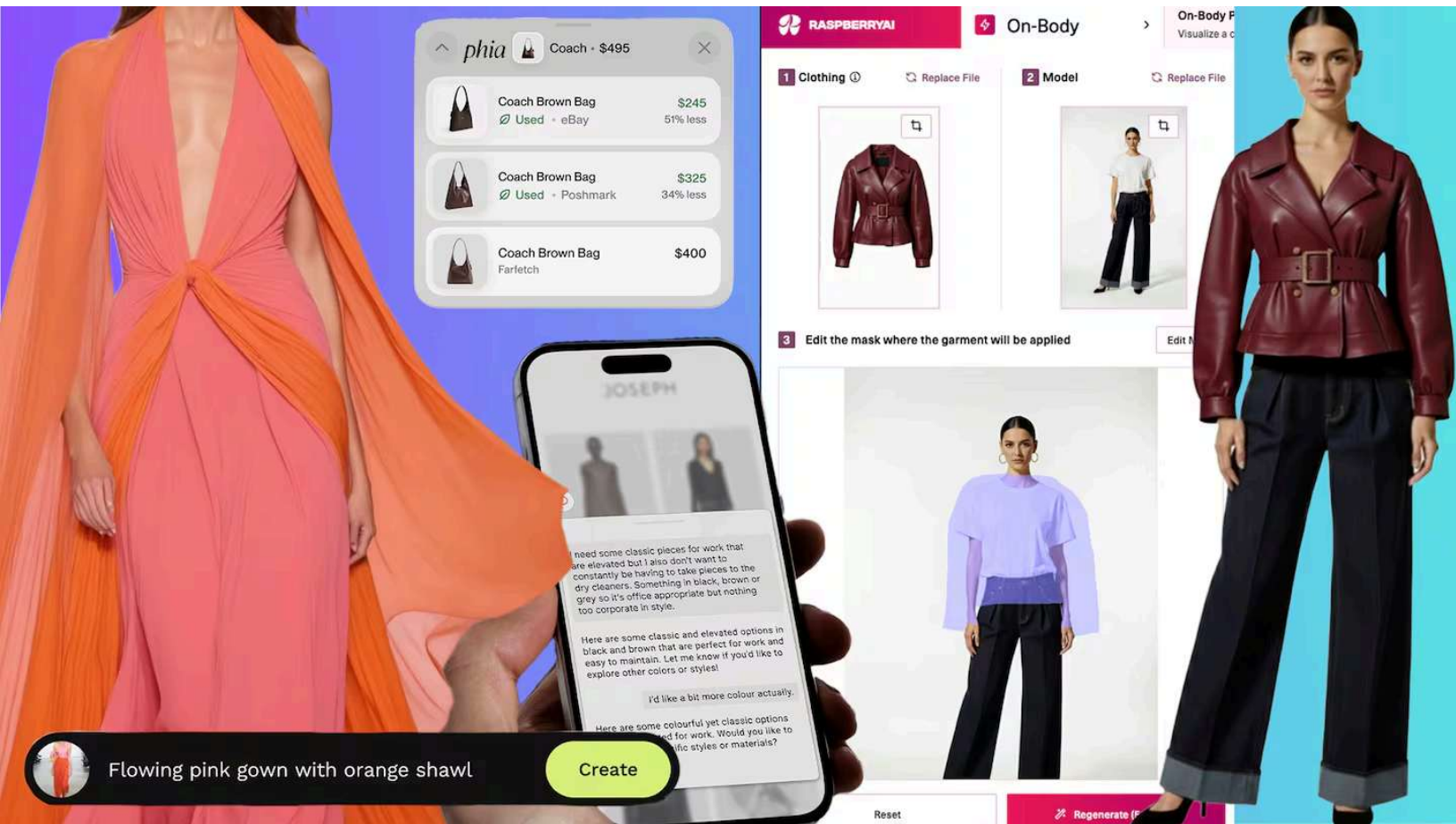


TECHNOLOGY

The Fashion AI Startups to Watch

BoF highlights 17 AI-powered startups that have raised more than \$400 million in the last five years by offering design, operation and shopping services that promise to help brands and retailers reduce costs and increase innovation.



