

Defining success:

**a new vision of success
for the fashion industry**

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Introduction



Like any other industry, fashion has been affected enormously by the Covid-19 pandemic. Our lives have changed beyond recognition and past visions of success now feel outdated. Yet we still need to make money. So how do we strike a balance between creativity, financial freedom, and our own and others' wellbeing, while also taking care of our planet?

For the past three decades the fashion industry has spiralled into a state of increased growth and consumption. Our way forward was driven by desire, ego, status and stories of happiness gained once we 'had it all'. Our actions were often at the expense of others and the planet.

Constantly chasing a dream that was perhaps not actually achievable left us feeling jaded or even burnt out. Yet beneath all this we still feel love for the very thing that led us to our career choice in the first place: creativity.

Life as a creative is at best elating and at worst painful. I have often considered it to be both a gift and a curse. However, I remain

strong in the belief that our innate creativity and ingenuity will help us find a new definition of success. One that is less focused on the individual and more on the collective. A definition that is less concerned with labels and financial metrics as markers of success, and more focused on how we make people feel, and how our actions honour and support the restoration of our people and planet.

Through this *Defining success* report and the two accompanying special podcast episodes, we explore notions of success gathered from a variety of people who have left the fashion industry or those who continue to forge their lives in fashion or the wider creative industries.

Fashion journalist Sophie Wilson poses the question of whether having a creative vision is enough to guarantee success in this notoriously competitive industry, and how to maintain a balance between creativity and commerciality. Fashion sustainability consultant and co-founder of Lab 2030, a not-for-profit initiative created by Other day, Laura Gibson explores how a growing

number of brands are evolving from the concept of sustainability towards a regenerative ethos. Jessica Carroll, fashion and beauty journalist, shines a light on those in fashion industry placing wellness front and centre in their work, while also viewing it as a marker of success in its own right. Jade Coles, founder of Studio-Coles, has devised four rules for future creative communities and argues that the legacy we pass on to future generations should not be based on wealth but culture.

In addition to our four articles, we have an enlightening Q&A with digital fashion house The Fabricant, exploring how as 'fashionauts' they champion an entirely new business model without physical fashion items ever being created.


For our first podcast we tackle a tricky subject for creatives: money. In search of expert guidance around what makes a creative venture attractive to financial investors and how we should plan for our personal financial future, I speak to three incredible women: Mehjabeen Patrick, chief financial and investment officer at Creative England and Creative Industries Federation; Anna

Sofat, associate director, wealth at Progeny; and Lottie Leefe, founder and director of DURA Private and The Dura Society.

For our second podcast we explore the less tangible subject of how to recognise and nurture creative potential with Sara Maino, head of Vogue Talents, deputy director of Vogue Italia and international brand ambassador at Camera Nazionale della Moda Italiana.

I hope this invitation to imagine a new kind of success for the fashion industry helps us find a better balance between creativity, work and wellbeing for everyone across the entire fashion industry and our planet.

**Jodi Muter-Hamilton,
Founder, Other day
Founder and CEO, Lab 2030**



"The planet does not need more successful people. It desperately needs more **peacemakers**, *healers*, *restorers*, **storytellers** and **lovers** of every kind."

David W. Orr



Supporting creativity and innovation to flourish

by Sophie Wilson

Creativity

plays a key role in any fashion business. This much we know. Creative innovation can be the driving force behind the success of a brand, but is it enough on its own?

A question faced by many creatives, especially in fashion, is how to strike the right balance between creativity and commerciality. Do you stick to a unique creative vision or make clothes that appeal to the masses? And can you do both?

When we think of true creativity, we tend to imagine a solitary artist dogmatically following their singular vision. Running a successful fashion business, however, requires creativity beyond the physical end product.

A 2013 research paper, Fashion industry professionals' viewpoints on creative traits and strategies for

creativity development¹ by Elena Karpova, Sara Marcketti and Caitlyn Kamm, identifies four key creative traits: different thought processes, determination, having an open mind, and risk-taking. When we refer to creativity, we will be referring to these traits as well as the inspirations and techniques that designers use in their creative process.

We spoke to fashion educators, creative foundations and agencies, as well as young designers and brands, to find out how we can best support creative innovation in the fashion industry and allow it to flourish.



Sophie Wilson

A freelance fashion journalist and a regular contributor at *Other day*, Sophie's work explores fashion in relation to sustainability, mental health, digital futures and intersectional feminism. She has written for the likes of *Vogue*, *i-D*, *Dazed* and *The Face*. Sophie graduated with an MA from Central Saint Martins, where she won the Hugo Boss Scholarship for Fashion Communication.

Key findings →

Leading a successful creative life looks different for everyone. What makes someone successful and/or creatively fulfilled can shift constantly. Creatives often feel that they never reach the point of success or creative fulfilment, but that both are a lifelong process.

The business side of building a brand is also creative. We should expand our definitions of creativity and cultivate a more holistic approach to being creative.

Creativity will be absolutely vital when it comes to building the fashion industry back up post-pandemic.

Brands will have to come up with creative solutions in the face of the climate crisis. Creative thinking and new approaches to the fashion business model will be essential.

Fashioning a creative education

The value of fashion education is an oft-debated topic, as is what should be included within that education. Many designers graduate with the technical knowledge and creative drive to enter the industry only to find that when it comes to the business side of running a brand, they know very little. This suggests that most fashion educators see creativity as one of the most important ingredients in industry success, if not the most important – but can creativity be taught?

It's a question that was put to 28 fashion industry professionals in the research paper mentioned above. One-third of the participants believed creativity to be an innate quality and, therefore, some people are born creative while others are not. Another third maintained that everyone has some creative potential that can be further developed.

We spoke to Colomba Leddi, fashion design area leader at Nuova Accademia

di Belle Arti (NABA), who states that there are certain teaching methods that can encourage creativity to flourish. "Anyone who joins the fashion system right now needs to be extremely flexible," she explains. "They have to take into account the difficulties and opportunities linked to sustainability. When it comes to our students, I think this could be taught, while moving along an entrepreneurial as well as an independent creative path." In the 2021/22 academic year, NABA will be launching a new specialisation programme dedicated to Fashion Design Management as part of BA Fashion Design to prepare students for the business side of fashion. "We try to form people who will be able to face and manage complex and unexpected situations," Leddi adds. "We make use of our traditional laboratories, as well as new digital technologies used in the fashion industry, and ask our students to imagine what the future will be like."

The ability to respond to unexpected situations and come up with imaginative solutions are both invaluable creative traits that can be cultivated through practice. Sustainable bespoke womenswear designer Sydney Pimbley,

who studied at Central Saint Martins, describes her fashion education as "a massive creative learning curve. It pushed me very quickly to realise my areas of interest and focus through the rapid turnaround of the experimental art and design projects. Nonetheless, there are many aspects you have to learn for yourself once you've launched a brand, but my education and placement year were a great springboard for me."

