

Detoxifying Luxury and Fashion Industry: Case of Market Driving Brands

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Abstract The current chapter encompasses the distinction between market driving and market driven brands in the sustainable luxury and fashion industry. In particular, how brands are detoxifying their manufacturing, supply chain distribution and market along with the methods they have adapted to differentiate themselves in this process. In the long run, how these methods economically impact the brands and consequences followed from the consumer's perspectives are explored. Stella McCartney published for the first time its environmental activity statement for the last three years of the brand in 2016. The fashion designer is also famous for her commitment to sustainability and her environmental friendly creations. Sustainability and detox are at the heart of debates within modern society and

In Memoriam our friend, student and much more, our beloved Cédric Laguerre.

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represent the main stake for the future, the organization of COP 21 in 2015 in Paris being one of the latest examples. However, when we talk about luxury industry, especially fashion, sustainability appears to be difficult to associate to this sector. Indeed, luxury is representing a kind of “unfair” and fast moving consumption, with some ostentation, while ecology involves the protection of resources and durable models. But sustainability and detox are representing a tremendous opportunity for luxury fashion brands. Luxury and fashion brands’ strategies need currently, within an increasingly competitive market, to shift from such paradoxes and to capitalize on being the greatest opportunity to dodge “green washing” advocacy communication.

Keywords Luxury · Fashion · Brands · Sustainability · Detox · Resources · Development · Strategy · Stella McCartney

1 Introduction

The shift towards a sustainable mindset in daily life is omnipresent these days. But in the fashion business and especially in the luxury industry, exists still a huge lack of transparency concerning this topic. Many companies have production sites located in Asian countries, such as China or India. Especially in such locations, the value chain is often not traceable anymore, and brands can tell their customers whatever they want to claim they are sustainable. This process of greenwashing is more and more feared by the consumers.

The following sections are dealing with this subject of ‘real’ versus ‘wannabe’ sustainability, and is therefore firstly analyzing two examples of market drivers. The very different approaches of Stella McCartney on the one hand and Valentino on the other hand will be compared, to give an example for the luxury industry.

But what makes Stella McCartney to be accepted as sustainable in the consumers’ minds? This will be explained in the following sections, by giving a closer look to luxury customers’ expectations and by analyzing who the drivers of the change might be. What are the different cultural approaches to that topic in China and in Western Europe? Do luxury consumers all think in the same way or are adaptations necessary?

Additionally, the term of ‘detoxification’ will be further explained. With Greenpeace, as a major NGO and leader of several anti-toxin campaigns, this part of the chapter will explain why detox is needed in the fashion and luxury industry and how the consumers are involved.

In the last part of the chapter it will be shown how to avoid greenwashing. It will sum up why a good corporate social responsibility will soon be crucial for luxury and fashion brands, and that there better be some truths behind those tactics.

2 Methodology

In this chapter the impact and concept of detoxifying the fashion and luxury industry is explained. Therefore, in the first step secondary literature has been consulted, such as articles, journals, blogs and company websites. The topic of sustainability furthermore goes hand in hand with the use of environmental reports. Here we included material from the brands as well as NGO reports drawn into consideration.

Additionally, as a primary source, a questionnaire and an interview was conducted. In this way, the most-up to date consumer-driven data was collected, to give an idea of the current scenario and the future directions.

Finally, all the primary and secondary collected data was drawn into consideration for our analysis and results. In summary, the end of the chapter develops a set of recommended actions to help brands implement a better CSR, without greenwashing their portfolio. Or are luxury and sustainability really an antithesis with each other?

3 Market Driving Brands

Only recently, luxury brands started to integrate sustainability in their value chain. There are two kinds of brands in the field of sustainability existing: Firstly, the ones who drive the markets, which are in the same time brands that totally adapted a sustainable identity to their core values.¹ Who are those brands and why are they considered to be market driving? This innovative way of thinking influences the whole market. Hence secondly market driven companies are those, who follow the rules of the preferences in this given structure (Jaworski et al. 2000).

Stella McCartney is one of the most famous market driving sustainable luxury brands. Her main approach to fashion is to provide excellent tailoring and to design sexy but confident pieces for women. In the same time the company tries to be environmentally and ethically correct. In these values the aspect of responsible sourcing and supplying is very important for the brands beliefs (Kering 2016). Instead of using leather or fur, the vegetarian designer provides high quality alternatives to her customers, such as a new material called 'Eco Alter Nappa' (Stella McCartney 2016).

