



THE IN-
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ANT SUSTAINABILITY STORIES AND SEMINARS
FASHION
RETAILER
SUSTAIN-
ABILITY
TOOLKIT

CASE STUDY

TRAD COLLECTIVE



VIDEO CONTENT

CLICK IMAGE TO PLAY

- Who is Trad Collective
- Where are they based
- How do they embrace sustainability in their business

CASE STUDY

TRAD COLLECTIVE, LEEDS

In September 2021, Josefin Wanner and her partner James Fenwick, opened Tråd Collective in Headingley, near Leeds, a clothing and lifestyle boutique with sustainability at its core.

Wanner has a background in fashion design and has run her own upcycled clothing brand, Wanner Label, for the past three years. Tråd Collective stocks Wanner Label, alongside other sustainably-minded brands, secondhand clothing and an alterations service.

“We wanted to create a fuller sustainable concept to make it easier for the people of Leeds to be sustainable,” says Wanner. As well as clothing the store stocks jewellery, cosmetics and lifestyle products such as stationery and prints.

The store now employs two members of staff, one on the shop floor and one assisting with the alterations service, who are paid a living wage. It also offers work shadowing to a student.

The store is free from single-use plastic (with the exception of some beauty products with plastic lids which Wanner conceded were a necessity for now after discussions with the supplier). Some shipping packaging from brands is reused to send out online customer orders too. She is fortunate to be able to heat the store entirely from what’s generated by the neighbouring Costa and Greggs, minimising energy use.

When sourcing brands, Wanner looks for small-scale production and lower-impact materials:

“I prefer to source locally, which works really well with the smaller products, there’s lots of good creators around Leeds. When it comes to the clothes, it gets a bit trickier, as there’s less clothing brands around. I try and source things that go with our style, and that follow the same sustainable values we have: the use of sustainable factories and sustainable materials. Ideally, they’re handmade by the person that’s selling them so they are in charge of their production rather than outsourcing it to other people and then saying it’s made sustainably when they’re not entirely sure.”

Over the course of the first year of business, Wanner has adapted the product offering based on customer demand. She has expanded the secondhand offering, which they source from a secondhand warehouse in Sheffield and is the store's best seller, reduced new clothing and increased the amount of jewellery. The alterations service, while accounting for a smaller amount of sales, has helped to create return visitors.

“

Josefin Wanner

“The alterations have been a good drive. It's good for people to come in, see that we do alterations and they'll come back because we do them. Without the alterations we would not have gained as many loyal customers.”

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Tråd Collective has also partnered with another local creative to run embroidery workshops at the store.

The different aspects of the business have also helped attract a broader customer base. The store is popular with students who come in to buy secondhand clothing, while the upcycled clothing collection and gift products appeal to young professionals and mothers. The mendings and alterations service, on the other hand, has attracted a more mature demographic.

Wanner says she has seen an increasing awareness of sustainable fashion, even in the short time the store has been open but there remains a generation gap in how different customers approach it. “The younger generations are very much into sustainability. Whereas the older generations don't understand the concept as much, but they're very much into making their things last longer, which is why mending and alteration appeals to them. They've had a jacket for 20 years and they want to keep it for another 20 years because that's better, not necessarily because it's better for the environment, just better.”

One of the challenges this presents is how to communicate Tråd Collective's values in a way that resonates with customers.

“I can find it really hard to be educational without being ‘preachy’. We have a fair number of signs up in the store about the different brands and what they’re doing to be sustainable,” she says. “People do like looking around and reading and then it doesn’t feel forced on them.”

Wanner says they also plan to create a series on their Instagram page about different sustainability concepts and what the brands they stock are doing to be sustainable too.

Now that the business is more settled after its first year of operation, Wanner wants to be able to collect more data about their impact to be able to share how they’re making a difference and highlight areas for improvement. “We try and keep a reasonably good track of what we’re doing but we don’t have actual statistics yet. It’s something we’re trying to work towards. I know how to be sustainable in terms of using sustainable materials and only sourcing sustainable brands but when it comes to how much energy we are we using and how much transportation we use, I have less knowledge, so that’s something we would probably need a bit of help with.”

