Textile + Design Laboratory
Case Study 1/ 2010: Pumpkin Patch

Project title: Sampling for 'Princess' range; for showing to northern hemisphere wholesalers, prior to bulk production
T+DL Partner: Pumpkin Patch
Project Co-ordinator: Kerith McKenzie, Product Manager, Pumpkin Patch
Website: www.pumpkinpatch.co.nz

Company Background: Pumpkin Patch began as a catalogue selling children's clothes from the founder's garage, in 1990.
The NZX listed company now employs over 2,800 people, producing over 2,000 styles per season, and recorded sales of $412 million in the 2009 financial year.

BIG GIRLS /W'10
STYLE#   LAST MODIFIED: 12/5/09
SUPPLIER:

drawing of design

blueberry navy berry cornflower champagne shimmer cream rich grey

Project Background: Sampling had been a lengthy process, with strike-offs taking about 2 weeks to arrive from China, then another 6 weeks for bulk production. This timing was of course dependant on things progressing smoothly and no difficulties being encountered.

Kerith heard about the T+DL at AUT from her colleague Carly Tolley, Design Manager at Pumpkin Patch, who had recently completed a Masters in Design at AUT as part of her professional development.

The T+DL promised a much faster turnaround for sampling, being a faster process for smaller lengths and also onshore, allowing bulk production to continue offshore in China. This maximized the strengths of both processes.

Project Methodology: Graphics were purchased and altered as an Illustrator file to suit Pumpkin Patch's ranges. T+DL staff helped Kerith to adjust the file for compatibility as necessary. The file was too big to email, so a flash drive with hard copies and fabric swatches were brought to the T+DL for matching with Pantone colours.

print breakdown as sent to TDL

Learning outcomes: Charts of Pantone colours are printed for matching on the T+DL's own pretreated fabrics. It is recommended that clients use only these fabrics for best results. Kerith found that the silk charmeuse gave the best results, and preferred results on woven fabrics over those on knits. Care taken at the T+DL stage has meant that to date there have been no problems in transferring production from digitally based sampling over to more traditional methods for the bulk production runs.

DRESS - mock up sample
as made with digitally printed
fabric on silk

detail of fabric printing quality

Feedback: Overall, the project proved to be very satisfactory for Pumpkin Patch. The company could easily and quickly trial samples with wholesalers, and so more accurately forecast their requirements when it came to costly bulk production.

Kerith comments "The staff at the T+DL were really easy to deal with, with the only difficulty, really, being my lack of knowledge of the technology being used." With Pumpkin Patch continuing to use the T+DL for sampling, this is quickly being overcome!

DRESS - actual garment made up
in 100% cotton with
hot fix sparkles

detail of fabric printing quality