Fashion education can definitely help kickstart a career. It gives designers useful creative tools, and connections to enter the industry. It is also an opportunity to develop a portfolio that they can use to promote their work on social networks.

Instagram: mastering the algorithm

Does Instagram foster or hinder creativity? For better or worse, it can

have a huge impact on creative success. It gives designers the opportunity to showcase their work to a global audience, but the algorithm is not without its biases. Learning how to work it to your advantage can be a full-time job in itself.

Most creatives have a love-hate relationship with the platform. They appreciate how it is a free promotional tool and an opportunity for a lot of people to see their work. But having to constantly be online is a lot of added pressure, and not all creative ideas can be easily translated or conveyed through the grid. Nevertheless, Instagram followers have become a marker of success.

As a creative fashion designer, Andrea Brocca believes that it's important to cultivate an idea of success that is unique to you instead of looking to societal markers, such as Instagram followers. "Instagram helps you maximise your possibility of exposure if you use it effectively. This offers confidence as a by-product, which gives birth to incentive and good morale to be more creative and outdo yourself," he says.

“However, it also increases your insecurity and self-comparison, which can force many a creative to give up,” Brocca adds. “Try to build your principles and your individuality from your own idea of success, and keep it separate from the outside world and pop culture’s idea of success.”

Social media can also lead to a homogenisation of ideas that arises out of looking at the same references as everyone else. Amy Trinh and Evan Phillips from surrealist bridal and eveningwear brand WED Studio suggest that, “after a while, everyone is looking at the same kind of imagery and this means certain things can often feel a bit overdone as everyone references the same things, whether consciously or subconsciously”.

Instagram may be at the forefront of every young designer’s mind, but it’s necessary for creative innovation to be established outside of the app. While going viral can undoubtedly help a designer get their name out there, true creativity comes from within, not from trying to please the algorithm.

Balancing creative fulfilment and commercial success

Some believe that creativity and success are two opposing principles. Being successful usually means having to make compromises. Artists who are commercially successful are often accused of ‘selling out’. But finding ways to make your creative project profitable requires a kind of creativity in itself – one that may be less immediately obvious.

Our findings suggest that creativity has a different meaning for each person. To be creatively fulfilled is as vague a goal as being successful. There are countless different definitions, and many people who look successful and creatively fulfilled often do not feel like they are. It’s human nature to always be striving for more, especially in creative fields where the rules are constantly being rewritten.

“I’m not sure I know anyone creative who is completely creatively fulfilled,” says Phillips from WED Studio. “I think part of being a creative person is that you never feel completely fulfilled anyway, especially in fashion. We’ve been taught that it’s always about what you are doing next and making it better each time. We have to teach ourselves out of this mode of thinking.” Taking the time to reflect and acknowledge your creative achievements can help cultivate a feeling of success and help avoid burnout.

Jacob Winter, CEO and head designer at New York-based custom rug brand MUSH Studios, believes that a creatively fulfilled successful life means “not getting bored of what you’re doing. It means waking up excited about what you’re going to create that day, that week, that month. You can be both successfully and creatively fulfilled, as long as there is balance. Work is work, whether you’re doing something creative or not, and ensuring your separation is necessary. Allow yourself to reflect on the work you’re doing, which will then make the experience of working a lot more enjoyable.”

Supporting and uplifting creativity

Many creatives would not be able to start their business without support from scholarships, stockists, funds and foundations. Pimbley received the prestigious LVMH Scholarship in her final year at Central Saint Martins. It helped her kickstart her brand, but the coronavirus pandemic has made it tough for brands like hers to stay afloat. “Sales, like most things, have been affected by Covid-19,” she says, “so it has been a great privilege to be stocked at Maimoun in New York.”

For WED Studio’s Trinh and Phillips, it was a residency at the Sarabande Foundation that has been pivotal to the brand. They moved into the Sarabande as artists in residence in October 2019, a week after showing their first collection in Paris. “We were incredibly small and really just starting out, but we had industry experience,” Phillips explains. “They believed in what we were doing and what the brand stood for, and they have supported us ever since – not only with a studio space

"After a while, everyone is looking at the same kind of imagery and this means certain things can often feel a bit overdone as everyone references the same things, whether consciously or subconsciously."

Amy Trinh

within the building, but also by putting us forward for projects and enabling us to make relationships with other artists and organisations that may not have happened otherwise. I think a foundation like the Sarabande is more important now than ever, especially in times like this."

Arts Council England has also been a lifeline for many creatives in the pandemic. Their 10-year-strategy, Let's Create, focuses on four investment principles: ambition & quality, dynamism, environmental responsibility, and inclusivity & relevance. "We want to invest in organisations and people who are bold and committed to improving the quality of their work," a representative explains. "Dynamism asks them to show they can be adaptable and respond to challenges that the next decade might bring. For instance, during the Covid-19 lockdown, many individuals and

organisations have adapted their activities in order to deliver them safely, such as accommodating social distancing measures or hosting events online. These individuals and organisations have demonstrated that they are capable of creative innovation."

Creating a sustainable fashion future

Adaptability has been a key creative asset throughout the pandemic. We can apply the same principle to create a more sustainable fashion future in the face of the climate crisis. Creative agency Holition pioneers bespoke digital experiences for luxury, fashion, art and retail industries. "Technology is often

accused of being a solution looking for a problem to solve," says a spokesperson from Holition, "but our belief has always been to first think strategically and then creatively – and only then to consider a technology solution." Responding to the climate crisis and the need to optimise business processes, we have endeavoured to explore how technology can help brands offer sustainable alternatives instead of holding large product inventories in store."

Finding creative solutions to reducing large product inventories is on the mind of many young designers too. Several of the brands we spoke to said that they have adopted a made-to-order business structure. This gives designers at independent brands more time and space to be creative. It also gives designers the opportunity to work one on one with customers on custom pieces and involve them in the creative process which can increase sales, proving once

again how important the role of creativity is for a small brand.

There is no doubt that creativity plays a vital role in success in the fashion industry. However, we would do well to expand our definition of creativity to include creative thinking from a business perspective. If we move past old-fashioned ideas about what creativity is, it will be easier for brands to be both innovative and successful.

As a spokesperson from the Arts Council says: "Creativity is hugely important in all kinds of fields. We may recognise it most easily in the arts, but it is also the driving force behind entrepreneurship in business, innovation in science and technology, and the development of new ideas in the humanities and social sciences. At the Arts Council, we believe that creativity will be one of our most important assets in years to come."

