

# Long-Term Sustainable Sustainability in Luxury. Where Else?

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**Abstract** We live in a world impacted by economic growth drivers of decreasing natural resources and increasing population. A shift toward a sustainable mindset does not seem a choice but a necessity. In today's extremely competitive luxury industry, sustainability seems like a paradox. The fashion and luxury business is producing more products, at a faster pace and change of seasons and constantly looking at decreasing costs. Many companies have moved production to Asia, especially to the more economically poorer nations. Is the demand of "sustainable luxury" enough for brands to consciously shift focus and change existing commercial production processes, do they realize the shift and awareness of the new customer who cares, and is it easy and practical to move toward "green" luxury? The purpose of this chapter is to explore the past and current intersections of

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sustainable luxury and draw a conclusion on its future. We take examples of luxury brands integrating themselves to sustainability. From understanding the production cycles, poor working conditions to how consumers are attracted to sustainable brands, we aim to help counter current challenges. Our methodology is comprised of qualitative data collected from various industry sources and interviews. The intent is to unravel the future of sustainable luxury with a lens on the manufacturing, packaging, and marketing efforts of a wide selection of luxury companies with different company turnovers. This chapter touches on a wide range of perspectives on the topic, including industry, designer, and retail, outlining a range of best practice strategies toward greater sustainability, while also acknowledging the complexity of the subject and its challenges, and the importance of the fashion and textile industries to livelihoods and business in general. The chapter specifically aims to put luxury and sustainability in the context of consumers and brands, understanding each through theoretical evidences from costly signaling theory, mimetic desire, pro-environmental values as well as practical phenomenon. Specific focus is given to the following: (1) Materials exclusive to luxury industry from exotic skins, high-quality tanned leather to furs, (2) Working conditions in manufacturing facilities, (3) Educating the customers, (4) Made in Europe versus developing countries, (5) Influence of technology in engaging with consumer on sustainability, (6) Evolution of business models that put transparency at the heart of emerging brands, (7) ROI, innovation, and luxury. The everlasting paradigm, (8) Emerging countries have also a great niche to boost, (9) Goodwill and know-how: sustainable by essence, (10) Branding the innovative sustainable way and new business models.

**Keywords** Sustainable luxury raw materials · Luxury and consumption · Engagement luxury consumer

## 1 Introduction

More and more luxury players are integrating corporate social responsibility and corporate environmental responsibility in their mission, objectives, strategy, and concrete actions (Cervellon and Shammass 2013), all under the pressure of being given low ranks on sustainability through nonprofit organizations (Bendell and Kleanthous 2007; Moore 2011). Increasingly, luxury consumers want to show that they understand and care about the environment and society. Luxury products are expected not only to look fabulous, but also to be environmentally and socially responsible. What satisfies luxury consumers, their perceptions of good quality and good design varies greatly across the world, and has been evolving over time. The global luxury industry has sometimes struggled to keep up, but has recently been challenged and rejuvenated by a new trend for authenticity and sustainability.

In this chapter we explore the following:

- Is there a strong and enriching relationship between consumer and product?
- Are luxury textile and fashion products being made that stimulate debate, that call for a deep sense of “meaning,” or that necessitate the work of skilled craftspeople?
- Are luxury textiles and fashion products being designed that inspire confidence and ability that promote versatility, ingenuity, customization, or individual participation?
- Can emerging countries be the future of sustainable textile production?
- How craftsmanship in India is being preserved?
- What are the sustainable practices incorporated while manufacturing in India?

Each section elaborates on the key aspect of understanding sustainable luxury from consumers’, retailers’, and manufacturers’ point of view. Directions for managerial practices are discussed and exemplified with brand cases.

## 2 Methodology

Through our chapter, we explain what sustainable luxury means in today’s times. Going beyond the norm of simple theoretical explanations, we argue upon the theoretically defined concepts and managerial practices that need to be readdressed. This chapter is based on two main areas: First, various literature sources have been consulted, from academic journals, the luxury industry professional magazines, and a combination of sustainability and luxury. This also included several web sources such as blogs, online articles, and company Web sites. In addition to this collation and parsing of information, we have drawn upon our discussions with various couture designers, artisans, craftspeople, and opinion makers in the fashion and luxury business in India and across the world. Various reports on sustainability and luxury in the public domain have been referenced. Methodology is primarily qualitative based on the expertise of the contributors’ long-term experience and existing relationships in the industry. Interviews are one of the key methods to collect up-to-date information from the key sustainability professionals in the luxury brands as well as NGOs that are working in textile and fashion industries.

