

# THE FASHION WHISPERER

The Business of Fashion is an industry must-read. Meet the man behind the influential website.

**BY MARK ELLWOOD PORTRAIT BY SCOTT TRINDLE**

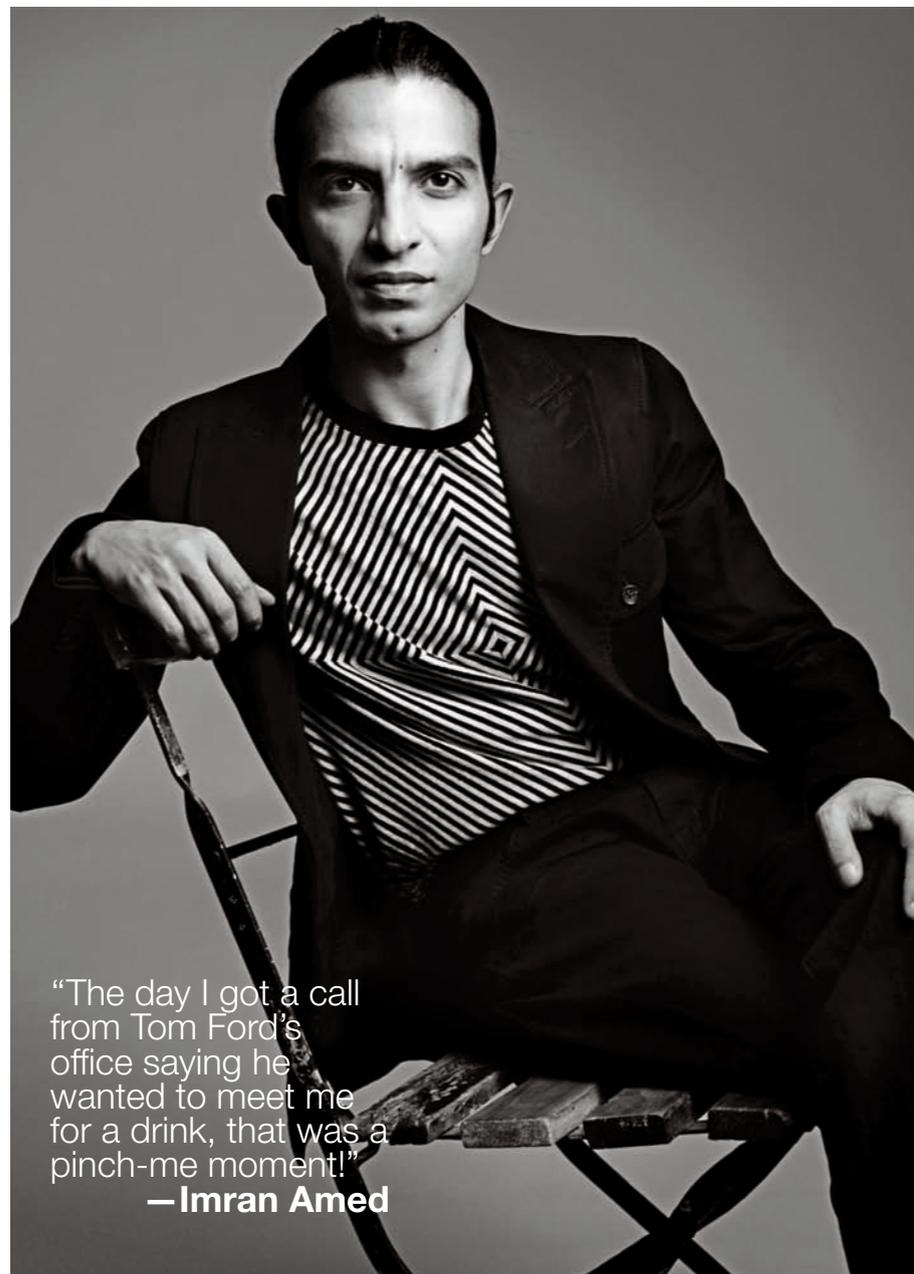
**For Imran Amed, it was a missed seat** at the Oscar de la Renta fashion show that changed everything. Accustomed to sneaking into most presentations and lurking at the back of the room, the upstart blogger was delighted to receive a formal invitation to one of New York Fashion Week's top runway shows. Sadly, snarled by traffic, he arrived late and had to take his place in standing, as usual. Amed was stunned when he sought out the PR head afterwards to apologize. "Have you met our CEO, Alex Bolen, she asked, because he's the one who asked me to invite you?" "And, he had saved you a seat next to him in the front row," Amed sighs. Perhaps I could be onto something with that blog of mine, he thought. At that point, *BusinessofFashion.com* had been live for less than a year.

In the five years since then it has become a rag trade must-read, a smart and snark-free snapshot of fashion news. Such success has surprised everyone, 36-year-old Amed included. Born in Calgary in Alberta, Canada, he followed a conventional corporate path (MBA at Harvard and served a stint as an associate at McKinsey & Company) before jonesing for both, independence and a little more glamour while living in London. The answer was to start a luxury goods consultancy; an ad hoc blog began as a way to tout his expertise. That was 2006, before the onslaught of Facebook, Twitter and Tumblr so he used *BusinessofFashion.com* as a way to workshop his ideas, tapping into the problem-solving savvy he learned at McKinsey.

Within six months, Amed noticed traffic spiking and after the Oscar de la Renta invitation, he realized there was more potential in his blogging hobby than in consulting. It was a smart move; he now reaches around one million people a month via his website, a daily newsletter and followers on Instagram et al. It's even more impressive given the surprising challenge he faced at the outset. Amed's reporting was so thorough and useful that some fashionista's preferred to read and digest his smart observations and then reiterate them—without mentioning the site. "People wouldn't want to tell about it, this was their secret source of insider information."

Now, he's high profile enough to be lionized as influential and stylish by *GQ*'s around the world from India to the UK (his favorite indulgence was a boiled cashmere blazer by Japanese label Icho.) Amed won't ever have to worry about sneaking into a show again. *BusinessofFashion.com* is now indispensable to Seventh Avenue insiders. "At Harvard Business School, we did a case study on the turnaround of Gucci," he said. "The day I got a call from Tom Ford's office saying he wanted to meet me for a drink, that was a pinch-me moment!" Jenné Lombardo, co-founder of MADE Fashion Week in New York, is another fan. "Amid the bitchiness and subjectivity that often characterizes fashion reporting, Amed stands out," she says. "He's a subtle, sweet guy and he's truly coming from an educated approach on fashion. He has an objective energy about him that you feel when you're reading it. BoF is the Cliffs Notes of fashion."

Ever so humble, Amed himself still marvels that he's ended up a Seventh Avenue media magnate. Aside from a grandfather who was a tailor, his immediate family wasn't concerned with hemlines or headlines. "I was just the guy whose friends turned to and ask 'Does this look good on me?'" 



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—Imran Amed