Building regenerative brands

by Laura Gibson

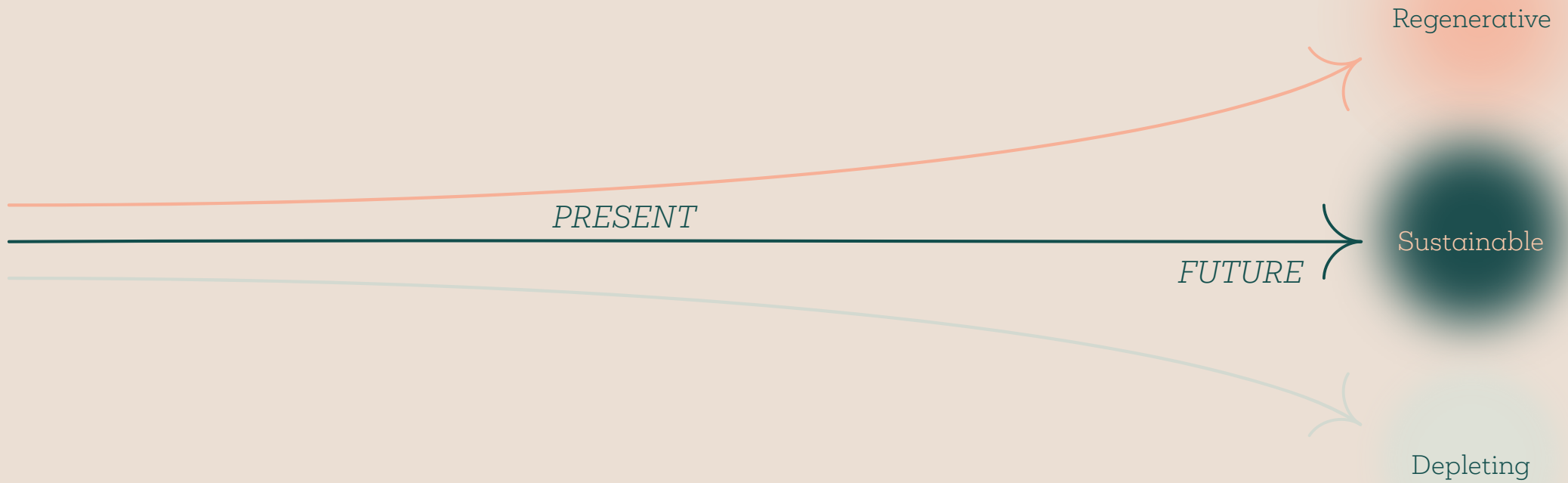


Laura Gibson

A co-founder of Lab 2030, a not-for-profit initiative created by Other day, and a fashion sustainability consultant with over ten years of industry experience, Laura is now focused on promoting industry best practice and purposeful business development. Studying for a Masters in Sustainability Leadership from the University of Cambridge (CISL) her thesis explores the barriers and challenges to sustainable supply chain management. An advocate of cross-industry collaboration she promotes a systems thinking approach to paradigm shifts across the apparel and textiles sector.

Sustainability

has been gaining traction as a key business strategy in fashion for a number of years. Numerous reports have shown that its influence has continued to affect consumers' choices even during the Covid-19 pandemic. A recent survey by management consultancy Accenture, *How is Covid-19 changing the retail consumer?*² found that 61% of consumers are making more environmentally friendly, sustainable or ethical purchases, with almost 9 in 10 saying that they are likely to continue doing so.



Where are we now?

Despite this consumer interest, a growing number of brands are evolving from the concept of sustainability towards a regenerative ethos. The reasons for this are complex. Notably, there is increasing use of eco jargon, unregulated claims and token commitments across the fashion industry. It's an issue exacerbated by the lack of an accepted definition of sustainable fashion and no universal metrics for measuring progress.

Partly as a consequence of these drivers, so-called 'greenwashing' is of increasing concern. So much so that in the UK the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) watchdog is currently investigating³ whether "descriptions and labels" that market products as "eco-friendly" are misleading consumers, with a focus on three industries: fast-moving consumer goods (for example, beauty and food), travel and transport, and textiles and fashion. The CMA's findings and guidance are due to be released this summer.

The great reset

To understand the current reassessment of sustainability as a strategy, it is helpful to look at the origins of the theory of sustainable development. The concept of linking the environment with growth or 'sustainable development' was first launched in 1987 with the publication of Our Common Future⁴, commonly referred to as the Brundtland Report. The UN-published report defined this now ubiquitous strategy as: "[Development that] meets the needs of the present without compromising

the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

This seemingly simple strategy has its fair share of fans and critics, yet sustainable development and the increasing global adoption of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) must be seen as a positive step forward to a certain extent (for example, See Factfulness: Ten Reasons We're Wrong About The World – And Why Things Are Better Than You Think⁵ by Hans Rosling, Ola Rosling and Anna Rosling Rönnlund). However, in order to address today's increasingly urgent

"We must not mistake Ethical Consumption – a private act – for political power or organised, collective social change that benefits everyone."

Elizabeth L. Cline

environmental challenges, the concept of mere sustainability is not compelling or progressive enough for what must be the decade of change.

A notable key criticism of sustainable development is that the development part has always referred to growth. Our economies have relied on the concept of actual economic growth (or positive GDP growth) as a sign of a healthy economy for decades. Despite broad calls for a global decoupling of economic growth and resource consumption (the basic idea of sustainable development), this change has not materialised. In-

deed, if we take a cold hard look at the fashion industry's success in decoupling growth from resource consumption – namely its sustainable progress to date – it is ad hoc and essentially inadequate.

It is increasingly believed that if we continue to follow revenue growth as the only measure of success, then sustainable fashion will always be an oxymoron. Consider a recent article by Elizabeth L. Cline, a leading voice in sustainable consumption and author of books including 2012's critically acclaimed *Overdressed: The Shockingly High Cost of Cheap Fashion*⁶. Cline's

provocatively titled article, *The Twilight of the Ethical Consumer*⁷, lists her turning point as working on the #PayUp campaign during the recent pandemic. Covid-19 has exposed insidious structures and cultures across the fashion industry, further highlighted by the Black Lives Matter movement and the ongoing hardships faced by garment workers across the globe, many of whom are women of colour living in poverty with no financial security.

I would recommend everyone to read Cline's article, although it will make for hard reading for many, including myself.

Cline makes the point that we cannot shop our way out of the environmental and social mess we have created. "We must not mistake Ethical Consumption – a private act – for political power or organised, collective social change that benefits everyone," she writes.

But where do we go from here as brands and creatives, when what we really want is a positive future for the fashion industry? How do we use our industry to create tangible change that benefits everyone? This is where regenerative ideas come to the fore.

Alternative growth metrics

If we begin by looking at how to decouple growth from resource consumption (and let's start adding social and racial injustice in here too please), we need to first reassess how we define growth and recognise success. The European Environment Agency (EEA) has created a helpful table showing alternative schools of thought about growth, *right*.

But how do we start to build these radical concepts into actionable business strategies when economic growth is correlated not only with well-being and health indicators such as education and life expectancy, but also with current measures of success.

Academics Kate Fletcher and Mathilda Tham launched the Earth Logic Fashion Action Research Plan just before the pandemic descended in 2020, centring on the idea of replacing Growth Logic with Earth Logic. A rich source of inspiration, Earth Logic, sets to redefine business strategies around more holistic concepts.

