

RESEARCH

Vestiaire Collective makes business case for circular fashion

April 23, 2024



The company is rolling out a new campaign on social media channels to celebrate the report. Image courtesy of Vestiaire Collective

By EMILY IRIS DEGN

French luxury fashion resale platform Vestiaire Collective's third Circularity Report reveals the value of its merchandise and the secondhand category at large.

According to the findings in the release, titled "[Exposing the True Cost of Fast Fashion](#)," the average preloved item is worn 76 percent more than the average mass-produced, cheaply-made piece. A cost-per-wear measurement determines that preowned curated styles are a better investment, the company arguing that perhaps sustainable luxury is more affordable than fast fashion after all.

"In today's climate of inflation, it is obvious: neither people nor the planet can afford fast fashion," said Fanny Moizant, president and cofounder of [Vestiaire Collective](#), in a statement.

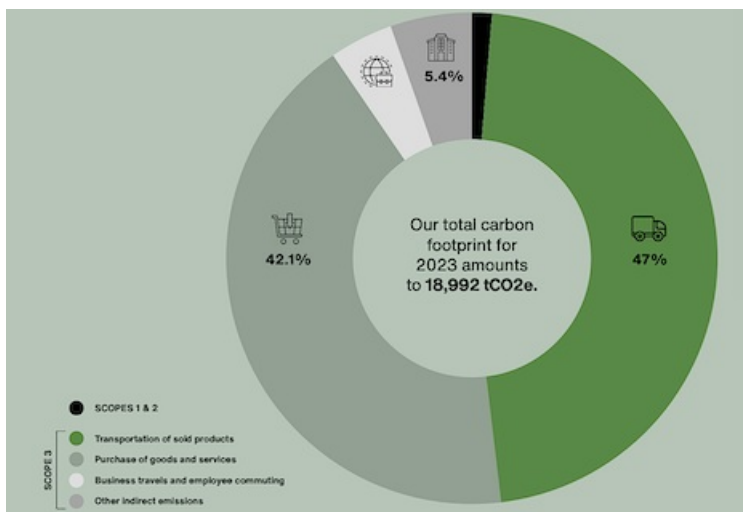
"We want to educate consumers about the benefits of circularity while sounding the alarm on fast fashion's devastating impact," Ms. Moizant said. "This report is a wake-up call to combat overconsumption and overspending, fueled by tempting low initial prices."

Vestiaire Collective draws on its March 2024 study, and responses from 13,400 participants and 28 qualitative interviews conducted in key global markets. 250,000 transactions on the platform over the last year were also analyzed. The report was done in collaboration with automated environmental impact assessor Vaayu, which offers calculation software that enables retailers to track and cut their carbon footprints in real time.

Closet case

By publishing the Circularity Report, Vestiaire Collective is looking to encourage financial and sustainable investments.

For the cost-per-wear metric, the resale value is subtracted from the initial price, and that total is divided by the number of wears. The total amount of times worn indicated in the surveys was cross-verified and scaled based on literature values.



The company's footprint is also detailed in the report, which states that in 2023, its greenhouse gas emissions decreased by 6 percent. Image courtesy of Vestiaire Collective

An external panel was used and participants were asked about the price of new versus second-hand fashion.

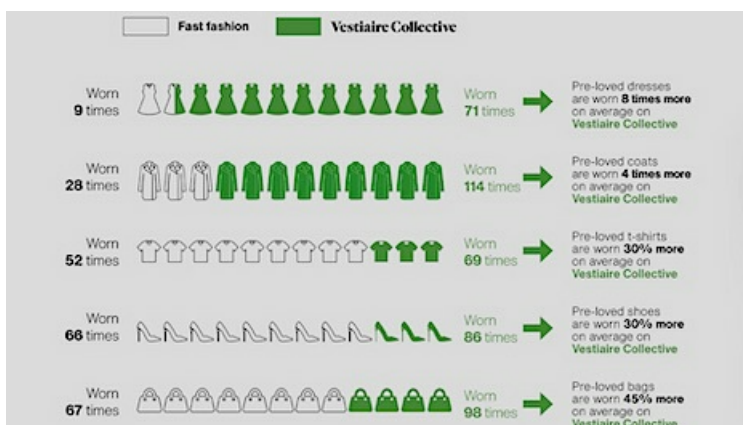
According to the findings, fast fashion lacks affordability despite widely held perceptions. While the upfront cost of the item will be low, consumers tend to wear them less and buy them more often since they do not hold up for as long as higher-end pieces do.

