

# Accessories 2011: Neckwear

<http://www.mrketplace.com/18474/accessories-2011-neckwear/>

August 16, 2011

## Time to Tie: Younger guys have discovered ties and it shows in sales.

By Harry Sheff



David Hart & Co. woven silk tie

Neckwear seems to be having a moment. "The good thing is that when we get on a neckwear trend, it's never just for a quarter, it's for a few years," says a cheerful David Sirkin, EVP of Neckwear at PVH. "We're probably about 12 months into it, so we're hoping to have another good 12 to 24 months ahead. And with all the expansion in young men's, there's a lot of opportunity going forward."

Sirkin adds that neckwear is up in the high single digits for PVH. "We're selling more units, we're getting more retail dollars and our AURs are higher."

David Katz at Randa notes that neckwear is getting more interesting, too. Randa, whose tie brands include Ben Sherman, Penguin and Countess Mara, sees slimmer ties growing in market share. But more than that, Randa is now offering 17 shapes to get 90 percent of their business, where three years ago, it was two shapes and one width for 90 percent of their business.

The slimmest of the slim ties, often in seasonal cottons, linens and blends, represents a new consumer segment that isn't necessarily buying ties to wear with suits. A year ago, we heard some retailers experimenting with putting contemporary slim neckwear in sportswear departments. Now, it's becoming mainstream for many big stores.

"We installed a new contemporary dress furnishings shop, outside of the traditional tailored furnishings department, stocking slim shirts and ties from brands like Rag & Bone and David Hart," said Eric Jennings of Saks Fifth Avenue. "Ties here retail for \$80 to \$195 and slim-fit shirts are just south of \$100 to just south of \$200."

"We're doing it with certain retailers," said Sirkin. "We need to capture consumers where they're shopping, and I wouldn't necessarily say that an 18 to 22-year-old guy is shopping the dress furnishings floor. If he wants a slim tie to go with his jeans, you have to present that product at the right place. We've seen several department stores taking that approach going into the fall, and several more will begin in the spring. "That said, you can't put 3.5-inch ties on the sportswear floor and expect them to sell."

Ironically, we've heard scattered reports of frustrated guys looking for those slimmer ties in the furnishings departments, where they used to be, and leaving the stores empty-handed because they couldn't find them. Obviously, this new strategy will take some getting used to.

## Specialties speak

**Gary Drinkwater, Drinkwater's, Boston:** "We sell a fair amount of neckwear, about 200 units a season. I'd say that's pretty good for a culture of non-neckwear wearers. I think if you offer remarkably interesting designs with colors stories that complement your shirts and clothing, it's hard not to convince a guy that sooner or later he will want or need to sport one or two. Our tie bar is the central focus of the layout of our store and they cannot be missed. We carry Dion and Seaward & Stearn as our main brands and have a small selection of neckwear from Engineered Garments and bow ties from Carrot & Gibbs."

**David Hodgkins, David Wood, Portland, Maine:** "We are selling the spectrum from quite formal neats to pretty sporty ties, and thank God for the younger guys coming along, because I think they know more about clothing than the two generations beneath me. The young bucks coming along really seem to get it, and want it and want to know about it. We carry Breuer, Seaward & Stearn and Michael Drake. Most of our ties are about 3.25 inches."

## Product points

**Materials:** Spun silks that give a wool-like hand and prints that look like textured boucles are among Randa's offerings. At PVH, wools and wool blends in the fall and linens and nylon blends, along with unique fabrications, are gaining ground. Some brands are working with silk shantung.



Ivy Prepster neckwear

**Small designers** like Ivy Prepster are staking everything on cotton knits to set them apart from other ties. David Hart & Co. offers shirting fabrics, other cottons and Japanese selvedge denim in addition to silks and wools.

**Patterns:** Plaids are still big. Half of Randa's Ben Sherman ties are plaids. David Hart laments that plaids, a big seller for him, aren't as fun to design. "What I get excited about is designing novelty ties, working with textile mills to create interesting fabric instead of pulling a plaid off an existing collection of textiles. But plaids are what's selling and getting the

most editorial coverage for us."

## Related Posts

1. [Furnishings trim down](#)  
Slim-fit fashion moves to the mainstream. Although Americas Health Rankings reports that...
2. [Accessories 2011: Bags](#)  
Fitting In: Today's bags for men must work hard and look great....
3. [Neckwear Notes: General Knot & Co.](#)  
Andrew Payne has an interesting career history. He's worked as a designer...
4. [Roffe Accessories to acquire XMI](#)  
NEW YORK—Men's furnishings company XMI announced today that it will be acquired...
5. [Accessories 2011: Gadgets and gifts](#)  
Go Go Gadget... Retailers search for the perfect accessories to complement tech...