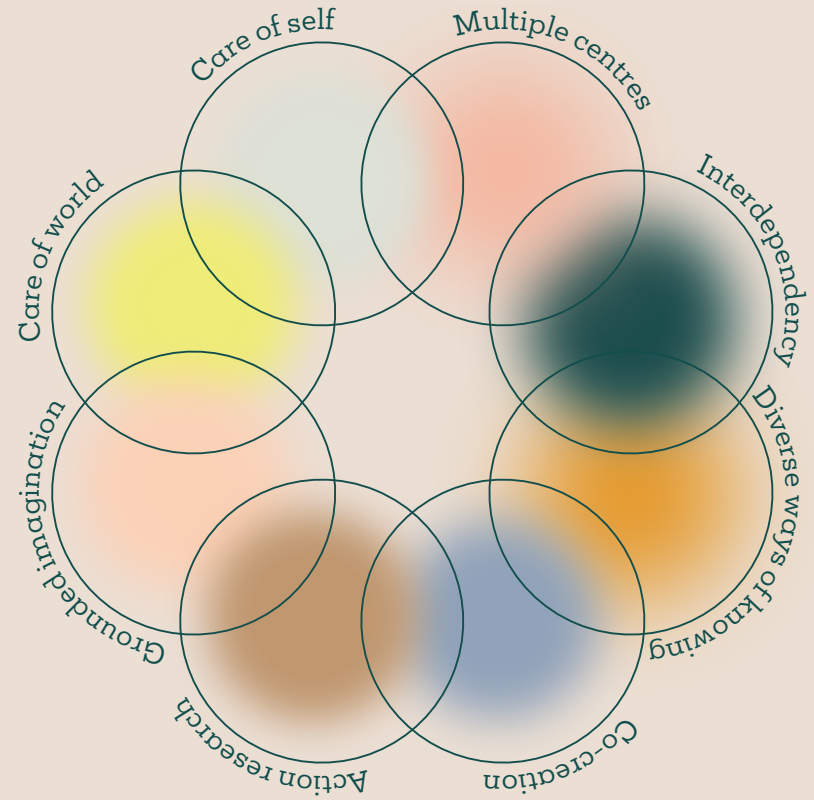
Perspectives on Growth	Definition
De-Growth	An umbrella term for more radical academic, political and social movements that emphasise the need to reduce production and consumption and define goals other than economic growth. <i>(Demaria et al., 2013)</i>
Post-Growth	Agnostic about growth, this school of thought focuses on the need to decouple well-being from economic growth <i>(Weidmann et al., 2020)</i>
Green Growth	Based on eco modernist thought that invests its hopes in scientific and technological progress (e.g. ecodesign, green innovation) directed towards sustainability. In other words 'green growth means fostering economic growth and development while ensuring that natural assets continue to provide the resources and environmental services on which our well-being survives' <i>(OECD, 2011)</i>
Doughnut Economics	Combines attention to legitimate needs of the present human population with the need for a transformation to a sustainable future. <i>(Raworth, 2017)</i>

Source: <https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/sustainability-transitions/drivers-of-change/growth-without-economic-growth>

Earth Logic



As a brief summary, the plan is built on a value framework around which activities can be planned and evaluated:



Source: Earth Logic Fashion Action Research Plan, p29



The final part of Earth Logic sets out six “holistic landscapes” that describe the pathway for the systemic transformation of the entire fashion system:

Source: Earth Logic Fashion Action Research Plan, p15

1. **Less**
Grow out of growth
2. **Local**
Scaling, re-centering
3. **Plural**
New centres for fashion
4. **Learning**
New knowledge, skills, mindsets for fashion
5. **Language**
New communication for fashion
6. **Governance**
New ways of organising fashion

Regenerative materials have the capacity to restore natural ecosystems and replenish rather than deplete resources if products are considered from a holistic perspective.

Regenerative resource consumption

While there are many materials that are considered more sustainable than the traditional alternatives (for example, recycled polyester used for sportswear), a deeper dive into material science is required to find materials and processes that generate a positive impact rather than rely on extractive processes.

Whether this is petrochemical-based fibres, cellulose fibres or protein fibres, all deplete resources for their production, and can result in the degeneration of the natural world and exploitation of resources, people and animals in the process. Regenerative materials have the capacity to restore natural ecosystems and replenish rather than deplete resources if products are considered from a holistic perspective.

In order to consider the holistic impact of a product from creation to end of A life, the design process may need to be

altered to consider materials and their unique characteristics first, rather than the design. If this sounds uncreative, it's not – as shown by the recent interest and investment in biobased materials such as plant-based leather and plastic-free sequins.

Other growth areas are climate-positive materials – those that sequester more carbon than their production uses. However, building restorative brands is about more than choosing regenerative materials and following circular practices; we need to slow the industry

down and begin to consider our whole approach, and not just try to sell new products.

Any regenerative initiative should also consider collaboration as a key point of change; the traditional transactional relationships and, at times, exploitative practises of the supply chain have to be evolved. Covid-19 has taught us that the financial risks of production must be equitably shared through the supply chain and that the challenge of radically transforming the fashion industry has to be synergistic.

67% of consumers agreed that companies will 'build back better' by investing in sustainable and fair solutions designed for the longterm.

Accenture

What could a regenerative fashion industry look like?

Trying to pin down what regenerative means is just as tricky as defining sustainability, not least because you can't restore a complex ecosystem to its original condition because they are always in flux – these systems are not static.

In addition to this, in fashion we are not just dealing with a natural ecosystem, we are dealing with a human socio-economic system which was broadly built on generations of uneven power dynamics and colonialism.

Amy Foster-Taylor, co-founder of And Beyond adds, "radical change requires radical ways of approaching change. Since colonial ways of doing, knowing, and being are locked into our collective minds, bodies, and structures, rewriting our relationships must be a co-creative process that includes unravelling and healing, before looking towards the future. Change must be an evolving process, guided through continually asking: what does it look like to be in right relationship with one another, and who decides? What structures are in place to ensure that everyone feels safe and supported to share openly, as equal and valued partners in these relationships?"

A future-thinking fashion industry needs to repair the broken bridges of trust within the supply chain by com-

mitting to an equitable and decentralised industry, and work to regenerate the health of the global ecological and socio-economic environment.

Summing up this sentiment in a Next Economy Now podcast interview in 2016⁸, Rick Ridgeway, VP of environmental initiatives at Patagonia, said he was interested in moving away from "causing no unnecessary harm" to "doing good". While Patagonia's success in achieving this bold aim is hotly debated, Patagonia Provisions (the apparel company's regenerative agriculture-focused offshoot) has had recent success with climate-positive foods.

The aforementioned Accenture study also found that 67% of consumers agreed that companies will "build back

better" by investing in sustainable and fair solutions designed for the long-term. But what does "building back better" mean? We need to consider this from a regenerative perspective – it's less about growing sales and more about building positive and equitable impacts. This Just Transition was defined by the Climate Justice Alliance⁹ as a "shift from an extractive economy to a regenerative economy".

