RETAIL

Selfridges' yellow shopping totes to incorporate recycled paper cup fibers

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Selfridges' iconic yellow shopping tote. Image credit: Selfridges

By STAFF REPORTS

British department store chain Selfridges is prolonging the life of its paper coffee cups through a newly launched upcycle program.

Selfridges will now recycle used coffee cups from its in-store dining options, as well its internal offices, and repurpose the paper goods into its iconic yellow shopping totes. The British retailer launched the upcycle program after scientific research found that paper cups could not be properly recycled, resulting in 2.5 billion paper cups used annually in the United Kingdom.

Paper product pick-up
To turn coffee cups into Selfridges' yellow shopping totes, the retailer will use a "tipped, flipped and stacked" process that removes any remaining liquids. The process also separates the cup from its lid and hot sleeve.

After being checked for quality, the paper cup material will be delivered to a paper manufacturer to create Selfridges' shopping totes.

Per the U.K.'s Retail Gazette, the final bag will contain 20 percent cup fibers, or an 8-ounce paper cup per one large shopping tote. The manufacturer will use PEFC-certified paper for the remainder of the bag.

Selfridges' Oxford Street flagship in London. Image credit: Selfridges

Selfridges upcycled bags will be recyclable in the the standard paper waste stream.

The paper cup to shopping bag upcycle program is part of Selfridges' award-winning "Buying Better, Inspiring Change" corporate social responsibility campaign (see story).

In addition to repurposing paper products, Selfridges has also removed all single-use water bottles at its locations' Food Halls and restaurants through its Project Ocean initiative (see story).