As a result, we looked at the production cycle of luxury products, focusing on textiles and leather. Taking some examples and depending on their engagement in sustainability, we explored some of the remarkable works being done already. Finally, we analyzed the outcome seeking to identify whether sustainability is a challenge or an opportunity for the luxury sector.

### 3 Conceptual Discussion

#### 3.1 *Paradigm Shift from Luxury to Sustainable Luxury*

As the alarm wakes up, Amy at her designer home in Shanghai and her House Keeper detail out her social engagements at breakfast, and she starts to get ready. While choosing her dress, she thinks about her girlfriends she will be meeting soon and remembers to wear her new “VogMask.” She is not among some of her friends who have left Shanghai for the weekend because of the pollution. However, this is not going to stop her from meeting her friends for some window shopping at Nanjing road, the address for most of the luxury stand-alone boutiques.

This does not seem to be a prediction for the future. It is already prevailing in our present. Caring for the environment, using recyclable packaging, saving on the carbon footprint while traveling, and decreasing wastage in any form all seem to be the extreme end of the spectrum which seem to be so far away from the world of luxury.

His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales participated through a video talk at the International Herald Tribune Luxury Conference in Miami (Sustainability, Artisanship and the Future of Fashion). Here he addressed that it is the collective responsibility of opinion leaders as well as senior members of the luxury fashion industry to secure a dignified future for our children. He stressed on focusing on the next Quarter Century rather than the next Business Quarter in the context of the luxury business being sustainable and viable. Loss of habitat and biodiversity, using unrenewable natural resources and not cultivating traditional techniques of craftsmanship, stands in our way of being sustainable. His message was both powerful and clear. The luxury industry needs to be responsible partners to the society and habitat of artisans that support the supply chain of luxury production. If not directly, he urged the industry leaders to support and look for sustaining the community that drives this very supply chain.

One could argue—How can it be luxury, if it is not excessive, ostentatious, over the top and created for the few because of its rarity and exclusivity? As it meets the eye, luxury and sustainability do not together. Do they? Or should they? In today’s extremely competitive luxury industry, sustainability seems like a paradox. However, increasingly it is being talked about as not just the need of the hour, but the foundation on which true and unique luxury shall be built.

#### 3.2 *What Do We Mean by Sustainability?*

As per EPA (United States Environmental Protection Agency), sustainability is based on a simple principle: Everything that we need for our survival and well-being depends, either directly or indirectly, on our natural environment. Sustainability creates and maintains the conditions under which humans and nature

can exist in productive harmony that permit fulfilling the social, economic, and other requirements of the present and future generations. Sustainability is important to making sure that we have and will continue to have the water, materials, and resources to protect human health and our environment.

### **3.2.1 People, Planet, and Profit**

When the triple bottom line (Slaper and Hall) accounting framework was introduced in the mid 1990s, it focused on the three dimensions of business—social, environmental, and financial. Also commonly called the 3 P's—People, Planet, and Profits, they are difficult to measure together as an index or a number. However, they provide a good lens to assess the focus of any business toward sustainability. When we look at sustainability in any organization through these three parameters, the typical focus is on Planet—taking care of our environment with regard to the production of goods. By nature, if we look at luxury products as those that have high quality as well as longevity because of the usage of rare raw materials, it could be argued that they are sustainable. This is because luxury is perceived to be rare and one of its kind. So customers buy few, but extremely beautiful and rare pieces rather than many that they may replace quickly. This is unlike the idea of the high consumption of fast fashion that keeps evolving very quickly, leading to a fast and large amount of production, leading to wastage.

### **3.2.2 Educating the Customer**

How important it is to educate the customer about the sustainable practices of the luxury companies? And how do we achieve that? Research done by Griskevicius et al. (2010) shows that motives of gaining higher status can increase desire in consumers to buy greener products in public, even though the greener products might be more expensive than the non-green products. Thus, from a costly signaling theory perspective, buying sustainable luxury products in public can communicate pro-environmental behavior and altruism. This might be true in countries where status consumption is the norm, for example in India and China where mimetic desire and word of mouth drive the market of luxury industry (Ramchandani and Coste-Maniere 2012). But in a non-status consumption environment where show-off tendencies and ostentatiousness are not involved, the consumption paradigms are yet to be determined by researchers and experts in the industry.

