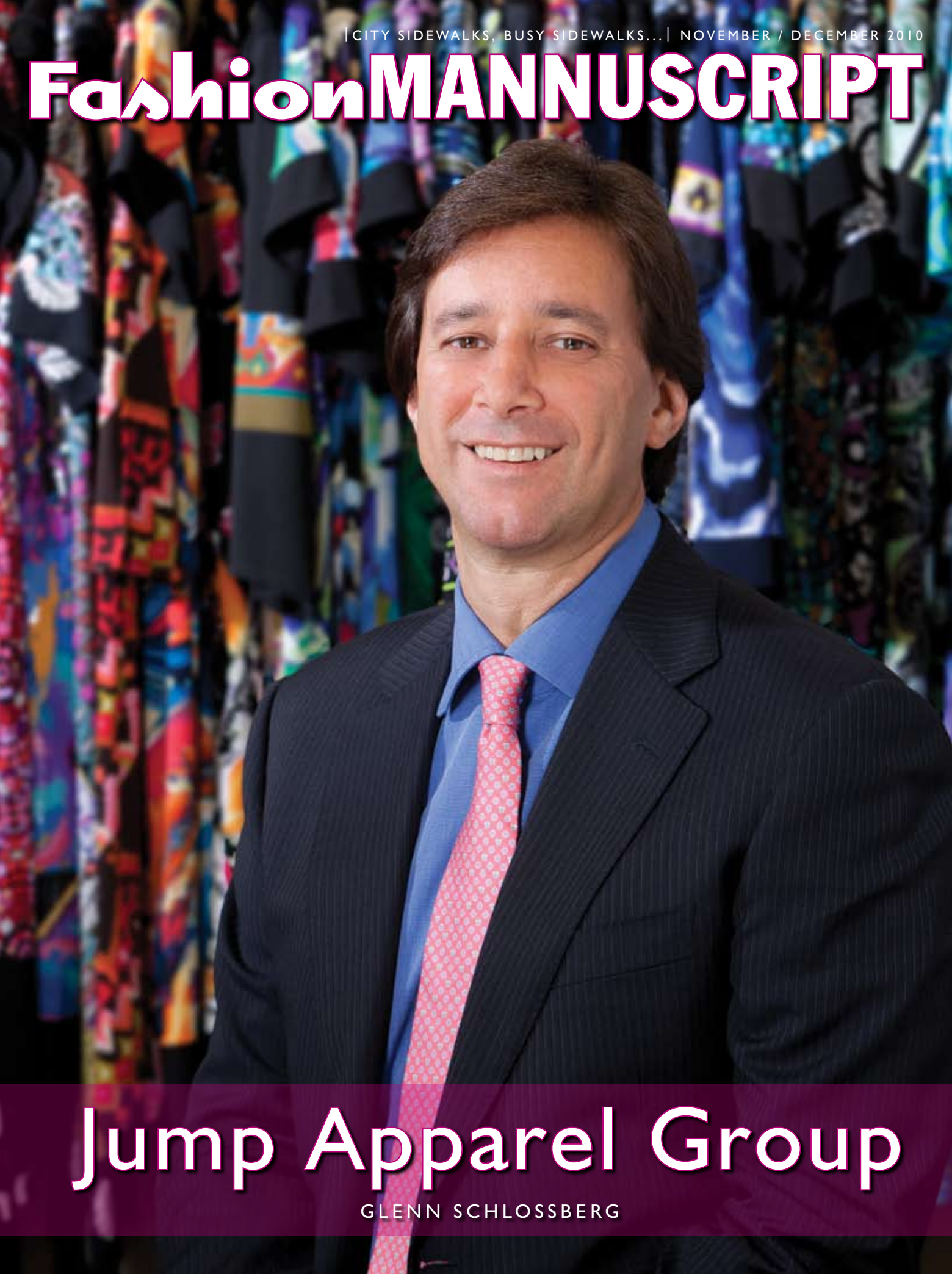


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# FashionMANNUSCRIPT



## Jump Apparel Group

GLENN SCHLOSSBERG

# SPEEDING TO SUCCESS

## JUMP APPAREL GROUP

When a company has been having 20 years of continuous year-to-year growth ... when it started with one product line and now sells eleven ... when its customers include every major department store, catalog, TV and internet retailer in the nation, and a staff of 240—then the company must have a strong concept behind it, and the skill to implement it. For Jump Apparel Group, both originate with its founder and CEO, Glenn Schlossberg.

The concept is *speed to market*, and it is one reason why Jump Apparel has kept its entire operation in the New York Metropolitan Area. The company's offices, showrooms, designers, pattern-makers, production controllers and more all are located on one 32,000- square-foot floor in midtown Manhattan, at a time when a huge number of Jump's competitors have relocated abroad. "Over the years, we had ten consultants tell us to go offshore and save money," Schlossberg says today. "We fought them all off, and stayed in the States. Now," he laughs, "they think I'm a genius. To this date, 60% of our production remains in the New York Metropolitan Area.

"I wanted the speed to shelf," he explains. "I saw the need to be on-trend in the market, to be able to test our products and, as they sold well, to take re-orders quickly—two, three, four re-orders during a single season. When my competitors were making product abroad and they sold out here, they couldn't get back onto the shelves in time. We have developed a 21-day turnaround, from concept to shelf."

