

FASHION × AI: FROM CONTENT TO SALES

Artificial intelligence is already rewriting the rules of the fashion industry: it helps create content, analyze trends, and drive sales performance. At the business conference of the 38th International Fashion Exhibition Central Asia Fashion Autumn-2026, speakers of the «Fashion × AI: From Content to Sales» session presented practical tools that fashion industry professionals can start implementing right after the show.

The session was moderated by Emina Ponyatova, an expert in assortment planning, analytics, and category management, and a former buyer and category manager for Replay, Pepe Jeans, Hugo Boss, Armani Collezioni, Stefanel, and Missoni. To open the conversation, she asked all panelists whether AI adoption has crossed the point of no return — or whether the industry is still riding a hype wave. Timur Kamalov, co-founder and CEO of Teplo Store and a speaker from Uzbekistan, was unequivocal: *«The hype is undeniable, but today using AI is becoming mandatory. There is no going back. In my view, it is a capability every company must have».*



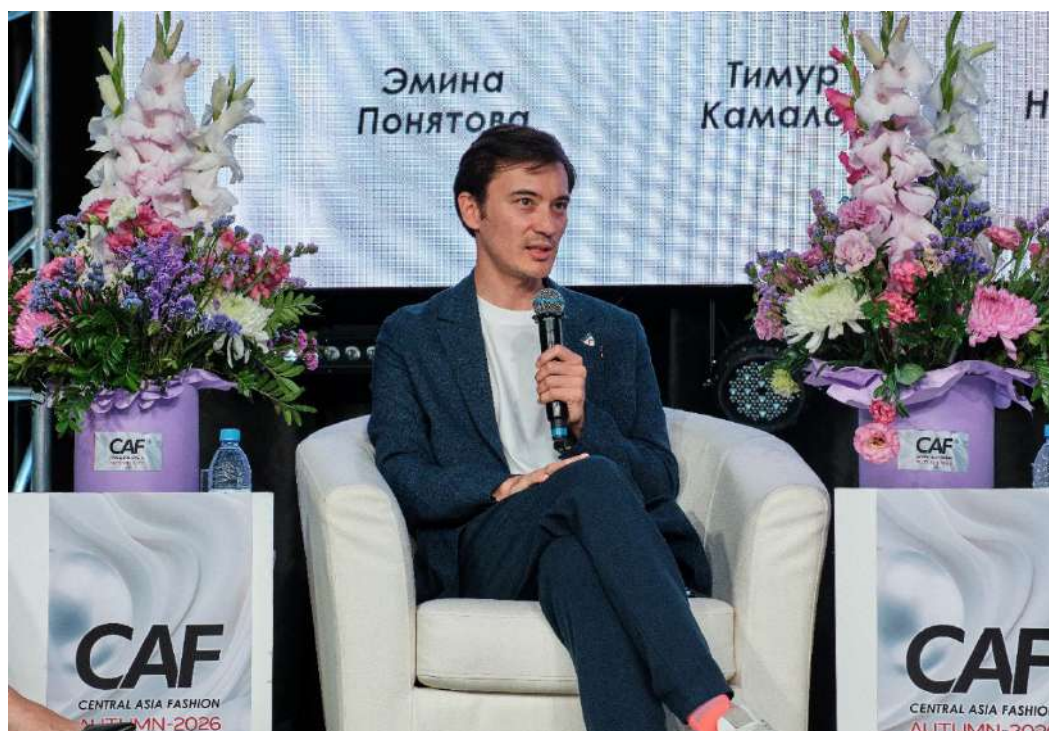
Expert in assortment planning, analytics, and category management Emina Ponyatova

AI Engineering Manager, ex-Amazon, CTO and Tech Advisor Zhansaya Nugusbaeva agreed: *«I would go even further — I think the hype is already behind us. Today, AI is no longer just about chatting with ChatGPT, tweaking the output, and calling it done. We are seeing much deeper integration: companies are embedding AI into automation and core business processes. It is entering every corner of business. This is not hype — it is a tool that must be deeply integrated to deliver real results and genuine efficiency gains».*

Ivan Bukhonin, entrepreneur and founder of web studios BuhoninLab, SunityWeb, and Bukhonin&CO, and an expert in web development, business process automation, and AI implementation, noted that the world has reached peak AI–business integration, and companies are now identifying concrete efficiency gains: *«These can be in sales, client communication, or various services. AI concierges, for instance, are trending heavily right now. We implement these solutions regularly and see how dramatically they boost performance — including in fashion, such as childrenswear retail and other categories. So yes, this is absolutely a point of no return».*

AI creator and generative content expert Marsej emphasized that artificial intelligence is evolving on a daily basis: *«We see how major brands are already actively using it for video generation, content creation, and promotion. For me, this is unambiguously a point of no return — not hype».*