Even though the previous research (Cervellon and Shammas 2013) indicates that sustainable luxury values in consumers encompasses sociocultural values (conspicuousness, belonging, and national identity), ego-centered values (guilt-free pleasures, health and youthfulness, hedonism, durable quality), and eco-centered values (doing good, not doing harm), but how do we influence the consumer values to consumption of sustainable brands? For this, we suggest that there is a real need

to educate the consumers by various means of communication strategy, ecolabels and initiatives created to rank luxury brands on the scale of sustainable practices.

Therefore, we present in the followings section the initiatives and accreditations for sustainable luxury brands that are reinforcing new standards to define sustainable luxury.

### **What is Positive Luxury?**

In 2011, Diana Verde Nieto and Karen Hanton founded Positive Luxury (About Us) a global award winning membership program revolutionizing the way consumers and brands get to know each other, and every brand featured on Positive luxury must take care on their sourcing of raw materials, manufacturing, and marketing services. Every brand featured on Positive Luxury takes great care with the sourcing of its raw materials, the manufacturing of its products, and the marketing of its services. Member brands to trust include Alexander McQueen, Balenciaga, Berluti, Boucheron, Burberry, Chaumet, Dior, DKNY, Emilio Pucci, Fendi, Gucci, Louis Vuitton, Marc Jacobs, Sergio Rossi, Hublot, and Valentino to name a few (Brands to Trust).

### **Green Carpet Challenge**

Livia Firth is a name that needs no introduction when one thinks of sustainability and fashion and luxury. She is the Creative Director of Eco Age Limited and the driving force behind the Green Carpet Challenge<sup>®</sup> (GCC). The GCC Brandmark<sup>®</sup> has become one of the most sought after validations for sustainability in the global retail world. The GCC Brandmark is a guarantor of sustainable excellence and is awarded when the GCC social and ethical benchmark standards for a product or collection are met.

The first GCC Brandmark was awarded to Gucci (Gucci for Green Carpet Challenge) when it created, in partnership with Eco-Age, the world's first handbag collection made from zero-deforestation, certified Amazonian leather. Other brands, products, and initiatives that have been awarded the GCC Brandmark include the following:

- Chopard's Green Carpet Collections of High Jewellery.
- The London 2014 Stella McCartney Green Carpet Collection.
- The 2013 Green Carpet Capsule Collection, created by Christopher Bailey, Victoria Beckham, Christopher Kane, Erdem, and Roland Mouret.
- The Narciso Rodriguez (HEART) Collection for Bottletop.
- Handprint, the short film directed by Mary Nighy.

Though small steps, these initiatives aim to be conversation starters as well as triggers toward a larger awareness of the concept and more important the responsibility that all of us have toward a long-term sustainable future. As customers become more conscious and specific in their likes toward sustainable brands, they will have to follow ethical practices to become successful in the long term by choice.

### 3.3 *Elucidating Typical Production Cycle*

In this section, we examine the complete luxury goods' life cycle. To create a mood-board of a collection, raw material and sourcing are the first step toward sampling. Not only one has to look at the usage and application of raw materials, availability in the right quantities is imperative. And of course, costs have to be right. Major environmental footprint is caused by the clothing and textile sector, polluting around 200 t of water per ton of fabric (Nagurney and Yu 2012). Textile waste in Great Britain increased by about 2 million t per year between 2005 and 2010 (Kirsi and Lotta 2011).

Sustainable sourcing of raw material cannot be achieved as a quick fix unless an entire supporting ecosystem is created. This usually takes time, patience, and nurturing. Not many companies want to take ownership of this as it is a long-term commitment. Often, one is not even sure whether that particular raw material will be used often enough in each forthcoming collection, so why bother?

#### 3.3.1 Sustainable Fabrics

Pier Luigi Loro Piana (the CEO and Deputy Chairman of the Loro Piana Group) was gifted by a Japanese friend a swath of beige fabric in 2009, and he had a hard time believing that the thread had been hand spun from the fibers of the lotus plant (Binkley 2010). The fibers of *nelumbo nucifera*, an aquatic perennial more commonly known as the lotus with its pink and white flowers, are sacred in parts of Asia. Through an artisanal handmade process, it takes approximately 32,000 lotus stems to make just 1.09 yards of fabric, approximately 120,000 for a costume.

It generally takes about 25 women making thread to produce enough yarn to accommodate one weaver. Keeping them moistened, the yarns are handwoven on looms into 100 yard (90 m) batches. This process takes approximately one month and a half to complete and also integrates a no-waste element as all parts of the lotus are utilized—using leftovers to make lotus teas, infusions, and flour. Best described as a cross between silk and linen, lotus flower fabric is naturally stain resistant, waterproof, and soft to the touch. This breathable, wrinkle-free fabric was once used to make robes for high-ranking Buddhist monks.

