Friday, October 29, 1993 - Fashion - F28

Come In & See The Latest Fall **Fashions** 

Designs by: Jackie K Joseph Ribkkof Eric Ric Yan

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## Sears' success formula

Why has Sears Canada hit the mark with their fashion programs and with the Canadian consumer? It's because they take their slogan serious-

Style, quality, and value - three words that Canadians have come to associate with Sears. But unlike most slogans, this one carries a sincere promise and continues to have meaning for Canadians, and it does so precisely because it continues to have meaning for the employees of Sears

STYLE: It begins at the top...in the offices of Sears fashion directors...

"We have a fashion goal at Sears," says Helen Stahl, Fashion Director, Women's Wear. "When a customer, man or woman, walks onto the fashion floor at Sears, we want them to look around and see exactly what they want - no confusing fashion surprises, no questionable colors, just clothes which appeal to them - in shape, color, and style."

As simple as this goal is, achieving it requires an Herculean effort and a major commitment, and to do so Sears, in addition to having buyers for each lifestyle department, has Fashion Directors for both men's and women's fashions, whose task it is to define style at Sears, and to interpret fashion for the Sears customer.

"What you see on the floor at any given time begins more than a year in advance," states Rick Stefiszyn, Men's Fashion Director. "Sixteen months in advance of the season, we begin to look at color. We work with the fabric mills and the forecasters, and begin to make decisions about the colors we will use." At the same time, Sears Fashion Directors and buyers "shop the market." "We look at everything that's going on," Stefiszyn says. "We watch the emerging trends in high fashion and decide how to interpret them for our customer."

The customer, of course, is the critical element in the decisions that are made. "We watch our customers like a hawk," Stahl remarks. "We know them, we understand them...we work very hard at understanding them. We never take them for granted." Sears Fashion Directors' interest in their customers extend beyond what their customers are wearing. "We want to know what they're doing on the week-ends," Stefiszyn says. "What movies are they going to, what videos are they watching? If we are to know what they are going to want to wear, we have to understand how they are living their lives."



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