

SOULMACHINE

I. COLLECTION

The starting point of any brand is building a collection. To set up a proper organization for creative and collection building processes is not an easy task however. SOULMACHINE assists in setting up a well-balanced and strategic collection plan, with the right product mix across varied categories and price points. Secondly, we help anticipate key constraints from market and manufacturers -- deadlines, volumes, minimum order requirements, systematic product coding -- while protecting a creative workflow. Finally, we have methods in place for thinking through your brand identity, collection narratives and key brand signifiers.

- Communicate a collection narrative within the wider brand identity.
- Set up a realistic collection development budget.
- Merchandise collections with the right product mix across differentiated target price points and categories.
- Project production volumes and set up a dynamic collection plan.
- Set up a clear product coding system.
- Develop a clear product development calendar by identifying and implementing the key deadlines and delays: from storyboard to final sample.
- Create technical drawings.
- Source fabric mills, trim and hardware suppliers, and sample manufacturers.
- Organise your tech-packs and manage communication with third-party ateliers and sample manufacturers.
- Organise your fittings.
- Negotiate MOQ and cost price for production.
- Normalise the sample for production.
- Order the final samples for show, showroom and/or PR and campaigning.
- Determine final product price for different product categories, taking brand positioning and target margins into account.

2. PRODUCTION

After a collection has been developed it needs to be produced. Timely delivery without quality issues - and within budget - is as critical as it is challenging. SOULMACHINE helps with setting up or expanding the production chain, budget control, negotiations with suppliers and manufacturers, monitoring and optimising the production process, and overall internal organization.

2.1 materials & material sourcing

- Set up and manage a cross-seasonal but dynamic material book and a coding system: across fabrics, trims, hardware, transformations, packaging, labels, hangtags, etc.
- Organise and optimise materials stock management.
- Budget correctly for raw material buying.
- Upcycle: how to start, where to source, and how to organise and scale the transformation process.
- Start certification processes (GOTS, bluesign, OEKO-TEX, in-house, etc.) where needed or wanted.

2.2 production, supply chain & logistics

- Normalise initial samples for manufacturing.
- Manage and monitor key deadlines in production with manufacturing partners.
- Create templates for tracking production status, controlling production budgets, and ensuring timely delivery.
- Set up and expand supplier and manufacturer networks in Europe and beyond.
- Organise quality control and manufacturing visits.
- Organise transport and freight: optimise logistics from raw material suppliers to manufacturers to warehouse.
- Warehouse management.

2.3 ERP & PLM

For emerging brands, it is key to start off with Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and/or Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) solutions sooner rather than later. Most of these solutions are cloud-based softwares, allowing you to integrate, manage and optimise processes all the way from design to delivery: improving time to market, product quality, reducing prototype costs, reducing waste, as well as simplifying invoicing, product analysis, and accountancy. We carry plenty of experience with ERP and PLM software and help to implement.

3. SALES, CAMPAIGN & COMMUNICATION

Bringing a collection to the public is a daunting task -- including shows, showrooms, building up retailer networks, possibly a webstore, an effective sales administrative process, and last but not least: effective campaigning around a strong and coherent narrative.

Find below what SOULMACHINE is able to cover as part of its Incubator program. Further, a key activity of SOULMACHINE is the production and launch of 360° campaigns as a whole, or of standalone deliverables such as websites, logos, press-kits and copywriting. This falls outside of the scope of our Incubator program. Please take a look at our projects section for a full overview.

3.1 wholesale & retail development

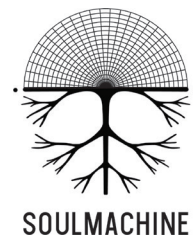
- Find the right balance between wholesale and direct-to-consumer sales.
- Strategize your wholesale: finding the right stores for your brand, and the right balance between third party e-commerce, department stores, and independent boutiques.
- Merchandise from show to showroom: collection editing, final pricing, margin optimisation.
- Organise the showroom: merch, invites, and other practical details.
- Integrate wholesale into the PLM and/or ERP systems (see above).
- Set up the digital showroom: LeNewBlack, Joor, Ordre.
- Optimise showroom results: set Open-To-Buy (OTB) criteria, Minimum Order Quantity (MOQ) requirements, and other terms of sale.
- Manage sales orders and sales administration: moving smoothly from order confirmation, to deposit, to delivery and final invoice.
- Communicate your brand identity, audience and collection narratives to your retail partners with a brand deck.
- Manage wholesale replenishment, Sell-Through (ST), and define retail performance KPIs.
- Control and patrol your recommended retail price (RRP) and markdowns.
- Organise retail visits, in-store events and installations, and new boutique openings.

