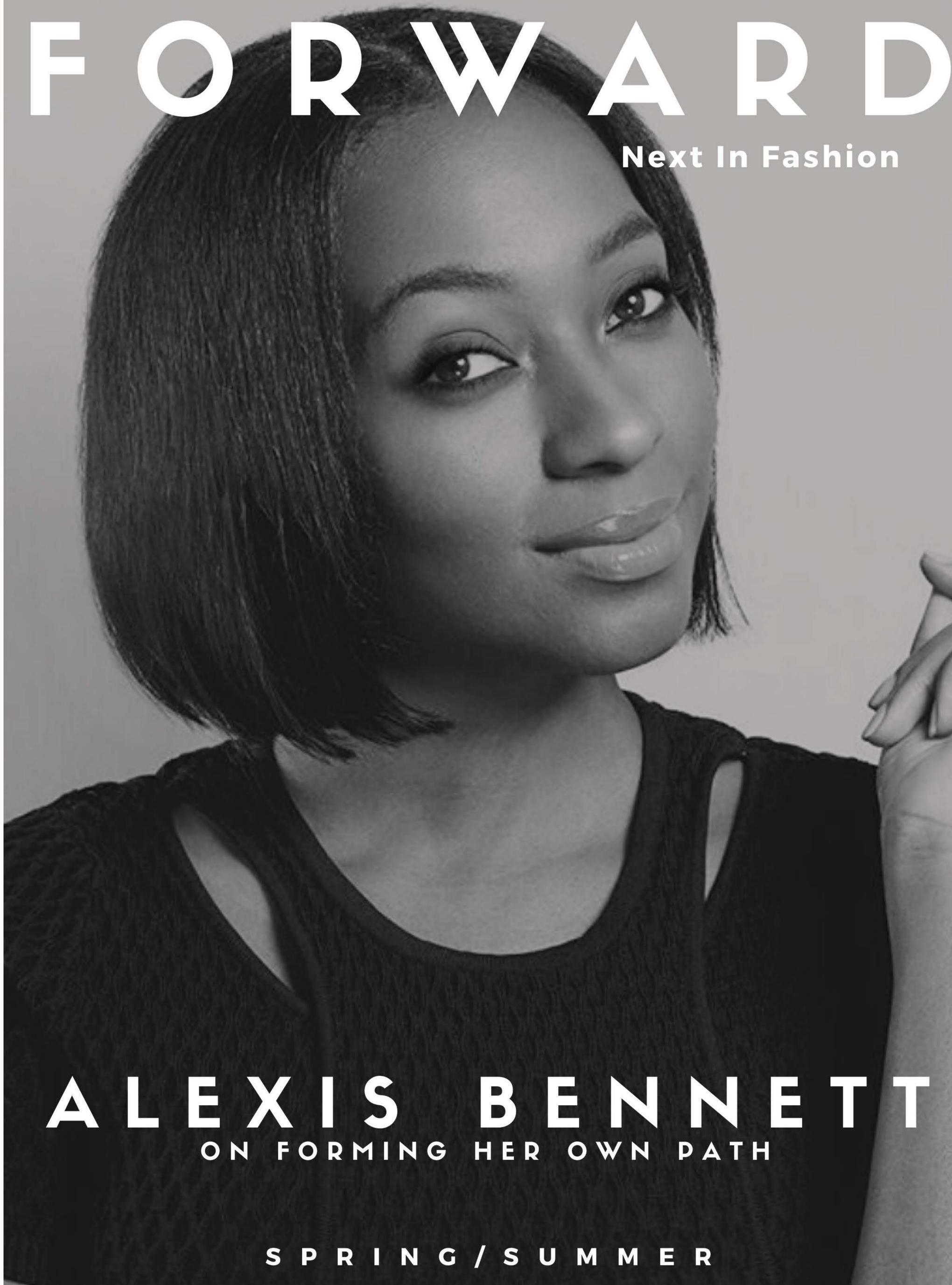


FORWARD

Next In Fashion



ALEXIS BENNETT

ON FORMING HER OWN PATH

SPRING / SUMMER

FORMING HER OWN PATH

Becoming the Shopping Editor for one
of fashion's most popular magazines

Words by Andrew Browne &
R. Calhoun for
Form2Fashion.com
FORWARD | NEXT IN FASHION

Alexis Bennett did not start her career in fashion. “I was actually interning in marketing for ADT” says Bennett, of her first foray after college. Of all places, it was working at a security firm that catapulted her career into fashion. Her manager’s wife worked for InStyle Magazine, and she realized she wanted to explore more of that world. The rest is a testament to her determination. She knew she needed to get to New York City, so she applied to the graduate business program at Manhattan’s LIM College and got a full scholarship. “That was my ticket [to] move to New York.”

Bennett earned her MBA in 2013, specializing in Fashion Management & Entrepreneurship. She began a public relations internship with BCBGMAXAZRIA sending samples to magazines and editors. The role allowed her to work the runway shows at Herve Leger, stuffing gift bags, steaming garments and getting her first taste of the perks of magazine life. “It made me realize I didn’t want to be a publicist. I wanted to be one of the editors, getting the things we were always sending to them.”