Despite the hurdles, the company has trademarked Loro Piana Lotus Flower fabric (Lotus Flower) and plans to sell lotus flower fabric from scarves to blazers that are priced upward of US\$5500. Samatoa (natural fabrics) that produces lotus flower fabric also makes natural silk fabric, Kapok fabric, banana fabric, and organic cotton.

### 3.3.2 Good Versus Bad Pants

Jenny White and Verity White with Eco-Boudoir recently made a film *MorethanPrettyKnickers* (Pants Exposed) to raise awareness about fashion becoming a sustainable business driven by the demands of well-informed shoppers. The real aim is to educate consumers about the shocking facts of production of the most used and basic ingredient in the fashion business: cotton. It analyzes the impact of pesticides, labor condition toxic chemicals, and usage of water to present some startling facts. Their argument starts with a humble pair of pants. A pair of pants in the UK will create 19 kg of carbon dioxide equivalent (greenhouse gases) in its lifetime. So even if all 60 million people in UK are wearing a pair of pants right now—that is over 1 million t of carbon just today! Everyone knows the importance of reducing our carbon footprint and pants have no exception, and in textile and garment production, there is a lot of shipping and air freight involved to get the cotton from the fields to the knickers on your bottom. Using the analogy of “Bad Pants” and “Good Pants,” they recommend the usage of fair trade cotton, Hemp and Silk fabrics, vegetable-tanned leather, bamboo, soy fabrics, and wool and request consumers to ensure products come from Fair Trade Practices.

## 3.4 *Manufacturing in Developing Countries*

In this section, we explore the pros and cons of manufacturing in developing countries and how to approach the challenges faced.

### 3.4.1 The Shirt on Your Back

A typical non-sustainable garment can make use of over 8000 toxic chemicals in textile creation processes (Hagen 2012). Besides the toxic chemicals used, the labor conditions are worsening in some of the developing countries. Not only they are prone to being exposed to these toxic chemicals but also work under depriving situations. The Guardian captured one of the world’s largest industrial tragedies in an eye-opening documentary called *The Shirt on your Back* (The Shirt on your Back). On 24th of April 2013, a nine-story factory called the Rana Plaza collapsed on the outer edges of Dhaka, Bangladesh. More than 1130 people died and more than twice were injured (2013 Savar Building Collapse). These were workers earning anywhere from £ 50 to £ 60 a month making clothes for western high-street fashion retailers including Mango, Matalan, and Benetton. Through this incident, many fashion industry manufacturers were criticized all over the world for their unsustainable practices in the Asian countries, which indicates that altruistic values in consumers define their concern for sustainable luxury practices. However, luxury sector may appear to exist outside of this system nurtured by the ideas of craftsmanship and design, but behind the glossy flamboyance lies the same dirt. The



working conditions need to be addressed in order to not devalue the respect of human lives. Luxury it seems has more respect for their merchandise than for people (Hoskins 2014).

### 3.4.2 Make in India Versus Made in India

An ancient Indian proverb says “We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors, but rather borrow it from our children.”

India the land of Yoga and Ayurveda has been synonymous with sustainability. In addition, in the field of sustainable luxury and fashion from sustainable production techniques, designing, raw materials, and supply chain, India is not far behind. This culturally diverse nation has opened up to the world by easing the FDI restrictions and welcoming companies to see India as a worthwhile destination for the production of goods and services.

In 2014, Make in India initiative was launched by the Government of India to encourage and attract international companies (Make in India 2014). The initiative aims at attracting international companies to manufacture in India. For the textile industry, India has been a lucrative country as it is the largest producer of natural raw materials such as jute and the second largest producer of cotton and silk. Launching a manufacturing unit in India for producing textiles is beneficial for sustaining a strong production base and catering to the increasing demand of the local and international consumers. Besides, the textile industry also employs directly over 45 million people in India, which serves as the largest employment generation sector for the country, consequently making the textiles and apparel industry estimated to reach US\$100 billion by 2016–2017 from US\$67 billion in 2013–2014.

The following section illustrates various sustainable aspects of luxury and fashion products made in India.

