to get samples is definitely one way to get started. But how do you know exactly what you are getting? Will you be able to easily re-order the style? How much time will you lose if you keep getting kicked back to square one because you did not start with tech packs?

Do it yourself or hire a freelancer.

Make your tech pack by downloading tech pack templates and fill in the information yourself. Or if you have physical samples then hire a tech pack freelancer to create the tech pack based on your sample. If you don't have a physical sample then work with a freelance fashion designer to design and tech pack.



A well done tech pack will have 4 to 20 pages.

Don't rely on the factory to create your tech pack.

Factories must make their own tech packs but they will not give them to you. Why? Because you can take that tech pack to another factory to get another price quote. You can easily take your order elsewhere. Tech packs are extremely valuable in this regard. Factories know this and will refuse to give your their internal tech packs. Don't rely on factories to create your tech packs.

Use your tech pack to switch suppliers quickly.

Imagine you work with a factory for two weeks and then all of a sudden they tell you that their capacity is full, or they increase the price significantly or their minimum order quantity doubles. If you have YOUR tech pack completed, then you can quickly move to another factory. If you don't have a tech pack

then you have to start all over from scratch with a new factory. Do you want to waste weeks of precious time jumping around from factory to factory?

Make a good first impression.

If you show up to a factory with a complete tech pack then you don't need to speak their language. Most factories can read English and understand images and numbers. Having a complete tech pack will make a good first impression and facilitate quick decision making. Establish your professionalism and get their respect from day one by having a tech pack in hand.

Be aware of factories that accept your order without tech packs.

If the factory accepts to work with you without tech packs then be very suspicious. You are going to be paying the factory thousands of dollars to have your garments made. Should you document what you expect to get for the thousands of dollars? Yes. What if there is one single problem like your logo embroidered two centimeters too low on the chest pocket? Can it be fixed easily? Will they say, sorry, our mistake, here is your thousands of dollars back? Most likely it will cost them too much to fix their mistake and they will not give you your money back. It is very very risky to produce anything without documenting technical details. You only have one shot to get it right. Would you build a house without architectural drawings?

Be familiar with Excel, Adobe Illustrator and Corel Draw.

If you plan to do the tech pack yourself then it helps if you are good at using Excel, Adobe Illustrator, InDesign or Corel Draw. You will need Excel to make tables full of descriptions, measurements and specifications. You will need either Adobe Illustrator or Corel Draw to illustrate your fashion illustrations, flats and call out images. Most people are not good at Adobe Illustrator or Corel Draw so you can hire a freelancer to do the technical drawings. If you are

not comfortable with Excel then you can start with tech pack templates. Buy tech pack templates for as low as $9.99 at Fibr.online.[1]

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1. Buy basic and advanced techpack templates at https://fibr.online/collections/tech-pack-templates

WHERE TO BEGIN?

Begin with these 27 questions. A tech pack is basically a list of questions that need to be answered to accurately quote price and make a sample.

When you can answer these 27 questions your tech pack is complete. These are questions that the factory will ask you. If you can't answer then the factory will help you but there is a limit. The more you can answer and avoid asking the factory for a favor, the better off you will be.

1. What is the name of your brand?
2. What is the designers name?
3. What is the short description of the garment?
4. What season does this garment belong to?
5. What is the date this tech pack was created?
6. What is the technical description of the main fabric?
7. What is the style name?
8. What is the style #?
9. What is the size range?

10. What is the sample size?
11. Do you have images for the sample fabric swatches that show details like artwork, patterns or textures?
12. Do you have a technical drawing (aka flat sketch)?
13. Do you know the item name, item description, color, SKU #, quantity and supplier name for every item in your bill of materials?
14. Do you have pictures that show the details of each trim like, buttons, zippers, labels or patches?
15. Do you have pictures that show the details of each accessory like hang-tags, poly-bags or carton boxes?
16. Does your technical drawing call out all the special elements of your design like velcro strips, snaps, secret pockets or water proof seams?
17. Does your construction diagram list the sewing operation, stitch type, stitch width, stitches per inch, seam orientation and seam allowance?
18. Do you know the exact Pantone color code for every element of your design including fabric, lining, buttons, zippers and thread?
19. Do you have the original artwork for any printing that needs to be done on the fabric, trims or accessories?
20. Do you have all the correct wording for your main labels and care labels?
21. Do you know the exact materials, dimensions and placements for all your main labels and care labels?
22. What type of card-stock and print quality do you want for your hang-tags?
23. What material and thickness do you want for your poly-bags? Do they have an adhesive strip?
24. What are you folding instructions?
25. Do you have the exact measurements for at least one size?
26. Do you have the exact graded measurements for the full size range? You only need the sample size measurements.
27. Do you have an accurate technical drawings that show where to take measurements from for quality control checks?

Do you see how much goes into a tech pack? Are these 27 questions overwhelming? It's true that a factory will help you but just how much they will help depends on many factors. Have you done business with them before? Can you make decisions quickly? Is your order quantity and price high enough to cover the expense of helping you with design?

Our suggestion is to rely on the factory as little as possible by answering as many questions as you can in advance. Show up prepared. Be ready to ask one question: *Dear factory, can you quote me a price and make me a sample based on this tech pack?*

TECH PACK PRICING

We believe that a tech pack is worth $US 200 to $US 2,000 depending on the complexity of the garment. A basic t-shirt tech pack may only cost $US 200 but a multi-layer, multi-fabric ski jacket with six pockets and moulded elbows might cost $US 2,000. There are people who will do tech packs for less than $200 but you get what you pay for. Well done tech packs require expert knowledge and approximately 5 to 20 hours to complete.

The majority of our clients need help understanding fabric options, sewing options, trim options, accessory options and packing options. Or they need help with the design itself whether it be the fit (measurements), color selection (Pantone Colors) or artwork (Corel or Adobe Illustrator drawings.) This is not tech packing; this is design, development and merchandising consulting. If you pay a tech packer and they throw in design, development and merchandising consulting for free then you are getting a great deal. *We differentiate between design, development and merchandising versus tech packing.*

. . .

Newcomers to the garment industry underestimate the value of a tech pack simply because they don't know all the details that go into making a garment. Even the most basic t-shirt has around 27 decision points starting with the name of your brand to the color of the sewing thread. Design, fit, seaming and accessorizing a garment requires training that is not easily gained by a quick search on Google. The going price for a basic tech pack in Vietnam is @ $US 200. Expect to pay @ $US 600 in Europe and USA.

Some tech pack freelancers only charge by the hour because they know that the hours will accumulate quickly as the client goes through the process of discovery and makes multiple changes. An experienced designer or garment technologist that can speak English well will charge between $US50 to $US500 per hour.

COVER SHEET

The cover sheet typically includes a sketch and the bill of materials. At the top of the cover sheet, and every sheet thereafter, there should be the following information:

- The name of the brand
- The designer's name
- Short description of the garment
- The season the garment belongs to
- The date the tech pack was created
- A technical description of the main fabric
- The style name
- The style number
- The size range
- The sample size

TECHPACKS.CO		COVER SHEET & BOM
BRAND: BRAND NAME	**DESIGNER:** DESIGNER NAME	**DESCRIPTION:** MENS JACKET
SEASON: S/S 2020	**DATE:** DATE CREATED	**MAIN FABRIC:** WAXED COTTON
STYLE NAME: HUNTING JACKET	**STYLE #:** AB012345	**SIZE RANGE & [SAMPLE SIZE]:** XS S [M] L XL

Belinda at Techpacks.co has a great header design.