In order to meet these aims, we need to accept that traceability, circularity and biomimicry, among other factors, are not the end of the line, but merely steps along the path. Much more work needs to be done. If this sounds like a big job, it's because it is, and it needs swift and radical collaboration to be achieved.

"*Success* is not
what you make,
but the ***difference***
that it makes
in *people's lives*."

Bernadette Jiwa



Valuing wellbeing as wealth

by Jessica Carroll

Success

is so often measured by what's in our bank accounts that wellness becomes irrelevant. However, a number of individuals within the fashion industry are working to rewrite this narrative, placing wellness at the forefront of their work and viewing it as a marker of success in its own right.

As the Covid-19 pandemic continues to affect everyone's lives, the world is waking up to the importance of wellness. With the number of British adults experiencing depression doubling during the pandemic, according to the UK's Office of National Statistics¹⁰, there has never been a more important time to redress how society views success and wellness.

We interviewed four business founders, of varying ages and business sizes, to find out how they interact with wellness within their roles.



Jessica Carroll

A Central Saint Martins fashion communication graduate. During her career as a fashion and beauty journalist, she has written for Dazed, 1 Granary, 10 Magazine and Mail Online. Jessica is passionate about championing founders and emerging designers and helping those working in the fashion industry to find the balance between work, life and wellbeing. At the time of writing this article, Jessica held the position of Editorial Assistant at Other day.

Key findings →

Wellness looks different to everyone and its significance to an individual can change throughout their life.

A successful wellness routine doesn't have to cost money.

To be truly sustainable, businesses should look after the wellbeing of their customers and their employees at all stages of the supply chain.

It is outdated to believe that chasing wellness means finances are no longer important. All collaborators agreed that financial stability can improve your ability to focus on wellbeing more authentically throughout everyday life.

Wellness as a measure of success

Wellness means different things to different people. However, according to the World Health Organisation¹¹, wellness is “not just the absence of disease or infirmity”, but “a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing”.

Our first collaborator, Pia Stanchina, co-founder of subscription service GLOSSYBOX UK and a lifestyle and business coach, has a similar definition. Wellness materialises when a person knows they can confidently address adversity in life. “Knowing that I have the resources to adapt will serve me better in the long run,” she explains.

Additionally, individuals should strive for balance to improve wellness. Natasha Fernandes Anjo, founder of accessories label Roop, explains: “It’s showing up for – and attending to – all the things in my life that are important to me. “ Without a sense of equilibrium, it is hard for individuals to reach a state of wellness.

This level of wellness does not come naturally. “We live in a male-oriented society, defined by outer success, competition and survival,” says Karen Ruimy, founder of luxury clothing and wellness brand Kalmar. “This disconnects us from self-love, self-respect and from listening to who we really are inside.”

Individuals at all levels of a business aren’t immune to these pressures. Achieving positive wellbeing can be as difficult as amassing money in a bank account. It’s therefore important these achievements are celebrated equally. Studies prove that wellness significantly impacts productivity. Our fourth collaborator, Chloe Isidora, an energy practitioner and author of Sacred Self-care¹², explains how wellness allows us to find balance. “Wellness helps us to feel anchored within ourselves,” she says. “From that place, whatever happens around us, we have that inner compass and strength.”

A 2018 UK study by the Institute for Employment Studies, Unlocking employee productivity: The role of health and wellbeing in manufacturing¹³, found that workplace productivity could be improved, on average, by 10%

“Wellness helps us to feel anchored within ourselves. From that place, whatever happens around us, we have that inner compass and strength.”

Chloe Isidora

"Knowing that I have the resources to adapt will serve me better in the long run."

Pia Stanchina

if employee wellbeing was addressed. "A company can only flourish when the employees are part of the family; where they feel they are part of a story that they are writing together with the team," says Kalmar's Ruimy. This shift towards addressing employee wellbeing is increasingly popular, especially within younger companies, and is integral to successful productivity.

Many business founders have found wellness the starting point for success in all aspects of life. This, Stanchina explains, is down to the effect stress can have on your brain. "The brain can be in one of two states: parasympathetic or sympathetic," she says. "When you're on the sympathetic nervous system track, you're in a fight or flight state." This shuts down much of the brain to allow it to focus on more urgent functions. Executive reasoning goes offline, as does the ability to reach creative solutions.

"However, when you're in a place where your nervous system is calm, all of your brain is online," adds Stanchina. "You're able to tap into all the different parts of your intelligence in order to come up with the most resourceful solution that's going to serve you best."

Wellness for the many

While wellness is rarely at the forefront of business owner's minds, when it is addressed, it's often focused on that of the customers – enhancing their relationship with the brand – rather than that of the employees. This is evident from fast fashion brands that use ideas of sustainability and wellness within the promotion of collections but have yet to address the working conditions of the garment workers who are creating their clothing.

With the fashion industry's influence upon the environment increasingly apparent, we expect more brands to place a focus on genuine sustainability – addressing social, economic and environmental issues. True sustainability isn't only about reducing water usage and using recycled fabrics, but also treating workers – at all levels – ethically and fairly. Founders must now ask themselves whether their brand is truly sustainable if it ignores the wellbeing of its employees?

Lessons can be learned from emerging brands placing employee wellness at the forefront. "In society, productivity is how you are measured as an ideal worker," explains Stanchina. "Being allowed to be inconsistent and human is seen as a threat to many institutions." But this doesn't have to be the case. Studies have shown that employees who feel cared for are better at their jobs.

Anjo, who leads her team at Roop knows it is possible for brands to make a profit while caring for their employees. "Maybe larger companies' ideas of profit might slightly dwindle, but as long as the environment you expect your staff to work in is nice, you pay them appropriately and appreciate them, it is possible [for brands to find increased success], she says."

Studies have found that wellness is seeing improved attention from employers. For example, a study by the Reward & Employee Benefits Association, Employee Wellbeing Research 2020¹⁴, found that 51% of businesses now offer wellbeing initiatives to staff, compared to just 25% in 2019. Additionally, 78% intend to introduce mental health workshops in 2020 or beyond.

Wellness initiatives can take many forms. From raising awareness through wellness-focused newsletters to offering healthcare discounts, it's not one-size-fits-all and should be focused on what the employees within a company genuinely need. It is promising that employers are starting to view their employees as real people, rather than productivity machines.

Wellness throughout our lives

Our findings overwhelmingly suggest that wellbeing is personal, and changes from person to person. The meaning and importance of wellness can also change for each individual, depending on life stages and experiences. Priorities regularly shift throughout life, as does the way we value and interact with wellness.

Ruimy is, in fact, an individual who epitomises this ever-changing relationship with wellness. The founder of lifestyle brand Kalmar began her

*"It's showing up for
– and attending to –
all the things in my
life that are
important to me."*

Natasha Fernandes Anjo

"Taking care of your physical body and living life organically are part of the traditions in Morocco, but the Western influence has pushed people away from this tradition."