#### Leather

India ranks as one of the highest suppliers of leather in the world. Cities such as Agra, Kanpur, Chennai, and Kolkata are famous for exporting leather as furnished and semi-furnished to Europe and other parts of the world. India's export of leather and leather products reached US\$3931.44 million (Council for Leather exports 2014). The leather industry in India thrived from the early nineteenth century to prepare shoes and leather goods for British army. The famous technique of vegetable tanning comes from the city of Kanpur. The technique involves tanning with tannin which is a class of polyphenol astringent chemical from the bark and leaves of many plants (Wikipedia 2014). This process of tanning has been used by various brands worldwide as a measure for producing sustainable leather and not causing skin allergies. Besides the process of tanning, the production of leather has also become an important subject for leather manufacturers in India. According to Zafar Iqbal Lari, a prominent manufacturer and exporter of leather from Kanpur, leather production process is scrutinized from beginning to the end of production for

concerns of pollution. *“The process starts with cleaning the sledge with PET (Primary Effluent Treatment) plant. Which is segregated into chrome to weaken the strength of water and diluted into water at the level of PH 7. Which is then transferred to the All Tanneries Conveyance System and CETP (Common Effluent Treatment Plant) controlled by the government of India.”*

### **Hidesign luxury leather brand from India**

Dilip Kapur started his company—Hidesign, with a cobbler as a two-man workshop in 1978. Today, it has grown from its artisan roots to an international brand with over 60 exclusive retail stores and a distribution network across more than 20 countries. Products are all individually handcrafted using the finest leathers, many of which are purely vegetable-tanned using natural seeds and barks in their own tanneries. Different properties of the leather are checked such as the color (rich and natural) and the feel (oily and silky or dry and smooth), and then, the leather is cut by hand, numbered, and panel-matched so that each bag is sure to be made from the same batch (IIM 2006).

All leathers are full grain and have not been corrected with paint and pigment to hide natural defects. The natural and ecological tanning process enhances the intrinsic characteristics and individuality of their leathers and gives them a tremendous strength and durability. Each bag is therefore, by its nature, a limited edition. LVMH Group invested in his brand as early as 2007 and provides support (Hide and Chic).

Upon interviewing a sales representative Hina Manzoor at Hidesign store, Kanpur, we found that sustainability is of least concern to the customers. However, once they are told about the vegetable tanning and the benefits, they get more interested in the product. She mentioned that sustainability is still a challenge for the company as customers in India are not yet ready for it. Thus, emphasizing that communication of such an aspect is necessary in India to educate customers.

### **Luxury Ayurveda brand Forest Essentials**

Forest Essentials was established in the year 2000 as a luxury Ayurveda company in India. This brand has been famous for producing skin care and hair products such as handmade oils, soaps from the Himalayas. The products are based on the recipes from Ayurveda after a long research. The highlight of the company's products is that each ingredient is handpicked from the forests in Himalayas and uses the therapeutic spring water from the region. From sustainable point of view, the products of Forest Essentials are never tested on animals, and it also engages local farmers to sustain local employability, does not involve child labors, and maintains strictly the finest traditional Ayurvedic recipes (About Us). The company has stores all over India. The estimated revenue of the company is Rs. 100 crore (1.6 billion USD), and in the year 2008, Estee Lauder bought 20 % stakes in the company (Rathore 2014). With higher involvement of Estee Lauder, Forest Essentials is set to launch stores globally as well.

### **Organic clothing brand No Nasties**

No Nasties an organic cotton and fair trade clothing brand launched in 2010 has come a long way in promoting sustainability in India and abroad. The founders of the company started with the simple idea of establishing the brand with organic cotton derived from the Vidharbha belt in India and employing the local farmers (Janwalkar 2011). The cotton used in manufacturing has a certified clearance from the Global Organic Textile Standard. The founders aim to contribute in saving the planet through their line of clothes and employing local farmers in order to prevent farmer suicides (as the statistical rate of farmer suicides in India has been 1 in every 30 min). The price of cotton is set up by the farmers, no child labor involved and no middle men as the products are sold directly to the customer through the Web site of No Nasties.