With this foregoing description, the sustainability is also a prospect for innovation. 'Eco Alter Nappa' is made from polyester and polyurethane which is coated with 50% vegetable oil. This mix of materials form an alternative for leather and uses less mineral oil than normal coating. Stella McCartney uses this material for example for her iconic Falabella Bags (Stella McCartney 2016). This model reached a well-known and well-accepted status in the luxury fashion world.

¹http://www.huffingtonpost.com/misha-pinkhasov/from-sustainable-luxury-t_b_7069074.html.

But originally the innovations of sustainability need a group of early adapters to be willing to get started with this ‘new’ form of luxury.

Thus, it requires the right psychological convincing of the consumer. What made the Stella McCartney Customer step away from the traditional luxurious leather materials? What makes the brand communication so authentic is also the fact that it admits flaws:

We know that we are not perfect. We also know that sustainability isn’t just one thing. (...) In many ways we are just beginning our journey towards becoming more sustainable, but we are dedicated to continuing our work towards being able to replace what we have taken from the environment. (...) We will probably never be perfect, but you can rest assured that we are always trying. (Stella McCartney 2016).

With this statement, Stella McCartney tries to modify the customers’ expectations. Till then, the mindset always includes an ‘all-or-nothing’-approach, in which the customer would not allow the brand to step slowly into sustainability. But this fact only leads back that companies were often only ‘greenwashing’ their images. In a sustainability approach in which the customer sooner or later learns that literally something hazardous was hidden behind every brand, it is a logical consequence that today’s customer has a hard time to really trust a company who only state that it is sustainable. At this point, Stella McCartney’s approach catches the trend: The designer never claims to be 100% sustainable. With admitting that, she makes herself more trustworthy for an authentic green-customer.

It is considered as a state of the art by now, that luxury brands discovered the potential of Corporate Social Responsibility for their brand identity. But Stella McCartney’s approach seems to be more honest one. The whole corporate identity and communication strategy of the brand is built around the image of sustainability and vegetarianism, and thus it is used as a differentiator of the brand. And it seems to be working out: 2015 has been the brand’s best year so far. In the last three years, it’s ecological footprint decreased by 35% per kg of used material (Van Looveren 2016).

On the other hand, the luxury house **Valentino** is in the meantime also considered to be detox-driving. Yet, the brands approach to it, seems to be different than Stella McCartney’s. What strikes the eye in Valentino’s sustainability approach is firstly: nothing. The consumer cannot find a hint to the topic on a first glance on the brands homepage. Only when scrolling to the bottom of the page and clicking on the link ‘corporate information’ one can find goals of the detox-campaign (Valentino 2016).

In the ‘Valentino Fashion Group Detox Solution Commitment’ the brand sets the goal to get rid of all hazardous chemicals in its whole value chain until 2020. The document is set up as a formal contract and can be downloaded by every interested customer from the brands website. As such, the commitment refers to the consumers ‘right to know’ about the chemical substances the brand uses. It furthermore promises to eliminate those substances one after another and to be transparent enough to inform the public about this process (Valentino 2016).

And yet, this Detox Commitment also indicates nothing more but the will to change. In contrast to Stella McCartney, Valentino never refers to itself as a 'sustainable' or 'ethic' brand. But through making their will to change formally public, the brand shows their interested customers that it is on a good path. Both brands clearly state that the detox vision is a long-term commitment, which is not easy to achieve. Stella McCartney tries to achieve a totally detoxed supply chain very obviously, while Valentino does it rather quietly, without making their actions obvious.

3.1 *Communication Sense*

Brands are always connected to an evoked set of perceptions of their customers. Especially in the luxury industry the customer's preferences are highly linked to emotions (Beiz 2006). And yet, so is sustainability. What would it do to the brand identity of Valentino if it would communicate more its' will to move into a sustainable direction? The brand Valentino is at this point an excellent example for many luxury brands. Valentino, especially, is overall linked to high class femininity, seduction and the brands legendary haute-couture evening robes. Nothing in the brands image could be generally connected to the image which sustainability has since now: A more honest, more down to earth, more unromantic image. It seems therefore legitimate that the dreamy luxury brand like Valentino does not clearly communicate their sustainable commitments.