Our Expert Tip - Instead of putting the bill of materials on the cover sheet, we recommend putting a quantities per style per color breakdown list. We call this the quantity breakdown list (QBL.) This quantity per style per color information is very important for the factory. They use it to estimate the complexity of the order. They use it to gauge if you can meet fabric minimum order quantities. It is more important than the bill of materials (BOM.)

Here is what a quantities per style per color breakdown (QBL) list looks like:

BILL OF MATERIALS + QUANTITY BREAKDOWN LIST

BRAND : FIBR Studios	**STYLE NAME:** Puffer Jacker	**STYLE NO#:** 001

Quantities per Style per Color per Artwork List

CUSTOMER NAME	
FACTORY NAME	
COLLECTION NAME	

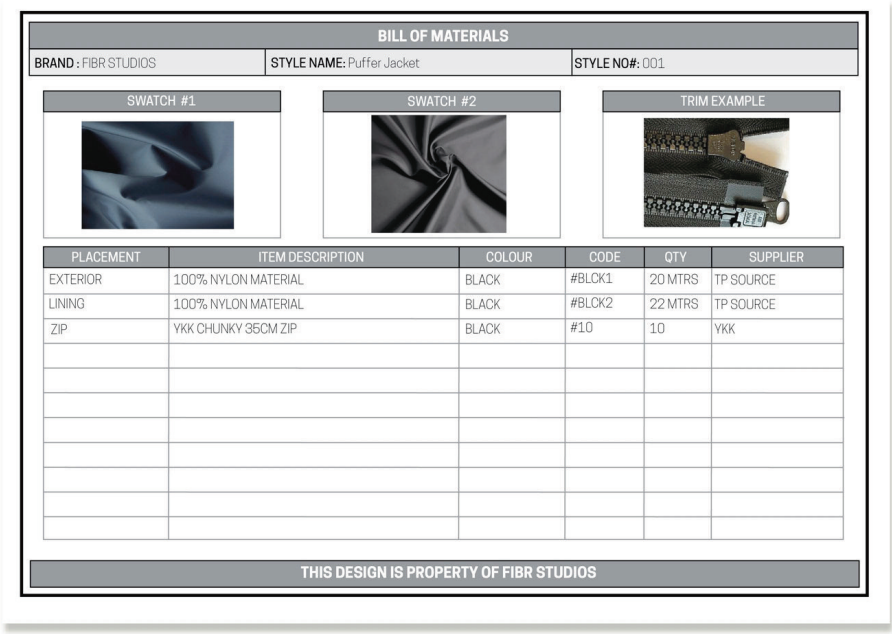
No.	DESCRIPTION & STYLE #	FABRIC DESCRIPTION	FABRIC COLOR	ARTWORK DESCRIPTION	XXS	XS	S	M	L	XL	XXL	3XL		TOTAL (PCS)	HS CODE
1															
2															
3															
4															
5															
6															
7															
8															
9															
10															
	TOTAL PIECES:														

DELIVERY DATE	
PREFERRED PAYMENT TERMS	
DESTINATION COUNTRY AND PORT	

THIS DESIGN IS PROPERTY OF FIBR STUDIOS

Quantity Breakdown List

Here is what a BOM looks like:



BILL OF MATERIALS

BRAND : FIBR STUDIOS | **STYLE NAME:** Puffer Jacket | **STYLE NO#:** 001

SWATCH #1

SWATCH #2

TRIM EXAMPLE

PLACEMENT	ITEM DESCRIPTION	COLOUR	CODE	QTY	SUPPLIER
EXTERIOR	100% NYLON MATERIAL	BLACK	#BLCK1	20 MTRS	TP SOURCE
LINING	100% NYLON MATERIAL	BLACK	#BLCK2	22 MTRS	TP SOURCE
ZIP	YKK CHUNKY 35CM ZIP	BLACK	#10	10	YKK

THIS DESIGN IS PROPERTY OF FIBR STUDIOS

We recommend putting the BOM either on the first page or second page.

An order of 1,000 black t-shirts is significantly different than an order of 1,000 t-shirts in three colors and two prints per color. The color and print variations affect the profitability of an order significantly. If there are prints, then list the quantities per style per color per print.

The quantity breakdown list (QBL) allows the factory to quickly assess whether they are interested in your order or not. They will quickly calculate if they can make a decent profit or not. At the end of the day, the factory is a business too. They have employees and bills to pay. Treat them with respect and nine times out of ten they will do the same.



The cover sheet of the tech pack should present the business you bring to the table.

BILL OF MATERIALS

Producing a garment is like baking a cake. When baking a cake you need four things: ingredients, recipe, a cook and a kitchen. The bill of materials (BOM) in a tech pack is like the list of ingredients for baking a cake. The BOM is the list of things the factory needs to buy before they can start sewing your garment together.

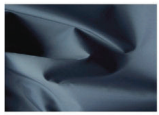
The BOM is a table with the following columns:

- Item description
- Color
- Supplier's name
- Manufacturers code or SKU number
- Quantity
- Cost (optional)

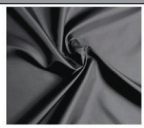
BILL OF MATERIALS

BRAND : FIBR STUDIOS | **STYLE NAME:** Puffer Jacket | **STYLE NO#:** 001

SWATCH #1



SWATCH #2



TRIM EXAMPLE



PLACEMENT	ITEM DESCRIPTION	COLOUR	CODE	QTY	SUPPLIER
EXTERIOR	100% NYLON MATERIAL	BLACK	#BLCK1	20 MTRS	TP SOURCE
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ZIP	YKK CHUNKY 35CM ZIP	BLACK	#10	10	YKK

THIS DESIGN IS PROPERTY OF FIBR STUDIOS

The BOM can also be your cost breakdown sheet.

When you describe the fabric, be as technical as you can. If you write that you want 95% polyester and 5% spandex sportswear fabric, then the factory will be frustrated because there are more than 100 variations of 95/5 poly/span sportswear fabric. The factory needs to know the fiber specifications, knitting or weaving structure, weight and any special finish you want.

If you are not sure what the fabric specifications are then we recommend you hold off on sending your tech packs to a factory. Factories are not good at what is called fabric development. If you need fabric development then we recommend you hire a fabric development company like Enventys or AS International. Or contact fabric mills directly and work with their sales team to

get fabric development support. Fabric mills will provide you with exact fabric specifications.

Or, if you have sample of the fabric you want then send it along with the tech pack and indicate in the tech pack, "copy supplied fabric."

Or, clearly state in the tech pack "need factory recommendations." The factory can certainly suggest fabric options but if they don't have what you want then you are stuck on first.

When you describe a color, use a Pantone number. We talk more about Pantone in the colorways chapter.

If you are nominating the supplier for an item on the BOM then write down the supplier name. For example, if you are using YKK zippers then include the supplier's contact information like company name, contact person's name and their email. Write down the model number or SKU number given to you by your supplier.

If you are not nominating a supplier and will accept the factory's supplier then write "factory choose supplier" in the supplier's name column.

Our Expert Tip - We recommend you dedicate one whole page to the BOM. Separate the BOM into four parts: fabric, trims, accessories and other. This allows you to visually compare the cost breakdown by group. This will be helpful when analyzing the price.

Our Expert Tip Continued: Include a column for price. If you know the prices of each component then include it in the tech pack. If you don't, ask the factory to provide a cost breakdown of each item on the BOM. Most likely they will not give you the individual prices. But, think ahead, when their price is too high, the next logical thing to do, is, start getting the prices for each component yourself to justify the price.