### **Handicrafts**

As Dr. Darlie Koshy points out (Koshy), handicrafts form the core of culture. They define cultural moorings and economic sustenance. While they use a wide range of inherent skills and local techniques, they provide a bridge to emotions and feelings through encoded values and aesthetics. These are the building blocks of the brand's DNA that cannot be duplicated. Crafts also form the best argument for sustainability. What better description of luxury than to wear handmade geography-specific products, made using rare material or techniques known to only a certain set of people. Crafts are true bespoke. To highlight the breadth and depth of craftsmanship available in textiles in India, Vogue India set upon a journey of exquisite handcrafted textiles. They then orchestrated collaboration with some of the biggest international labels to mold these textiles into something inspiring. Gucci created a dress from the famous "patola" fabric (a technique characterized by weaving of separately dyed warp and weft yarns to create surface motifs as per the design, usually in silk), Alberta Ferretti for Kanchipuram silk, Roberto Cavalli for Rajasthani Bandhini, Febdi for Bengali Jamdani, Christian Louboutin for Kanchipuram silk, Hermes for Bengali Kantha, Jimmy Choo for Benarsi brocade, Missoni for Lucknowi Chikankari, and many more (Project Renaissance). This highlights the true possibility of creating luxury using traditional sustainable craftsmanship, which needs to be nurtured.

### **Shared Talent India**

The Centre for Sustainable Fashion at the London College of Fashion started a project called Shared Talent India (Shared Talent India) to highlight the culturally vibrant and ecologically sensitive textile processing techniques that are present and being developed in India. It explores a variety of design opportunities and connects designers and buyers through sharing of knowledge and experience. India is perhaps the only country where story telling is practiced through textiles. Known as a sourcing hub for every major high fashion and luxury brand, it constantly amazes and surprises buyers.

Sustainable practices in the luxury and fashion industry are continuing to grow. Countries like India are upcoming and establishing their names for specialized sectors such as textiles, handicrafts, and leather as discussed in the earlier sections.

However, it is still yet to be explored how making products in developing countries will distinguish between sustainable practice paradigms for luxury companies benefitting and their country of origin effect like Made in Europe versus Made in Asia? Will there be a balance of sustainable standards in the production of textiles/goods and the quality luxury products have sustained so far with?

## 4 Can Sustainability and Luxury Go Together?

Luxury by definition is exclusive, rare, and hence long lasting. In some categories like watches, it is considered an honor to be passed as a family heirloom. The concept of sustainability can easily be integrated as part of the DNA of true luxury. It is the responsibility of the luxury industry to redefine itself so that their products embody this DNA of sustainability. The industry is also changing to believe that sustainability does not matter.

Since 2011, various luxury companies started waking up to the integration of sustainability in their DNA. This had some obvious advantages.

1. It is a part of the luxury business ethos—Jean Noel Kapferer, renowned French marketing Professor, observed the relationship as “luxury is at its essence very close to sustainable preoccupations because it is nourished by rarity and beauty and thus has an interest in preserving them. The unique values of the luxury business—Uniqueness, Timelessness and Heritage, all overlap with the ideology of Sustainability.”
2. It is seen as an ethical business practice—The convergence of media highlighting various aspects of the luxury business, whether it is outsourcing to developing countries, environmental impact, abusive employment policies, labor working conditions, or the health impact of the toxic residues present in food, textile, and cosmetics brings a high level of awareness among consumers. A luxury business aligned to the principles of sustainability is seen as a value enabler rather than arrogant. This creates a sense of belonging and awareness that engages the aware and involved luxury consumer. For example, Hermes invested in Shang Xia, a Chinese premium luxury brand of graceful, contemporary handcrafted products. The usage of Cashmere Felt, Zitan Wood, Eggshell Porcelain, and Bamboo Weaving are some of the crafts revived and used as the brand story (Shang Xia—Chinese Fine Living). BMW’s Efficient Dynamics technology was created to reduce harmful emissions and fuel consumption without sacrificing the comfort and pleasure of driving.
3. It is a clear differentiator—By stressing on the fundamental values of luxury, sustainability demarcates itself from the ever-changing, fast high fashion brands who promote consumption for the sake of owning such high fashion, rather than appreciating the value of rarity, the usage of noble materials, and craftsmanship.
4. Sustainability provides for a long-term return on investment—Luxury brands aligned and seen to be following sustainable practices echo their values of

timelessness and longevity. These values stand the test of time through generations and position the company being true to their core principles of craftsmanship. This enduring spirit weaves a certain longevity and story creating a long-term ROI.

