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## Leveraging Industrial Designs and Brand Portfolio Protection in the Nigerian Fashion Industry

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In the highly competitive Nigerian fashion sector, where design imitation, or "copycatting," is rampant, strategic IP protection must go beyond merely registering the brand name and logo as a Trademark.

While Trademark registration remains essential for brand equity, fashion houses must actively utilize Industrial Design protection under the Patents and Designs Act. This specific form of IP safeguards the novel and original visual features of a product, such as the unique cut of a garment, the pattern on a textile, or the distinct shape of a handbag or accessory.

An Industrial Design registration secures exclusive rights to the aesthetic appearance for an initial period, offering a powerful legal tool against unauthorized replication of unique product aesthetics that differentiate a brand.

A comprehensive strategy also involves meticulously drafting agreements, including employment contracts and Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs), to protect creative processes and collections before launch. By combining Trademark, Industrial Design, and contractual confidentiality measures, Nigerian fashion businesses build a robust, multi-layered shield against infringement.

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