3.2 webstore development

- Design and develop a website: domain registration, hosting, choosing the right CMS (Joomla, Wordpress, Webflow, etc.), and other key start-up elements.
- Develop a webstore with Shopify.
- Get your digital merchandising in order: what to do and what to avoid.
- Review your logistical solutions fore-commerce: warehousing, shipping, packaging and return policies.
- Mobilise Google Analytics, Google Search, and other key metrics in reporting (conversation rates, traffic sources, engagement, etc.).
- Set up an effective Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.
- Drive traffic by focusing on Search Engine Optimisation (SEO), and/or Marketing (SEM).
- Drive traffic by optimising and integrating your newsletter, Instagram/Facebook and other social channels (SMO).

3.3 campaign, pr, and communication

- Design and develop a weDirect seasonal storytelling - including inspirational boards and visual anchors - that is coherent with the brand's broader DNA, codes, and wider cultural references.
- Create a 360° content creation plan and content launch plan, integrating social channels, shootings, events, digital marketing, runway shows, newsletter, in-store marketing and installations, etc.
- Coordinate and monitor fashion shows and events.
- Identify and work with the right photographers, graphic designers, visual artists, or other creative collaborators.
- Organise the PR: create press kits and press releases, finding and communicating with press offices, sample management, VIP strategy, gifting, and guest lists.
- Ensure a clear campaign budget management.
- Ensure the right KPIs, feedback mechanisms, ROI metrics, and reporting on campaign efficiency are in place.
- Set up brand collaborations: identifying partners, reaching out, collaboration agreements, and execution of the program.



4. OPERATIONS & STRATEGY

No matter how great and brilliantly organized collection, production and campaign efforts may be... Without smoothly organized operations or a clear long-term business strategy, any brand will spin out of control sooner or later. SOULMACHINE brings executive-level experience in elaborating a strong long-term strategy with you, with an eye for the big picture. Moreover, we are able to manage all or a part of your daily operations, so you can steer clear in obtaining optimal outcomes.



4.1 accounting

- Set up and execute your daily bookkeeping: stamping, categorizing, bank card management, administering VAT, cash account, and payments.
- Manage accounts payable and receivable.
- Closing the accounts on a monthly or quarterly basis.
- Establish an analytical accountancy for sound internal management.
- General accountancy: your accountant's yearly reporting.
- Managing corporate taxes, social taxes and VAT.

4.2 business & financial planning

- Build a multi-year Business Plan, outlining marketpositioning, product strategy, organizational development, and projected growthof revenue and turnover.
- Define strategies to build brand awareness, increase sales and market share, and the launch of new services or products.
- Define, register and present key measures of success to banks, financial institutions, or investors.
- Implement budget control mechanisms.
- Set up a Treasury for internal management, securing cashflow, and communication with financial institutions.
- Define and monitor primary KPI's: EBITDA, gross margin, net margin.
- Define and monitor secondary KPI's: target percentages for payroll, campaign expenses, production budgets, and revenue differentiation.

4.3 business operations & human resource

- HR acquisition: finding the right people, conducting job interviews, and negotiating labour contracts.
- Onboarding and offboarding: what to do and what to avoid.
- Internal HR: URSAFF, mutuelle, prévision and other key HR institutions and arrangements in France.
- Set up a clear organisational chart and layering that is right for your stage of development.
- Set up and manage basic communication infrastructure and IT: GSuite, MS Teams, an internal server, and other tools.
- Take care of your studio and office: equipment, pantry, and stationary management.
- Start with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): agenda-setting and implementation.
- Corporate entity establishment and administration: starting a company in France (SARL, EURL, SAS, SASU, etc.).
- Intellectual Property management: INPI, WIPO, trademark registration, protecting your IP, and the importance of China (CTO).