It’s the next step in a one-at-a-time approach that Wanner would recommend to any business owner looking to become more sustainable. “Start with something small. Don’t go from one day to the next and say I’m going to be completely and entirely sustainable. It will just get too overwhelming. Start with one thing, say I’m going to stop using plastic or whatever it is. When you finish doing that, then move on to the next thing. It will be more like a checklist, which is a much more productive way of doing things.”



CASE STUDY

SANCHO'S



VIDEO CONTENT

CLICK IMAGE TO PLAY

- Who is Sancho's
- Where are they based
- How do they embrace sustainability in their business

CASE STUDY

SANCHO'S EXETER

Most people working in the sustainable fashion sector come to it because they're concerned about the harm fashion can do. For Kalkidan Legesse, founder of Sancho's boutique and resale platform Owni, she saw the potential that fashion had to provide sustainable jobs in developing countries. While working in Ethiopia for an NGO, she saw how garment makers were able to improve their quality of life through fair, safe and equitable work.

This sparked her interest in fashion as a tool for sustainable development and she launched Sancho's in 2015 to support brands working in this way. Today the business operates a physical store in Exeter as well as a thriving online shop selling 150 ethical and sustainable brands.

Fair treatment of garment workers and low impact materials is at the heart of every brand they stock: **“When we source brands for Sancho's we lean towards natural fibres, and organic fibres we will lean into more than natural. Then we look at the production methodology and how transparently the brand can communicate how the item was produced, where and by whom and at what pay rate. We also look for items that lean towards capsule style dressing: the idea that you build your collection of clothing and your style over time, as opposed to working towards achieving specific trends.”**

Legesse says she considers brands using synthetic fibres as “short-sighted” for its use of petrochemicals and inability to decompose and says that another red flag is brands who lose sight of their garment workers as the business gets bigger.

However, while she has preferences, she understands there's no one set of criteria that works for all brands. “As a multi-brand retailer, one criteria group isn't going to work across everybody. There is an element of scale and scope in terms of what we look for from different suppliers. For example, we have a lot of items that are produced locally, less than 10 miles away from us. They don't have [fair trade] accreditation, but we can go and see how items are made.”

Legesse sees independent retailers as great allies to social impact brands. “A lot of brands rely on independent retailers, especially innovative brands, or brands creating things that don't currently exist in the market. A lot of them rely on the wholesale purchase potential of independent businesses to create, launch and master products. A lot of what we consider the most exciting sustainable products

I don't think would exist the way they do without the initial buy in from independent retailers."

Beyond product, Legesse employs six members of staff. All are paid a living wage and the company has a sustainable pensions provider too.

The store uses a renewable energy supplier and they don't purchase any plastic packaging. Any plastic packaging that comes to them via outside suppliers is reused and clothing tags are made from recycled paper.

The next step in the business' sustainable journey is Owni, a resale platform for sustainable brands and retailers. Despite having only launched last year, 15% of the business' sales now come from the platform. "In the UK there's £30 billion of unworn clothing which is currently underutilised," says Legesse. **"It's in people's homes, it's in warehouses, it's just unused inventory. What Owni does is it helps brands and retailers recover those goods to resell them,"** explains Legesse.

Owni enables consumers to buy and sell secondhand clothing but also helps businesses launch a resale arm of their business. Legesse says that, on average, the brand partners they have worked with have generated 8% of their total business revenue through Owni.

