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AD5604 Contemporary Fashion Communication

Part One: Marketing Sustainability to Generation Z with Ikea – Initial Research  
and Conclusions

1500 words

11.2.19

The world as of 2019 is a scarily damaged place, especially in the fashion and lifestyle sector. Environmental issues are worsening, and even though sustainability is a key issue which many brands are striving to work towards, the fashion industry, and all that encompasses is responsible for being the world's second largest polluter, sitting just below the oil production industry. This shocking fact comes along with the late 2018 announcement from the *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, that the world only has twelve years to change and adapt the foundations of not only the fashion industry, but all polluting industries before it's too late.

Fashion is drastically killing our planet, and although the sustainability market has grown 16.3%, which is the largest increase since 2012 according to *The Ethical Consumerism Report*, research has concluded that the world still consumes 1.7 million tons of textile products per year, of which only 1.1 million tonnes is clothing. Although the fashion industry exports 352,000 tons of textiles per year to countries such as Zambia, 300,000 tons of that figure still ends up in landfill each year. Something needs to change soon. To many consumer groups, including the Baby Boomers, Generation Y and older Millennials, sustainability is not so much an issue, and these facts and figures often pass them by. On the other hand, research carried out suggested that Generation Z, whom will soon be the new world leaders and will be the largest consumer group in 2020, are concerned about sustainability. They want to be educated, so they can help make a positive change for everyone's future. A November 2018 report by the *Green Match* suggested that 25% of Generation Z always purchase from brands which align with their beliefs and values around sustainability, and 67% often buy from brands whom support their values. In fact, 49% of Generation Z would consider boycotting brands which don't support their values, and  $\frac{3}{4}$  of Generation Z would consider paying more for a product from a sustainable brand, compared to only  $\frac{1}{2}$  of Baby Boomers. From the research concluded, these facts and figures surrounding this generation group could all be incorporated into the Fashion Film for Ikea, and could form the foundations of the informative, factual film.

However, as negative as the environmental issues may seem, many smaller brands such as All Birds, Ninety Percent, and Traid are focusing their brand narrative and message on being ethical and sustainable. All Birds is a designer footwear brand focusing on producing comfortable shoes in understated styles which are fully sustainable. All Bird's shoe soles are crated from natural sugarcane, with the upper fabric being created from eucalyptus or natural Marino Wool, all sourced ethically. No petroleum-based materials are used, thus creating less carbon emissions during production and at the end of the lifecycle. Similarly, Ninety Percept is an ethical brand specialising in relaxed loungewear made from organic and regenerated fabrics such as Tencel. 90% of the brand's profits go to charities such as War Child, and Big Life Foundation, and the consumer can, during check out, choose which charity their money goes to. Traid, is a chain of funky vintage stores, selling second hand clothing, thus encouraging consumers to participate in a circular economy, as the clothing is being reworn and reused, instead of being thrown away.

These brands however are luxurious and only very small, as it is highly expensive to run sustainable brands, however small change is still being made. As more people, especially

Generation Z become educated and aware of sustainable practice, real change would be made if fast fashion brands adapted their practises, as most of the environmental damage is created in the fast fashion sector of the market, as the demand for new clothing, beauty and furniture products is so high. Higher up in the industry, Stella McCartney, who's brand narrative is sustainable and ethical practice for all, as of 2018 launched the *Fashion Industry Charta for Climate Change* after a United Nations report predicted that greenhouse gas emissions would not meet the goals set in the Paris Agreement in 2015. In an interview with *Business of Fashion Voices*, McCartney explained that The Charta is a way for all brands, large and small, to unite together, to agree to make a positive change with their brand, by outlining sixteen commitments they should follow. Moreover, McCartney has just released "Stella McCartney Green" as a way of opening up the conversation about climate change and marketing sustainability to not only Millennials, but Generation Z also.

