

“The Fortune 500 Shirt”

EMPOWERING WORKWEAR

by Lydia



Storytelling Garments

Throughout history, fashion expression has evolved alongside cultural norms. With the accessibility of social media, in an era of social activism, it is befitting to design fashion pieces that tell contemporary stories.

Empowering Workwear's first bespoke garment intends to do just that. The Fortune 500 Shirt shows the ratio disparity of men to women on the fortune 500 CEO list for the year 2020. That year out of 500 CEOs there are 37 women – this figure being is an all-time high at that moment. The monochromatic jacquard weave shows this gender inequality ratio discretely in plain sight.

The circle mother of pearl buttons illustrate the gender pay gap where the etched circle inside the button represents the .81 cents that the median woman's earns to the white man's \$1 which is represented by the full circle of the button.

The cufflinks that come with the shirt are an artistic rendition of the breaking of the glass ceiling. They are numbered 1-100, to match the numbered shirts as this is a limited edition of only 100 pieces.

Some have described the Fortune 500 Shirt as *"an art installation that you wear"*.



An Ode to Craftsmanship and Slow Fashion

Empowering Workwear's 'Fortune 500 Shirt' is more than a story, but an ode to centuries old craftsmanship and a nod to the merits of slow fashion in an era of disposable fast fashion.



The jacquard loom was invented in 1804 by French weaver Joseph Jacquard, it used punch cards which created the woven patterns in the fabric – this is actually the world's first computer. While it was invented in the Western hemisphere, today this is one of the many types of manufacturing that has moved East. The taste for jacquard has also subsided as print fabrics dominate the fashion industry. Jacquard was chosen for this fabric because of its visual and sensory texture as well as its versatility in hiding designs into monochromatic designs as in the design pattern of this shirt.

Those who purchase the Fortune 500 shirt kit will get to experience a centuries old work of art – bespoke tailoring. Tailoring dates back to the early Middle Ages and has diversified tremendously since then. However, what has not changed is the lengthy apprenticeships needed to master the craft. Using the client's measurements, their tailor will hand make a bespoke pattern for the client from which the Fortune 500 Shirt will be made. Through tailoring extra fabric allowances can be made in the seams to allow for the event of weight change. Extra fabric allowances are not a common practice of the contemporary fashion industry. However tailoring adjustments are an eco-friendly practice allowing for the shirt to remain a part of a client's wardrobe across fluctuations of weight gain or loss.



While the kit encourages everyone to design the shirt of their dreams, Empowering Workwear offers some suggestions for both men and women. For women it offers a design suggestion with a neckline that moves away from traditional collars and reimagines what a 21st Century #LadyBoss raised collar could look like. For men, it embraces the spread collar and a slim fit cut. For the cuffs, a rare but stylish cuff is proposed - the angled cuff.

Embracing slow fashion in a fast world, Empowering Workwear's encouragement of distributed micro-manufacturing strives for zero waste, just in time production and hopes to be an agent for positive change in the conversations of its storytelling pieces as well as through its values-based supply chain that are aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.



The United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) are an integral part of the Fortune 500 Shirt's supply chain. It is an imperative for businesses today to make the effort to match their values and production to the SDGs. The following expands on how the Fortune 500 Shirt kit aligns with the United Nations' SDGs:

5 GENDER EQUALITY



Goal #5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

This storytelling fashion garment aims to (1) bring gender disparities to light that exist among the CEOs of the world's leading Fortune 500 companies, (2) make note of the persistent pay gap, (3) inspire women to break the glass ceiling and (4) encourage institutions to do better at creating space for female professionals.

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



Goal #6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

The organic cotton used in the 'Fortune 500 Shirt' was farmed in Israel using recycled urban waste water and a drip irrigation system which saves more than 50% of water consumption. They also comply with the Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) standards.

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



Goal #8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

The Italian mill that wove the jacquard fabric (Canclini) adheres to the market exhibiting OEKO-TEX® Standard 100, ensuring the lack of any dangerous chemical substances for the human health.

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



Goal #9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.

The organic textile that the Italian mill (Canclini) produces adheres to the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) international standard used for certification of natural fibers which includes ecological and social criteria. Canclini is GOTS certified by the Institute for Ethical and Environmental Certification (ICEA).

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



Goal #12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

The Empowering Workwear's shirt's supply chain uses sustainable consumption from the recycled water used in farming the cotton, to the organic textile standards in the fabric manufacturing. This includes the mother of pearl buttons which are aesthetically beautiful and an eco-friendly alternative to plastic or metal buttons and will not harm the environment.

The shirts are bespoke which means they are only produced on demand to fit tailored to the customer. As the production of the Fortune 500 Shirt is capped at 100, it is easier to estimate the supplies needed and avoid waste.

About

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Empowering Workwear was founded by Strategy and Innovation Advisor Dr. Lydia Kostopoulos and was born out of a frustration with professional clothing for women and the industry's double standards on functionality and comfort. Believing that workwear should be designed around body systems (nervous system, reproductive system, skeletal system and others) instead of a non-human mannequin she began to design suits for women.



This later became Empowering Workwear a #StorytellingFashion platform to tell stories and raise awareness about the things she is most passionate about. Her inspiration is drawn from her advocacy for women's rights, passion for technology and her career in national security.

A tremendous amount of detail goes into the design of each product which will particularly delight those with an eye for detail and craftsmanship. For those who wear their heart on their sleeve and feel passionate about women's rights, the Fortune 500 shirt gives them an opportunity to wear their values on their sleeve – literally.

Empowering Workwear strives to align its supply chain with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and create conversation pieces through fashion design in efforts to raise awareness and highlight social issues that merit wider discussion. The primary story topics include women's equality, technology and national security.