



INTERVIEW WITH Anna Maria Lamanna Image Consultant – Personal Shopper – Style Coach in Milan

Ambassador: Hello, thank you for accepting the invitation to the Ambassador magazine

Anna Maria: Thank you for the invitation.

Ambassador: Before we came, we got a recommendation that if we talk to anyone about fashion in this city, we should talk to you.

Anna Maria: Thank you. Indeed, my experience is multidimensional because I started working for different brands and brands. I dealt with the approval of the product, i.e. from the drawing to the selection of fabrics up to the fashion show, while since 2005 I have been developing my business as Shoper staff and here I actually combine two functions because on the one hand I work directly in contact with well-known stylists, on the other hand I work with the client I try to translate what stylists propose to the needs and language of customers.

Ambassador: It was very nice because we just came to Giorgio Armani, we had the pleasure to be at his house yesterday and talked about his personality and it turned out that he is your favorite fashion designer, why?

Anna Maria: I like Armani because his vision of Women is an elegant woman but also a relaxed woman, that is, women who wear Armani's clothes do not feel „embalmed” when they dress his clothes, which is too stiff in the choice of clothes, but they are elegant and at the same time have such a dose, a dose of slack. Armani often uses the phrase „eleganza rilassata”, that is, relaxed, maybe that's not the right term, elegance, let's say relaxed, literally relaxed. But he says that what he appreciates about Armani is that he dresses women of different sizes, because not all of us look like models and every woman feels good in these clothes. There are also stylists who create clothes in which only very slim women look good. What Armani often says is that an elegant woman is not one who attracts attention, but one that everyone will remember. So it is not supposed to be a shocking effect, but it should be remembered.

meaning, i.e. shopper or trainer, a person who is treated by the client later, if it comes to a relationship as a friend. So the person who advises when buying clothes becomes such a friend and this relationship becomes closer.

Anna Maria: I absolutely agree with that. Such a key word in this profession is empathy, i.e. the most important thing is to understand the expectations of a given person at the very beginning, because it is not that I always have the same stores to which I lead everyone, but first I try to understand what the customer expects and it really is about getting to know each other better, observing what the client's choices are, what he likes and advising whether it suits him or her or another choice would be better, proposing an alternative. Treating each client individually.

Ambassador: The function you perform is already a process when you have knowledge, a young person cannot advise because you need to have knowledge, a young person must go through a process, first be a stylist, work for a fashion house, then a creative director and then go on their own account So what is the way in Italy to become a personal Shoper?

Anna Maria: In the case of a personal shopper, two qualities have to be developed, I myself teach at such a well-known institute in Milan? in the field of fashion, there are special courses for the personal shopper. In Milan itself, there are three universities that deal with this. It is very important that there must be a difference between a personal shopper and a great salesperson. On the one hand, you need to get to know the products of a given brand, get acquainted with them, be up to date, but the technical aspect is very important, know the fabrics, styles, dimensions and know how the clothes fit on a person. Development of interpersonal skills is also very important. The clientele if we are talking about the age for both men and women is from 35 to 65 years. With a young, beautiful girl, clients may get a little scared, so this experience is also important and to be able to establish a relationship with the client.

Ambassador: At the beginning, I think that it would be better to do an internship at a fashion house or with a designer outside the university that gives the knowledge, because it's a practice.

Anna Maria: Absolutely. It is an extremely important matter, which is why the world of fashion is very specific, it also has its own language, on the other hand, technology, you have to get into it, you have to get to know it in order to tell customers about it later, they also create a story, this story telling. It is not enough to say that this is an Armani jacket made of such and such material, but to tell a story.

Ambassador: How long does the university last?

Anna Maria: There are many different courses. The shortest course to become a personal shopper lasts 40 hours. The second course is Image Advisor, a bit longer. These are classes in various subjects, such as the history of fashion or activities shaping your image, because this is where you have to start- you are your own advertisement, classes about matching clothes or color to your face.

Ambassador: Very wise, because I can't imagine a personal trainer in fitness who doesn't look like a god, because nobody will buy what he says. How long do these courses provide work afterwards, because, for example, when very good



Ambassador: Thank you. We talked about two main trends. The first trend is Future, which has connected all Italian designers, i.e. the past because we are recovering from this pandemic, and the second is the shows that will take place live and the number of exits will be smaller because it will not be 150 or 50 and maybe later less, that's it. we know and when it comes to individual trends in Milan today and we look at different designers, what is the common one trend for all?

Anna Maria: There is one thread common to everyone and it is sustainable development. This is something that is definitely being talked about a lot and that stylists will focus on. So, for example, the Dolce Gabbana store has a Patchwork dress on display made of various pieces, i.e. it is about saving when it comes to choosing materials or reusing materials.