In the last few years, the number of market driving luxury brands in the field of sustainability barely rose recognizable. Other brands are not yet this far. For them sustainability is a differentiated part of their business: A part which is nice to have, to generate sales and to create a good image. But those brands treat their corporate Sustainability as a part of their marketing and communication process (Pinkhasov 2015). This often happens because of public pressure which is nowadays put on international businesses. An ecological or social scandal would have a huge negative impact on the reputation of the brand and the buying behavior of the consumer (Merck and Fleischer 2013).

4 Survey

We conducted a survey to show the customers reaction to the increasing impact of sustainability in the luxury and fashion industry. The questions were sent to a non-representative group of consumers in China and Western Europe (n = 282), to compare both cultural approaches to this delicate topic. In total 118 Chinese participated. On the other hand, 137 people located in western Europe participated. Herewith it is important to mention that the majority, 94% of the participants come

Table 1 Demographic profile of the sample

| | Variable | Total | | China | | Western Europe | |
|------------|---------------------|-------|----|-------|----|----------------|----|
| | | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| Gender | Male | 101 | 35 | 45 | 37 | 50 | 37 |
| | Female | 181 | 65 | 73 | 63 | 87 | 63 |
| Occupation | (Self-) employed | 128 | 45 | 62 | 53 | 53 | 39 |
| | Student | 140 | 50 | 53 | 45 | 75 | 55 |
| | Not working/retired | 14 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 9 | 6 |

from Germany and France. Both these countries have a well-developed and growing market for sustainable luxury and fashion goods. The total sample demographical profile is shown in the Table 1.

The survey included questions regarding participant's opinion about their general interests in buying sustainable luxury and fashion products; if it makes a difference for them regarding how the luxury and fashion products are sourced sustainably or not; and if they would consider buying more sustainable luxury and fashion products if the brands would provide them. Additionally, we measured their feelings (*positive/neutral/negative/inconvenient*) when buying a sustainable luxury and fashion product. Moreover, they also answered in their opinion who do they consider responsible for sustainable products (*Consumers/Government of the production country/Government of the selling country/The brands/The suppliers/Others*). Finally, they answered how can luxury brands improve their reputation in sustainability (*Publish an environmental activity statement/Being tested by NGOs on a regular basis/Making their supply chain transparent/None of these, luxury and sustainability together will never be trustworthy/I don't know/Other*).

A study of KPMG in 2012 showed that sustainability attempts are often driven from a governmental side and by laws. Our survey could not confirm that: In total, most of the consumers see the responsibility rather on customer-, brand- and supplier-side than as a governmental issue.

Often 'being sustainable' is not what it seems like. For example, are synthetic fabrics not necessarily more damaging for the environment than natural products. If we just think of the water usage of a pair of jeans compared to a textile made of old plastic bottles, this point gets clear. But the PR-Department of most companies can simply make more nice images out of healthy glowing cotton fields than of non-natural sources. The true picture of sustainability is often disturbed by what media channels make of it and by what the public wants to believe (Pinkhasov 2015).

This emphasizes the role of the customer. Sustainable market driving brands are more likely to be bought by a group of people who *know* and who *care*. The next section will analyze how consumers are affected by sustainable driven luxury brands and if it is going to change their perspective on the industry.

4.1 *The Customer's Perspective?*

Why do some brands practice market driven greenwashing? Because the image of sustainability by itself still has a problem. From the business side, sustainable methods are generally reckoned to be more complicated, slower and for the most important part more expensive (Pinkhasov 2015). But also, consumers tend to think that way. Sustainable fashion and luxury has moreover the image of being high priced due to more complicated production. Hence 'buying sustainable' is seen as rather inconvenient even though linked with the acknowledgement of the positive idea behind it (Petersen 2015).

In fashion, rather than in luxury, the customers are getting more sensitive. In response to the recent catastrophes, such as building collapses in Bangladesh, consumers are starting to pay attention (Merck and Fleischer 2013). Our survey resembles this trend: Most of the test group is interested in sustainable produced fashion and luxury goods (70%), as well as they are interested in buying more of those products if luxury brands would provide them (68%).