Schlossberg has also been quick to spot trends, or abandon them when they don't click. "When I founded the company 20 years ago," he says, "I was going to focus on cotton Lycra products. In fact, because the fabric had that stretchy, jumpy quality

to it, I named the company Jump. In my first six months, cotton Lycra died. I did a lot of research into what was trending well, and I discovered that junior prom and graduation dresses were selling very strongly. I learned how to make them, I discontinued the old lines right away, and I focused on junior evening wear."

A client provided the impetus for Jump's next move. "We were having great success with the junior lines," Schlossberg recalls, "when a customer told me he wanted my evening dresses in large sizes. I recognized the need: 50 percent of American women are size 14 and up. I moved fast into making junior-plus evening wear; and it turned out to be as big a success as my original juniors! Then I was faced with a practical problem: in many stores, apparel for Plus Size customers is bought, not by the Junior Department, but by the Missy Department. To make the new line stand on its own, I changed its name and created a new brand, Onyx Nite."

Jump soon added more lines. "There was a huge department store consolidation a few years back; as they merged, many of our individual customer stores began to vanish. To gain new ones, I felt we ought to vary the lines, to diversify. That's what we did. Today, for the larger stores, we sell to ten different departments, equaling ten different customers and ten different buyers." Today Jump Apparel's lines include: the Onyx brand, for both Missy and women's cocktail dresses and separates, and Marina, the better brand of both evening dresses and separates catering to the customer who wants more coverage. The biggest growth in the company is the *daytime dress* collection. Tiana B's strength is printed and solid knit dresses that the stores can *reorder in season* because of the company's domestic production. Because of the success of daytime, the newest and exciting

brand is Annalee+Hope, a collection of daytime dresses and sportswear, including full fashion knits—eleven product lines in all.

### A Passion for Fashion

Glenn Schlossberg came to the field of fashion early. His grandfather was in the industry; his parents operated a retail store. Schlossberg started working in his father's warehouse; learned cutting, marking and grading; and earned a degree in pattern making at the Fashion Institute of Technology. Realizing that "fashion was my passion," he started Jump Apparel at the age of 26.

One year into the business—soon partnering with Terry Friedman, who today manages the firm's production and operations—Schlossberg took a small showroom on the second floor of 1400 Broadway, in the heart of Manhattan's Fashion District. Sharing the floor at first with eight other vendors, Jump Apparel gradually expanded its space to occupy the entire floor, 32,000 square feet, encompassing its entire non-manufacturing operation, or more than 100 employees in all.

"Our full floor at Broadway feeds into my concept of speed," notes Schlossberg. "If we see something that is selling very well, our designers and production people can produce five different versions that same afternoon, have it in production the next morning, and ship it out and into the stores within 21 days. In addition, clients coming to New York can visit us, see all our styles, and order on the spot. They can confer with our designers, the order goes down the hall to our pattern makers, then to marking and grading on the premises, and right into production—again, all in 21 days. I believe I'm the fastest in the industry. That keeps us on trend."



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The company's Manhattan space is also home to Jump's sales force. “Our salespeople are a very aggressive and focused team,” says Schlossberg. “They shop the market, they look at the trends, they work with the buyers to find out what's happening. They look at each dress to help determine the best way to sell it, how to make it even more glamorous, all while maintaining its same price point. We have a sales meeting every week, where all of us compare notes and provide suggestions. I call them my ‘A Team!’”

One exception to the concept of ‘everything-under-one roof’ is Jump's modern Distribution Center, with 120,000 feet of space, in Secaucus, New Jersey. “However,” Schlossberg explains, “it, too, is part of our plan to get our product to our customers as fast as we can.”

The company's design concepts come from around the world. “Our people travel, shop and scout,” says Schlossberg.

“We have a full-time shopper in Australia; a large presence and outside shoppers throughout Europe, and outside shopping services. In addition, Jump's eight staff designers analyze the market every day. Up-to-date information is the critical part of this business.”

Jump Apparel sells internationally. “Twenty percent of our business is export,” says Schlossberg. “We sell to nine countries in Europe, to South Africa, to four countries in South America, to Mexico, Canada and Australia. We sell the big department stores in Germany, Milan and London. In fact, when other retailers there see our lines and then come to the U.S., they seek us out.” Evidence of the firm's international success is in Schlossberg's office: An *Export Achievement Award* from the U.S. Department of Commerce, an award from the Small Business Trade Association for *International Growth and Achievement*, and lastly, two awards, from two recent years in a

row, from New York City's Chamber of Commerce given to Jump Apparel as the *Fashion Industry's Exporter of the Year*.

While keeping his eyes on every aspect of Jump Apparel, Glenn Schlossberg finds time to nurture the next generation of fashion professionals. He speaks to students at fashion colleges, including New York's Fashion Institute of Technology, and personally conducts student tours of Jump's operations. “These students, I hope, come away with the idea that an individual with vision and drive can accomplish that vision.” *fess*

By Peter Haas

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# The Jump Apparel Group



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ONYX *Nite*

*Blu Sage*

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