

February 2015

## Growing Capacity, Gaining Traction

### Overview

Media production company, Tryon Media, makes and enables spectacular fashion entertainment via its three brands:

- *Regalia*, a fashion app for consumers
- *Runway Manhattan*, a curated digital repository of exactly tagged and key-worded fashion photography for media production
- *Ready by Runway Manhattan*, a "ready-to-wear" line of journalistic services for international photo agencies



As a resource and opportunity nexus, APEX has helped advance the capacities and community traction of Tryon Media, an innovative startup serving the fashion entertainment industry.

Headquartered in Duluth, Minnesota, Tryon Media also has staff on the ground in Milan, Hamburg and New York City. [www.tryonmedia.com](http://www.tryonmedia.com)

### The Opportunity

Founded in 2010 by Markus Mueller and Lara Signorelli, startup company Tryon Media leverages digital acumen and insider insight to serve the fashion entertainment industry. Mueller has more than 25 years in the media industry, while Signorelli is a former photo editor at Getty Images and the Associated Press.

Though Tryon Media has staff on the ground in Milan, Hamburg and New York City, most of the work they do takes place in Duluth. While Duluth, a city rich in manufacturing, mining, logistics and timber history, may not be the first city that leaps to mind when you think of fashion, Mueller believes that, due to its rich business, technology and human resources, Duluth has the potential to transform into an international hub for fashion entertainment.

Working with the Area Partnership for Economic Expansion (APEX) has helped Tryon Media tap into those business and human resources.

APEX has helped Tryon Media advance its capacities and traction in the community in three primary ways:

- **Smoothing the way for local seed funding**  
Tryon Media is currently in a \$2.5 million seed round and as of late 2014 had raised one third of that sum from local investors. Mueller credits word of mouth spread by APEX leadership for increased awareness of Tryon Media and greater receptivity to the idea of a company rich in intangible assets – a challenge in a city like Duluth with such a long history of dealing in tangible resources. There are APEX Angels among Tryon Media's investors.



**TRYON MEDIA**

**Runway  
Manhattan**

**REGALIA**

*Regalia is available as a free download on the iTunes App Store.*

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**“APEX is an iceberg organization,” says Mueller. “It reaches so much deeper and is so much more powerful than what you might see at first glance.”**

– Markus Mueller,  
CEO, Tryon Media

### ■ **Connecting the Company with business resources**

APEX has served as a vital resource nexus for Tryon Media, connecting the Company with the creative, financial, legal and additional resources needed to grow.

### ■ **Helping the Company find and hire talent**

“We always thought the biggest challenge would be finding the talent to fuel our vision, but that has been the least of our challenges,” said Mueller. One of Tryon Media’s photo editors, for example, came to the Company via TwinPortsConnex, now part of NORTHFORCE, a regional online talent database. Tryon Media’s first fashion writer is from Knife River, Minnesota and some of the stories she has produced for Runway Manhattan have been published in *Vogue* magazine and *The Wall Street Journal*.

## The Outcome

“Word of mouth that APEX staff and members have spread has absolutely paved the way for us and helped us find fertile soil,” said Mueller.

Between the community traction, operational resources and well-qualified talent – not to mention the seed funding round in progress – Tryon Media is positioned for major growth. Some recent milestones:

- In Spring 2015, Tryon Media’s brand *Runway Manhattan* will have its breakthrough in the US market, with multiple publications in several fashion magazines
- The Company is preparing to re-launch *Regalia* – its signature fashion app – with all-new visual branding
- The number of staff in the Duluth office will soon hit 15. As of early 2015, the Company was looking for a business management intern. Said Mueller, “I have no doubt that within a week or two, either APEX staff will recommend someone directly, or we will find the right person through NORTHFORCE”

Tryon Media’s long-range vision is bold but clear – to help establish Duluth as an international hub for fashion entertainment. Bolstered by the resources and connections of APEX and the rich human and business resources of the community, the Company’s vision has a fashionably strong chance of coming true.

## About APEX

APEX is the private-sector led business development engine for northeast Minnesota and northwest Wisconsin. APEX investor-members represent some of the most influential companies in the region, with a collaborative approach to promoting sustainable economic growth. APEX attraction, expansion and retention efforts focus in areas including aviation, data centers, manufacturing, professional services and next generation forest products. Since 2003, through attraction, expansion and retention efforts, APEX has impacted over 3,640 jobs in the region, resulting in an annual regional payroll of over \$133 million and contributing to over \$18 million in state and local taxes annually.