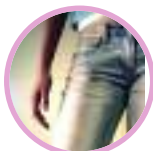


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The recent London Fashion Week was overshadowed by the row over size zero models showcasing the latest designs on the catwalk. But where high couture meets the High Street, concern is mounting over skinny profits caused by theft and increased internal fraud, issues that cost the European retail industry €2 billion last year.

The fashion industry has been on the receiving end of this perennial problem as high value designer labels are high on shopping lists of shoplifters and dishonest staff who steal to order.



Now the fashion industry that is fighting back and taking the lead in action to cut crime.

The Profit Protection Fashion Forum - organised by the ORIS Group and sponsored by New Look Retailing, is a lobby group of more than 20 loss prevention heads representing the UK's leading fashion and accessory retailers. Its objectives are to share best practice on reducing shrinkage in the one non-competitive area of their business, but above all it is not a 'talking shop.'

Every meeting of the Profit Protection Fashion Forum has resulted in direct and timed actions that are helping to educate the Criminal Justice System and the Government as to the specific issues faced by the fashion retailers - from electronic crime to sentencing shortfalls.

The Forum, which has been in existence for little over 12 months has already put its case directly to the Home Office and the DTI and a local MP who attended the last meeting has written in the strongest terms to Tony McNulty, the Home Office Minister whose remit includes retail business crime.

At the last meeting, one of the areas discussed was fraudsters



use of illegal electronic auctions using the Internet. The Forum wrote in the strongest terms to the global CEO of eBay and her opposite numbers in Europe and the UK urging that the world's leading on line market to make it harder for thieves to off load stolen property on the web.

The result - eBay executives now want to meet a delegation of the Profit Protection Fashion Forum to discuss their concerns. Ebay will also send security representatives to the next full Fashion Forum meeting in September where issues including a more transparent code of practice for selling on line will be discussed.

Currently the onus is on the retailer to prove the goods are suspicious rather than the vendor providing proof of purchase or even genuine names and addresses. To offer some context and scale of the issue, one member of the Fashion Forum using intelligent software; designed specifically for this purpose, closed down almost 1000 auctions in three months. He received just two complaints from legitimate traders.

The Profit Protection Fashion Forum is growing in size and strength in its fight against skinny profits.

Why not add your weight to the debate and be part of this force for positive action by coming along to the next meeting in September 2007.

To find out more or to register please email:-
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Purpose of the group:

- Share information
- Share industry "best practice"
- To take issues raised from the group upwards to help in influencing change
- To gather information from the group that may help to support own business objectives
- To share "specialist" knowledge and experience
- To help get more from existing investment areas by learning how other retailers are doing it
- Network and meet like minded individuals
- Learn and listen from each other and build trust
- For the group to act as a lobby to raise issues upwards to the powers that be
- Fill in knowledge gaps and/or blind spots

Source: All information supplied by The Profit Protection Fashion Forum Members, September 2006

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