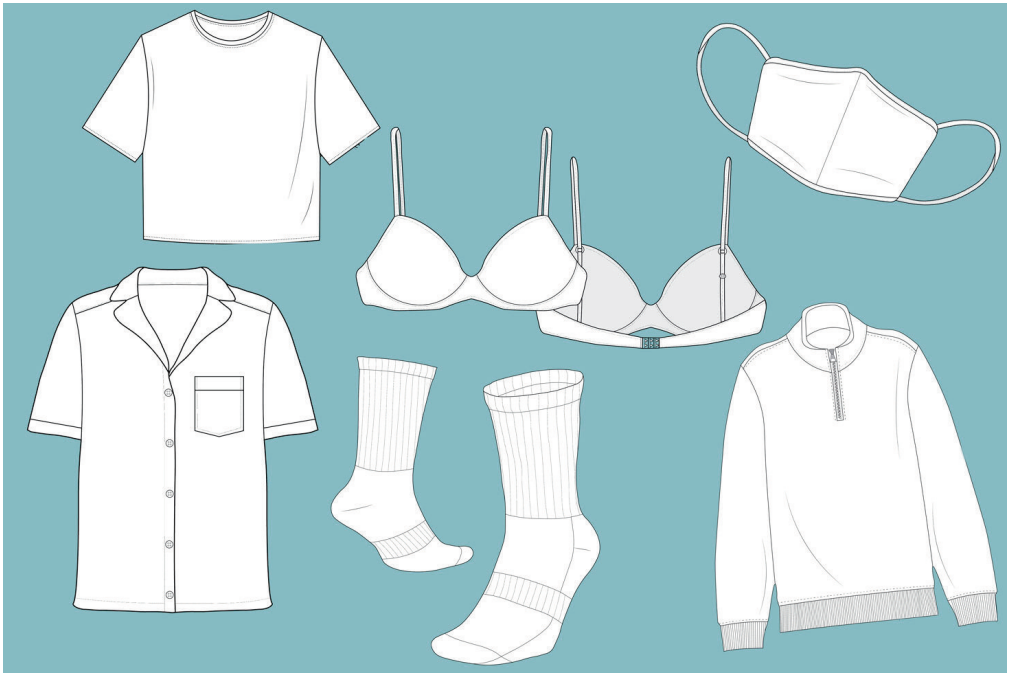
The BOM is your list of ingredients as well as your cost breakdown sheet.

Normally labor, management fee and factory profit are not listed in the BOM. They are needed to calculate the total price though. Ask your tech pack designer for a cost breakdown sheet for your own use where you can add external costs such as labor, management fees, import taxes, duties and shipping etc.

TECHNICAL SKETCHES

A garment starts as an idea in your mind. Unfortunately, the factory staff can't read your mind. The best thing you can do is describe the garment using detailed technical drawings, reference images and measurements.

A technical sketch, aka fashion flat, will illustrate details such as fit, drape, seams, trim placement and styling. It will also indicate proportion and often be the foundation for pattern makers to bring the garment to life. Therefore, the technical sketch needs to be accurate to ensure the first sample is nearly perfect.



Technical Sketch

What makes a sketch technical? The technical drawing does not include a model. It's just the garment. It is done in black and white. There is usually a front and back view. If there are complicated features then there will be additional sketches to highlight the details.

If you plan to do your tech pack by yourself then we strongly recommend you hire a freelance technical designer to do your technical sketches for you.

Know the difference between a *fashion illustration* and *technical sketch*. They are very different. A fashion illustration includes the model and colors. It is inspir-

ing, emotional and artistic. A fashion illustration does not highlight technical details.



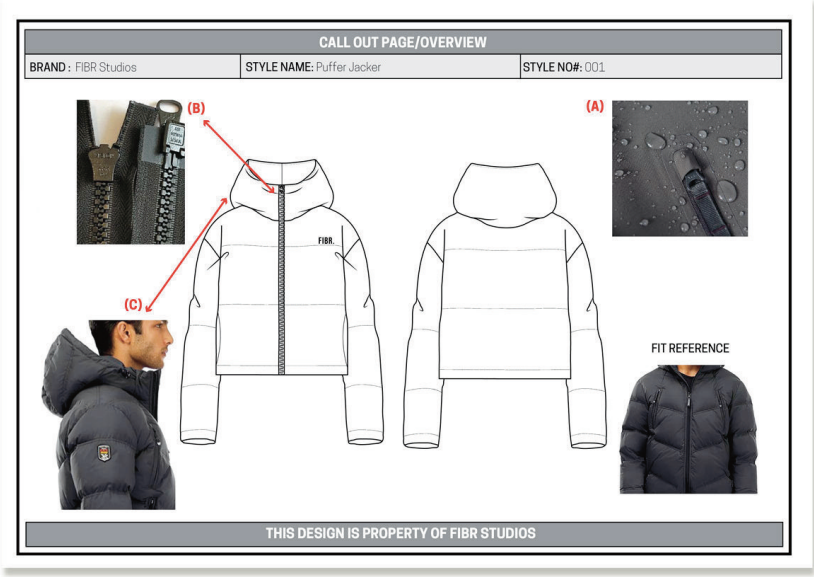
Fashion Illustration

CALL-OUTS

A call-out page draws attention to details for the different parts of your garment. You write a note or instruction and draw a line to the part of the garment where the note is applicable. Usually, details that require additional explanation are discussed face to face. Call-outs is a way to get the details in writing to confirm understanding when meeting in person is not possible. Misunderstandings happen all the time. Picture the factory developing 20 styles per day. Human error happens so create a great call-out page to avoid mishaps.

Call out anything that is not intuitive. The more the better. Call out details like:

- Embellishment placement
- Labels
- Piping
- Drawstrings
- Bartacks
- Gussets
- And waterproof zippers



Call Out Page

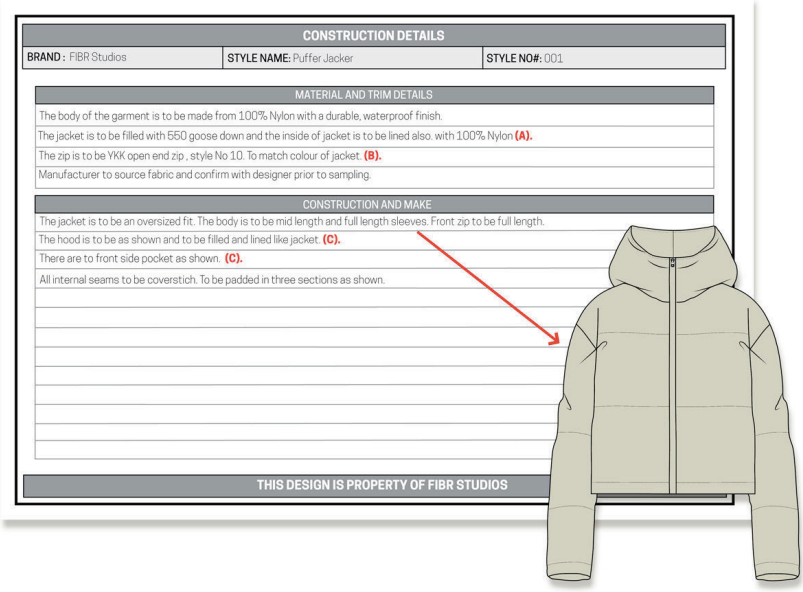
Our Expert Tip - To learn how to do call-outs using Adobe Illustrator watch this video called 'Adobe for Fashion: Tech Packs- Creating Call Outs [1] in Illustrator' by Robin Schneider.

1. Video about making call out pages in Adobe Illustration. https://youtu.be/86rVhG7AboY

CONSTRUCTION PAGE

The construction page tells the factory how to sew the garment together. It includes a construction drawing with a corresponding construction detail table. Examples of construction details are stitching, bonding or moulding. The construction drawing will have call-outs labeled with numbers that correspond to the list in the construction detail table. We recommend including reference images of seams to be super clear.

