

# **GET YOUR SUSTAINABILITY MESSAGE THROUGH WITHOUT GREENWASHING OR GREENHUSHING**

## **5 steps to authentic sustainability communication**

**Paris global  
warming goal  
of 1.5 degrees.**

**Aligning brand  
communication  
to climate  
target and  
sustainability  
goals.**





# Sustainable fashion definition

”A sustainable textile industry is one that is resource-efficient and renewable resources-based, producing non-toxic, high quality and affordable clothing services and products, while providing safe and secure livelihoods”

-UN Environment Programme 2020b





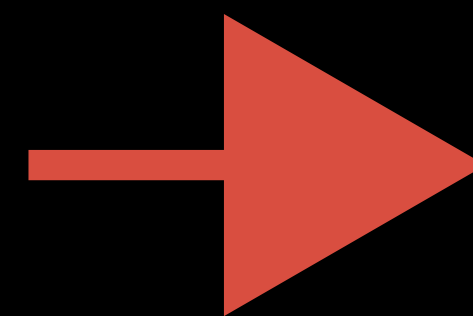


# Sustainable fashion communication

Not just talk about sustainable materials in product.

All aspects involved in your business. Communicate to consumers to elevate sustainable consumption, sustainable lifestyles, educating and informing to make better choices.





# WHO'S RESPONSIBLE?

## NOT JUST THESE GUYS



The number of greenwashing lawsuits filed in the US has increased by 300% in the past five years. (Source: Lex Machina, "Greenwashing Litigation Report," 2022) (Source: The Capgemini Research Institute)

Only 22% of consumers trust companies to make honest claims about their sustainability efforts. (Source: 2022 Edelman Trust Barometer)

**60% of consumers believe that  
companies are greenwashing.** (Source: Cone  
Communications, "2022 Cone Communications CSR Study," 2022)

**83% of consumers believe that  
greenwashing is a problem.** (Source: 2022 Edelman Trust  
Barometer)



**59% of consumers say they have  
changed their behaviour in some way  
because of greenwashing.**

**23% reduced the amount of money spent  
with that company**

**15% of them said they have boycotted a  
brand entirely as a result**

**13% switched to an alternative with  
better sustainability credentials**

Source Texintel- Sensus

Survey

71% of consumers are more likely to trust a company that is transparent about its sustainability efforts. (Source: IBM, "The Consumer Trust in Business Report," 2022)





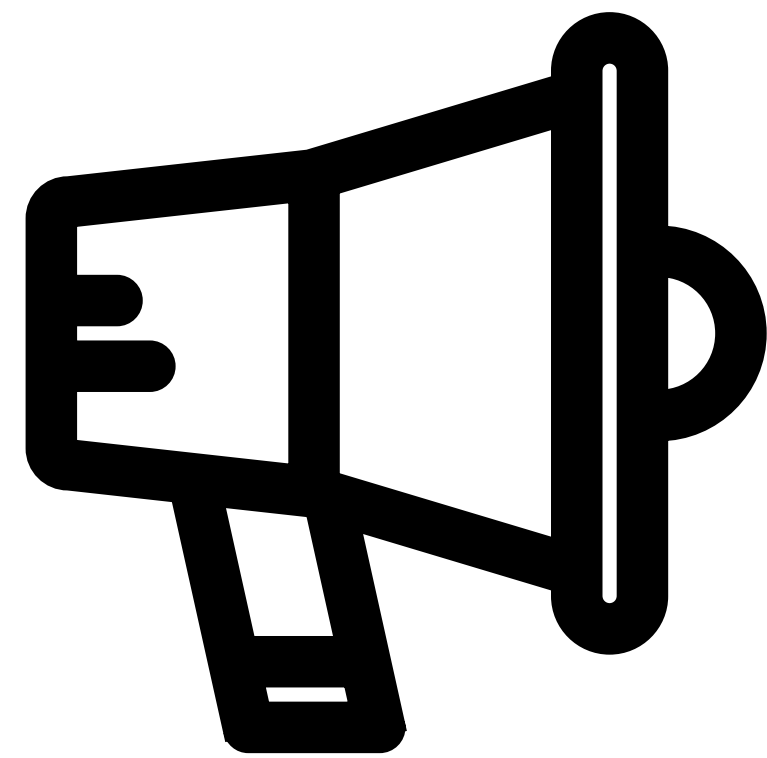
# GREENWASHING?