Yet, for most of them it does also make a difference if this product would be sourced sustainable. That means that either in a positive or negative way their buying decision would be affected by knowing that a piece is sustainable. Thus, we also asked for the consequences. The results are striking: Only 7% of the participants linked something negative and inconvenience with buying sustainable, and 57% only bought sustainable to feel better.

The benefit for the customer must be more than only a clean consciousness and the fulfilment of moral and ethical obligations (Gutjahr 2013). Brands still need to provide the decision driving benefits, such as function and design, which are still more important for the customers (Beiz 2006). The environmental commitment of the brand is not a decisive factor, according to a study of Achabou and Dekhili (2012). This study furthermore shows, that consumers are by far more likely to buy sustainable luxury products, if those goods have an equivalent high intrinsic quality standard to former bought, non-sustainable products (Achabou and Dekhili 2012).

The goal is hence, to sell sustainable luxury and fashion with no difference to conventional, former goods. At least, 21% of our test group claimed that it would make no difference to them, but the tendency for a rise of this number is not unlikely. If more brands like Valentino sell their sustainable luxury items without further communication, it will not much more occur to the customer's consciousness. This verifies the percentage of people who would keep buying 'their' luxury brands if it would start selling sustainable goods: 62% would be happy about it, 10% would feel positive till neutral about it and for 25% it would not even make a difference. Only barely 3% of the asked demanded the brands to change nothing.

But who should lead the action for the change? As mentioned most participants in our survey answered that the brands and the consumer should take the initiative. But with respect to the cultural background, the answers differed. For the Westerners, these responsibilities were very strongly defined: A significant high amount of them see the responsibility on the brands' side, followed by the

consumer themselves. These two were followed by the supplier-industry with still nearly half of the people's votes (46%). This finding proves what is also widely spread in literature and in the web: Without these three parties' cooperation, the shift to sustainable luxury will 'simply remain an ideology' (Guldager 2016).

But on the Chinese side, this survey question showed a major difference: Firstly, the brands and the consumer were too, the prior responsible, but with less significance than for the western. And secondly it is maybe not surprising to see, that over half of the Chinese participants saw also the government of the production country on duty. The following section will give some explanations about China as a production country and why detox is important.

5 The Term of Detoxification

Detoxification means getting rid of toxins and other hazardous chemicals in consumer's products. In 2011, a detox campaign was launched by Greenpeace to raise awareness of the toxic products and exposed the links between global clothing brands, suppliers, and toxic water pollution around the world. The logo contained a Chinese sign "Shui" meaning water as the alphabet X in DetoX. According to Qian (2016), the use of the Chinese sign was an indicator of the main hazardous chemical problems associated with China. As it is the biggest manufacturer in the world with over 25 thousand chemical companies.

Especially the textile industry in China is responsible for toxic water pollution. The suppliers located there deal with a wide range of hazardous chemicals for clothing, manufacturing and processing. This leads to a high amount of industrial discharges, which contaminates the Chinese environment as well as the human health (Greenpeace 2012). The past has shown that most brands do not even feel responsible for what is happening in manufacturing companies in their supply chain.

A campaign was set up, from the non-governmental organization to put pressure on some of the biggest fashion companies. Greenpeace demands an elimination of all hazardous products from companies like Nike, H&M, Valentino and Burberry. Those and 14 other companies already signed a public commitment to create concrete steps towards more transparency and less hazardous substances (Greenpeace 2016).

Greenpeace believes that such big global players should lead the whole industry to a cleaner production. The campaign focuses very much on the point of production, but less on the issue of the supply chain. The NGO even asks the brands to redesign their products if it is not possible to get rid of hazardous ingredients otherwise.

Yet, China as a production country is very much on the map of the detox-movement. Due to a lack of governmental restrictions a lot of hazardous accidents are happening in the world's biggest chemical industry. Greenpeace

found out, that the environment of the country has to deal with an average of 29 chemical accidents per month, of whose many lead to bad consequences such as injured workers, death and huge ecological problems (Qian 2016).

By January 2020 the NGO wants big brands to completely “phase out the use of toxic chemicals from their global supply chain and products” (Greenpeace 2016). At the same time it is very difficult to get information about those supply chains. As for China, for example, there are still a lot of white spots on the map. And the Chinese government has shown not much interest to change that status (Qian 2016). We found similar results reflected in our survey: That is why Chinese see the governmental responsibility much as much higher as the Westerns do.