The construction detail table also includes garment construction details for zippers, buttons, embroidery, velcro, flaps, collars and pockets. If you don't know what the construction details are then either consult with a designer or ask the factory to choose by noting in the tech pack: to be chosen by factory.



Construction Details

Providing reference images is the best way to communicate construction details. Don't fret, most people don't know the construction details but they can not be overlooked. You can always note in your tech pack, "factory choose."

Researching garment construction or hiring a designer is important because seam finishes can create huge differences in the quality of the garment. Factories usually know well what constructions are best but if they choose incorrectly then should they be liable?

The operations column in the construction detail table refers to sewing operations. Sewing means joining different parts of garments (panels) with the use of needle and thread or adhesive. An operation refers to the sewing action the seamstress will perform. For example, the call-out will point to the collar and

the operation is called topstitch on collar. A call-out will indicate how two pieces of fabric (panels) should be joined together. The call-out can also indicate how trims are sewn on to fabric etc.

The stitches column indicates the type of stitch, the width of the stitch and the number of stitches per inch (SPI). There are more than 70 different types of stitches. See detailed descriptions below.

Common stitches are:

- Chain Stitch
- Lock Stitch
- Blind Stitch
- Over-edge Stitch
- Safety Stitch
- Flatlock Stitch

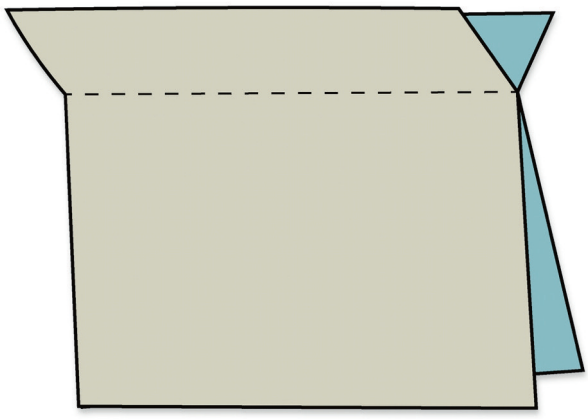
If you know the width and stitches per inch (SPI) then note them clearly in the tech pack. Otherwise note, “factory choose.”

All of these decisions can be incredibly overwhelming if you don't have a fashion degree. If you are able to work directly with the factory you can ask them for recommendations. Asking for help with construction details by email usually goes over like ice-cream on a blazing hot day. Ask for help from a local trained garment technician.

Our Expert Tip - Coats is a brand of threads and yarns. They have a great webpage that illustrates common stitches. Check it out if you want to dig in deeper. [1]

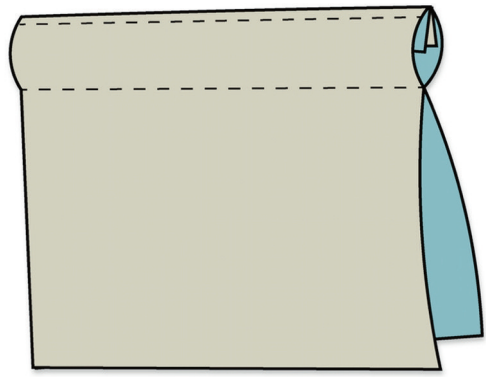
The next column is seams. There are four basic kinds of seams: plain seams, french seams, flat seams and lapped seams.

A plain seam joins two pieces of fabric together face-to-face by sewing through both pieces, leaving a seam allowance with raw edges inside.



Plain Seam

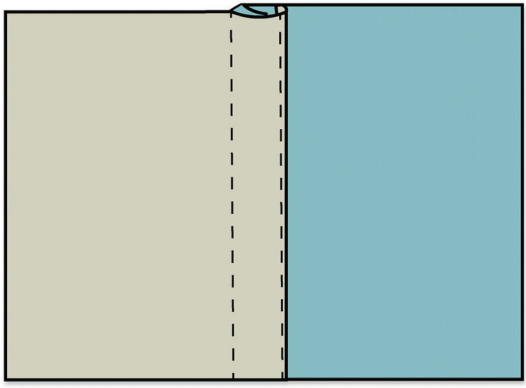
A french seam joins two pieces of fabric with wrong sides together, then the seam allowances are trimmed and pressed. A second seam is sewn with right sides together, enclosing the raw edges of the original seam. Clear as mud right?



French Seam

A flat seam joins two pieces of fabric edge-to-edge with no overlap and is sewn with hand or machine stitching that encloses the raw edges.

A lapped seam joins two overlapped layers with the wrong side of the top layer laid against the right side of the lower layer.



Lapped Seam

Head spinning yet? Our heads spin daily deciding which construction details are best and documenting them in our clients' tech packs.

Our Expert Tip - Learn more about sewing seams and see some great illusions of seams on Instagram @abcseams.

Who knew there was so much to consider in a single seam. Point is, let a professional tech packer guide you and don't hope that the factory will get it right. Be sure to include the seam allowances so everyone knows what will be acceptable during quality control checks. Or give the factory authority to decide for you but don't hold them liable.

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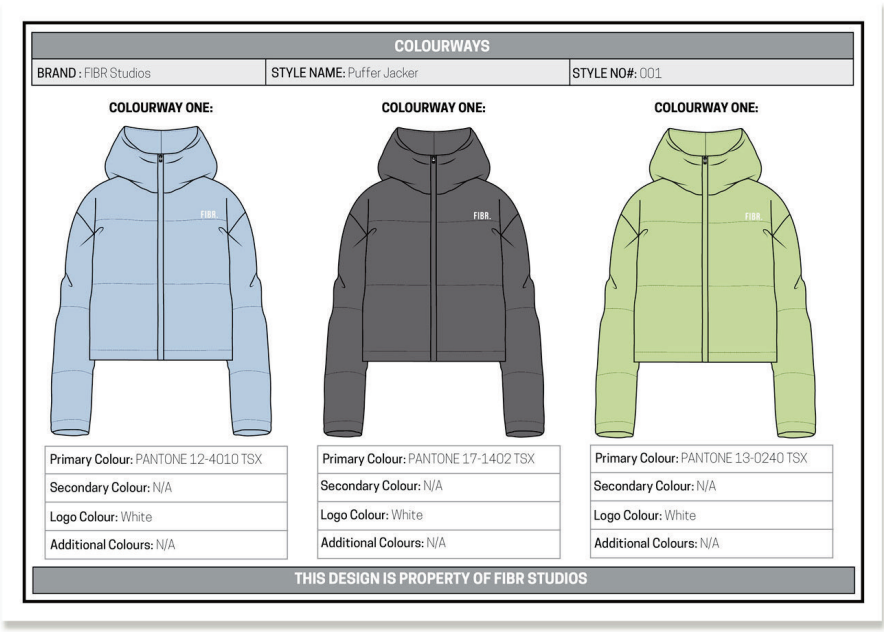
1. https://coats.com/en

COLORWAYS

Did you know that there are more than 10 different shades of black? Same is true for white. It is not enough to ask the factory for blue - not even royal blue. There are many shades of blue and what is royal to one eye is not royal to another. There is an industry standard system of colors for textiles and it is called the Pantone system. Each Pantone color has a specific code and these codes need to be included in your tech pack. All reputable factories use the Pantone system. This system is the reference point when there is a dispute about color.

Our Expert Tip - be aware that there are multiple Pantone color systems. There is the Pantone Matching System (PMS) and there is the Fashion, Home and Interior (FHI) System. If you are producing apparel then use the FHI system. Fashion designers need more whites, blacks, and neutrals in their palette which the FHI systems offers. Print and packaging designers need colors that will pop on shelf which the PMS System offers.



