

COLUMNS

Trust and transparency: The new sustainability currency for luxury

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Just over halfway through 2025, we've crossed a threshold one that luxury businesses can no longer afford to ignore.

The value gap is widening, consumer trust is eroding, and traditional levers of desire price, prestige and provenance are being called into question. In this new landscape, trust and transparency have emerged as the new currency of sustainability.

Let me be clear: this isn't about box-ticking or compliance. It's about survival.

Reality check

Consumers, especially Gen Z, the much-heralded future of luxury, are no longer buying into the faade.

They're reading labels. They're scrolling TikTok, not for the polished campaigns, but for the unfiltered behind-the-scenes views.

They're researching brands in ways that would make any CEO squirm. A glossy campaign can no longer mask poor sourcing practices or murky supply chains.

Prepared responses ring hollow. And this year, more than ever, that scrutiny is proving to be the catalyst for a fundamental reset.

Nowhere is this more visible than in the rise of Digital Product Passports (DPPs) and resurgence of certifications.

While born out of regulatory compliance particularly the EU's Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation DPPs are being reinterpreted by forward-thinking luxury leaders as something far more valuable: an opportunity to reconnect with the core values of luxury.

Craftsmanship. Quality. Heritage. Culture. When executed well, DPPs are not just a QR code.

They're an investment advisor to luxury consumers a portal into the story of a product where it came from, who made it, how to care for it and how it might live on beyond its first life.

In doing so, they allow brands to reclaim the narrative and rebuild consumer confidence, separating smart investments from

dumb money.

Bain & Company recently called this out explicitly: digital transparency, when done right, unlocks not just compliance, but commercial value.

Extended product life. Deeper loyalty. Price premiums rooted in perceived and actual value.

In an era when price hikes have left even loyal customers questioning whether the goods live up to the hype, transparency becomes a value multiplier. But the shift goes deeper still.

Opacity costs

The sustainability conversation is no longer about alignment with consumer values it is becoming value.

And as the [Loro Piana controversy](#) painfully reminds us, transparency isn't optional. In a global supply chain where stories of exploitation can surface at the swipe of a screen, opacity is a liability.

Luxury brands must no longer assume they can operate behind a velvet curtain. That curtain has lifted.

Of course, the uncertainty around the EU Green Claims Directive has caused confusion. Brands are greenhushing for fear of saying the wrong thing.

But silence is not a strategy. In fact, now is precisely the time to double down on intelligent, evidence-based transparency.

Smart brands are getting ahead of the regulation, not waiting for it to land. They're working with third-party verifiers and respected standards to build a body of hard evidence that backs up not just green claims, but claims of quality and craft integral to luxury brands.

They're building systems that speak to both compliance and consumer curiosity. They're investing in new ways of working and technology that enables sustainable storytelling with substance.

At Positive Luxury, we see this shift happening across our Real Changemakers community from fashion and beauty to travel and fine jewelry. The best among them recognize that transparency is not a quick win it's a long game.

But it's a game worth playing. Because trust, once earned, builds resilience.

And resilience is what luxury needs now more than ever.

Integrity pays

In this climate economic, political, environmental brands that can't prove their positive impact will lose relevance, relationships and ultimately, revenue.

Those that can, stand to gain more than just goodwill. They'll earn justification for their premium price points.

They'll attract investors looking for long-term value creation and loathing risk. They'll inspire employees who want to work for businesses that mean something.

They'll generate positive chat and advocacy among savvy consumers. They'll build a future-proof foundation.

So here's the challenge for luxury: own your transparency. Make it beautiful.

Make it immersive. Make it worth the price tag. Because when storytelling meets integrity, luxury doesn't just survive it leads.

Trust is the new luxury, the hottest commodity in town. And transparency is how you earn it.