Greenpeace, furthermore, sees the responsibility for action not only at the companies, but also on the governments site. They ask for a set of ‘chemicals management policies’ in the country of production. It is seen to be as questionable that a set of new rules in one or two supplying countries could make a noticeable change in the industry.

Last but not least Greenpeace emphasizes the social media hashtag #PeoplePower. But the NGO also underlines, that the consumer can only make a change when a larger group of consumers is shifting their mindset and raise their voices (Greenpeace 2016). The consumer is asked to take action in form of putting pressure on brands and governments, but it is not described how a normal citizen shall influence such big industries.

The Detox campaign as a sustainability movement has a comparable high chance to touch the end-consumer directly. The trend started as a personal food-diet in which participants shall get rid of toxins in their body. Detox is about the consumer’s direct lifestyle. Various studies have shown, that the impact of sustainable offers is especially high when it comes to the consumer’s instantaneous lives. Health issues are building an important line of argumentation in the customer’s decision journey. Benefits are considered as weaker, when they do not attach the direct lives of the consumer, such as the climate change or the deforestation. Those tragedies are well aware, but less touchable for the consumer (Gutjahr 2013).

6 Interview

We conducted an Interview with Arianna Bolzoni and Fahid Jaaouan founder of OPS-ARTIFEX to understand further about the current issue within the field of sustainable luxury. Following are the questions and responses from the interview.

1. Can you tell us a little about your backgrounds and introduce us a bit your company.

We are called OPS-ARTIFEX (in Latin it means the support of the skilled) We are a fashion design studio specialized in denim.

2. What, in your opinion, is the most important thing to look for in ethical fashion?

It has to be pretty, It has to look cool, it has to be in trend, it has to be commercial. The ethical means to me sustainable product, where water consumption is reduced, chemicals dyes are not hazardous for our planet.

3. What do you think is the biggest obstacle to becoming a more sustainable and less harmful industry?

The price! Brands are too greedy! They rather give incentives to buyers and sourcing managers who help them make bigger margins. I believe government should step up and strategies such as implementing high taxes to brands who still uses harmful product. We all know which chemicals are harmful and hazardous, hence we should just get high tax on all those chemicals and reward the brands who are sustainable by deducting taxes. Just like when using solar panels for your house, you are allowed to deduct the related charges from your taxes. That's a win-win strategy.

4. How do you think we can increase the use of sustainable materials in the fashion industry?

As mentioned before, the only motive for company is profit, therefore by Increasing taxes of all the products who aren't sustainable, you will get a positive impact very quickly.

5. How do you choose what brands to work with?

We work with all the brands without any exception. We usually find them solutions to create beautiful collections, matching the trends and their market in a sustainable way, keeping the same budget.

6. How have you seen the sustainable fashion industry change/develop in the past five years?

Yes indeed! it is changing a lot! Many global campaigns focus on sustainability. Groups like Greenpeace has challenged many fast fashion and mass market brands to use zero hazardous product by 2020.

7. Have you seen more interest from consumers lately?

Frankly no, at least not enough to make any changes. Consumers are driven by prices and trends!

I believe we will be able to see change in consumer's purchase behaviour, if the big players would change their manufacturing process to an eco and social friendly one.

8. In your opinion, will it be the consumer who will facilitate the change in the supply chain, or will it be the design and manufacturing industry?

Being in the industry for more than a decade, the only engine to change is R&D, design and manufacture.

9. People charge that ethical and sustainable fashion is too expensive. How do you respond to that?

It's true! Once again! Sustainable means, environment, social and economy. If those 3 pillars aren't respected then it is not sustainable.

10. Fostering sustainability and responsible consumerism is on top of the agenda for many players in the denim industry. What other brands do you most respect for driving sustainable initiatives.

Nudie jeans are doing great sustainable products, but by far my support goes to Candiani Denim! An Italian denim mill known to be the greenest denim mill in the blue world.

The interview provided us with deeper understanding of the subject. The next section describes further about the CSR aspect in sustainable luxury brands.

7 Opportunity and Potential of ‘Good’ CSR

The sustainable luxury image has to shift itself to a more self-evident luxury and fashion industry. A detoxed luxury and fashion industry must not be part of a quite consciousness but simply a part of the aesthetics and dreams that brands are selling. In the last few years, literature was mostly claiming that sustainability has to be deeply rooted in the brands identity (Gutjahr 2013). But market driving brands like Valentino are the best examples that this assumption is no longer the only truth.

