

RETAIL

Walpole looks beyond pandemic to launch sustainability working groups

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By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

Walpole, the sector body for British luxury, has launched its Sustainability Working Groups as online forums to discuss eco-conscious behavior that consumers are increasingly expecting from brands.



The move comes eight months after the London-based organization introduced its British Sustainability Manifesto. More than 50 luxury brands have signed up to follow sustainable practices across their entire organization, notwithstanding the pressures from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

"During the pandemic, sustainability has taken on a new imperative as Walpole members commit to a future vision of building back better," Walpole said in a statement.

"With the spotlight on how globally integrated the business of luxury is, from supply-chain to customer, protecting people and planet has become more important than ever."

Better together

The online forums will bring together small groups of members sourced from current signatories of the manifesto. These members represent each of Walpole's sector categories to network and share best practice around its four pillars of sustainability.

Upon launch, Walpole's sustainability manifesto six brands signed up Harrods, Burberry, dunhill, Johnstons of Elgin, Mulberry and The Savoy that signed the pledge to follow sustainable practices in their companies.

Soon, a roll call of a Who's Who of British luxury followed: Aiveen Daly, Asprey, Boodles, Cadogan Estate, Carrier, Chapel Down, Chivas Brothers, Church's, Cookson Adventures, De Le Cuona, Dugdale Bros & Co, Elegantes, Freight Brokers, Fortnum & Mason, Halfpenny London, Henry Poole, House of Hackney, IDP Packaging and James Cropper.

The list also includes Jing Tea, Lisa Redman, Lock & Co., Miller Harris, Oliver Burns, Ormonde Jayne, Pureprint, Rachel Vosper, Rapport London, Stephen Einhorn, Turnbull & Asser, Trunk Clothiers, Vivien Sheriff, Votary and Winch Design.

"If British luxury is to achieve its target of 65 billion in sales over the next five years, sustainability has to be at the heart of every brand's strategy," said Helen Brocklebank, CEO of Walpole, in a statement in January.

"For millennials and Gen Z, who will account for half of all luxury sales by 2025, true luxury only comes with a clean conscience," she said.

Green back

Walpole has 270 members comprising the great and good of British luxury manufacturing, retailing and services.

The move to sustainability is to move in lockstep with consumer desires to transact with conscientious brands that respect the environment and workers.

Four principles will guide Walpole's sustainability manifesto:

1. Lead the transition towards a circular economy
2. Safeguard the environment and natural resources
3. Guide partners and suppliers towards sustainable practices
4. Advocate equal and respectful working conditions

In addition to pressure from consumers, marketers also face regulatory and political directives to comply with green initiatives. Add to that expectations from the workforce.

A Swytch survey last year on employee sentiment found that about 70 percent of employees would prefer to work for a company with a green footprint.

WALPOLE CITED a similar sentiment in its 2020 Walpole-McKinsey Sustainability in Luxury Survey as well as focus groups conducted within Walpole membership.

In those surveys, an estimated 90 percent of brands identified sustainability as a top-five priority for their business largely driven by the increased focus on social responsibility and changing consumer expectations and purchasing behavior, per Walpole.

[Please click here to down Walpole's 2020 British Luxury Sustainability Manifesto](#)

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