

## CASE STUDY: Made in America

For many years, apparel and textile manufacturing was mostly located to Asia, Mexico and South America where labor costs were low. But that is no longer the case. With the popularization of fast fashion and customers' constant demand for new and better items in a fraction of the time, companies are now considering reshoring. Bringing apparel manufacturing back to the U.S. reduces inventories, increases visibility and control, improves lead times and responsiveness to the changes in the market, and allows companies to explore markets unique to its region, like plus-size apparel. The average woman in the U.S. wears a size between a size 16 and 18, according to the International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education<sup>1</sup>

## MEET DANIELLE MALCONIAN



Danielle Malconian is the highly successful, innovative, and dynamic CEO of Vikki Vi plus-size apparel. Her involvement with the plus size market and Vikki Vi brand began in the early 90s when she worked as a women's clothing manager at Nordstrom's Encore department. At Nordstrom, Danielle became acquainted with Vikki Vi, a brand and product that would eventually transform her life.

In 2008, Malconian made the decision to buy the label in order to expand her own plus-size ecommerce business by adding Vikki Vi products. She knew how valuable the brand was, so she made it a personal commitment to not let the line disappear after its original parent company filed for bankruptcy.



<sup>1</sup> Deborah A. Christel & Susan C. Dunn (2017) Average American women's clothing size: comparing National Health and Nutritional Examination Surveys (1988–2010) to ASTM International Misses & Women's Plus Size clothing, International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education, 10:2, 129-136, DOI: [10.1080/17543266.2016.1214291](https://doi.org/10.1080/17543266.2016.1214291)

## Vikki Vi now and Danielle's guiding success

There couldn't have been a better person to take over Vikki Vi than Danielle Malconian. She understands her customers and the struggle to find apparel that fits and compliments a woman's body. She's become a beacon of light for women struggling to find comfortable, professional, fashionable, plus-size clothing, and has continued to provide Vikki Vi customers with a high quality 100% made-in-America fashion products.

Today, Vikki Vi is available at Nordstrom online, as well as Amazon.com, and Malconian's own website: Plus by Design – Vikki Vi. Danielle's efforts are now geared towards expansion of the line into different fabrics and designs, to reach and appeal to more women.

Although Malconian has had many opportunities to manufacture Vikki Vi overseas at much lower cost, she made a conscience decision to keep the brand production in the U.S. including fabric manufacturing and cut and sew.

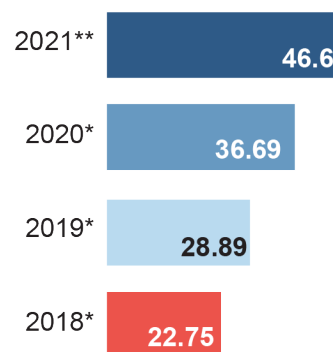
# THE PLUS-SIZE MARKET

The plus-size market became recognized in 1904, when Lane Bryant open its doors to the public becoming the first exclusively plus-size retailer. Later, in the 1980's, "plus-size" became the designated descriptor for 14+ sizes. Today, more brands including Ralph Lauren, Talbots, H&M, Anthropologie, and young designers such as Zac Posen and Christian Siriano are embracing and working to cater the plus-size market.

## Plus size market, industry insights and projections

In 2017, the global plus-size women's clothing market was valued at \$165.2 billion with a forecasted compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 4.4% from 2018 to 2026<sup>2</sup>. In the U.S. the average woman wears a size 16<sup>3</sup> and its total apparel market represents \$120.3 billion in sales, out of which \$20.4 come from the plus-size sector<sup>4</sup>.

### Plus size women's apparel market value forecast in the United States from 2018 until 2021 (in billion U.S. dollars)\*



Source  
Duff & Phelps: Coresight Research  
©Statista 2019

Despite market growth, there's an almost unanimous feeling that plus-sized customers are being neglected. In 2017, 72% of women who wore a size 14+ or otherwise identified as being plus-sized, said that they didn't feel apparel brands and designers produced garments that would fit or be flattering to the average woman<sup>5</sup>. Most women indicated they would be willing to spend more money on clothing if more brands and designers included a bigger range of sizes.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.credenceresearch.com/report/plus-size-womens-clothing-market>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.statista.com/topics/4834/women-s-plus-size-apparel-market-in-the-us/>

<sup>4</sup> Duff & Phelps. "Plus Size Women's Apparel Market Value Forecast in The United States from 2018 until 2021 (in Billion U.S. Dollars)\*." *Statista - The Statistics Portal*, Statista, [www.statista.com/statistics/820609/plus-size-women-s-apparel-market-value-forecast-us/](https://www.statista.com/statistics/820609/plus-size-women-s-apparel-market-value-forecast-us/), Accessed 18 May 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Fung Global Retail & Technology. (n.d.). Plus-size shopper attitudes to plus-size clothing offerings in the apparel industry in the United States as of 2017. In *Statista - The Statistics Portal*. Retrieved May 18, 2019, from <https://www-statista-com.libproxy1.usc.edu/statistics/831469/plus-size-shopper-attitudes-to-plus-size-clothing-offerings/>.