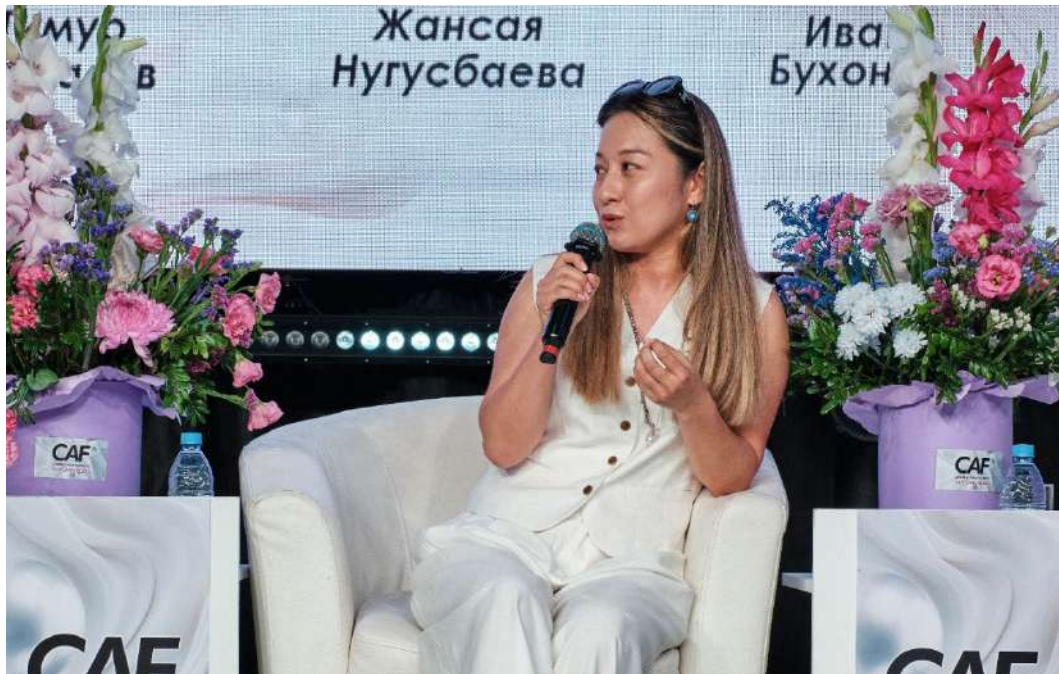
The conversation then shifted to real-world business tools. Emina Ponyatova asked Timur Kamalov where AI is already generating tangible revenue. The Uzbek expert responded that AI has primarily delivered significant cost savings: *«AI effectively replaces around eight roles for us — specialists we would have had to bring in separately at different stages. Previously that meant salaries or project fees. Now we pay for an AI tool subscription — around \$200–\$250 depending on the region. Instead of eight specialists we essentially have one person plus AI. It is not only considerably cheaper — it is also much faster. We started using AI about two to three years ago, but active integration has happened over the last eight months. Another example is product photography. Previously we hired a photographer who handled all shooting and editing for our online store. Now a team member photographs the item on a decent smartphone, uploads it to an AI service, and gets a result ready to publish. This cuts both costs and turnaround time. The third area is analytics: you take an Excel spreadsheet, upload it to ChatGPT, and get a full data analysis. Before, we just saw numbers. Now we identify patterns and make data-driven decisions — which consistently outperform gut instinct».*



Co-founder and CEO of Teplo Store Timur Kamalov

Emina Ponyatova echoed the points on speed and analytics: *«It is not only about saving money — it is about speed. Photographers, studios, models, production schedules: all of that demands time and budget, especially in the premium and luxury segments where costs can be substantial. And today speed is becoming one of the defining competitive advantages. A business must be agile and adapt fast. On analytics, virtually any company with a minimal budget can now build spreadsheets, generate reports, manage product classifiers, and conduct pre-season planning. But the biggest challenge for a fashion business owner is not creating a report — it is knowing how to read one correctly. The fashion market in Russia and the CIS is growing fast, yet category management expertise remains scarce. This is exactly where AI can become the tool that lets owners quickly adapt, interpret, and analyze reporting for their specific decision-making needs».*

Zhansaya Nugusbayeva shared how she helped launch a startup using AI: *«It was a small retail venture — not clothing, a different product category. They were just opening: the product concept was there, but there was no clarity on where to start. I helped use AI at every stage: from developing the store concept and branding to design and website creation. There were essentially two of us — me and the founder. We replaced an entire team: a copywriter, branding specialists, and designers — and built everything in literally three days. Ten years ago, producing the brand book needed for launch would have required assembling a large creative team».*



AI Engineering Manager, ex-Amazon, CTO and Tech Advisor Zhansaya Nugusbayeva

Emina Ponyatova offered a detailed example of AI-driven workflow optimization: *«Take WGSN, the trend forecasting company. When you understand how WGSN actually works, it becomes clear it is in many ways a precursor to what AI does today. The trending colors, fabrics, and silhouettes we see in upcoming seasons*



Founder of web studios BuhoninLab, SunityWeb, Buhonin&CO, AI implementation expert Ivan Buhonin

are the result of enormous analytical work. Previously that was almost entirely manual: specialists analyzed sales across regions, studied consumer behavior, and forecast next-season trends. Major brands paid fortunes for that intelligence. Today, many of those same tasks can be done in a single click. You can upload your target audience profile, preferences, sales data, and behavioral patterns into an AI tool and receive a far more precise forecast — tailored specifically to your brand».

