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BUF 4700 OL85: Contemporary Issues in the Fashion Industry

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FASHION THRIVE (ABSTRACT)

The fashion industry has been contaminating our precious environments and communities with their environmentally harmful practices for long enough now. The industry is mostly to blame for many of the environmental pollution that our world is facing and it needs change. Fashion Thrive is an e-commerce-based company that will create sustainable casual wear clothing for young women derived from biosynthetic fibers. Our company's main goal is to help reduce the carbon footprint that the fashion industry is creating by providing more eco-friendly alternatives to clothes. Our platform brings together casual chic styles from a variety of biosynthetic textiles. As a sustainable ready-to-wear fashion brand for young women, our main goal is to create sustainable, trendy and eco-friendly clothes. Our clothes have a fabric composition that derives from sustainable fibers such as orange fiber, *Mylo* leather, pineapple fiber, milk fabric, and microsilks. Our sustainable fabric selection offers an eco-friendly alternative that aims to avoid the contamination of oceans, lakes, and the air that we breathe. The variety of clothing materials that our company offers also aims to target a younger generation of women who are looking for a place to buy sustainable clothes. Our company makes sure that the manufacturing of our clothes takes place in safe working environments for all of our workers, and we work closely with farmers to ensure a livable wage.

SWOT ANALYSIS BRIEF CHART

S	The company's clothes are made of biosynthetic sustainable material.	1% of the sales gets donated to the non-profit organizations that help preserve and restore the environment.	The company works closely with factories around the world to help provide factory workers with fair wages.
W	Increase the interest of younger women into buying from Fashion Thrive.	Creating a competing price for all the garment styles in the company. A price that can make the company gain profit and provide consumers with a decent price.	The special maintenance of the clothes we make. Since the clothes are made from special material specific maintenance rules must be followed.
O	Younger generations are getting more involved in climate change action these days.	Environmentally conscious consumers are always constantly looking for eco-friendly clothes.	Younger generations are more educated about the effects of the climate in the world and the steps that need to be followed in order to decrease the pollution.
T	Younger generations also tend to buy from inexpensive fast fashion brands because they have a low income.	Fast fashion brands creating inexpensive and highly affordable clothes mainly targeting younger women.	

SWOT ANALYSIS INFORMATION (EXPANDED).

STRENGTHS

Fashion Thrive has as a company strength the composition of our clothes which derive from biosynthetic fibers. Our company will have several partnerships with sustainable companies that create the biosynthetic fibers so we can use it in our casual garments. We will work with companies such as Bolt Threads, Duellillate, Piñatex, and Orange Fiber which are the ones who create the textile fibers we use in our garments. From every sale our company will make we'll give away 1% of the profit to the restoration and preservation of the environment. The percentage of the sales gets donated to non-profit organizations whose main goal is to help preserve nature. The profits will go to organizations such as, the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), the Sierra Club Foundation, the National Park Conservation Association and the Center for Natural Lands Management (CNLM). Since our clothes will be manufactured in different countries around the world, it is our need to care for our fellow contributors. Our company will work closely with the factories that will manufacture our clothes to provide safe working conditions to our workers. Fashion Thrive will work with the Fair Trade Certified organization to help provide farmers and factory workers a living wage and safe working conditions.

WEAKNESSES

_____ Fashion Thrive has as a weakness the price of each garment. Since the textiles that are used in each garment are special and complex to create, more money needs to be added into the

garments. For example, the microsilks fiber used in some garments comes from the company, Bolt Threads and it has a complex scientific and technical process. Some garments might be considered overpriced, but the manufacturing of the textiles takes time, resources and money. The price of each garment is a challenge because we are targeting younger women who might not have as much money to buy sustainable clothing. For that same reason, the company will focus on young women with a full-time stable job that earns at least from 50-100 or more dollars per hour. The material of each garment requires the consumer to follow specific maintenance rules because of the composition of the garment. This might be considered tedious by some consumers since extra work needs to be put into giving maintenance to their clothes. Things such as handwashing, using different laundry detergents, letting the garment dry by itself, among others might be found irritating and tiresome for consumers, and might decide to buy from other companies.