Across the seven years that Sancho's has been open, the sustainability conversation in fashion has grown and changed and it's highlighted new ways for the business to operate too. Legesse reflects: **"One thing that I'm so clear on, having done this for almost a decade, is that sustainability isn't an endpoint. It's not a finish line. It's a process. It's about being very clear that your business is having an impact on people and on the planet. Some of the impact is negative and you need to have a conscious approach to business whereby you're behaving equitably; so what you give to the world is equivalent to what you're taking back from it."**

Currently Legesse is focussed on growing Owni but is also interested in potential partnerships to explore future options for both businesses and is open to fresh thinking and new ideas. "You don't need to do what's been done before. There's scope for bigger steps of growth by innovating new systems. What you should do is try to experiment and see what new systems can be created. Some of them might not even be like anything we currently imagine retail to be like. The future of retail, I would say, is definitely going to be service based, much more so than we've become accustomed to. Repairing, resale, rental, styling, AR, those are going to be huge, huge, huge components of the future retail landscape."

LECTURE VIDEOS

LECTURE VIDEO

INTRODUCTION



VIDEO CONTENT

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LECTURE VIDEOS

LECTURE VIDEO 1

CLIMATE CRISIS



VIDEO CONTENT

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- What is the climate crisis
- How it's affecting the world and our business now
- How fashion is playing a part in the climate crisis.

LECTURE VIDEOS

LECTURE VIDEO 2

CIRCULARITY



VIDEO CONTENT

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- What is circular fashion
- Why is degrowth better than green growth
- Circular business models

LECTURE VIDEOS

LECTURE VIDEO 3

SUSTAINABILITY



VIDEO CONTENT

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- How to talk about sustainability with your customers
- Consumer expectations
- How to avoid greenwashing



GLOSSARY

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BIODEGRADABLE An item that can be broken down by nature and decomposed without polluting the environment.

BIODIVERSITY The variety of animal and plant life that can be sustained by the planet, or a particular area/ecosystem.

CARBON FOOTPRINT The carbon emissions created by a particular entity or activity.

CARBON NEUTRAL When the carbon emissions produced by a particular entity or activity are balanced out by the amount of carbon that is also absorbed.

CARBON OFFSETTING Investments in schemes that reduce carbon dioxide, such as tree planting or renewable energy, to counteract the carbon emissions created by a particular entity or activity.

CIRCULAR ECONOMY A system by which products and resources are kept in use for as long as possible before safely returning to nature to provide sustenance for new natural resources.

CRADLE TO CRADLE A design process which considers the full lifecycle of a product and aims to bring waste back into use or to be safely biodegraded.

DECARBONISATION The process of moving to a way of living which cuts out carbon emissions caused by human activity.

DEGROWTH The process of moving to an economic system which reduces our current level of production and consumption to prioritise ecological and social health.

DOWNCYCLING

Recycling resources into something of lower value or quality than the original material.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROFIT & LOSS (EP&L)

A method for companies to assess the environmental impact of their activities alongside their financial reporting.

FAST FASHION

A system that enables fashion items to go from design to store in a short space of time, sometimes as little as a few weeks. The system has become synonymous with cheap clothing that is not designed to last and where speed and low cost is prioritised over worker wellbeing.

FOSSIL FUELS

A finite resource created from the remains of dead animals and plants living long ago found in the Earth's crust. They are extracted and burnt for energy, releasing carbon and hydrogen into the atmosphere. Some examples of fossil fuels include natural gas, oil and coal.

G7 FASHION PACT

An agreement launched in 2019 and signed by over 60 corporations, representing more than 200 fashion brands, which binds them to tackling the climate crisis, improving biodiversity and protecting oceans.

GLOBAL HEATING/WARMING

The increase in the temperature of the Earth's atmosphere as a result of human activity. Global heating is now often used instead of global warming to convey a stronger sense of urgency to the issue.

GREENHOUSE GASSES

Gasses, including carbon dioxide, methane and nitrogen oxide, that trap heat from the sun and regulate the temperature of the Earth. The increase in greenhouse gas emissions since the Western Industrial Revolution has led to global heating.