5. Sustainability should be seen as a responsibility of luxury companies, in not so much a manner that it is required, rather than that luxury companies with their deep pockets and profits can contribute far easily to people, planet, and finally profits. While we can argue that the consumer shall eventually start distinguishing between environmentally conscious and sustainable organizations, it is the duty of luxury companies to become sustainable in whatever form and fashion quickly.
6. Sustainability is an opportunity for innovation. More and more designers are looking a creative ways in terms of material, design, packaging as well as giving back to society as a long-term value. To do this, they are seeking innovative ways to create what they have been creating for the last century or so. The Diffusion of Innovations Theory centers at creating conditions which increase the likelihood that a new idea, product, or practice will be adopted by members of a given culture. Diffusion of Innovation Theory predicts that media as well as interpersonal contacts provide information and influence opinion and judgment. Studying how innovation occurs, Rogers (1995) argued that it consists of four stages: invention, diffusion (or communication) through the social system, time, and consequences. The information flows through networks. The nature of networks and the roles opinion leaders play in them determine the likelihood that the innovation will be adopted. Ideas and hence practice of sustainability require early adopters to use the communication channels of the luxury business over time to be able to bring change to the social system.

## 5 Some Examples of Luxury Brands Integrated with Sustainability

According to Cervellon and Shammass (2013), luxury brands these days are complimentary with sustainability through ethos (e.g., eco-brands such as Stella McCartney (Kering/PPR) or Edun (LVMH) in luxury fashion or Tesla Roadsters and Venturi luxury cars), commitment all along the supply chain (Gucci group, LVMH, Porsche) and/or introduction of eco-collection and eco-lines (BMW i3 electric cars, Vranken-Pommery Pop Earth Champagne, Issey Miyake 132.5 origami design collection, Gucci sunglasses made out of liquid wood produced from sustainably managed forests).

In the following section, we show detailed cases of some luxury brands that have adopted sustainability as an integral part of the company.

## 5.1 *PPR to Kering*

In 2013, PPR became KERING. Their press release (PPR becomes KERING) mentioned—A world leader in apparel and accessories, Kering develops an ensemble of powerful Luxury and Sport and Lifestyle brands: Gucci, Bottega Veneta, Saint Laurent, Alexander McQueen, McQ, Balenciaga, Brioni, Christopher Kane, Stella McCartney, Sergio Rossi, Boucheron, Girard-Perregaux, JeanRichard, Qeelin, Puma, Volcom, Cobra, Electric and Tretorn. By ‘empowering imagination’ in the fullest sense, Kering encourages its brands to reach their potential, in the most sustainable manner.

The new corporate name was accompanied by an owl logo and a tagline, “Empowering Imagination.” Its pronunciation, “caring,” is meant to signify the group’s approach of cultivating its brands. Kering recently announced a five-year partnership with the Centre for Sustainable Fashion at London College of Fashion (Kering). The project will involve annual talks for students, training, and internships at Kering brand’s including Stella McCartney and a joint curriculum module focusing on the use of ethical materials and processes within the fashion supply chain. It is thought that recipients of the Kering Award for Sustainable Fashion will also receive financial support during their studies.

Sophie Doran writes on Gucci’s steps toward sustainability (Doran)—Kering is arguably a leader when it comes to conglomerate-level corporate social responsibility in the luxury sector. As part of the group’s overall profit and loss account, Kering’s multi-tiered action plan focuses on the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions, waste, and water; sourcing of raw materials; hazardous chemicals and materials; and paper and packaging. Kering also aims to eliminate all hazardous chemicals from its production by 2020.

Leather for brands, such as Bottega Veneta, Sergio Rossi, and Alexander McQueen, will be 100 % sourced from “responsible and verified sources that do not result in converting sensitive ecosystems into grazing lands or agricultural lands for food production for livestock.” When it comes to precious skins and furs—a long time hallmark of the Gucci brand—its goal is for 100 % to come from “verified captive-breeding operations or from wild, sustainably managed populations,” where suppliers employ “accepted animal welfare practices and humane treatment in sourcing.”

## 5.2 *EDUN*

(NUDE spelt backwards to stand for Natural) is a global fashion brand founded by Ali Hewson and Bono in 2005, to promote trade in Africa by sourcing production throughout the continent (EDUN).

In 2009, EDUN became part of the LVMH group. LVMH provides essential support to fulfill this vision. EDUN supports sustainable growth opportunities by

supporting manufacturers, infrastructure, and community-building initiatives in Africa. It is helping to increase the trade throughout the continent with their apparel and accessories business. Currently, they manufacture more than 95 % of the collection in Africa. Over the past few years, they have collaborated with Conservation Cotton Initiative Uganda (CCIU) which assists by providing funding and training to displaced cotton farmers to help rebuild their businesses in northern Uganda. In fact, in a two-season partnership with Diesel, they created two collections inspired by the African desert produced entirely in Africa (Diesel+EDUN)

All of their clothing is made from organic fair trade materials using non-toxic biodegradable materials and organic water-based ink, even though this comes at an extra cost. They are a fair wage company hoping to alleviate poverty and provide equal opportunity.

