

TEXT 1

Speaker 1

There's a definite trend for boys to be more flamboyant in what they wear. I love it! The mainstream doesn't have to be bland — sometimes it's very exciting! In Tokyo, a lot of men, even older men, have started wearing long skirts, or shorter skirts over leggings, like the girls. This is possibly more readily acceptable in Japan, since there's a historical precedent for men to wear robes, called *yukata*. These are also making a comeback, by the way. I try to make my clothes truly unisex, not male, not female ... And it seems to be working, judging by the figures!

Speaker 2

Yeah, well, we just can't cut it like the girls, we just don't get the recognition. So naturally, we don't get the remuneration, either. I did an accessories shoot for a high street chain last month and got €1,000 for it. The girl I was working with — not even that high-profile — took €12,000. That's just the way it is. That said, we guys have it a lot easier in many ways. It's definitely easier to model trousers than dresses or skimpy lingerie! Behind the scenes, male fashion is friendly rather than intimidating. OK, there are pressures at times, but it's generally fun.

Speaker 3

Whenever I go back to India, I try to get to the craft fairs. An outfit is only totally finished when you've added the right shoes, bag, etc. A plain dress can be made into something special by putting a bold necklace with it. Eye-catching jewellery gets you noticed. Most high street shops sell only the same old well-known brands, and the designer labels are too pricey for my budget. The best Indian craft fairs often have innovative products from young designers, and you can sometimes find a bargain that makes you look like a million dollars! I've picked up some exquisite pieces.

Speaker 4

We produce grooming products for men as well as women, and while the market for the latter is definitely larger, our men's range has grown considerably over the last two to three years. Young men are generally keen consumers now, but admittedly they need a slightly different approach in the packaging and marketing. The words 'fashion' and 'cosmetics' sound feminine to most men, and so we use the less off-putting words 'style' and 'grooming'. We're now trying to target older men, 35 plus — that's our new target market.

Speaker 5

A lot of people are nervous about clothes shopping — fashion can be unwelcoming, especially if you're a more curvaceous shape or some way past your teens! That's where the web is such a help. By downloading my e-book, users can discover where to find original and affordable items from designer or mainstream brands, or choose accessories which blend subtly with an outfit, and so on. Then they click on a link to find a store that sells their kind of clothes. I've been operating this service for five years now and haven't had a complaint yet!