

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainable style means circular, diverse fashion

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Sustainability is not just about using less plastic, but rather, is about completely reshaping consumption through a clear environmental and social lens. Image credit: Farfetch

By NORA HOWE

NEW YORK Accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, sustainability awareness has reached new heights, especially among fashion consumers whose values are pushing brands and retailers to make tangible changes.

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One of the largest environmental stressors, the fashion industry is responsible for **5 to 8 percent** of climate emissions each year. During a session at *Luxury Daily's* digital Luxury FirstLook 2022 conference on Jan. 13, sustainable fashion executives shared insights on the various pillars of social and environmental responsibility, such as serving all consumers and enabling circularity.

"The conversation around sustainability and the understanding of what sustainability means has accelerated significantly," said Diana Verde Nieto, cofounder and CEO of **Positive Luxury**. "What has become increasingly clear, though, is that companies must act.

"COVID-19 forced people to recognize our physical and emotional dependency on the natural world and how much we need the natural world to not only thrive but survive."

This session was moderated by Mickey Alam Khan, editor in chief of *Luxury Daily*.

Defining true sustainability

Sustainability is not simply about using recycled paper in packaging or forgoing plastic straws it's far more complex and systematic.

"From the start, [our] vision has been to better connect supply and demand throughout the world," said Thomas Berry, global director of sustainable business at **Farfetch**. "At the core, we aim to make the market more efficient by enabling our consumers to choose cleaner products."



Younger consumers are increasingly looking into brands' supply chains and sustainability credentials. Image credit: Positive Luxury

In last year's annual ESG report, Farfetch stated it is focused on driving environmental impact reduction, in its own operations and wider value chain, specifically targeting carbon as its biggest area of direct and indirect impact.

By 2030, the online retailer plans to be climate positive, achieving carbon neutrality ([see story](#)).

Consumer values for environmental and social consciousness have completely infiltrated their purchasing behavior, and they are looking to companies who provide the necessary product information and enable them to make the right choices.

While many pair "sustainability" with "environmental," a major aspect of sustainability is social responsibility, or diversity and inclusion.

For instance, in October 2021, Farfetch and multimedia brand Nataal launched the second iteration of their year-long partnership championing Black creativity in fashion. Nataal is a global media company celebrating contemporary African fashion, music, beauty, arts and society ([see story](#)).

"Diversity and inclusion, the importance of enabling an industry which genuinely serves everyone in fashion and represents everyone in fashion, is absolutely key," Farfetch's Mr. Berry said. "We have this massive range of brands and reach an enormous audience globally, so we all have a responsibility and opportunity to help deliver that kind of leadership in inclusivity."

Circular fashion

Historically, the fashion industry has notoriously added fuel to the fire that is climate change due to overproduction. Now, with circular business models, consumers and industry professionals are aiming to mitigate waste and contribute to a healthier society.



The Farfetch, Restory partnership aims to extend the fashion lifecycle. Image credit: Farfetch

In February 2021, Farfetch partnered with aftercare platform The Restory in an effort to sustainably extend the lifecycle of luxury goods through a program entitled "Farfetch Fix."

The initiative provides Farfetch customers with services from The Restory, which has cultivated a wide range of techniques offering aftercare and repair services to shoes, bags and leather goods ([see story](#)).

"Much of the value in the circularity space is driven by resale, repair and rental models, which have an inherent value for businesses while reducing waste in the industry," Farfetch's Mr. Berry said. "If you orientate more of your

business around service and existing products, you are making money.

"You're growing your business without growing the kind of resource intensity of your business."

In addition to its partnership with The Restory, Farfetch also partnered with resale platform ThredUp in launching donation services in the U.K. and U.S. ([see story](#)).

"Thinking ahead to 2030, 45-55 percent of all revenues for businesses will likely come from this circular model," Positive Luxury's Ms. Verde Nieto said. "Whether it's peer-to-peer or within a brand, resale is massive.

"Even the big conglomerates like Kering have invested in these types of business models, so it presents a huge opportunity for retail."

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