The perceived cognitive value of a brand is the connected with the actual bundle of advantages of a brand. Therefore, this cognitive knowledge is most likely subjective and linked with the customer’s emotions (Meffert et al. 2012). Those emotions, however, most not necessarily be linked to ‘doing good’ or ‘buying eco-friendly’. Instead of using guilt as an argumentation line for sustainable fashion and luxury industry, the brand communication should rather implement this strategy as a natural part of their value chain (Petersen 2015).

In the brand communication, authenticity is still the most important aspect. Only when the customers recognize an honest approach to a detoxed value chain, the brands can avoid the accusation of greenwashing (Gutjahr 2013). We asked the consumers of China and Western Europe how luxury brands could improve their reputation in sustainability. With some distance 68% of the consumers would feel better if luxury brands would make their supply chain transparent on their website, for example. Especially for the western world, this was an important point. When the country of production is physically as well as culturally far away, it is hard for this demographic group to calculate the actual Status Quo.

This policy was followed by the proposed measures of publishing an environmental report and being tested by NGOs on a regular basis. NGOs are well trusted by the consumers. But concerning their sustainability-communication, NGOs play an important role for the brands, too. In the reputation-process they plan a significant role as an intermediary between brands and consumers (Fabisch 2010). In the past NGOs like Greenpeace were rather feared by brands, because they reported about illegitimate VERHÄLTNISSE in their supplier’s production sides.

To take apart real detox-attempts and greenwashing, it is in the brands responsibility to educate and empower their customers. This might result into changing existing buying habits (Achabou and Dekhili 2012).

The problem of greenwashing occurred parallel with the trend to publish a Sustainability Performance Report (KPMG 2012). When publishing those reports without further proof, the companies would obviously embellish their detox attempts. 52% of our participants claimed that a published report would improve the image of a brands sustainability approach. If that shall work out, the brands have to provide transparent and comprehensible data for their customers. It is a quite likely scenario that only companies and brands that will provide an authentic sustainability approach will gain the trust of their customers on the long term (KPMG 2012).

Brands should see the detoxification as a part of innovative branding (Gutjahr 2013). Stella McCartney is a pioneer in this field. Through her sustainable marketing communication, she gives the customer the feeling to be able to solve ecological and ethical problems through buying her innovations (Gutjahr 2013). Herewith the customer experiences a double self-improvement: His reward center requites him for buying a design which a higher social class would consider as beautiful and at the same time bought (exaggeratedly expressed) the feeling that he or she has saved the world.

And yet luxury goods and sustainable production share some common aspects: They require extraordinary materials and production processes, and both have the reputation to be rather rare since now (Petersen 2015). Within our test group, only a significant small number of people would claim that luxury and sustainability won't go well together (6% in total).

Various former studies have shown that luxury is often possessed because consumers accredit it with a higher quality than low-priced products (e.g., KPMG 2009). Within the test group who are already loyal luxury customers, 90% were convinced of the better quality. This perception is the grip-point for sustainability. Because how high can a quality of a product be, as long as there are hazardous chemicals still in the materials?

Luxury brands more than fashion brands have the power to manifest sustainable buying as a lifestyle choice (Petersen 2015). Even though luxury and fashion seemed to be a paradox for a long time, now the question is no longer *if* but *how* to implement sustainability in the brand management.

Luxury and fashion brands need to take action for consumers. In order to maximize the perceived value in the context of sustainability excellence, the brands need to figure out what level of sustainability awareness their customers want to see. Adjusted to this the supply-chain needs to be examined and taken into operational strategies. Only in this way brands can create deeper value and hence clearly differentiate "the 'real green' from the green-washing" (Sauers 2010).

8 Conclusion

What strikes the eye, is that there is still a very small amount of true market driving brands in the field of sustainable luxury and fashion. This is not necessarily a confession of failure for the industry, but rather a statement of how difficult it is for brands to jump into sustainability. There is no such thing as the perfectly detoxed brand in the market yet, but under governmental and public pressure, more and more of them are trying the shift.