Greenwashing is an attempt to make people believe that your company is doing more to protect the environment than it is.



# GREENWASHING - WHY DO BRANDS DO IT?

## INTENTIONAL



- to win over customers who want to support brands that care about the environment
- lack of information and transparency, no data
- lack of ambition - good enough
- lack of accountability - no strict regulations
- lack of incentive - do what they want
- lack of clear expectations and standards

# GREENHUSHING?

Greenhushing is when companies choose to not fully communicate their sustainability efforts, to avoid scrutiny.



# GREENHUSHING - WHY DO BRANDS DO IT?

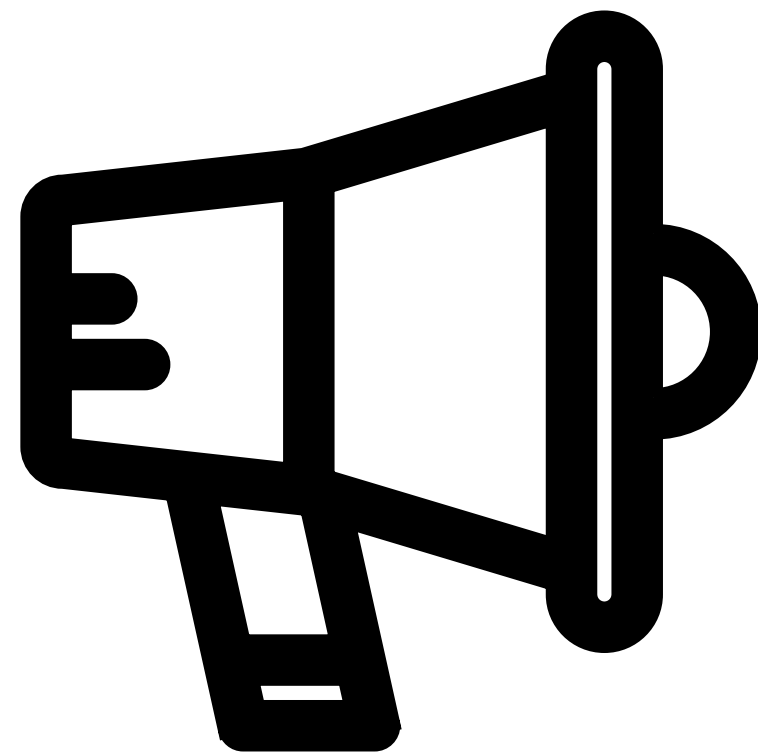
INTENTIONAL OR NOT



- fear of greenwashing
- fear of ruining reputation - fear of backlash
- don't know what and how to communicate
- fear of being accused of not hitting sustainability goals

# WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

## Greenwashing



Making exaggerated or false claims about the environmental benefits

## Greenhushing



Keeping quiet about sustainability, intentionally or unintentionally



# GREENWASHING PHRASES



Greenhushing

Greenlighting

Greenlabelling

Greencocking  
Ecopeacocking

Greencrowding

Greenshifting

Greenrinsing

# GREENWASHING PHRASES



## **Greencrowding**

hiding in a group and moving at the speed of the  
slowest adopter of sustainability policies

# GREENWASHING PHRASES



## **Greenlighting**

when company communications (including advertisements) spotlight a certain green feature of its operations or products, however small, in order to draw attention away from environmentally damaging activities being done somewhere else.