BoF highlights 17 AI-powered startups that have raised more than \$400 million in the last five years. (BoF Team/Courtesy)

By **MALIQUE MORRIS**

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BoF PROFESSIONAL

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Fashion is going all in on AI.

As the technology alters how products are made, marketed and sold, there are a growing number of AI-powered startups looking to bring the industry up to speed. In September, *The Business of Fashion* compiled a list of 17 that are already working with major brands, or are close to bringing promising technology solutions to market. They specialise in capabilities from generating imagery to improving product listings to personalising product recommendations. There's BlnG, a generative product design and marketing platform for jewellery brands; Spangle, which uses proprietary GPT technology to create personalised product pages; and Daydream, a ChatGPT-like search engine for fashion, to name a few.

The 17 upstarts have benefitted from investors' insatiable appetite for anything AI-related, collectively raising more than \$400 million in the last five years. What's driving those investments is their potential to help fashion companies "keep costs down" and "respond at lightning speed to changes in trends," said Nick Kramer, a principal at global consulting firm SSA & Company.

"AI really does promise to change the game and create new winners in the fashion industry," Kramer said.

The Fashion AI Startups to Watch

Design	Raspberry AI Overview: A design platform that adapts AI's image-generating capabilities to the needs of fashion creatives Launch: 2022 Funding: \$29 million	Refabric Overview: A platform that lets brands use AI to edit and refine their designs before going into production, in addition to offering tools such as creating AI-generated marketing imagery Launch: 2023 Funding: \$2.4 million raised; also part of the 2024 LVMH accelerator program	BIng.AI Overview: Generative product design and marketing platform for jewellery brands Launch: 2023 Funding: \$5 million	Imki Overview: An AI design platform that generates design ideas based on a brand's house codes and aesthetic DNA Launch: 2020 Funding: No funding but joined SEMIA Incubateur d'Alsace (per PitchBook)
	Spangle AI Overview: Software firm that uses proprietary GPT technology to create personalised product pages for users who click to a brand's site through a paid ad Launch: 2024 Funding: \$6 million raised	Altana Overview: An AI-powered supply chain platform that helps companies find and vet new suppliers, maintain compliance and assess risks Launch: 2018 Funding: \$200 million raised Notable clients: L.L. Bean, Skims	Vody Overview: Helps retailers organise data to improve product listings and search capabilities Launch: 2019 Funding: \$10 million raised (per PitchBook)	Depict Overview: Swedish AI-powered software platform that helps brands improve their product listings on e-commerce storefronts and offers ChatGPT-like search that functions like an in-store salesperson. Launch: 2019 Funding: \$18 million raised
Operations	SparkBox Overview: Uses AI to help merchandisers improve pricing and inventory planning Launch: 2018 Funding: \$3.5 million raised	7Learnings Overview: AI-powered software firm that offer tools to better predict pricing, improve performance marketing and streamline the process of ordering inventory Launch: 2019 Funding: \$16 million raised (per PitchBook)		
Shopping	Daydream Overview: Creator of a ChatGPT-like search engine for fashion that responds to granular prompts like "revenge dress for a wedding in Paris with 'Saltburn' vibes" for better results Launch: 2025 (in beta) Funding: \$50 million raised	OneOff Overview: AI-powered fashion discovery platform that offers product recommendations based on users' favourite celebrity and influencers' style Launch: 2025 Funding: \$3.5 million raised	Doji Overview: AI-powered virtual try-on platform Launch: 2024 Funding: \$14 million raised	Vetir Overview: AI-powered shopping platform that offers personalised styling and product recommendations Launch: 2024 Funding: \$3 million, with an additional \$12.5 million in funding planned in the next month
	Phia Overview: Shopping app that uses AI to help consumers find and compare prices on visually similar items, estimate resale value and track price drops across different retailers Launch: 2025 Funding: \$8.85 million	Croissant Overview: Software platform that gives shoppers the guaranteed resale value of new items before they buy them through a browser extension and select brand partners Launch: 2022 Funding: \$24 million	Gensmo AI Overview: Creator of an AI-powered shopping agent that personalises product recommendations Launch: 2025 Funding: \$70 million raised	