For this tactical need, the brands identity has to evolve around the idea to be as good to nature and humankind as possible. Since fast fashion is all about fast-lane consumerism, it seems to be more in the nature of luxury to develop a true approach to sustainability. A turn to 'slow fashion' would enhance the aspect of luxury, and develop the aspect of sustainability (Coste-Manière et al. 2015). This argument was furthermore backed up by the survey made, which showed that most participants are not only interested in buying sustainable, but would moreover even like to see 'their' luxury brands shifting in this direction.

Additionally, the survey was able to show the differences between the cultural mindsets about sustainability. It got clear, that compared to Western Europeans, Chinese see responsibilities and measures on a slightly different focus. Therefore, it is important for brands to educate international customers with adapted cultural styles.

What concluded clearly from the analyzed materials of the survey and the interview, is that brands have to set a good example. But to avoid greenwashing, it is inevitable for brands to work with customer education as well as with restrictions for their suppliers and even the governments. Without those cooperations, the shift to sustainability will be hardly made within the industry.

Appendix: Survey Answers

| Questions | Answers | Total | | China | | Western Europe | |
|---|---------|-------|----|-------|----|----------------|----|
| | | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| Are you interested in buying sustainable luxury and fashion goods? | Yes | 197 | 70 | 71 | 60 | 110 | 80 |
| | No | 56 | 20 | 34 | 29 | 13 | 10 |
| | Maybe | 29 | 10 | 13 | 11 | 14 | 10 |
| Does it make a difference for you if a luxury or fashion product is sourced sustainable or not? | Yes | 170 | 60 | 68 | 58 | 86 | 63 |
| | No | 82 | 29 | 38 | 32 | 36 | 26 |
| | Maybe | 30 | 11 | 12 | 10 | 15 | 11 |
| Are you interested in having and/or buying more sustainable luxury products if the brands would provide them? | Yes | 192 | 68 | 67 | 57 | 109 | 80 |
| | No | 59 | 21 | 37 | 31 | 14 | 10 |
| | Maybe | 31 | 11 | 14 | 12 | 14 | 10 |

| Questions | Answers | Total | | China | | Western Europe | |
|---|---|-------|-----|-------|----|----------------|----|
| | | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| In your opinion: What are the consequences for you when buying a sustainable luxury product? | A good feeling (positive) | 161 | 57 | 70 | 60 | 75 | 55 |
| | Positive—neutral | 39 | 14 | 8 | 7 | 29 | 21 |
| | No difference (neutral) | 60 | 21 | 28 | 23 | 27 | 20 |
| | Neutral—negative | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| | Inconvenience | 20 | 7 | 11 | 9 | 5 | 4 |
| Does it make a difference for you if a luxury or fashion product is sourced sustainable or not? | Yes, I would like it (positive) | 173 | 62 | 79 | 68 | 81 | 59 |
| | Positive—neutral | 28 | 10 | 3 | 3 | 22 | 16 |
| | No, it would not make a difference (neutral) | 70 | 25 | 31 | 26 | 32 | 23 |
| | Neutral-negative | 1 | 0,5 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | Yes, I don't want them to change anything (negative) | 8 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| In your opinion: Who has the responsibility for sustainable products? | The consumer | 161 | 57 | 63 | 53 | 87 | 64 |
| | The government of the production country | 123 | 44 | 61 | 52 | 49 | 36 |
| | The government of the selling country | 94 | 34 | 42 | 36 | 40 | 29 |
| | The brands | 217 | 77 | 82 | 70 | 115 | 84 |
| | The suppliers | 138 | 49 | 61 | 52 | 63 | 46 |
| | Others | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| How do you think luxury brands could improve their reputation in sustainability? | Publish an environmental activity statement | 146 | 52 | 61 | 52 | 67 | 49 |
| | Being tested by NGOs on a regular basis | 141 | 50 | 63 | 53 | 68 | 50 |
| | Making their supply chain transparent | 192 | 68 | 72 | 61 | 104 | 76 |
| | None of these, luxury and sustainability together will never be trustworthy | 17 | 6 | 14 | 12 | 2 | 2 |
| | I don't know | 25 | 9 | 13 | 11 | 11 | 8 |
| | Other | 9 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 4 |

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Detox Fashion

Case Studies

Muthu, S.S. (Ed.)

2018, VII, 84 p. 32 illus., 28 illus. in color., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-981-10-4782-4