Karen Ruimy

working life in the financial sector, before following her calling into wellness. "When I left my job in finance for my spiritual calling, I realised how important wellness was, and how crazy it was to run non-stop after [traditional] success," she says. Since then, wellness has become integral to every aspect of her life. It's perhaps obvious, but often ignored, that attitudes towards wellness differ between cultures, as was made clear from the conversations with our collaborators. Ruimy, born in Morocco and living in Paris, has noticed these differences first-hand. "Taking care of your physical body and living life organically are part of the traditions in Morocco," she says, "but the Western influence has pushed people away from this tradition".

To meet individuals' varying wellness expectations, companies must work hard to genuinely understand how different cultures interact with wellbeing and, therefore, what their employees need in order to feel that their wellness needs are being met. Views on wellness also change across generations. We are now witnessing a shift in young people shunning traditional routes to success. "We're realising that, not only will we not

be able to surpass our parents' living standards, but many will not even meet them," says Stanchina. Instead, the business founder and life coach noticed younger generations measuring success outside of conventional definitions, turning away from institutions that no longer serve their wellbeing. "We are doing different calculations than we were before in terms of the value that our activities are creating for ourselves, for others, and for the planet."

However, we are still not completely immune to outside influences. Ruimy believes that the Covid-19 pandemic has also increased people's attentiveness towards their own wellbeing. "The virus has shown us how life is really dependent on our wellness and our true values of self-love, self-respect and caring." In fact, when Euromonitor International asked respondents about what being healthy meant in 2020, as part of its Top Consumer Trends Impacting Health and Nutrition report¹⁵, more than 60% said mental wellbeing was the most important factor. Factors deemed less important included absence of disease, fitness and endurance, and eating a balanced diet.

"Wellness is not just the absence of disease or infirmity, but a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing."

World Health Organisation

Is wellness a luxury?

Many wellness rituals require time and money – things not readily available to everyone. Nothing sums it up quite like this quote from Dr Peter Cochrane, featured in *The Soul of the New Consumer: Authenticity – What We Buy and Why in the New Economy*¹⁶ by Darren Bridger and David Lewis: "I've become convinced that our society now consists of only two classes of people. It's not a divide by birthright. It's a divide by time. There are large numbers of people who spend huge amounts of time to save money and a small group of people who spend huge amounts of money to save time."

However, our collaborators agree this doesn't mean that wellness is exclusive to only those in privileged positions. "Everybody's wellness is different and personal to them," says Anjo. "Wellness isn't all about yoga retreats and expensive

therapies. To me, it's acts of kindness to yourself, and helping yourself grow and understand your own world."

As a global industry, wellness is valued at \$4.5 trillion, according to the Global Wellness Institute¹⁷. It's obvious that many individuals are willing to spend a lot of money on wellness. However, the women we spoke to for this report explained they embrace wellness that doesn't cost money. For Isidora, wellness comes from being in nature and she believes in weaving wellness practices into everyday routines. "We can bring self-care to things we normally do so that we don't have to change too much... it's bringing mindfulness to everyday actions," she says. She follows a gratitude practice each morning and uses the time in the shower or washing her hands to connect back to nature through water.

Social media negatively impacts an individual's sense of wellbeing. "Wellness is a self-luxury to which everybody is

entitled," says Anjo. "But this can be hard to see if you are in a dark place and adverts and consumerism are [suggesting] what wellbeing should look like." However, Ruimy believes that this is now pushing young people to rebel against outdated consumerist ideals. "We are seeing levels of anxiety rise so much that a lot of young people are deciding to let go of [traditional] success and find other ways to express themselves."

Equally obvious is the fact that financial stability is highly beneficial in the journey towards successful personal wellness. Amassing wealth gives the freedom of working for more reasons than just a paycheck. "We live in a society where we need money to survive," says Isidora. "An outdated spiritual belief is that we let go of the material world. Personally, I want to be abundant because, when we have basic needs taken care of, we are able to create things from a more genuine place that isn't about making money."

It is key that brands address this by opening up their wellness offerings to all. Those who can redefine wellness as something that isn't a luxury are likely to come across as more genuine to their customers.

Conversations with our collaborators suggest wellness is too often ignored as a measure of personal success. Younger generations, in particular, are waking up to the importance of placing positive wellness at the forefront of a successful life. While our society is unlikely to lose its reliance on material wealth anytime soon, it is promising that consumers are demanding more from brands. They believe brands should care for their employees' and customers' welfare equally, and that their offerings are more thoughtful and considered. And with the Covid-19 pandemic only heightening everyone's attention to wellness, we predict a large shift towards a wellness-focused approach to both work and homelife.

Creative culture as an agent of change

by **Jade Coles**



Jade Coles

Founder of Studio-Coles, creative strategist, cultural producer, changemaker and legacy-maker, Coles works with physical spaces and online platforms to build their cultural 'legacies', which primarily serve creative communities through events, partnerships, mentoring and coaching.

Legacy

is passed from one generation to the next and usually it's based on wealth. But I argue for a new legacy not based on cash savings, buried loft antiques or land ownership, but on culture – shaped, designed and cultivated by a community of value-driven creative entrepreneurs.

Digital labels not clothes labels

"The current [community] cycle is based on the value trilogy: prcommunity, profit and environment. Current structures embrace these values, with many being driven by the rise of the freelance workforce. Then we saw the emergence of co-working spaces, such as the pioneering We Work, which received major investment for growth. Unlike a standard shared working space, We Work and the like were about fostering a sense of community by curating a space anything from who takes up a desk, what coffee they drink and in what kind of cup through to enabling socialising among co-workers." Lida Hujic, author of The First to Know.

Each decade has come with its own cultural and sub-cultural reference points. We see this play out in the way people dress, adorn themselves, the brands to which they align themselves and, more recently, the memberships they belong to – from the punk hairstyles of the 1970s through to the sports chic of the 1990s and

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Lida Hujic

the rise of private member spaces in the early noughties.

Each era shared an external aesthetic deeply entrenched in associations that aimed to declare the internal political, social and cultural leanings of whomever 'wore' it. You found your tribe in the main by eye. Selection, taste, curation. Right place, right shirt, no tie.

However, finding your tribe, squad or community is no longer about external commonalities, but instead a shared value system, spiritual leaning or common goal. Therefore, the future of creative communities will be about

digital labels and not clothes labels. The apps on your phone, the slack groups you comment on, the Patreon accounts you financially back, the businesses you share on your social media platforms, and the businesses you invest in on Crowdcube are now the key to showcasing to the world your alignment, principles and value system. Your digital label is who you are, a legacy that will live on far beyond your physical self. Your digital legacy will no doubt outlive your favourite jacket.

True influence as a community leader, whether this position is held by an individual 'influencer' or brand, will come from navigating the challenging task of understanding what can feel like nuanced changes in social commentary, and upholding strong and consistent codes of conduct, while also being a brand that people feel proud to share and support openly (in short, it still needs to look great). This won't mean fewer private members clubs per se, but certainly more public community hubs and digital clubs shaped by their cohorts, which will be an ever-evolving organism. "It's all about a community of members who share a mindset – formed around the value trilogy of

profit, community and environment" explains Hujic.