With this in mind, the report asserts that in the long run, preloved curated clothing and accessories are a sounder pick, economically speaking.

When compared to fast fashion at comparable price ranges, all categories of preloved curated clothing and accessories had a 33 percent lower cost-per-wear. They are also worn two times more on average.

Owners of secondhand hold onto their products 31 percent longer than average. Preused shoes are kept for 48 percent more time.

Used curated coats are worn four times more than new ones. This makes their cost-per-wear \$1.72, versus fast fashion jackets' \$4.82.



Overall, secondhand items are worn more often and have longer lifespans. Image courtesy of Vestiaire Collective

Preloved curated dresses are donned eight times as much as fast fashion versions. The cost-per-wear of the former is \$1.56, while the latter is \$5.66.

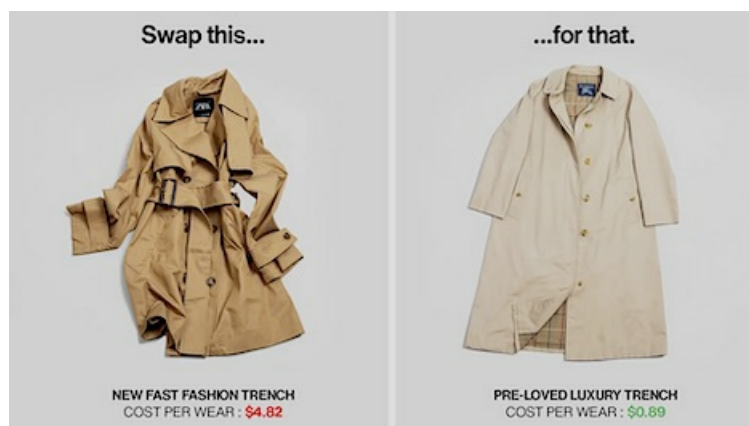
Foreowned designer bags boast a 72 percent lower cost-per-wear. Thanks to their resale value, their total for every use is \$2.56 versus \$9.05 if they are new.

"Fast fashion is a false economy," said Dounia Wone, chief impact officer at Vestiaire Collective, in a statement.

"Buying cheap fast fashion is deceptive, as in the end, you end up replacing items again and again," Ms. Wone said. "We champion circularity as it not only benefits consumers' wallets, but also protects our planet."

Boosting the segment

Sixty percent of fast fashion ends up in a landfill within 12 months after purchase, and 92 million tons of textiles are thrown away every year.



Though fast fashion has a lower upfront cost, in the long run, it is pricier. Image courtesy of Vestiaire Collective

Many consumers are looking for alternatives. The preloved market has become a giant player in the luxury industry, with prestige labels either launching their own circularity programs or joining secondhand retailers to get a piece of the pie.

Ecommerce giant Amazon recently dug deeper into the space ([see story](#)). Meanwhile, online retail platform eBay is bulking up its authentication services ([see story](#)).

On Vestiaire Collective, 12,000 brands are listed. The 5 million authenticated selects on the platform meet the company's anti-fast fashion standards.

The preowned luxury provider's customers are reported to keep their pieces 31 percent longer than other consumers, or 1.4 years more.

As Vestiaire Collective expands its global reach ([see story](#)), the business is finding new ways to reinvigorate interest in the growing industry. This month, its vintage segment was relaunched, accompanied by a playful marketing endeavor on social media ([see story](#)).

To celebrate this new report, a fresh effort is rolling out across digital channels.



Visuals are going up on Instagram today that show the fleeting nature of fast fashion. Image courtesy of Vestiaire Collective

The next edition of the Think First, Buy Second campaign is now live. Five months after the first reveal ([see story](#)), a series of testimonials, memes and videos debuted online for Earth Day yesterday, on April 22.

Challenging standing ideas about fast fashion's affordability, the cost-per-wear approach centers the imagery and narratives. Preloved luxury is framed as being kind to the planet and to wallets, which could appeal to both mindful spenders and the aspirational.

"Pre-loved luxury items are more cost-effective over time with a longer lifespan," said Ms. Wone, in a statement.

"Our mantra 'Think First, Buy Second' makes more sense than ever."

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