Colorway Description

Just defining the Pantone color of your fabric is not enough. You also need to clearly state the colors used on buttons, drawstrings, zippers, thread, neck-tape,

interlining etc. If you don't then the factory must guess. If they guess right then go buy a lottery ticket cause your luck is on.

Be sure to include the Pantone color code in your bill of materials (BOM) as well as the colorways page.

ARTWORK

Artwork includes your logo, graphic design, embroidery, sequins, stones and appliqué (patches). Artwork can be placed on fabric, labels, hang-tags, poly-bags, carton-boxes etc.

Creating the artwork for your designs is an exciting part of building a brand. We can't emphasize enough how important consistent and mind-blowing artwork can elevate your brand from amateur to professional. Make sure you document all your artwork clearly in your tech pack.

The original artwork files will either be a digital photo or an illustration made using software like Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, Paint or Corel Draw. These files need to be larger than 2 MB. They will be given to the factory along with the tech pack. We recommend using email, Google Drive, Dropbox or USB. The files should be .png (transparent) as opposed to .jpeg. Vector format is also preferred. Adobe Illustrator is the software to use if you want vector format. The alternate option is raster format which is the format you get when using Photoshop, Corel Draw, Paint and other graphic design software.

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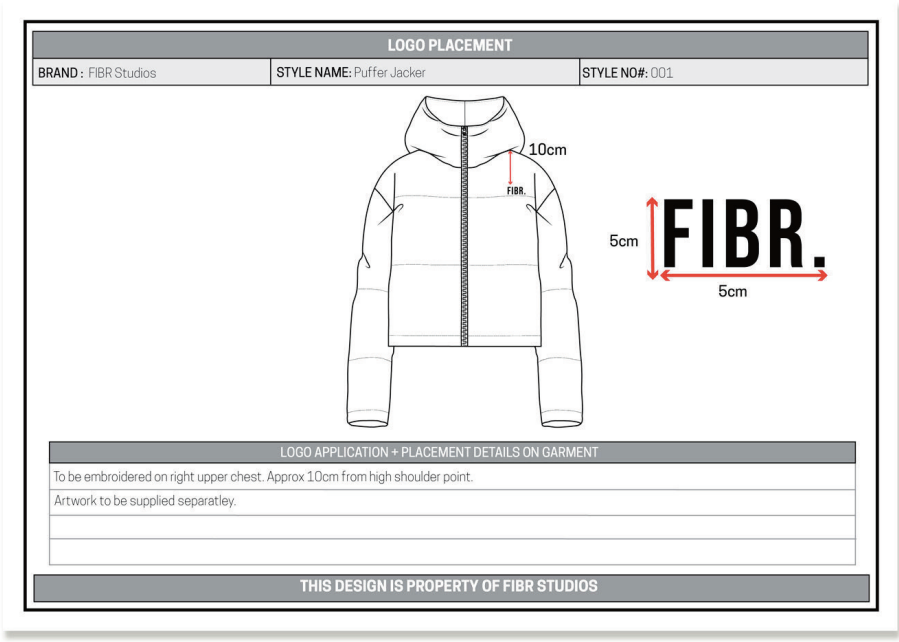
The placement, size and orientation of the artwork needs to be illustrated in the tech pack.



Logo Placement

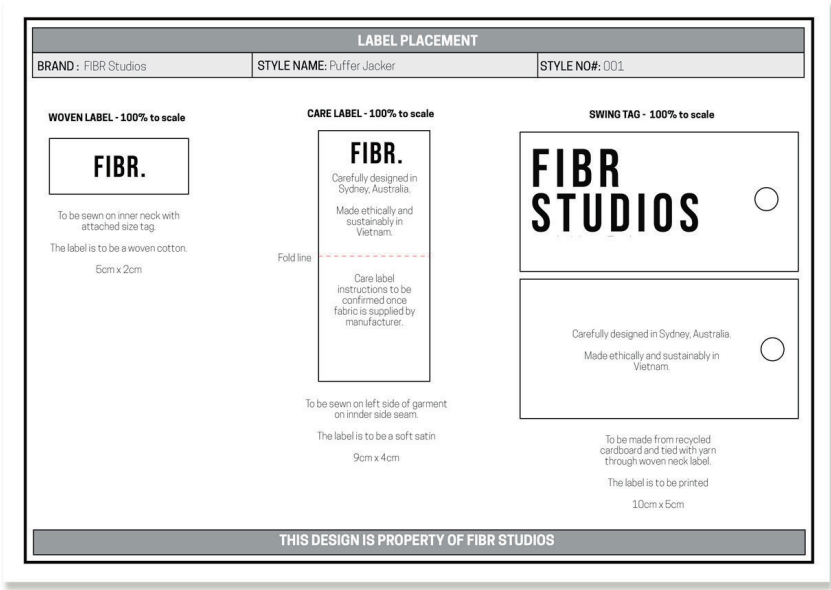
You will also need to indicate the artwork medium. By medium we mean embroidery, sublimation printing, screen printing, appliqué, sequins, crystals, beads, stones etc.

LABELS

Garments typically have two labels: main label and care label. Exact details about both need to be included in the tech pack. The material, placement and text must be clearly illustrated.

Our Expert Tip - If a label is a heat-seal label then indicate the temperature, pressure and duration needed to apply the heat-seal label. If you don't know, ask the factory and write down what they tell you in the tech pack. This information comes in handy during your in-line quality control inspections. You should check the temperature, pressure and duration of heat-seal label application.

Research the legal requirements for labeling in the countries where your garment will be sold. You don't want to find out at the last minute that the wording on your labels is not compliant. Factories are not responsible for the wording on labels. They will follow your tech pack instructions.



Main Label and Care Label Information

Ask the fabric supplier about fabric care instructions or decide yourself what to write on the care label.

HANG TAGS

Be sure to illustrate or describe the following properties of your hang tag.

- What is the shape? Is it a banner, circle, rectangle or rounded square?
- What is the orientation? Is it vertical or horizontal?
- What are the exact dimensions?
- What is the grammage of the card stock? (Great article about card stock measurements). [1]
- What is the finish? Is it uncoated or glossy?
- What is the size and position of the hole?
- What kind of attaching string do you want: plastic, cotton, or metal?
- Are there bar codes? Are they printed or attached as stickers?

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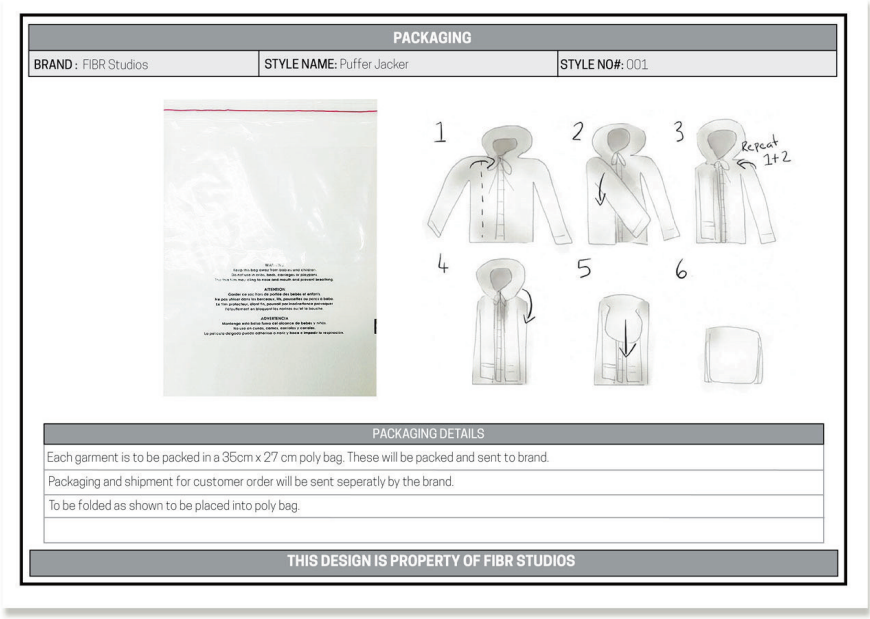
1. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Card_stock

PACKAGING

Packaging information typically includes instructions about poly bags and carton boxes. Is the poly bag polypropylene (PP) or polyethylene (PE)? Is the cardboard box 3, 5 or 7 ply? What are the dimensions of the poly bags and cardboard boxes? And finally what is printed on the poly bags or carton boxes?