GREENWASHING	The practice of misleading consumers, whether intentionally or unintentionally, to make them think a product or company is more environmentally friendly than they are.	NET ZERO	The point at which the amount of carbon emitted is balanced with the equivalent removal of carbon. The UK aims to reach net zero by 2050.
GLOBAL NORTH	A socio-economic classification of countries that are typically defined as economically developed and politically stable.	ORGANIC	Produce grown without using certain banned chemicals that can be toxic to human, animal and/or plant life.
GLOBAL SOUTH	A socio-economic classification of countries that are typically defined by low income, political instability, former colonies and negatively affected by capitalist globalisation.	PARIS AGREEMENT/ PARIS CLIMATE AGREEMENT	A legally binding treaty signed in 2015 by 196 parties, including the UK, to limit global heating to below 2 degrees, and preferably 1.5 degrees.
HEAVY METALS	Metallic chemicals with a high atomic weight and/or are toxic to many human and animal life forms. In fashion production, such chemicals can sometimes be found in dyes and tanning agents used for leather.	PLANETARY BOUNDARIES	The limit at which humans can survive and thrive without causing environmental destruction.
INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE (IPCC)	A leading body for science on climate change created by the United Nations.	RE-COMMERCE/ RESALE	The selling of second-hand goods.
INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION (ILO)	An organisation set up by the United Nations which promotes social and economic justice in employment. As part of its work it sets international standards for basic rights and principles at work.	RECYCLABLE	Able to be recycled.
LIFECYCLE ASSESSMENT (LCA)	A methodology for evaluating the environmental impact of a product at every stage from its production to use stage and end of life.	RECYCLED	Made from waste that has been made usable again.
LIVING WAGE	A wage that is high enough to ensure a normal standard of living. This is often higher than a country's legal minimum wage.	REGENERATIVE	Renewing and restoring after destruction
MICROPLASTICS	Fragments of plastic smaller than 5mm. These are harder to clean up and can cause problems for ocean life, and potentially human life. Microplastics are shed by petroleum-based clothing, such as polyester, and enter water systems when washed.	REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE	An agricultural practice that ensures the long-term health of the soil and surrounding environment.
MODERN SLAVERY	The illegal exploitation of people for personal or commercial gain. Incidences of forced labour, a form of modern slavery, have been uncovered in fashion supply chains across the globe including in the UK.	SCIENCE-BASED TARGETS	Carbon emission targets that are in line with what is necessary to meet the Paris Agreement's aim to keep global heating below 2 degrees.
		STAKEHOLDERS	Any party who affects or is affected by a company's activities. This includes shareholders, employees, supply chain partners and customers. The sustainability movement encourages businesses to also factor in the environment and local communities into their business considerations.
		SUSTAINABILITY	The ability to be maintained long term. Many consider fashion's current rate of production and consumption to be unsustainable due to the rapid depletion of resources and its contribution to the climate crisis.
		SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	Progress that addresses current problems for humans and the planet while not creating future problems.

SYSTEMS CHANGE Disrupting existing ways of doing that involve multiple players to reimagine new possibilities.

SCOPE 1 Emissions created by a business' direct activities.

SCOPE 2 Emissions created by the energy that is used to fuel a business' activities.

SCOPE 3 Emissions indirectly created by a business' activities in their supply chain or as a result of customer use.

TRANSPARENCY Public sharing of company information to be honest and accountable for environmental and social impacts.

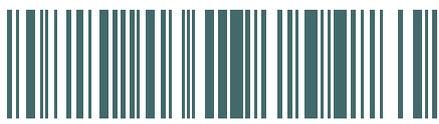
UPCYCLING Modifying an old product to give it new value and usability. In fashion this is the repairing and altering of clothes to make them wearable again.

VEGAN FASHION Fashion products made without animal-derived materials such as leather, wool, silk and even some glues used to make shoes and bags. Vegan items limit impact on animal life but should not be confused for eco-friendly products where no further environmental benefits are stated.

VIRGIN MATERIALS Materials that come from raw natural resources that have not been used before.

ZERO DISCHARGE OF HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS (ZDHC) A programme that unites brands and suppliers in eliminating dangerous chemicals from apparel, textiles and footwear.

ZERO WASTE DESIGN A method of production that eliminates waste in the production stage of a garment by using techniques such as considered pattern placement and reusing of any scraps that are created.



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