Rules for a new community

A successful community will drive output not status. Creative communities with a framework for action over passive brand alignment will be ones that move through the new normal of our current time and into a world of newly populated creative ecosystems. No longer will a well-established event program, meet-up (virtual or otherwise), or a cozy, well-designed physical space be enough. New community upholders will expect to take their shared concepts into action and with velocity in a way that's fully hybridised, online, and in real life with their peers. The legacy community members want to leave is one of a 'supporter' not 'follower.' 'Leadership' is as a group.

With this in mind, I have devised some rules for future creative communities:

Rules for future creative communities

1

Develop a strong community strategy with action at its core, which is truly collaborative and not transactional

Creatives will want to meet and be heard under common goals and shared aspirations for change. Millennials and Gen X are output-driven content creators who expect to see their ideas realised in the world, and quickly.

2

Respect the power of the craft

Creativity will be championed as a vehicle for social, political and economic change. This includes changing oppressive systems, discarding outdated models of representation, and promoting economic transparency. This group is not looking for an 'exchange' in services or products (either transactional or simply for PR). They are looking for value, collaboration, autonomy and results they can see out in the world.

3

Recognise the value in each and every individual in your community and respect their value above all else

It is about respect and hearing your whole community across intersectional lines. Listening, patience and empathy will be the next big trends. Jasmine Douglas, founder of Babes on Waves, a business club for diverse female founders, explains; "My decisions in my business and everything I do comes from having that service mindset, which is always asking 'how can I design a great service or experience that will help my customers and the people around me?' If you lead with this, everything else tends to fall into place. It's when I feel most fulfilled in my own life too".

4

Have global reach, but always hero supporting local

Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic have made the worlds of many individuals feel physically smaller. Many are bound by the distance we can walk, run or bike to. Though this does create a heightened sense of pride in one's community, it also creates more barriers to understanding culture, heritage, new stories and changing environments. Using digital technology will be key to keeping a sense of global exploration, idea sharing and empathy. "It's all about finding people who really see you and connect with you on an emotional and spiritual level. This goes deeper than what the label on your clothes says about the way you live your life, what you give attention to and the content you consume" says Douglas.

"Instead of accepting the cliché of a starving artist, we are giving creators the tools to earn a sustainable living and to spark a second renaissance of culture."

Gee Linford-Grayson

Anti-scale and all for 'smelling the flowers'

Currently, over 80% of creative businesses in the UK consider themselves lifestyle businesses. They are set up and run by their founders primarily with the aim of sustaining a particular level of income and no more. They are anti-scale and all for [enjoy the beauty of life and] smelling the flowers. Organic growth, slow-working and patience are all required to tune out the noise and the pressure that comes with the external validation of a six-figure salary, promises of business equity or raising VC funding in record time.

This group are concerned with the quality – not the quantity – of the output left by them on this planet. And by that we mean the quality of their work, but also the quality and depth of their relationships with others and with themselves. Self-awareness will overtake self-promotion in its importance.

Creatives have always been exceptionally entrepreneurial, and entrepreneurs are highly skilled creative thinkers. The pressures of multiple recessions, lockdowns, protests, and pandemics will mean that creatives on every level will be reassessing value not only from their internal value systems, as we see in communities, but also from an economic perspective.

We live in a world powered by content creators. It's in the name: 'creator' it will sit in every job description, across multiple verticals and in every type of business. 'Creative' will finally establish itself not as a dreamy, ethereal, God-given talent, but as a highly regarded, refinable and exciting skill.

Being an 'ideas person' will no longer hold. Being a Plant, as teamwork specialist Dr Meredith Belbin¹⁸ labels it (someone who is imaginative, free-thinking, generates ideas and solves difficult problems, but lacks tact, communication, team spirit and self-awareness) in a corporate system will mean very little. Translating ideas

and concepts into reality through thoughtful collaboration will be most prized.

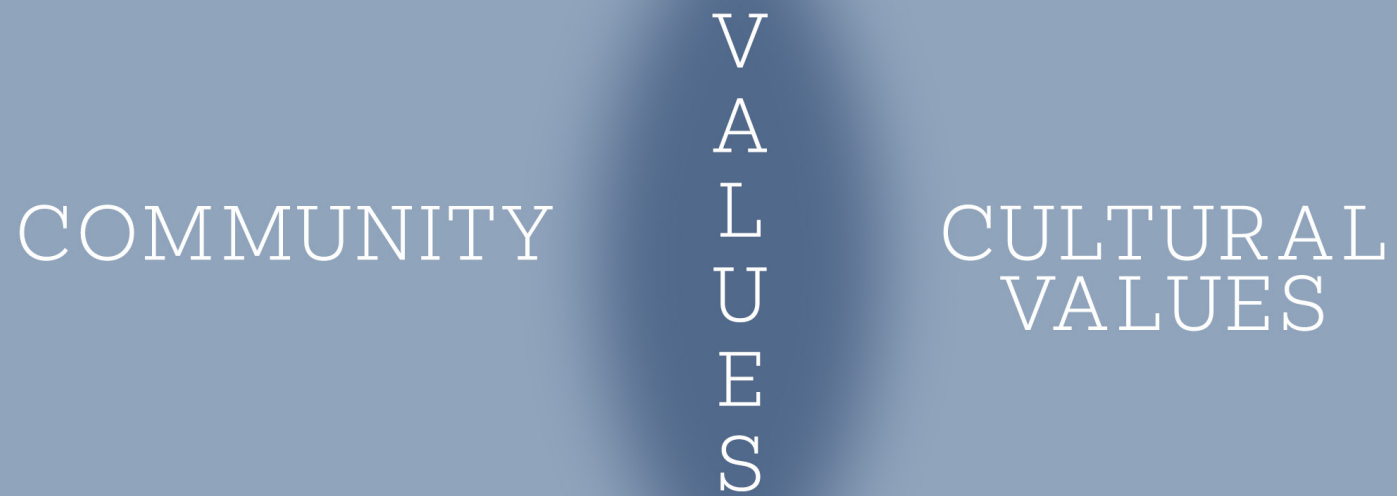
The marriage of creativity and business will finally be seen not only in the creative community, but in society at large. Alongside this celebration of creativity, we will also see 'change agency' and 'agility' as highly covetable skills in every kind of workforce.

We have already seen a huge amount of entrepreneurial and supportive spirit in the creative community with the rise of mutual aid – a form of participation in which people not only share responsibility for caring for one another through symbolic acts, but also change the conditions of their everyday lives by building new social relations. For example, the highly successful Artists Support Pledge launched in 2020 in response to the pandemic, and, of course, the meteoric rise of creator platform Patreon. Gee Linford-Grayson, UK & Ireland Creator Partnerships at Patreon shares: "instead of accepting the cliché of a starving artist, Patreon is giving

creators the tools to earn a sustainable living and to spark a second renaissance of culture. Patreon is full of creators connecting with their audiences in rewarding and innovative ways – from live-streamed hangouts, 1-1 mentorship or community forums using our Discord integration".

