



CHECKLIST FOR SUSTAINABLE FASHION BRANDS

Design choices based on Sustainability standards is more than using sustainable materials, for example fabrics, textiles and dyes.

When creating a new product for your brand, you can integrate sustainable standards without forgetting essential design principles.

It's a good thing that brands in 2020 are feeling pressure to keep up with consumer demand for sustainable companies and products; but now the challenge is to distinguish between brands that are making serious, holistic commitments to sustainability, and brands that are making more superficial tweaks.

Deborah Lewis

FASHION MENTOR



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If your customer supports a sustainable lifestyle, they will want to learn more about its processes and if you “walk the talk”. Does your brand use mostly recycled or biodegradable materials? Does your brand carefully study its own carbon footprint and offset emissions? Does it allow customers to repair and then eventually recycle products? Does it use recyclable packaging materials?

This checklist will assist you to work by sustainability standards from the very beginning of the design and manufacturing process.

Deborah Lewis

FASHION MENTOR

1. DEFINE KEY RESULTS IN THE THE DESIGN BRIEF AND CONCEPT.

The brands that really stand out when it comes to sustainability are the ones that have a more holistic vision, and think about the entire life cycle of a product, rather than just one aspect of the process.

The design brief and development will affect the life-time environmental impact of the clothing, so consider:

- how the pattern will be spread out on the fabric;
- the amount of waste created;
- whether the item can be built in a different way to lessen waste;
- investigating methods of reducing labour costs in the manufacturing process (for example, 3D garment design).

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2. ADOPT SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS.

Consider the life of your product and select the correct material to limit wear, tear, stains or the requirement for specialist cleaning.

Natural fibres (for example cotton and bamboo) have a lower environmental impact than synthetic fibres, for example, spandex and polyester.

Select inks and dyes that are non-toxic, natural or vegetable-based.

Think about composite approaches in your material choice - for instance, research shows that 50/50 cotton-polyester blends are probably going to last twice as long as 100 percent cotton sheets and may have a huge decrease in environmental effects related with washing.

If you adopt sustainable practices in the choice of materials, consider having your items certified organic: that will create goodwill with consumers who support sustainable living.

Deborah Lewis

FASHION MENTOR

4. CHOOSE SUSTAINABLE GARMENT DEVELOPMENT.

During the production process, use textile workers that work under ethical conditions.

Clothing labels showing information about the garment use, care and recycle can assist customers with avoiding disposing of it prematurely and limit environmental impact during washing.

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5. DECREASE PACKAGING WASTE.

Consider the way in which you bundle the finished product and if you could lessen the amount of packaging utilized.

Locate a nearby service of recycle packaging.

BONUS TIP:

If a brand is working hard to be more sustainable, it usually provides a lot of information in the “about” or “sustainability” page of its website. Spend some time in creating those pages.

If you’re serious about your commitment to sustainability, you will want to share specific information about what you have already achieved, and when you hope to reach new goals.

Deborah Lewis

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