On Thursday, Womenswear Daily mixed things up by holding a — wait for it — menswear conference. The event, held on the Upper East Side of Manhattan, drew designers like Todd Snyder and Stuart Vevers of Coach, retailers like Saks Fifth Avenue and newcomers from the startup world like Frank & Oak.

With New York Fashion Week: Men's coming our way in July, there's no better time to study up on the menswear market. Here are four things we learned from the panelists and speakers at WWD's event.

**1. Men will pay more for products than retailers are currently charging.**

That's according to Greg Petro, the president and CEO of [First Insight Inc](http://www.firstinsight.com), an analytics company that provides predictive data on products that haven't gone to market yet. During the men's fashion shows in Milan, First Insight asked consumers which items on the runway they preferred and how much they'd be willing to pay for them. For leather jackets, the most popular style within the coats category, men said they'd be willing to spend 44 percent more than retail price. Depending on the brand and clothing item, Petro said, retailers could be charging 30 percent more than they currently do — and boost their profit margins in a big way.

**2. In China, menswear is a bigger market than womenswear.**

If you split up the Chinese apparel market by demographic, menswear occupies the biggest portion of the pie — 43 percent — says Richard Cohen, the CEO of Trinity Limited, a company that owns a number of high-end menswear brands and has a strong presence in China. Overall, men's clothing is worth $73.3 billion in the country.

**3. The lines are blurring between traditionally "men's" and "women's" styles, and retailers are acknowledging that.**

In a presentation on Coach's newly evolved men's collection, creative director Stuart Vevers said that he aimed for simplicity and an "American sense of function and utility" in designing the line's tote, backpack and messenger bag. But beyond that, what constitutes men's bags — as opposed to women's — has totally changed.

"Is a guy more comfortable carrying a bag today? I absolutely do think so. Something about a modern lifestyle implies actual necessity: a vessel for his gym gear, his technology, and absolutely in metropolitan areas and also in Asia, I often see guys carrying [bags] that were traditionally carried by women," Vevers said. "I think this also reinforces the idea that gender stereotypes are breaking down. I also think guys may increasingly be less likely to wear a classical wallet due to his slimmer pants and the fact that everything can be dumped in his bag. A guy's version of a clutch is becoming increasingly accessible."

**4. Men are dressing better and their sartorial status symbols are changing.**

"It is a super exciting time. Guys are really well-bred, well-versed, have an interest in fashion. I think there are a lot of great influences right now," said Saks Fifth Avenue SVP and General Merchandise Manager Thomas Ott onstage. "The world of sports; I think basketball players are dressing so well. I think that that is very influential. A lot of young musicians are dressing up. I think that today's generation — guys in their 20s and early 30s — are great for the industry. Thinking back on my career it's probably one of the best generations of male dressers that we've seen."

That said, what guys are wearing isn't uniform across the board, even in our globalized society. While Ott said he's seeing a lot of guys getting into suits and ties, Vevers pointed out that he's noticed men veering away from tailoring, particularly in Asia.

"I've traveled a lot in Asia over the last seven or eight years, mostly in China and Japan, and I'm always struck by what a dramatic shift this region has generated, and especially for men's," said Vevers. "It's not easy to generalize, but I actually quite rarely see guys wearing tailoring, either. Even more rarely see a guy wearing a tie. To me, some of the new codes of status are being created right in front of us. A new sweatshirt, a crazy cult sneaker, or a modern and often quite playful leather bag."