Ivan Bukhonin offered a more nuanced perspective on AI outputs: «What we get from AI is not a finished product — it is more of a hypothesis validation. The final result still needs to go through a specialist. AI is not a magic pill — I keep emphasizing this. It is above all an accelerator. As for content costs: Deloitte notes that text production has become significantly faster. The cost of visual content has also dropped dramatically. Where a quality image once cost around €45, today you can achieve the same result for €4–5. In digital marketing, one banner used to cost around 5,000 tenge. Now I write a brief, generate several options, and send them to the client to choose from. We save across the board: time, money, and human resources. That is one of the core values propositions of AI».

AI creator Marsej, on the question of how to make AI genuinely profitable, outlined a simple content chain: «With AI we create content, content generates views, views build trust, and trust — ultimately — drives sales. Scripts can also be created with ChatGPT if you know how to frame your prompt. You don't have to be a professional screenwriter: if you understand how to set a task and work with AI, you can get the result you need. I think the next in-demand role may well be the AI specialist — and this doesn't have to mean someone with an IT background. Far more important is the ability to articulate ideas clearly, set precise tasks, and critically evaluate the output. That said, I disagree with the claim that AI produces better content than humans across the board. For marketplace product listings, AI may perform better. But not for all content — that distinction matters».



AI creator and generative content expert Marsej

Timur Kamalov warmly backed his colleague: «In the creative industry, the human element always remains the most essential. I am not yet convinced that AI can fully replace a genuinely talented creative mind. Yes, AI will eventually produce very high-quality visuals — especially with a well-crafted prompt. But context is everything: an understanding of culture, audience, and the industry itself. When we are talking not just

about a product shot but about a truly compelling campaign, a brand concept, or a distinctive visual identity, AI will still fall short of a person with real creative thinking and deep contextual understanding. A talented creative person will not be replaced by AI anytime soon».



CAF business conference experts showcased practical AI tools for the fashion industry

When asked how to use AI in content without losing a brand's voice and authenticity while optimizing budgets, Marsej responded in detail: *«I don't think you should produce all of a brand's content using AI. Audiences detect it quickly, and it can create a sense of disconnect. It is better to blend AI-generated content with traditional production: phone-shot video, professional model shoots, and so on. That preserves authenticity and keeps the brand voice intact. Because we sell products through emotion — and fully AI-generated content often looks too perfect: no natural draping, no fabric texture, no small imperfections that make a product feel real. My rough rule of thumb: two traditionally produced pieces for every one AI-generated piece. For product brands especially, I see no case for going fully AI».*



Marsej demonstrated that AI can cut advertising production costs by approximately 50%

The creator then walked attendees through a cost estimate for producing a promotional video with AI: *«Here is a video created without a model, camera operator, or physical location. What would it cost traditionally? A model: around 15,000 tenge per hour. A camera operator: 20,000 tenge per hour. Studio rental: 15,000 per hour. Stylist and make-up artist: 15,000–20,000 tenge. Equipment: around 20,000 tenge per hour. Logistics: about 5,000 tenge. Total: approximately 70,000–95,000 tenge per hour. With AI? The client provides the product image — 0 tenge. The AI creator's work runs around 40,000 tenge. Savings: 30,000–55,000 tenge, and in time — from four to seven days down to roughly one day. The process is just five steps: product photo → virtual model → location → animation → finished video. The model can be anyone: male, female, or a fictional character. All of this lets you sell through emotion — without a single physical shoot».*

Discussing the most versatile AI tools for any user, Ivan Bukhonin named ChatGPT, Gemini, Grok, and Perplexity: *«ChatGPT is a multimodal system for text, images, and creative tasks. Each tool has its specialization: Gemini excels at data analytics, Grok at video generation. I would not look for one AI that does everything — I would match the tool to the specific task. For small businesses I would particularly recommend Perplexity: it is a strong aggregator for quickly finding and synthesizing information. I personally use a combination of ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Gemini. Gemini now has Google Drive integration: you can create and edit spreadsheets, documents, and contracts — even by voice. For small businesses, three subscriptions at around \$20 each is entirely justified. I would allocate between 50,000 and 150,000 tenge per month for tools».*

Timur Kamalov advised newcomers not to rush and to start with a single, simple subscription. As you go, you will naturally understand which tasks need solving and which additional tools are genuinely necessary — you can even ask ChatGPT itself.



CAF business conference speakers (left to right): Emina Ponyatova, Timur Kamalov, Zhansaya Nugusbayeva, Ivan Bukhonin, Marsej

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