Due to this threat to the environment, furniture retailer Ikea, have also joined the conversation and have, as of 2018, released their People and Planet positive report; a manifesto of the ambitious changes they wish to make within all aspects of their well-loved, global brand. Launched in Sweden over thirty years ago, Ikea is a value driven company whom have over 355 stores in over 29 countries, and since 2008, have been the world's largest furniture retailer. Ikea focuses on producing well made furniture at low prices, and although their main consumer group are young families whom have a limited amount of money, Generation Z also make up a huge majority of the consumers. However, although online and in the People and Planet Positive Report sustainable practise is pushed hugely and seems like a real focus for Ikea, personally, this was not evident enough in the Warrington store for the unknowing Generation Z consumer to understand or be aware of.

The People and Planet Positive report by Ikea outlines three main focus areas for the brand to address. *Healthy and Sustainable Living*, which aims to encourage people to tackle sustainability in their own homes, by reducing water use and enabling consumers to use more renewable energy sources. *Circular and Climate Positive*, emphasises the scarcity of the world's natural and limited resources, and predicts that by 2020 Ikea will source 100% of their wood from sustainable sources and continue sourcing their cotton and fish from sustainable sources. Moreover, this focus area also emphasises the need for a circular economy rather than a linear one, so encourages and teaches consumers to rid of their waste more sustainably so the product's lifecycle carries on and doesn't end after use. Lastly, *Fair and Equal*, helps to unite all of Ikea's work force and help all of the Ikea community feel empowered and respected in the work place. Again though, when undertaking research in the Warrington Ikea, these goals did not seem at all evident, so within the fashion film to be displayed in Ikea, these goals could be pushed much further to truly inform the Generation Z market on Ikea's sustainability plan.

As touched upon previously, Generation Z will be the biggest consumer group by 2020, and in a study by *Green Match* 93% of parents believe their Generation Z child influence their shopping habits, therefore showing Gen Z are already making their mark on the world and changing the way older generations think and behave. This is due to the fact Generation Z have such a unique and progressive set of values and shopping habits compare to previous

generations. Research has concluded that Generation Z are extremely tech savvy, and may not remember a life without a mobile phone. In a November 2015 *Ted Talk* from Jason Dorsey he explained that his four-year-old daughter will never remember a time when she couldn't see whom she was speaking to via Facetime, nor will she be able to record a time when she wasn't in a mixed race and ethnicity class. Generation Z are the most diverse generation yet and accept all diversity, and unlike the previous millennials, don't worry so much about fitting in, as acceptance and understanding are a key value amongst Generation Z. This was evident in The November 2018 *Business of Fashion Voices talk on Navigating Gen Z: The ABC's of Fluidity*. Moreover, transparency from brands is a key pulling factor for Gen Z shopping habits, as well as the need to feel relaxed and comfortable with a brand and the products they sell. Generation Z also desire things instantly due to the vast rise in technology, however it has been suggested that a mobile phone for Gen z isn't an obsession, but an extension of their personality.

In today's day and age, a brand is unable to market itself properly without the help of non-traditional social media. Brands need to be able to stand out online with their media platforms in order to reach their target market effectively. As an extension of this, fashion films, fashion photography and styling are able to market a brand in a much cleverer way, through the use of semiotics and hidden meanings, that tell much more of a story and give much more of a message to a consumer than first meets the eye. Brands are able to push messages such as sustainability in subtle way to help make a real impact in the industry.

This is why, going forward in the project, I wish to create a Fashion Film surrounding Marketing sustainability to Ikea, that focuses on Ikea pushing the need for a circular economy, and reusing and passing down products from generation to generation. I feel this is a key area at the heart of both Ikea's and Generation Z's values, as family, sentimental, and environmental values are important to both causes. However, the film will be quite snappy, factual and to the point, to help get Ikea's message of sustainability and in particular their need for a circular economy across effectively to Generation Z, and other consumers browsing in the Warrington Ikea store.

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