Adding silicon gel bags is a packing option. We recommend you mention them in your bill of materials. Describe how many silicon gel bags to include in each poly bag or each box.



Note the affixation warning on polybag.

Packaging labels and bar codes that go on poly bags or carton boxes should be described and illustrated on the packaging page.

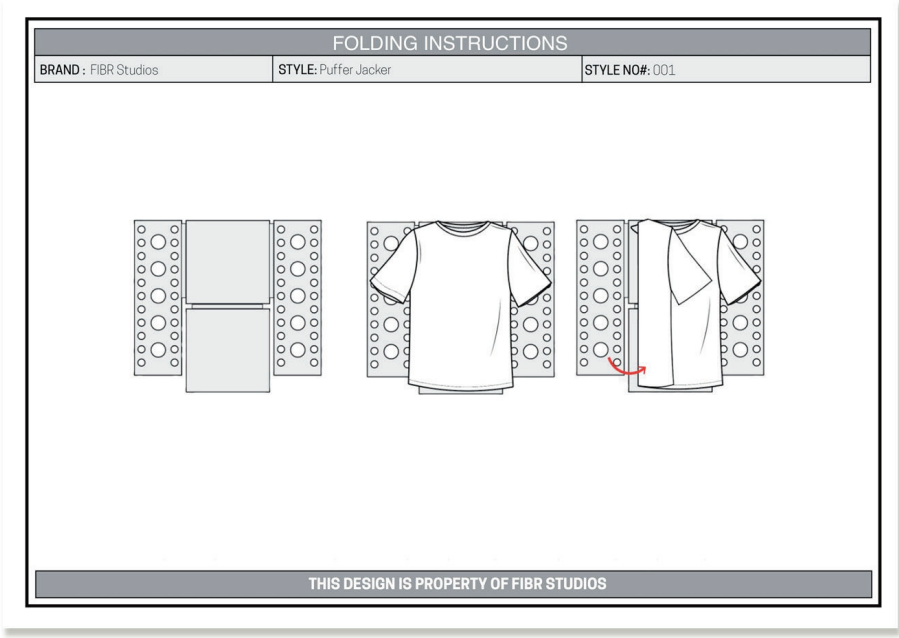
FOLDING

Illustrate how you would like the factory to fold and insert your garments into the poly bags or boxes.

Seems simple right? Like putting socks on a rooster. To get an appreciation for the complexity of folding garments, check out this video.[1] They illustrate multiple ways to fold various garments.



Do you want the factory to use folding boards during production? If yes then mention them in the tech pack. If you require a unique folding board then include a picture of the folding board inside the tech pack. Here is an example of what a folding board looks like.



Folding board illustration.

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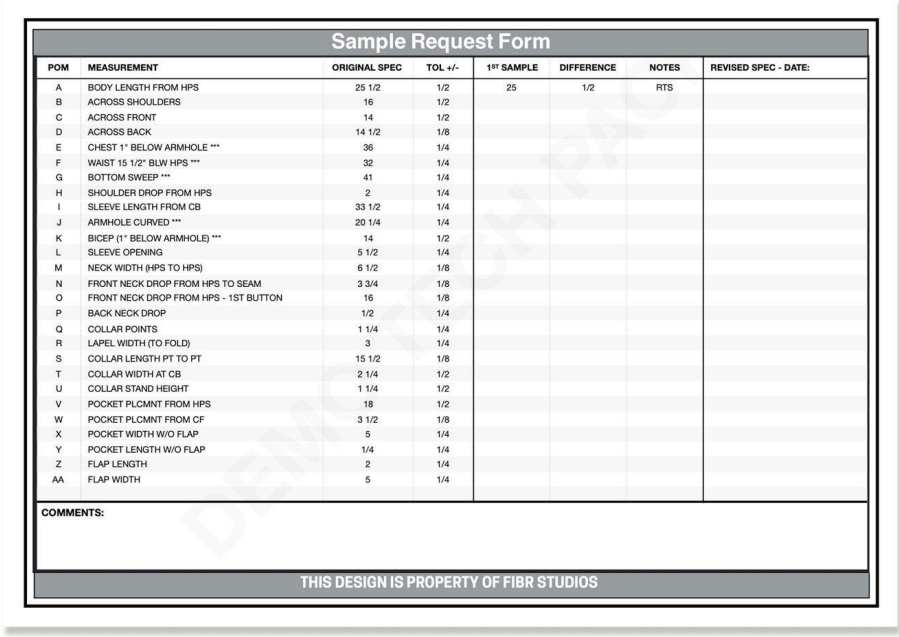
1. This KonMari Fold Basics video has had over 2.4 million views. https://youtu.be/IjkmqbJTLBM

SAMPLE REQUEST

The first order of business after getting an acceptable price quote is to get a sample made. Be pro-active and include a sample request page in your tech pack. Include the measurements for the sample size which is usually medium. Include the allowable tolerances so the factory can anticipate your quality control standard.

Leave empty space to record the measurements of the first sample and make notes. You can even leave room to record the results of a second sample as illustrated below.



Sample Request Form

POM	MEASUREMENT	ORIGINAL SPEC	TOL +/-	1ST SAMPLE	DIFFERENCE	NOTES	REVISED SPEC - DATE:
A	BODY LENGTH FROM HPS	25 1/2	1/2	25	1/2	RTS	
B	ACROSS SHOULDERS	16	1/2				
C	ACROSS FRONT	14	1/2				
D	ACROSS BACK	14 1/2	1/8				
E	CHEST 1" BELOW ARMHOLE ***	36	1/4				
F	WAIST 15 1/2" BLW HPS ***	32	1/4				
G	BOTTOM SWEEP ***	41	1/4				
H	SHOULDER DROP FROM HPS	2	1/4				
I	SLEEVE LENGTH FROM CB	33 1/2	1/4				
J	ARMHOLE CURVED ***	20 1/4	1/4				
K	BICEP (1" BELOW ARMHOLE) ***	14	1/2				
L	SLEEVE OPENING	5 1/2	1/4				
M	NECK WIDTH (HPS TO HPS)	6 1/2	1/8				
N	FRONT NECK DROP FROM HPS TO SEAM	3 3/4	1/8				
O	FRONT NECK DROP FROM HPS - 1ST BUTTON	16	1/8				
P	BACK NECK DROP	1/2	1/4				
Q	COLLAR POINTS	1 1/4	1/4				
R	LAPEL WIDTH (TO FOLD)	3	1/4				
S	COLLAR LENGTH PT TO PT	15 1/2	1/8				
T	COLLAR WIDTH AT CB	2 1/4	1/2				
U	COLLAR STAND HEIGHT	1 1/4	1/2				
V	POCKET PLCMNT FROM HPS	18	1/2				
W	POCKET PLCMNT FROM CF	3 1/2	1/8				
X	POCKET WIDTH W/O FLAP	5	1/4				
Y	POCKET LENGTH W/O FLAP	1/4	1/4				
Z	FLAP LENGTH	2	1/4				
AA	FLAP WIDTH	5	1/4				

COMMENTS:

THIS DESIGN IS PROPERTY OF FIBR STUDIOS

Belinda at Techpacks.co taught us to do this.

