



### **Project Data**

#### **Key Scope Items:**

- Business Plan Development
- Feasibility Study, Including Comparable Facilities Analysis
- Board Development

**Development Budget:** \$200,000

**HSP Professionals Involved in Project:** Rob Hunden

**Time of Service:** 2007 – Present

## **Chicago Fashion Incubator**

*Chicago, Illinois*

The City of Chicago sought to broaden its diverse offerings to provide a world-class cross-cultural experience to residents, entrepreneurs and visitors. The City was eager to support the development of the fashion industry as a sustaining economic force. Concerned about the number of fashion designers leaving Chicago, a Fashion Industry Incubator was proposed to nurture the growth of fashion entrepreneurs in an appropriate physical setting.

The Fashion Advisory Council retained the services of Hunden Strategic Partners to study the effectiveness of the concept and how such an incubator should be programmed for maximum positive impact on the fashion industry locally.

The study included an analysis of gaps in the fashion industry in such areas as education, production and distribution. The incubator was seen as a place where both newly-minted fashion graduates and entrepreneurs without fashion experience could come and learn, produce, show, market and develop their businesses. Macy's dedicated several thousand square feet to the Fashion Incubator in its office space above the flagship Chicago store.

Based on HSP's recommendations, the Chicago Fashion Incubator non-profit was formed and debuted in 2007 at Macy's on State Street. Each year, the six designers-in-residence work, produce and show their collections. In 2009, Tommy Hilfiger was brought in as CFI's first "Master Designer" and further enhanced the visibility of Chicago as a fashion industry hub.