### 5.3 *Maiyet*

Paul Van Zyl, Founder and CEO of **Maiyet** (Maiyet), pioneered a new luxury by creating a fashion brand that celebrates rare artisanal skills from unexpected places.

Maiyet's uniquely inspired, design-driven collection seeks to revive ancient techniques and elevate the next generation of master craftsmen from places such as India, Indonesia, Italy, Kenya, Mongolia, and Peru. The invention of the Jacquard loom in 1801 revolutionized the textile industry. It created a programmable system allowing elaborate complicated designs to be woven directly into fabric's construction. To create a jacquard textile, the desired pattern is coded onto a punch card that determines the placement of "warp" threads, strung vertically onto a loom. The loom operator conveys the horizontal "weft" thread through the warp on a "shuttle." With each subsequent stroke, the delicate jacquard pattern emerges from the loom's threads. Maiyet collaborates with master weavers in Varanasi who preserve the tradition of the hand-operated Jacquard loom to create finely wrought, original silks.

Hand-painted textiles are sketched directly onto textiles by master artisanal, which is then filled with details. Kalamkari—the Indian hand-painting tradition or "pen craft," was used in ancient times to decorate temple hangings with scenes and motifs from Hindu mythology. Once an art form widely practiced, hand painting is now a heritage craft disseminated by master artisans through years of apprenticeship (hand-painted scarf).

Maiyet's fine jewelry collection is hand crafted by artisan partners in France, India, and Italy and showcases rare stones, unique cuts, and a rich local heritage of fine jewelry craftsmanship. Subtle pave diamonds line the interior of a hand-carved horn and gold bracelet, an unexpected detail that nods to the considered design and impeccable craftsmanship of Maiyet's artisans. Diamonds range from full cut to polki slices, which are naturally earth-mined and uncut diamonds celebrated for their unique faceting and raw looking quality, and stones are set in gold as well as carved horn and bone pieces (Organic Geometric Necklace).

Maiyet is deeply committed to forging partnerships with artisans globally and has entered into a strategic partnership with Nest (Nest) an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to training and developing artisan businesses to promote entrepreneurship, prosperity, and dignity in places that need it most. Whether it is reviving a 500-year-old silk weaving tradition in Varanasi in India, or rescuing the Javanese art of Batik Textiles in West Java, Indonesia, and many more initiatives in Colorado, USA, Mexico, and Kenya to name a few. Nest is partnering with the world's most promising artisans to build sustainable businesses within the competitive landscape of today's global economy.

According to Van Zyl, the artisans with which Maiyet works face a number of specific challenges. "They lack design direction, access to markets, fair financing, the sort of training and rigour required for them to perform at the highest levels of the luxury market," he said. "We try through our model to offset all of these obstacles, so these craftsmen can turn their skills into viable businesses." (Business of Fashion Maiyet).

## 6 Conclusion and Crystal Ball Gazing

Many consumers believe that luxury brands adopting sustainable practices are purely commercial in nature (Achabou and Dekhili 2013). For consumers, ethical concerns can help to improve opinion and self-perception; they constitute an increasingly decisive factor in the psychological satisfaction afforded by luxury goods (Olorenshaw 2011). The initiatives of sustainable luxury practices are attractive to the consumers with altruistic values and pro-environmental behaviors. But it is still far from establishing a reputation of a sustainable brand. The transition of parent luxury brands to sustainable labels is not well defined, and further strategies need to be involved for educating the consumers.

We need to move from a world of "fast fashion" to a world of "slow fashion" where the dresses or handbags are designed and produced for a longer life cycle than merely being thrown away from one season to another. This is a beautiful echo of the brand DNA of luxury products and hence cements the idea of sustainable slow fashion in luxury. The nature of the slow fashion makes it luxury.

Raw material sourcing and processing has been addressed in this chapter along with future directions. We suggest brands to critically analyze the need of educating the consumers about sustainable practices adopted, in addition to imbibe research on identifying various customer segmentation for sustainable goods, for example status-driven consumption, altruistic consumption, and hedonic and utilitarian consumption. In a nutshell, sustainable luxury is intertwined with manufacturing practices adopted by companies and consumer behavior. Neglecting one aspect or the other cannot satisfy the sustainable luxury definition.



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