If you include the sample request page in your tech pack then you will show the factory that you are serious and prepared to move quickly from price quote to first sample.

MEASUREMENTS

Once the factory finishes the 1st sample and you agree to place the order, the factory will do what is called grading. Grading is the process of getting all the measurements from size medium down to XXS and up to XXL. The process of grading produces the measurements for all sizes.

Using the graded measurements, the factory will make a full size set of samples so you can check the fit across all sizes.

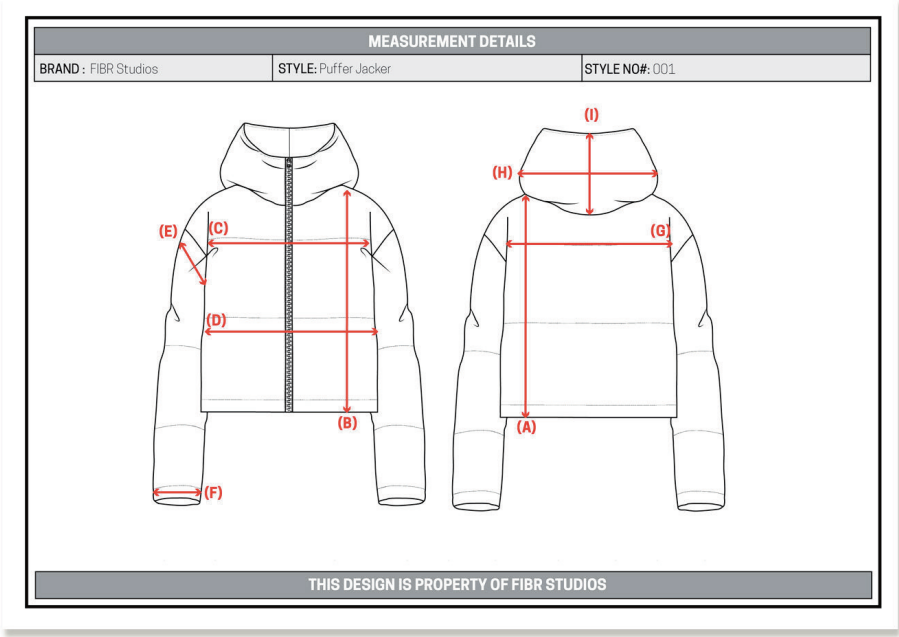
MEASUREMENT DETAILS									
BRAND : FIBR Studios		STYLE NAME: Puffer Jacker				STYLE NO#: 001			
MEASUREMENT SPECS	**XXXS**	**XXS**	**XS**	**S**	**M**	**L**	**XL**	**XXL**	**XXXL**
BACK LENGTH FROM CMB (A)	77	78.5	81.5	83	86	86	83	86	86
FRONT LENGTH FROM HSP (B)	77	78.5	81.5	83	86	86	83	86	86
CHEST (C)	102	112	116	118	124	128	118	124	128
WAIST (D)	96	106	110	114	116	118	114	116	118
UPPER ARM(E)	24	25	26	28	29	30	32	34	36
ARM OPENING (F)	20	22	24	25	26	27	30	32	34
BACK YOKE LENGTH (G)	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95
HOOD WIDTH (H)	16	17	17	17.5	17.5	18	17.5	17.5	18
HOOD HEIGHT (I)	21	21	22.5	23	25	26	23	25	26
THIS DESIGN IS PROPERTY OF FIBR STUDIOS									

The measurement chart is the unique identifier for each garment.

Grading is not a simple task. You do not just add 5 mm to each measurement. Grading requires technical knowledge and experience. It can also be an unexpected cost to new brands. Pattern makers in Europe and USA charge @ $200 per size for grading. Once all the grading is approved, the final measurements are listed on the measurements page and used for quality control checks.

Our Expert Tips - The Spec Manual by Michele Wesen Bryant and Diane DeMers[1] provide fashion professionals and start-ups with a comprehensive guide for measuring garments using standard industry practices.

The measurement page is accompanied by an illustration that shows where to measure distances in accordance with the measurement chart. Double headed arrows are named with letters that correspond to letters on the measurement chart. In cases where the end of an arrow is not clear then describe in words where to measure from. Often it is necessary to have both a front and back view.



This diagram shows exactly where to measure and it ain't always as easy as eating pie.

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1. The Spec Manual https://www.bloomsbury.com/au/the-spec-manual-2nd-edition-9781563673733/

EXAMPLE TECH PACKS

Learn from those who have gone before you and use example tech packs for guidance. There are many online resources available to download. Take advantage of free resources before reaching out to tech pack designers. For example, the blog found at TechPacker.com showcases plenty of example tech packs and has excellent guides such as 'What is pattern grading?' and 'What is a garment spec sheet?'.

Being able to meet up with your tech pack designer allows for in-person fittings to get the measurements right. The measurement chart is arguably the most vital part of a tech pack.

If you can find a local tech packer then you can potentially save yourself mailing expenses and get a more personable experience while you finalize and document the design of your garment. It costs hundreds of dollars to send samples back and forth multiple times. Communicating details in person is more fun than doing it via email or Zoom.

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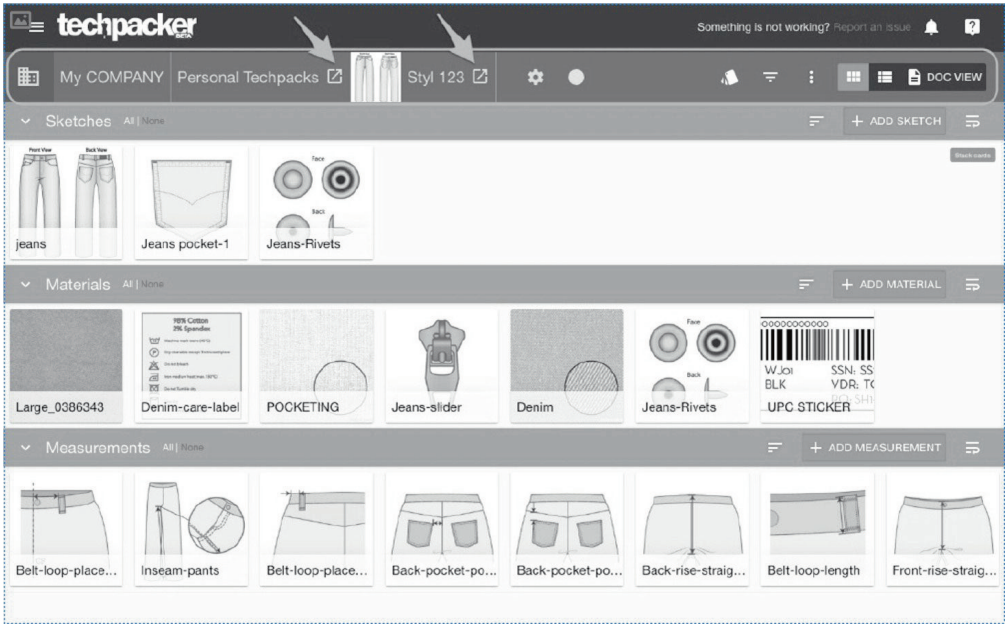
One tech pack designer in the US we recommend is Belinda from Techpacks.co. In Europe we recommend Sarah Denise Cordery at sarahdenis-estudio.com.