# VIKKI VI

## Brand’s appeal: what’s made Vikki Vi stand out and be preferred by customers for 30 years?

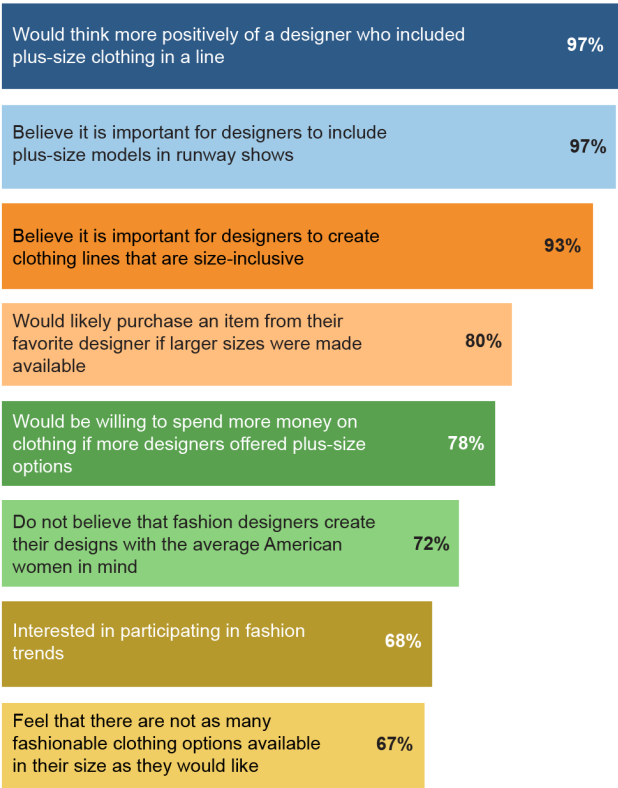
Vikki Vi became the customers’ favorite because of their tried and tested patterns that complimented women’s bodies, their use of stretch jersey knit and “slinky” fabric that perfectly drapes, and the wide assortment of classic patterns and colors. The high quality of the materials and stitching, create a long-lasting garment that can be worn in multiple ways, with all kinds of accessories, for any occasion. As a result, Vikki Vi has a very loyal customer base and a repeat customer rate of 80%, with some loyal customers who have purchased Vikki Vi products for over 25 years.

## Manufacturing partners in NY, U.S. sourcing, and why “Made in America” is the best strategy for Vikki Vi

Vikki Vi’s garments are 100% made-in-USA. Their signature fabric is sourced from a mill and dyed in North Carolina and manufactured in New York City. Vikki Vi has maintained relationships with their original production partners and has every intention of keeping it that way.

A big part of their success is the fabric and its perfect weight that makes the draping both flattering and comfortable for all body shapes and sizes. Knitting and dyeing are also a major aspect to fabric appeal as well as a

## Plus-size shopper attitudes to plus-size clothing offerings in the apparel industry in the United States as of 2017



Source  
Fung Global Retail & Technology; Various sources (dia.com)  
©Statista 2018

sueding process that creates a unique velvety look that many other brands have tried to emulate and failed to achieve. The true value of the product lies in the high quality materials and construction.

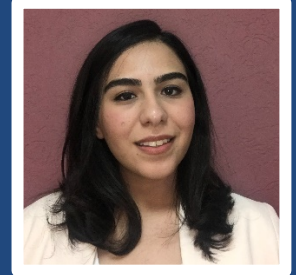
For Vikki Vi customers, each purchase is an investment. Malconian has worked tirelessly to build relationships with customers by providing exceptional customer service and information. Customers can find an extensive list of blogs on the Vikki Vi website, written by industry experts and the Vikki Vi staff.

## The future: challenges in production and merchandising and how the future of the plus-size industry can affect Vikki Vi’s business

Vikki Vi brand faces challenges for the future due to the everchanging nature of the industry and the difficulties that come with trying to reach new customers through e-commerce sites. The market is extraordinarily competitive. Shortages of raw material worldwide for signature ribbed knit acetate/lycra fabric are always an issue. But Danielle Malconian is optimistic and innovative. She’s a survivor with a mission to continue to produce her products in America.

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Claudia Munoz is currently pursuing a Master's Degree in Global Supply Chain Management at the University of Southern California. She holds a BA in Fashion Design with a minor in Marketing and a Professional Designation degree in Merchandise Marketing from the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising.



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The most beautiful thing  
a woman can wear is  
*Confidence*

Vikki Vi.  
Vikki Vi.