

Meet Irina Byalaya of Apparel Product Development

June 2018

Irina, let's start with your story. We'd love to hear how you got started and how the journey has been so far.

I always love art and fashion. I was 5 years old when I decided to be a fashion designer. I went to art school for kids at age of 6. My first and most gratifying experience was meeting a couture designer and my grandma's friend. We lived in Ukraine, she came back from Paris...

I spent countless hours with her, watching the creative process, comprehending the world of fabrics, proportion, construction. She helped me to develop 'the eye' for style and proportion. She was my mentor. I designed and sew my own clothes at age 14.

I received my formal education in Art institute, studying fashion design and garment construction. I studied and admired the work of famous designers. My fashion icon is Karl Lagerfeld. From the list of younger talents are Tom Ford, Phoebe Philo, late Alexander McQueen...

I worked in Kharkov and Moscow. When Gorbachev opened the doors, my family moved to Rome. I worked there for a couple of years.

My family came to the US in 1989. I took courses at Academy of Fashion Design to learn terminology, to understand a different approach to fashion business here. There are many fashion schools in the US. Every year, new graduates leave alma mater to conquer the fashion world. Unfortunately, not all of them are ready 'to fly'.

The glamorous word of a fashion designer is hard work and constant learning. To achieve success in every profession, one needs more than talent, but also knowledge and experience.

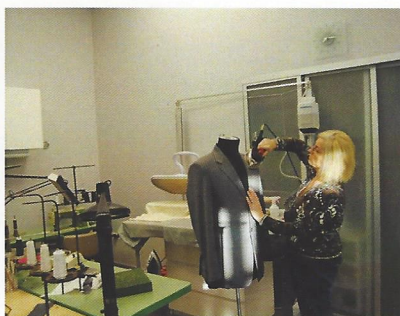
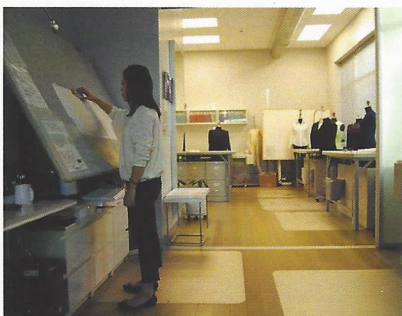
Beautiful design must be supported by good construction. Technical skills are in demand in the apparel industry. I always enjoyed working on garment construction.

I changed my focus from couture to product development and mass production. I worked in apparel and uniform industries, learned CAD (specific for pattern development), and keep myself up to date with sewing technology.

Product development requires deep knowledge of garment construction, CAD, fabrics, sewing technology as well as fit, proportion and body types.



IRINA
Meet
Irina
Byalaya
of Apparel
Product
Development
in Glenview



I worked in Chicago since 1990 as designer and pattern designer.

I founded Apparel Product Development in 2006. It was a dream, a vision. Today, APD is creative, innovative entity. I was lucky to find talented professionals and build a great team.

Overall, has it been relatively smooth? If not, what were some of the struggles along the way?

One of my personal struggles is to divide the time between 'working in the business' and 'working on the business'. In many cases for me, it means long hours... work-week well extended into the weekend. The constant challenge is to balance customers' calendars with our internal goals.

Alright – so let's talk business. Tell us about Apparel Product Development – what should we know?

Apparel Product Development, Inc. is a full-service design and development; consulting and training company. APD is remote product development department that serves the Apparel industry in the US and abroad. We are Apparel Architects: we develop the models, specifications and blue prints for new products.

We build a relationship with our client as a long-term commitment to their vision and goals. Every project is different, there is no routine. We get inspiration from our clients, from the market, and from different industries.

APD designs and develops the product from concept through production. We earned utility patent in 2017. Apparel Product Development is industry expert in apparel design and product development.

Any shoutouts? Who else deserves credit in this story – who has played a meaningful role?

My son Gennady and his friend and business partner Alex are talented entrepreneurs. They are extremely supportive. Gennady and Alex helped me to build the office in Glenview. They are generous with their business advice and help. Gennady and Alex are high achievers, busy with families and businesses. And still, they find time and resources when I reached out to them with new ideas or concerns.

Apparel Product Development staff: great people with a high set of skills and strong work ethics. We are constantly learning and experimenting. The team deserves the credit!

My family, especially my daughter Julia, is always supportive and understanding. They are my biggest fans.

We have great clients. Some of them are with us from the start. We are inspired and learned from them. I also have mentors from the industry: the owner and creative direction of the company I used to work for. They teach by example.

I hope I do the same with my colleagues.

