

RETAIL

Walpole CEO Helen Brocklebank on why she will buy less, but buy better

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Helen Brocklebank is CEO of British luxury trade organization Walpole

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

Soon after the launch last month of Walpole's [British Luxury Sustainability Manifesto](#) earlier this year with 47 brands signing up, the trade lobby's CEO, Helen Brocklebank, has declared she will buy less, but buy better this spring.

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Talking the talk and walking the walk is what Ms. Brocklebank aims to do. She also wants consumers to adopt small, positive changes that will contribute towards safeguarding the future of the planet.

Here, in Ms. Brocklebank's words to [Walpole](#) members, are why she is embarking on this journey, aptly timed with the start of Lent:

The Sustainable Spring: 40 days of positive change

Walpole is launching 40 days of positive change: we'd like everyone in the Walpole community to commit to six weeks of being more mindful when it comes to sustainable behavior and, as individuals, adopt some small positive changes that will contribute towards safeguarding the future of the planet.

Earlier this year, Walpole launched the British luxury sustainability manifesto, a long-term project with the ambition of making the U.K. the global benchmark for luxury sustainability.

The Sustainability Manifesto is all about British luxury brands working towards 12 important aspirations for example, working towards 100 percent of plastic packaging to be reusable or widely recyclable, or a 50 percent absolute reduction in scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions and Walpole members have embraced the project with both enthusiasm and passion, and there are already 47 signatories to the manifesto.

Together as businesses I believe we can achieve great things, and there is also a key role for legislation and a strong regulatory framework interesting to see what role COP26 will play in accelerating the pace of change in the U.K. but there is also a clear obligation and opportunity for each of us as citizens to play our part in reducing our impact on the environment.

It's this thought that has inspired Walpole's Sustainable Spring: We believe the actions of five thousand or so like-

mindful and empowered individuals within the Walpole membership can make an extraordinary difference and I'm really excited to give it a try between now and Easter Sunday.

I'm not suggesting we should embark on a luxury version of Climate Strike, or that we meet in Whitehall for a spot of Extinction Rebellion-inspired performance art (though now I've written it down, I'm quite tempted), what Walpole is asking for is six weeks of mindful consumption it might be committing to using your reusable cup or water container (we all now have one) rather than inadvertently leaving it at home.

It might be dissuading your dry cleaner from shrouding your clothes in yards of plastic (if I promise to pick them up on the day they're ready, mine will comply he also takes back all the wire coat hangers).

Or it might be getting into the habit of washing your gym kit at 30 degrees inside a marine-friendly bag (washing machines are one of the worst contributors to micro-plastics in the water system).

There are many small nudges and changes that together combine into something more significant think of how disconcerting it is now to see a plastic straw being offered in a pub or restaurant.

Why 40 days?

Aside from co-opting Lent into a kind of secular climate fast, most of the research seems to agree that six weeks is the right amount of time to embed a new habit so the small initiatives and nudges you adopt between now and Easter Sunday could have a lasting (and meaningful) impact, and it also allows for some experimentation and a bit of trial and error whilst the 100-mile diet seems like a great idea on paper, only eating food grown within a 100 miles of Mayfair may prove impractical.

Rather than try as many different planet-saving things as you can for the next 40 days, I recommend really committing to one or two things, trialing a few others to see if they have habit forming potential and taking an overall approach of mindful consumption.

I'm going to try to kick my habit of sidling into Zara for a little fast-fashion pick-me-up: instead I've been going through my wardrobe and rediscovering some old favorites (including a dress I bought thirty years ago), and I'm investing more in fewer, better things that I hope I will still be wearing in 30 years time.

I'm also reducing my carbon footprint by embracing a vegetarian diet (I love meat and hate vegetables so wish me luck).

Easier to adopt so easy I'm not even sure I could make it qualify for #40days is using the water bottle I bought from Fortnum & Mason it wasn't nearly as expensive as the main brand in the reusable water bottle category and it's about a trillion times more chic.



The fate of the Earth is in consumer hands

Between now and Easter, Walpole will be posting our suggestions for Walpole's #40days on [Instagram Stories](#) and if you'd like to share what you're doing to support #40days please WhatsApp a picture or a short phone video to Jenni Rayner on 07818523705, and we will feature it on our Instagram stories to inspire other members.

#40days of Walpole's Sustainable Spring isn't part of the Walpole Sustainability Manifesto, but I do hope it will inspire everyone to think carefully about the choices we all make, and by doing so, put ourselves in our customer's shoes.

And if you need an opt-out day along the way, there is precedent; the early Church nominated the fourth Sunday of Lent as *Laetare Sunday* (refreshment Sunday) a day of relief from the rigors of Lent. But my bet is that you'll be so fired by enthusiasm for #40days, you won't even need it.

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