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MANUFACTURING Label Conscious

By Alison A...



The California Fashion Association has long heralded California as an international design center—and the organization encourages its members to promote its products as California-designed.

But if those products are made overseas, apparel makers can label their products “Designed in California,” but they also have to include the country of origin—and there are strict rules regarding how that information appears.

“The law is very clear for sewn-in labeling and separate hangtags,” said CFA President Ilse Metchek. “Sewn-in labels in garments made overseas can say “Designed in California” as long as the country of origin is on the same label in the same size. However, hangtags do not need the country of origin if trademarked. Without a trademark certification on the hangtag, the size of the font for ‘Made in China’ has to be the same size as ‘Made in California.’ It can’t say ‘Designed in California’ with a little bitty ‘Made in China.’”

The CFA spent the last year perfecting and trademarking a new Designed in California hangtag, which will allow apparel makers to emphasize where their garments are designed.

Metchek recently unveiled the new hangtag during a presentation at the **Los Angeles International Textile Show** at the **California Market Center**. Pointing to an iPhone ad that reads “Designed in California,” Metchek said, “If Apple is doing it, I don’t see why the apparel industry shouldn’t do it, too.”

The CFA’s hangtag design is trademarked, which means apparel makers don’t have to worry about also including where the garment was made on the hangtag. (That information must remain on the sewn-in care label.)

“We’re going to give the artwork and the specs free to all the tag-and-label companies upon request,” Metchek said. In return, the CFA is asking label companies for a donation of one cent per tag to the **California Fashion Foundation** scholarship fund. That cost is tax deductible for the label companies, and each hangtag will indicate that a contribution has been made to the scholarship fund.

“If the label company gives us a penny a piece, it’s a donation,” Metchek said, adding, “If a brand owner client of the tag producer buys and uses the hangtags and then wants to donate a penny apiece to the scholarship fund, we’ll take it, too.”

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