OPPORTUNITIES

According to a survey held by Yale university “younger generations are more likely than older generations to view global warming as personally important and/or to express a willingness to engage in climate activism” (Bellew et al., 2019). Since younger generations are getting more involved in climate change action it means that they might be more aware about the daily choices they make, especially when buying. This gives the company an opportunity to introduce the platform that allows them to buy sustainable clothes at a reasonable price. Fashion designer Eileen Fisher said “Five years ago, customers only cared about if they like the product, now they are caring about the impact of their purchase”. (Cheng, 2018). Consumers are more aware of the

impact that buying non-sustainable clothes might have on the environment. This benefits the company because we can better target our audience about buying from our company.

THREATS

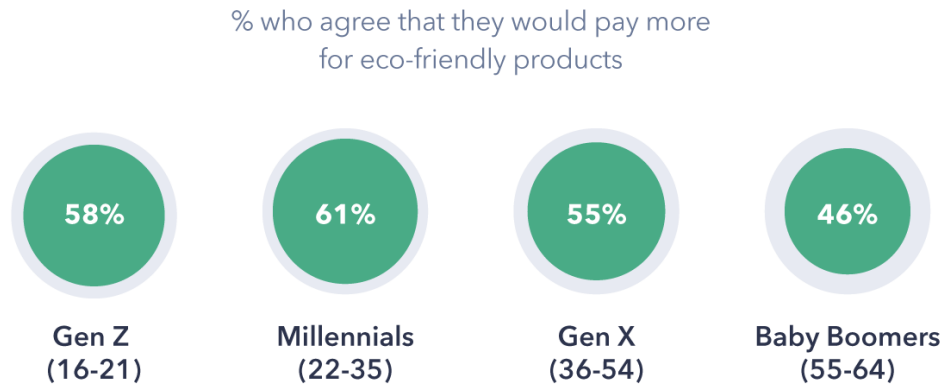
Younger generations buy inexpensive clothes from fast fashion because they might not have the income to buy sustainable clothes. Fast fashion brands such as, Forever 21, Shein and Fashion Nova are creating affordable clothes mainly targeting younger generations of women. This is something that the company will not be able to control because fast fashion is an industry that is impossible to compete with currently. However, brands such as Patagonia, Alternative Apparel, and Sezane are able to provide a decent and affordable alternative to sustainable clothes. This means that it is possible to provide an affordable price for a younger audience.

COST AND CUSTOMER DEMOGRAPHICS

Our customer demographics consists of all middle and upper class young women from the age of 16-21 (Gen Z) to 22-35 (Millennials) who are environmentally conscious consumers and have an yearly income of 100K or more. The company will focus on younger women who have a stable job that is able to provide them with enough money to buy sustainable clothing. Younger women who think that buying eco-friendly clothes is an essential part of their life is mostly our target market. A survey found that 58% of Gen Z and 61% of Millennials agree to pay more for eco-friendly products (see **figure 1**). Younger consumers are now more driven into buying eco-friendly products and are more conscious about the correlation between fashion and climate. The cost of the products will be from three hundred dollars or more depending on the composition of the clothing. Since working with biosynthetic fibers is not inexpensive, a bit more money needs to be put into each garment in order to get a good profit.

Figure 1

URL: <https://blog.globalwebindex.com/chart-of-the-week/green-consumerism/>



Source: GlobalWebIndex Q2 2018 Base: 111,899 Internet Users aged 16-64

SCALABILITY

If Fashion Thrive goes viral, the company can scale up by perhaps opening several shopping locations. Since the company is e-commerce-based, if the company goes viral it will be a good idea to have actual shopping locations, and more customer service agents. This will provide an alternative to those customers who want to try on their clothes before buying it and easily return them. More customer service agents will help the company provide a broader and faster service to the customers. The company can also perhaps move on from having only a website to also develop a shopping application. This will help customers to have a faster and better experience while doing their online shopping and will avoid logging in from a browser. Another idea to consider is to increase the manufacturing of the clothes in the factories. If the platform idea goes viral that will make more people want to buy from it, and more clothes and storage will be needed.



Figure 2: Fashion Thrive shopping application prototype.

