



10 Expensive Mistakes Fashion Startups Make Before Production

A Practical Guide from L.A. Rag Maker

A Note from George Arrington

I've spent decades working within the Los Angeles fashion and garment industry, witnessing both successful launches and costly mistakes. The purpose of this guide is simple: help emerging brands, designers, entrepreneurs, and apparel professionals avoid common pitfalls that can waste time, money, and momentum. This guide is a starting point. For deeper education, visit the L.A. Rag Maker Resource Page and follow [@laragmaker](#) on YouTube and Substack.

Mistake #1: Starting With Production Instead of Development

A factory cannot manufacture an idea. Before production, you should have approved samples, production patterns, grading, specifications, and materials identified.

Learn More: The L.A. Rag Maker YouTube Channel ([@laragmaker](#)) covers this topic and many others in greater depth, including production, sourcing, development, technology, logistics, and the realities of the Los Angeles garment industry.

Resource: Visit the L.A. Rag Maker Resource Page for additional tools, organizations, software, and industry resources.

Mistake #2: Underestimating Minimum Order Quantities

Different factories operate at different scales. Understanding minimums before outreach saves time and money.

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Mistake #3: Believing Fashion Is Only Design

Fashion includes sourcing, production, logistics, inventory, sales, technology, and distribution.

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Mistake #4: Ignoring Technical Documentation

Verbal instructions are not production documents. Clear technical information reduces errors.

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Mistake #5: Choosing Vendors Based Only on Price

The cheapest option often becomes the most expensive when quality or communication fails.

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Mistake #6: Waiting Too Long to Learn the Business Side

Fashion is both a creative industry and a systems industry.

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Mistake #7: Overlooking Industry Software

ERP, PLM, inventory systems, and development software can dramatically improve operations.

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Mistake #8: Not Understanding Logistics

Warehousing, fulfillment, transportation, and distribution are part of the product journey.

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Mistake #9: Trying To Learn Everything Alone

Industry organizations and educational resources already exist. Use them.

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Mistake #10: Spending Money Before Understanding the Process

The strongest brands learn the system before making major investments.

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Continue Your Fashion Industry Education

L.A. Rag Maker Resource Page

A curated collection of organizations, software platforms, manufacturing resources, educational tools, logistics providers, technology solutions, and industry partners covering the complete fashion ecosystem.

L.A. Rag Maker YouTube Channel

@laragmaker

Videos covering fashion production, sourcing, pattern development, manufacturing, technology, logistics, distribution, and the realities of the Los Angeles garment industry.

L.A. Rag Maker Substack

@laragmaker

Industry observations, practical insights, historical context, and commentary from inside the Los Angeles fashion industry.

Recommended Reading

Manufacturing in Los Angeles – Past, Present & Next

A deeper exploration of the Los Angeles apparel manufacturing sector, its history, current challenges, and future opportunities.

Fashion is not just design. Fashion is a system.

The better you understand the system, the better decisions you can make.