Ambassador: From such a shop life, because it is also interesting where these markets will be in the future, i.e. China, India and Dudaj, so every serious shop today, large, fashion not only in Milan but also in the world has a Chinese salesperson employed, and the second thing, because it is also interesting how the store staff is trained, because sellers have to find a golden mean to be helpful on the one hand, but on the other hand to create comfort for the customer so that they do not feel any pressure.

Anna Maria: Yes, now there are always sellers in the store who speak Chinese, Russian, Arabic. In companies, this whole process of educating the crew who works in the store is extremely important. The higher the level of the store, the stylist, the more elaborate it is and the point is not to sell, but to make the customer fall in love with this style. There is a tendency, the so-called story telling, which started in France and in Italy they started to copy it, that is building the whole story, the envelope. The customer entering the store is to feel the whole story related to this brand and everyone has their own individual features and the woman who usually wears Dolce & Gabbana does not wear Armani. Often it is involved in such sensory aspects, smell and the whole atmosphere of the store. It all plays a very important role.

Ambassador: When we look at the markets and focus on the Arab market, which is very definite because they sell gilded and decorated items, such as Baroque or Rococo. In Poland, when it comes to Poland, such a designer Sylwia Romaniuk who creates such very sensual dresses and in 2018 won Dubai Fashion Week and found herself with her stylization one hundred percent there. So when we focus on the Arab market, in your opinion, which of the Italian designers care a lot about this market and are recognized, fit?

Anna Maria: The tendency among the most famous top stylists from the top 10 is not to conform to just one market, but to be universal while keeping your style. Perhaps in less famous stylists such trends can be observed, but none of the famous stylists changes their style to match.

Ambassador: It is clear, my question was different, because I did not mean that anyone would change anything, but who of the Italian stylists fits in that market, who has a lot of sales, who is naturally so well seen?

Anna Maria: Mainly Dolce & Gabbana, Versace and Cavalli. Cavalli is currently experiencing a certain economic crisis and is not investing in new projects, while Dolce & Gabbana is doing great. For example, with her client, she bought clothes from Dolce & Gabbana, which cost 28 thousand euro. Arabic sizes are also different from European ones.

Ambassador: It seems to me that when it comes to this profession, the word personal itself, what stands for this word has less

learning ends or very good courses end, home fashion designers or designers come forward on their own.

Anna Maria: Yes, it works this way and here in Milan it is common that stylists collaborate with the most famous institutes, they look for good students themselves, they even ask me often for help and advice so that I can She recommended specific people to hire first for an internship and then for further cooperation.

Ambassador: These 40-hour courses are usually holiday courses or do they extend to the whole year?

Anna Maria: The courses take place on 5 consecutive Saturdays, on specific dates. I also organize such private courses myself and then I adjust to the needs, usually these are different dates than at the university.

Ambassador: The best universities in the world, I am not talking about fashion now, but for example about Harvard, Oxford, there is such a thing that when young people start studying there, they can get 90% of them for themselves, they receive a loan from you which they then pay back because you know how Oxford has a good job, all the gates of the world are opening yeah, they have it spread over 15 or 20 years and they pay back, but they have a certain minimum rate that they have to earn for graduation, if they do not achieve it within the first year or two, i.e. do not meet the expectations, the university, taking care of this prestige, prefers to redeem it than to admit that she raised someone who did not live up to expectations. How is it here?

Anna Maria: There is a scholarship here for people with the best results who are unable to pay for their education. They can apply for this scholarship on the basis of their high school performance. I do not know anything about the possibility of canceling the education loan, but prices in Italy are not as high as in the case of Harvard or Oxford. My daughter pays around EUR 13,000 a year at a private university.

Ambassador: Are you going to New York Fashion Week in autumn and do you participate in them outside of Italy at all?

Anna Maria: I focus on Fashion Week in Milan because I am most interested in it, but I also go to selected fashion shows because it is also the time when I have the most customers who come to see fashion week and go shopping. I watch the other shows on TV.

Ambassador: The last question about the Polish market, because we also have designers, do you know such names as Zięć, Paprocki & Brzozowski, Baczyńska or Ewa Mingę who participated in Fashion Week in Milan, did you have contact with them?

Anna Maria: Of course I follow trends all over the world, apart from individual countries, but I have not heard of specific names of Polish stylists. My clients, who come to Milan and go to the Italian personal shopper, expect me to be a Made in Italy ambassador.

Ambassador: Anna Maria, thank you for the interview.

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