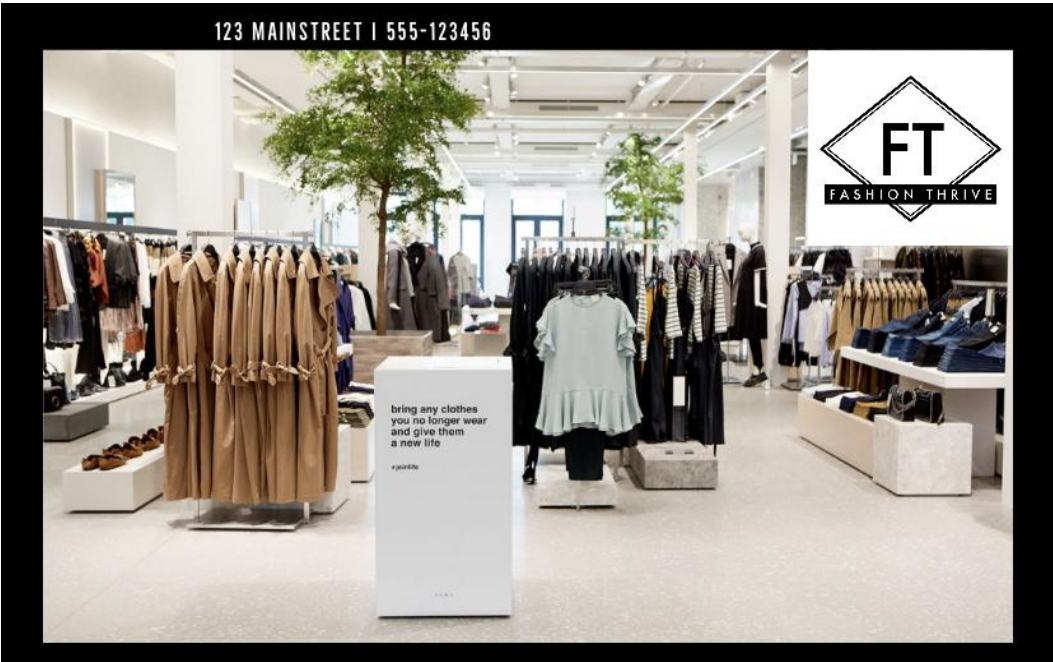


Figure 3: prototype photo sample of the Fashion Thrive department store.

GARMENT SAMPLES THAT WILL SOLD AT FASHION THRIVE



		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ORANGE FIBER CASUAL SWEATER (\$600)• MYLO LEATHER SKIRT (\$400)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• OFF-THE-SHOULDER MICROSILK DRESS (\$900)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MILK FIBER CASUAL BLOUSE (\$350)• PINEAPPLE FIBER PANTS (\$700)

Figure 4, 5, 6: Garments that will be sold on the Fashion Thrive website and (price made by fashion designers specialized in sustainability).

Source: Fashion Thrive sustainable wear fashion designer, Kimberly Baez.

FASHION THRIVE AND FAIR TRADE

In the apparel industry, factory workers are the lowest paid workers in the world. According to the documentary named, *The True Cost* less than 2% of factory workers earn a living wage. (Morgan & Ross, 2016). An estimated 98% of fashion industry workers are likely being held in systemic poverty and 75% of these workers are women between the ages of 18 and 24 (The Lowest Wage Challenge, n.d.). Since the company understands how important it is to give proper treatment to those who will help build and contribute to the brand, we will give proper attention and care for our workers. The company will be able to sustain fair trade principles while still making a fair profit. For example, some garments that will be made from pineapple leaf waste fiber are going to be handpicked by farmers. Fashion Thrive will make sure that the farmers and sweatshop workers are well supervised and provided a fair wage in our supply chain. Since the company will not be able to control what exactly happens in each sweatshops, supervisors will be around to ensure a safe working space. Also, in order to help ensure a healthy working environment for the workers, global outsourcing contracts will be signed with the service providers. These contracts are going to be an agreement between the company and sweatshop ensuring a safe and healthy working space. Fashion Thrive will pay a premium for every of our products that carries a B-certified sewn label. This will be considered as extra money will go directly to the factory workers, and a fair trade worker committee will decide how these funds will be distributed.

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