

The quest for the perfect T-shirt

September 26 2017, by Deborah Evanson



Credit: Imperial College London

A start-up co-founded by an Imperial student is using data analysis to transform menswear design.

Morph, which was founded by undergraduate engineering student

Raphael Guth and fashion entrepreneur Niels Thoné, has developed an innovative new sizing system for menswear.

The pair claim that their method, which is based on consideration of both [body type](#) and height, could bring considerable advantages to both customers and retailers – providing a better and more flattering fit, making it easier to shop online, and drastically cutting return rates.

Raphael said: "A lot of men I know just do not shop online because they can't be certain that the [size](#) they buy will actually fit them properly. Often you can find a shirt that's the right size across the chest, but the sleeves don't fit properly or the shirt is the wrong length. It adds up to clothes that just don't look or feel right when you wear them, which is very frustrating."

"There is also so much variety between brands and especially between countries – a size S in China or Japan will often be considerably smaller than a size S in Europe or the US. We wanted to find a solution."

Data analysis

Morph's first product was a t-shirt, which they developed following a crowd-funding campaign that raised more than £20,000. They collected data on male [body](#)-types from around the world to help them determine the patterns for the t-shirts and the sizes that would be required.

Niels explained: "The patterns usually used to make men's clothes are the same ones that were used in the 1950s – they have hardly moved on at all. We started from scratch, and set ourselves the task of designing a t-shirt that would fit and look better on more people."

Based on the [data analysis](#), they identified 3 main body types – slim, athletic and broad. Customers select their body type and then input their

height to determine their size. There are nine size options in total, which they say provide a significantly superior fit to existing t-shirts for virtually all body types.

Morph have also done away with the usual "small", "medium" and "large" sizes, instead naming each size after a Greek hero – such as Hermes, Achilles, or Agamemnon. The symbol for the respective hero is emblazoned on the sleeve of each shirt.

"We want the range to be body positive, and for our customers to be proud of their size. We think the names are empowering," Niels said.

Raphael and Niels eventually hope that more brands will adopt their approach to sizing, but for now are selling direct to customers online. Their return rates, Niels explained, are considerably below what most online retailers achieve: "Generally speaking, online clothing retailers have a return rate of 30 to 35 percent. That's a huge profit issue for companies. We have a return rate of just 8 percent, which is a massive improvement."

The pair are planning to launch a new crowdfunding campaign for a shirt later this year.

Morph have been working with Imperial's Enterprise Lab as they grow their business. Raphael said: "Imperial is a great place to develop as a young entrepreneur. We've been working with the Enterprise Lab for the past year, who have provided us with invaluable support, space, and connections."

Provided by Imperial College London

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