Platforms like Creative Entrepreneurs, a first-of-its-kind online membership that helps creatives 'build brilliantly successful businesses', pivoted in the winter of 2020 to support every generation of creative to bridge the gap between creativity and commerce. Thus, anyone can build their own brilliantly successful business circumnavigating the usual routes into an industry that have been typically challenging for marginalised communities and diverse groups.

Taking into consideration all the elements that I have shared in this article, I am proposing a new system that I am calling the Cultural Legacy Venn diagram. It's all about community and cultural output, with our values at the heart and centre.



The Cultural Legacy Venn Diagram

Q&A

The Fabricant

Amsterdam-based digital fashion house The Fabricant, founded in 2018 by Amber Jae Slooten and Kerry Murphy, are a company of creative technologists that envision a future where fashion transcends the physical body, and our digital identities permeate daily life to become the new reality. They create digital-only fashion that can be used and traded in virtual realities. Pushing boundaries of how we wear and value fashion, in May 2019, they sold the world's first digital Digi-Couture dress entitled 'Iridescence' for \$9500. A first-of-its-kind blockchain transaction, the unique garment is a traceable, tradeable and collectible piece of digital art.

Q1

If you openly share designs for free, how do you make money? Do you have other revenue streams that are not design-based?

Through our work, we demonstrate that digital fashion is an entirely valid business sector, and we are committed to demonstrating, through our own work and projects with the brands that we collaborate with, that entirely new revenue streams are possible without physical fashion items being created.

These ideas didn't exist when we were founded in 2018, so we've had to create the language to talk about what we do. Our communications discuss a philosophy around digital fashion that co-exists with physical

fashion but eradicates many of its toxic practices – when there are no physical garments being created, obviously fashion becomes much more sustainable.

We are glad to experience a strongly positive response from several key industry leaders, who collaborate with us in championing this movement. Our position has, of course, become clearer with the digital acceleration due to global lockdowns and the necessary reduction of physical interactions.

From a revenue model point of view, we work as a digital fashion house creating entirely non-physical fashion, and as a digital fashion creative agency, co-operating with brands by providing the following services:

- 3D sampling and look books, presenting collections to sales teams and buyers

- 3D digital fashion shows and show-rooms, where collections can be shown interactively in hyper-real 3D
- Digital narratives and campaigns to be used on digital channels
- Phygital experiences – interactive experiences across sales touchpoints
- Digital-only garments, representing a new revenue model

Q2

Creating digital rather than physical products lends itself to having less of an environmental impact. However, we know that digital uses energy (for example, the impact of running Cloud services is tremendous). How do you think we can look to under

stand the full environmental impact of digital fashion?

The Fabricant has always placed itself at the forefront of the sustainability conversation, and our goal is to minimise fashion's environmental impact as much as possible. With this in mind, we wanted to add empirical evidence to support our beliefs, so we commissioned a sustainability report from Imperial College London to look into the issue from a scientific standpoint. The report's findings show that digital fashion creation generates less than 10% of the carbon emissions (0,7g of CO2) compared to physical fashion's production processes (8g of CO2). Digital fashion will never end up in landfills, will never generate plastic waste, and will never contribute to water pollution.

The concept of digital fashion is sustainable by its very nature.

"We are returning to the heart of what fashion was always meant to be – a playful arena to explore and express our identities and individuality."

The Fabricant

At The Fabricant, we are mindful of and transparent about the tools we use. While electricity consumption will play a role in assessing the long-term environmental impacts of the digital format, when clothing is always digital, never physical, pollution and waste reduction are non-topics.

Given the scale of the pollution that the physical fashion industry currently contributes to, pioneering and enabling a digital-only fashion sector will undoubtedly have an lasting, positive effect on the environment as a whole. Creativity and self-expression don't come at a cost that becomes difficult to justify.

Q3

You said: "Forget business as usual; we want business

unusual." Can you expand on what this means?

Digital fashion challenges the norms of the fashion industry. From our perspective, the very idea of physicality, sizing, trends and seasonality is not relevant. Digital fashion enables anyone to embrace and explore their identity fully – in all forms, shapes and colours. It does not dictate trends, but seeks to co-create with users, continuously being informed and updated by the collective intelligence.

At The Fabricant, we see ourselves as explorers or 'fashionauts'. We want to create and discover a new way to experience fashion, focusing on self-expression, creativity and innovation, which do not require a physical expression. 'Business unusual' isn't a desire to be unconventional, but a dedication to provoking the industry to

question the behaviours that it clings to so tightly.

Q4

Are there any concepts, methods or ways of working that you would say have made your business 'successful'? Are these unique to you or do you feel they can help others to create great brands?

Our measure of success is both influenced and determined by our company values of collaboration, innovation, creativity and sustainability. Through our work, The Fabricant is returning to the heart of what fashion was always meant to be – a playful arena to explore and express our identities and individuality.

The fashion future we are building

is collaborative, creative diverse and inclusive. In digital fashion, people are not passive consumers, but creative agents crafting their self-expression and curating their virtual identity through digital clothing. It's been exciting for us to work and co-create with leading brands like Tommy Hilfiger, Puma, Vogue Singapore, Rag & Bone, Peak Performance, I.T Hong Kong and Napapijri, and our continued success lies in our ability to step into a new fashion space with an open goal for the imagination.

Digital fashion is a vast and untapped creative terrain and, as leaders in our field paving the way towards a future of digital-only clothing, we believe in engaging with brands in a collaborative and open way. For us, it's always about ideas, and the collision of fashion and technology. When you step into the virtual world, where the rules of the physical world don't apply, the creative possibilities are endless.

We invite you to....

Imagine a world where
we shift our focus away from
individual achievements
to supporting collective joy.

Imagine a world where
we move from depletion
to restoration.

Imagine a world where
we turn away from
markers of success
to centring our actions around
human and planetary wellbeing.

Imagine a world where
we leave behind valuing wealth
to building a legacy of creative culture.

Imagine a world where
we channel our energy away from
visionary thinking
to behaving in a visionary way.

Acknowledgements

Amy Foster-Taylor

Amy Trinh

Andrea Brocca

Anna Sofat

Arts Council England

Chloe Isidora

Colomba Leddi

Evan Phillips

Gee Linford-Grayson

Holition

Jacob Winter

Jade Coles

Jasmine Douglas

Jessica Carroll

Karen Ruimy

Lida Hujic

Lottie Leefe

Mehjabeen Patrick

Natasha Fernandes Anjo

Pia Stanchina

Sally Farr

Sara Maino

Sophie Wilson

Sydney Pimbley

The Fabricant

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We are aware this report offers an incomplete vision. Our reflection is based on our own horizons. If you have different experiences, ideas or learnings to share we'd love to hear from you. Send us an email via hello@otherday.co.uk