(BoF Team)

Before this emerging class of software companies can deliver on that promise, they'll have to compete with big tech firms offering similar services. Tech giants like Shopify, Google, Perplexity and Open AI, for example, are steadily introducing a range of AI-powered shopping features on their platforms. In September, Open AI announced a partnership with Shopify to allow users to check out directly on ChatGPT. Since last November, Perplexity's been offering a similar feature for its paying subscribers.

Still, the upstarts have an advantage of moving faster to evolve their capabilities, whereas the bigger companies may have to slowly adapt their existing technologies, Kramer argues. The newbies are already signing on notable brands: Spangle partners with Revolve and Alexander Wang; Altana, which uses AI to help companies find new suppliers and assess supply chain risks, works with L.L. Bean and Skims; and Sparkbox, an AI-powered pricing and inventory planning platform, counts River Island and New Balance as clients.

The startups "may not have a long track record but they have built a product exactly for today's need versus a product that is trying to change," Kramer said. "You get a cleaner product, a better experience and a much more fully formed version of that innovation."

Also, many of these startups' founders have technology backgrounds and cut their teeth at prominent firms. Julie Bornstein, who founded Daydream, was chief operating officer at online styling service Stitch Fix; Spangle's founder, Maju Kuruvilla, was a vice president of software development at Amazon; and Gensmo, an AI-powered shopping app that personalises product recommendations, was founded by former Google software engineer Ning Hu.

But they'll also have to differentiate themselves to avoid competing directly with each other, along with the giants, for consumer attention. Shopping platforms Vêtir and OneOff both focus on personalising product recommendations. But OneOff derives its recommendations from what users' favourite celebrities wear, as opposed to Vêtir which recommends items based on what consumers already own. Croissant and Phia help shoppers estimate the resale value of new items, but the latter also tracks price drops on goods across retailers.

They'll also need to build robust businesses to survive a potential AI bust. The excitement around AI, and how it will change the world, is not dissimilar to the dot com boom that birthed behemoths like Amazon, Google and eBay. But many more companies with unique propositions died painful deaths in the aftermath of the bubble, such as Pets.com.

In the meantime, it's a race to see who has the most staying power.

"There's gonna be one or two key winners," said Amber Atherton, partner at investment firm Patron, which backs early stage tech startups including OneOff. "Every investor is hoping that they're smart enough to back the right approach."

*Want to dive deeper into an insight from this article? **Check out The Brain of Fashion**, BoF's new generative AI tool where you can unlock BoF's technology archive with a single question.*

Editor's Note: This article was amended on Oct. 14 2025, to correct the number of startups included in the list.

FURTHER READING

→ Executive Memo | Everything Fashion Executives Need to Know About AI

The industry's top decision makers may know all the AI buzzwords, but too many are lacking fundamental knowledge about how the most consequential technology in a decade actually works.

→ Unpacking Fashion's New AI Marketing Toolkit

From Mango to Zalando, fashion brands are using AI tools to produce faster, cheaper and more personalised campaigns — but keeping content on-brand still requires human creativity and strategic control.

→ AI Shopping Is Here. Will Retailers Get Left Behind?

AI doesn't see the internet the same way human shoppers do, meaning retailers need to adapt as more consumers turn to AI to find products or even make purchases.

→ How Investors Fell Back in Love With Fashion Tech

With the rise of AI, Silicon Valley is going all in on a new generation of startups that promise to radically change how products are made and sold. This time, they're backing founders with tech chops and are more patient in helping them grow.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**MALIQUE MORRIS**

Malique Morris is Senior E-Commerce Correspondent at The Business of Fashion. He is based in New York and covers digital-native brands and shifts in the online shopping industry.