Through the internship Bennett learned about other jobs in the industry. “They had a sales team in the office. Buyers [from department stores] would come in and I would have to set up the showroom. There were so many different roles.



ALEXIS BENNETT

photo via @_alexisbennett on Instagram

“Relationships are everything!”



Marketing is so much different than public relations. Maybe you're good with numbers? There's the finance team. There's a campaign coordinator that plans the photoshoots for the marketing campaign, or the Head of Photoshoots as the Art Director." The options were endless.

With her sights set on becoming an editor, Bennett's relationships were hugely impactful in each of her roles. In fact, all her jobs in the magazine industry were the result of strong relationships, including a freelance reporter role at InStyle. After applying - and being denied - for an internship there, she still kept in touch with all the people she met from the opportunity." Every now and then I would send them an email. One or two lines, just to stay at the top of their minds, something like, 'Hey! I just read this story you did,' or 'You made me buy this item you wrote about.'" One year later, they offered her a freelance job. The rest is fashion history.

When asked about how she got her current job as the first Shopping Editor for Cosmopolitan Magazine, Bennett shares, "When I found out they were hiring for it, I sent a DM!" She adds, "We weren't friends or anything, but we met at Coachella last year, became friends on Instagram and liked each other's pictures. When I saw the role come up, I told her what I did at InStyle." The Coachella friend turned out to be the hiring manager for that job; what started as a new friend, became

her next big opportunity.

Her years of experience prepared her for this - year after year, she scaled the editorial ladder, lending her pen to Vibe, Essence, & Self Magazine. Bennett spent the most time at InStyle, as their E-Commerce Editor, where she monetized digital content and quadrupled revenue. Armed with lessons learned and gems galore from her various bosses, she found that you don't have to work directly with someone to learn from them, "It's observed," she states.

We asked her to think back to some of those lessons. Her boss at Self Magazine, Carolyn Kylstra, taught her to always cross your t's and dot your i's. "She is the most thorough person I've worked for," Bennett admits, "You couldn't quip around her. It made me a better writer." Laura Brown, her Editor-in-chief at InStyle, taught her to show off her work and use her platform to show off what she was doing. When it comes to social media, she says Brown told her, "Don't overthink it." Her current boss at Cosmo, Jessica Pels, taught her how to be a team player and observed how great she is at asking questions. "If you're genuinely curious about it, ask the question," Bennett says.

As busy as she is, Bennett still finds time for her own passions. In between sifting through runway and mainstream trends and writing about lifestyle products

as the Shopping Editor, she curates self-care and mental well-being posts for @NudeBeaute. It started as a celebrity focused page, digging into what make-up and skin care products celebrities were wearing. Bennett confesses, “I took a break, started a website, and realized I cannot write stories at work and for my website.”

Nude Beaute now focuses on self-care and empowerment, a change inspired by a dreadful haircut that left her crying and feeling self-conscious. Bennett soon realized everything she accomplished was not due to her hairstyle and beauty. “It was because I have a great work ethic, I’m dedicated and ambitious.” Her posts are uplifting and celebrate embracing your natural beauty. Although Bennett has taken another break from the land of personal blogging, her focus remains clear: creating a space for women of all backgrounds.

Looking back over her career, it’s evident - Bennet’s path was built on her own merits. But she admits, “Everyone can be an editor. You can voice your opinion on things... and I love that about this digital wave we’re going through.” Ultimately like Alexis Bennett, the choice is yours to forming your own path.

ALEXIS⁷

TIPS FOR TEENS

1. Use the Internet to your advantage
2. See someone you admire? Write them a note, or send them a DM. They might respond.
3. When reaching out to people, think about what you can do for them, not just what they can do for you.
4. Find someone doing what you want to do. Study what they do and how they got there.
5. Be a sponge.
6. Create your own path.

▶ **For FORWARD | NEXT IN FASHION
Activities and worksheets log on to
your online learning portal.**

ALEXIS BENNETT



Q: Who is your favorite designer?

A: Acler (an Australian brand)

Q: What was your first luxury purchase?

A: A Prada nylon bag w/ a strap

Q: Who in pop culture influences fashion the most?

A: Rihanna

Q: Who do you consider has timeless style?

A: Angelina Jolie

Q: What is the most iconic brand?

A: Chanel

Q: Which brand can withstand the next 100 years?

A: Louis Vuitton, for high end luxury. Zara, for fast fashion.

Q: What’s your favorite gift as an editor?

A: My Bulgari necklace

Q: What was the biggest adjustment to life in New York?

A: Falling asleep on the subway

Q: What’s your favorite hairstyle?

A: My bundles! 22 inches!

Q: What moment are you most proud of?

A: Nothing will top that feeling when I got my first full-time job as the Fashion Assistant at Real Simple Magazine! I remember hanging up the phone after they gave me the offer, breaking down, falling to my knees and thanking God. I felt like I can do anything from here on out.

Q: How did you feel the first time you saw your name show up on the masthead?

A: I made a vision board, cut my name from my resume and pasted it on InStyle’s masthead. I visualized it before it happened. My first time was at Real Simple. It was a good feeling. It was one of those moments I was waiting for.

Q: Define your style in one word or phrase.

A: Michelle Obama mixed with Kim K. Classy and Sassy.

FORWARD | NEXT IN FASHION