

MARKETING

How are influencers addressing the fashion apparel crisis?

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Sustainability has become one of the most searched for terms in fashion in the last year, with an average of 27,000 searches specifically for "sustainable fashion" each month in 2019.

Given this statistic, influencers could become the shining light on the industry, instilling sustainable style into the minds of consumers.

Social media does incite a constant pressure to keep on top of trends, but we are beginning to notice more influencers are leading the way on re-wearing clothes we may feel are old-fashioned or out.

We all know influencers have the power to change the mindsets and buying habits of consumers.

Infamously, Kylie Jenner is known for reducing Snapchat's worth by \$1.3 billion in 2018 after she tweeted about its redesign.

But influencers could be the key to greening our globe and positively challenging fashion.

Ethical influencers are on the rise and it is exciting to see their movement to backing brands that understand their impact and want to educate consumers on how to reduce the ecological effects of their clothing.

Here are how some influencers are beginning to change consumers' approach to throw out fashion and are setting more environmentally friendly fashion trends.

Lending, swapping and borrowing

One of those leading the way is influencer [Naomi Smart](#), who has 1.2 million followers on Instagram. She recently posted an image of a wedding outfit with the caption "something old, nothing new, something borrowed, something renewed."

Wearing a dress from [Byrotation](#), a rent-and-lend Web site, and being "lent" rather than gifted a velvet statement hat from designers at Jane Taylor London, she demonstrated a new kind of partnership with brands.

And it is a method that is proving a hit with consumers, who are driving growth in the rental fashion niche that is projected to hit \$1.9 billion by the end of 2023.

YouTube star Ms. Smart has also hosted a "Smart Swap" clothes swapping party in partnership with Clothes Aid.

Its actions such as this that lay down a marker for other ethical fashion influencers.

Ms. Smart is a pioneer of using her influencer status to bring sustainability initiatives to the fore. She is socially and environmentally conscious and her audience really connects with what she is doing.

"Make do and mend" mentality

Many of us have had that favorite pair of jeans or boots that we loved so much but ultimately ended up in the bin because we wore them out.

This new breed of influencer is encouraging us to adapt and mend fashion items that are special to us. It is about finding something new to love in an old garment. It makes economic sense, for one thing, and it helps us identify the things we really value and refine our style accordingly.

Micro-blogger [Worn Values](#) is also on board with this vibe, sharing her sustainability vision via her blog and social channels, by mending garments rather than creating her own clothing line.

Online repairs services such as [Clothes Doctor](#) not only restore clothes but also offer a hand-customization service so that consumers can transform their old items with a fresh style.

Influencer Rosanna Falconer recently worked with them to transform two vintage dresses posting the results to more than 30,000 followers and giving the business a real boost.

"Thrift-fluencers" and vintage inspiration

The success of the hashtag #thriftd speaks for itself being tagged on Instagram outfit posts more than 1.8 million times.

Foraging for unique fashion finds on charity shop rails is fun for the thrifty and great for the back pocket. It is a good way to mix up new items with old and, if you get lucky, you might pick up a designer bag or jacket for a snip.

Showcasing her thrifty finds to her 23,000+ followers is [The Metal Romantic](#), an Instagrammer who specializes in styling vintage items. Using her sizeable audience as a retail opportunity, she promotes her discoveries on her social platform and sells them through a hand-curated Etsy store linked in her bio.

Influencers offer solutions

Sustainability in fashion is not without its issues. It can be difficult to know where to look for sustainable materials, for example, and they can often carry a premium price tag.

Influencers can turn talk into action: With thousands of followers, they set trends and also offer knowledge, creative tips and style advice which is invaluable to followers looking for more than the high street serves up.

Sustainable fashion advocate [Emma Slade Edmonson](#) has created a series of bite-sized videos for her followers called "Come second-hand shopping with me" with a range of guests. Its popularity reflects an emerging demand for something a little different.

Re-sale and purchase Web sites

With the emergence of "pre-loved" clothing Web sites such as Rebelle, Depop and Vinted, more influencers are using Instagram and other apps to sell their unwanted back of the closet' items.

While they may be gifted big-brand fashions to promote, some such as Louise Cooney who has 190,000 followers on Instagram are building an audience on Depop as well.

With more than 5,500 followers, Ms. Cooney sells statement pieces and buys new ones to pair with other fashions.

And, as greater numbers of influencers become keen advocates of pre-loved fashion, more of their followers open up to a new way of thinking about clothes and how to bag unique items for less.

"Slow fashion" advocates

We all want to own a piece of clothing that no one else has and this need for individuality is recognized by

influencers, who are coming to love "slow fashions," such as made-to-order and customizable vintage items.

"Influencers are always finding new things to be excited about in fashion it is a labor of love to create a sustainable style and many influencers are proud to drive positive change. They cannot wait to show off their second-hand, vintage or organic finds.

Having worked with luxury fashion brands such as Tom Ford, Coach and Ted Baker, Robert Lockyer, CEO of [Delta Global](#), a packaging provider to the sector said: "It's great to see more influencers finally promoting change in the industry, in particular, luxury brands are going greener and want to endorse the importance of second-life style.

"It's not about swapping new fashion for old, it is about pairing the two and collaborating with other brands in order for high-quality fashion to become accessible to everyone and reduce our impact on the environment," he said.

INFLUENCERS HAVE an important role to play in making the industry more sustainable for the long-term. They can start valuable conversations about climate change and the individual impact of fashion consumption.

Brands should look to influencers to inform, educate and raise awareness about their products' sustainability, as well as selling new and old fashions to new audiences in the most exciting way.

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