Where possible, we recommend you reach out to a tech pack designer who is local to you. Meeting with your tech pack designer removes the need for lengthy email chains and allows them to see your samples and provide advice on the spot.

TECH PACK SOFTWARE

There are product lifecycle management (PLM) solutions that include tech packs but these PLM solutions are expensive and for large organizations. There is only one stand-alone tech pack creation software designed for small organizations that we recommend, it is called Techpacker.com.

I, Chris, found out about Techpacker.com back in 2015. I immediately signed up for their 29 U.S. dollars per month plan to try it out. The interface was intuitive and the software functioned well. My favorite feature was their library of fabrics, trims and accessories which I could choose from. I highly recommend trying Techpacker.com for free for seven days. You will know right away if it is the solution you need.



Techpacker.com online tech pack creation software.

A few clients have come to us after using Techpacker.com because they realized that they did not know what information to put into the software. They realized that they needed help from of a garment technician and a garment merchandiser. Techpacker.com taught them a very important lesson. **Creating a tech pack is easy if you know what information to put in the tech pack.** If you don't know how to answer the 27 questions then tech packs are challenging. When is a good time to reach out for help?

FORMATTING TIPS

Jump online and search for garment-tech-pack. You will see many different tech pack formats. Unfortunately there is no standard. The key is to choose one that is easy for you and the factory to interpret.

Our Expert Tip - Download a tech pack you like and then modify it. We offer some great tech pack templates for $9.99. Buy basic and advanced techpack templates at fibr.online.[1]

Format a tech pack so it's easy to know which sections of the tech pack require input or modification. **A tech pack is a live document to track changes during the development and production process.** The brand, factory and agent must be able to easily update information with pencil or keyboard. Use shading or color coding to indicate which parts of a tech pack are meant to be modified.

For example, the measurement charts and change tracking sections could have have non-white backgrounds to indicate action is required.

The final format depends on which software you choose. Your software options are Excel, Adobe Illustrator, Corel Draw or InDesign. Excel is great for tables of numbers and the other three are great for illustrations. We recommend creating your illustrations in Adobe Illustrator, CorelDraw or InDesign and then import them into Excel.

Create easy to read and professional headers and footers in Excel and include them on every page. Make sure each section of your excel sheet fits nicely into a landscape A4 size. Don't merge cells if you can avoid it. Add the file path to illustrations that you imported to Excel so you know where the illustrations came from. Don't use formulas or macros.

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1. Buy basic and advanced techpack templates starting at $9.99 at https://fibr.online/collections/tech-pack-templates

TAKE AWAYS

Remember this, factories only make ~ 10% profit margins to manufacture your apparel. That means if the high-end t-shirt costs $5 to make, the factory profits 50 cents/shirt. If the factory produces 1,000 t-shirts then they only net $500. That is assuming everything goes flawlessly which never happens. Design and tech packing is not included in the $5 price. Design and tech packing is your responsibility and your expense. If you don't do it then it's like showing up to an airport with without a plane ticket. It's like baking a cake without a recipe.

On the flip side, if you successfully produce 1,000 t-shirts @ $5/t-shirt and then sell them all at $25 you will net (1,000 x 20) $20,000. Does it make business sense to invest $1,000 dollars to do your tech pack in advance and do it well? Can you see how much more money you profit compared to the factory?

We encourage you to make your own tech packs to save money and learn. We predict that you will face technical questions that will be hard to answer. If you get to that point, reach out to us, we can help you. We offer design, tech pack

services AND we can either introduce you to factories directly or manage your production in Vietnam.



A lot of detailed work goes into making each garment.

Here is a summary of our best tech pack tips:

Think of the tech pack as a contract that clearly states what you are paying for. Use it for arbitration purposes if there are problems.

Send your tech pack via email to as many factories as possible to get price quotes and compare apples to apples pricing.

Accept the fact that the factory will not create tech packs for you.

Include a quantities breakdown list (QBL) on the cover sheet. Enumerate the quantity per style per color per artwork or print.

Dedicate one whole page to the BOM. Make the BOM your materials cost breakdown sheet.

Hire a professional to create your fashion illustrations and technical sketches (flats).

Think ahead and include a sample request form.

Only include the measurements for your sample size. - usually size medium. Let the factory do the grading for all the other sizes.

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Create your quantity breakdown list,[1] quality control checklist and production schedule along with the tech pack. These three things are a natural progression after tech packs. Don't wait. Have it all ready before you contact the factory.

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1. Download your quantity breakdown list at: https://www.fashion-start-up-consultant.com/index.html#quantity-breakdown-list

ABOUT MEG AND CHRIS

Hi, my name is Chris Walker. I was born in Los Angeles, California in 1970 and grew up in Germany. After graduating from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo with a physics degree, I studied Spanish in Madrid. Then I joined the US Navy as an electronic technician served on a nuclear powered submarine based out of Honolulu. My experience took me to the Gulf of Mexico where I worked on offshore drilling rigs as an electronic technician. Finally, I settled down in Vietnam to start a family and learn about apparel manufacturing from the inside out. For the last ten years I have been consulting for fashion start ups and overseeing their production in Vietnamese factories. I'd like to meet you and hear your fashion start-up plans.



UnLabel by Marc Ecko and Shoe Dog by Phil Knight are must reads if you are planning on overseas apparel production. Learn from those who went before you.

Hi! My name is Meg Fisher and I was born and raised in Sydney, Australia. My first job in the fashion industry was in London, hand stitching samples for small couture brand Asante. I then worked as a sample and production manager in a high-end and sustainable apparel factory, Apparel Tasker. This London based factory introduced me to the world of sustainable and ethical garment production and allowed me to get immersed in all things apparel. One project was designing and producing limited edition Major League Baseball merchandise. My time in the UK taught me the ins and outs of sample making and factory sourcing for eco friendly start up brands.

I then studied both Graphic Design and Textile Design at the University of New South Wales in Sydney (UNSW). I perfected my sense of design development and execution in the Adobe Suite. I also was able to learn the basics of weaving, which has deepened my knowledge and appreciation of textiles. I then earned a Bachelor of Commerce (UNSW), majoring in Marketing. This degree taught me the importance of market research, development of product in relation to consumer demand and how to position these products in the market.

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During and following my studies I worked for known Australian brands, Brigid McLaughlin and Alex Perry. Over these years I perfected my technical drawing skills and tech packing expertise through branching out in freelance opportunities. In 2019, I launched FIBR Studios to assist brands through the design, development and sampling phases. I design for clients and document it all in a tech pack before introducing my clients to my network of factories in England, Australia and Vietnam.

Share your story with us! Both of us would love to say thank you for downloading our book and we are always looking to share brand stories on our social media channels. Send a well written piece about you and your brand as well as a few pictures. If appropriate then we will share your story with our social media following.

WHERE TO GO FROM HERE?

May we ask you a few questions?

- What product do you want to produce in Vietnam?
- Do you already have tech packs prepared?
- Are you sure about your quantities per style per color?
- Do you know your target prices?
- Do you need help with fabric sourcing/development?

When we speak with you, these are the questions we will ask. Are you ready to approach factories to get price quotes and samples made in Vietnam?

Here are other services we offer:

- Consulting for overseas production
- Tech packing
- Fashion illustration

- Technical flats drawing
- Factory introductions
- Factory visits
- Quality control
- Factory assessments
- Full service apparel production in Vietnam

Thanks for reading to the end and good luck starting your fashion brand!

The End.