

# Is Source My Garment the Apparel Industry's Answer to Match.com?

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Posted on June 13, 2016



Photo: from Veena's website

A major reason many new fashion designers flame out so soon after launching is that they don't think ahead. After all, a great idea is worthless without proper execution and a sustainable supply chain.

Jena Murray, founder and creative director of [Veena](#), a tween girls' clothing label with a philanthropic mission, knew that for her brand to scale up and be successful long term, she would need to prepare it for growth from the get-go. That's why she turned to [Source My Garment](#), a Toronto-based agency that acts as a bridge between North American designers and overseas factories.

"I put in the hard work at the beginning so it would save me time later," said the former graphic designer. "It was a big jump to take but I thought it was the right thing to do."

And in Adila Cokar, Source My Garment's founder, Murray found a kindred spirit, someone who had experienced firsthand the struggle to keep up with the ever-increasing pace of production.

“It’s easy to launch one line but to do it for the next season and the next season again, it’s a big challenge and a lot [of newcomers] end up closing down,” Cokar said.

It’s something she went through herself with her own two clothing lines (Shortstak Boyswear and Pure Blankz) and the reason she started Source My Garment in 2014.

In addition to Cokar and her associates providing their clients with supportive consultation and production services, taking a designer’s idea from concept to market, they also make sure it’s done responsibly.

“Our platform is totally transparent and we’re all about building relationships,” she said, noting that unlike Alibaba, which advertises factories that are often indecipherable from one another in appearance and specialties, each supplier in Source My Garment has its own personality. “We have video profiles, Q&As with the founder; it’s all very personalized,” she added.

It’s her way to educate manufacturers and consumers that not all factories mistreat people or the planet, mass-produce and care only for the bottom line. Her “give back” ambition, according to Source My Garment’s website, is to bring awareness to the fact that all clothing has a human element and isn’t just made by machines.

That’s essentially what appealed to Murray.

“It was very important to me that I knew where the clothes were being produced and why. I wouldn’t feel good about having any children in any part of the work making my clothing,” she explained, adding, “Because I am dealing with tweens and kids I really wanted to know where my cotton was coming from and that it was produced organically, not made using harsh chemicals or dyes.”

Those values are why Cokar likens sourcing to online dating.

“It sounds crazy, because at the end of the day this is a product that will have an impact no matter what you do, but you need to choose your battles,” Cokar said. “If dyes are a major concern for you, look into natural ones. If water is one of your missions, don’t go for bamboo. Understand yourself, do your research, then slowly build up your product that way.”

She added, “Like any relationship it’s about building trust, because it’s a two-way street. The factory is half your business. Half your cost goes there.”

If sourcing is like dating, then Source My Garment is a great matchmaker because things appear to be going well for Murray’s line.

Veena is currently sampling its Spring 2017 collection in India, its third since launching and the first that Murray said feels like everything has finally come together. The brand’s factory, Assisi Organics, follows the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS), is certified Fair Trade and indirectly supports orphanages, senior centers and a school for deaf and blind children.

Plus, Veena has received carbon neutral accreditation from BlueDot Register, uses only eco-friendly dyes and GOTS-certified fiber, ships by sea instead of air and chooses natural and recycled materials whenever possible.

“The first time you manufacture is not the easiest. The factory is getting to know you, the way you like things, all the details,” she shared. “Once those little details are in place, everything becomes a little more streamlined, smoother. The creativity is coming out more because I’m pushing myself further, knowing what the factory is capable of.”