# GREENWASHING PHRASES



## **Greenshifting**

when companies imply that the consumer is at fault  
and shift the blame on to them

# GREENWASHING PHRASES



## Greenlabelling

When for ex a fast fashion brand releases a collection of clothes made with recycled polyester, but this collection is only a very small fraction of their overall production. The brand might also continue to use unsustainable practices in other areas of their business, like as excessive packaging or sampling.

# GREENWASHING PHRASES



## **Greenrinsing**

When businesses frequently change sustainability targets without genuine accomplishments.  
This breaking trust and makes it hard for stakeholders to track progress.



# GREENWASHING PHRASES



## **Greencoeking or Ecopeacocking**

When brands are boasting about their green credentials when they are maybe not that legitimate - distracting the customers to feel good about a purchase/consumption

# MISLEADING & CONFUSING TERMS

compostable      recyclable      eco-conscious

ethical      good for the environment      earth-friendly      eco      environmentally friendly

100% sustainable      eco-friendly      green

climate friendly      carbon neutral

degradable      plasticfree      biodegradable

climate neutral



# RED FLAGS



Use of natural colors and imagery



# PUT THE CUSTOMER FIRST



VS



No overconsumption

The right choice

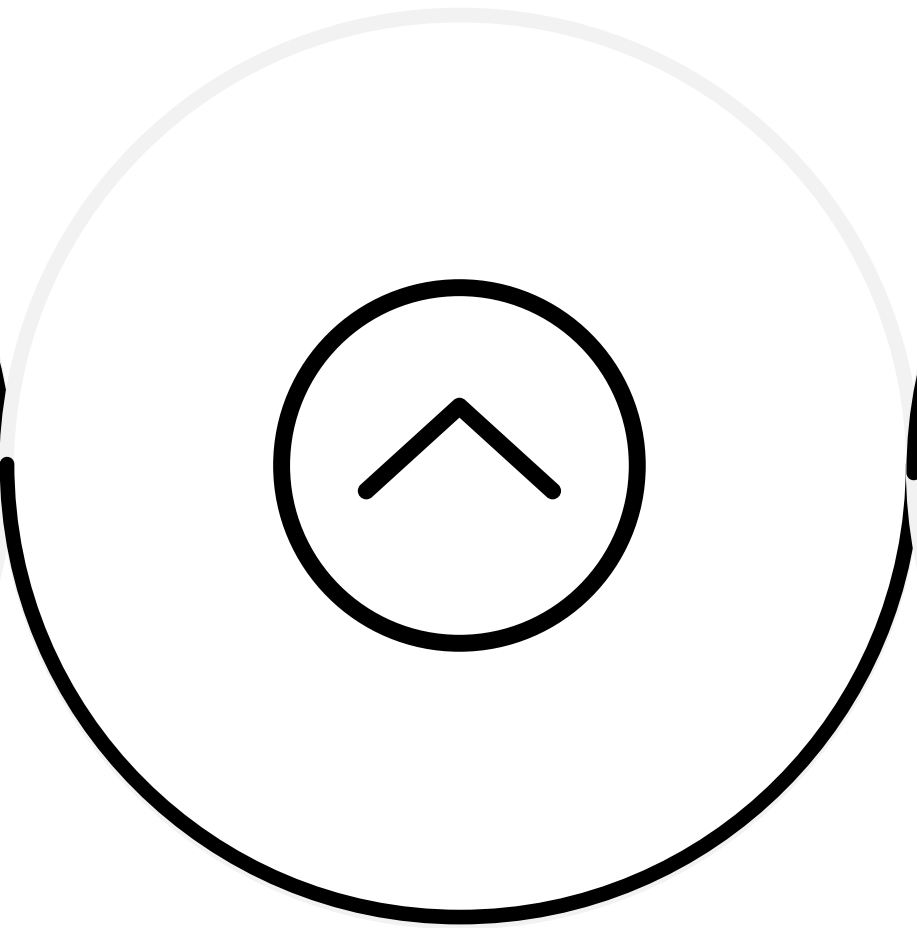


# 5 STEP FRAMEWORK

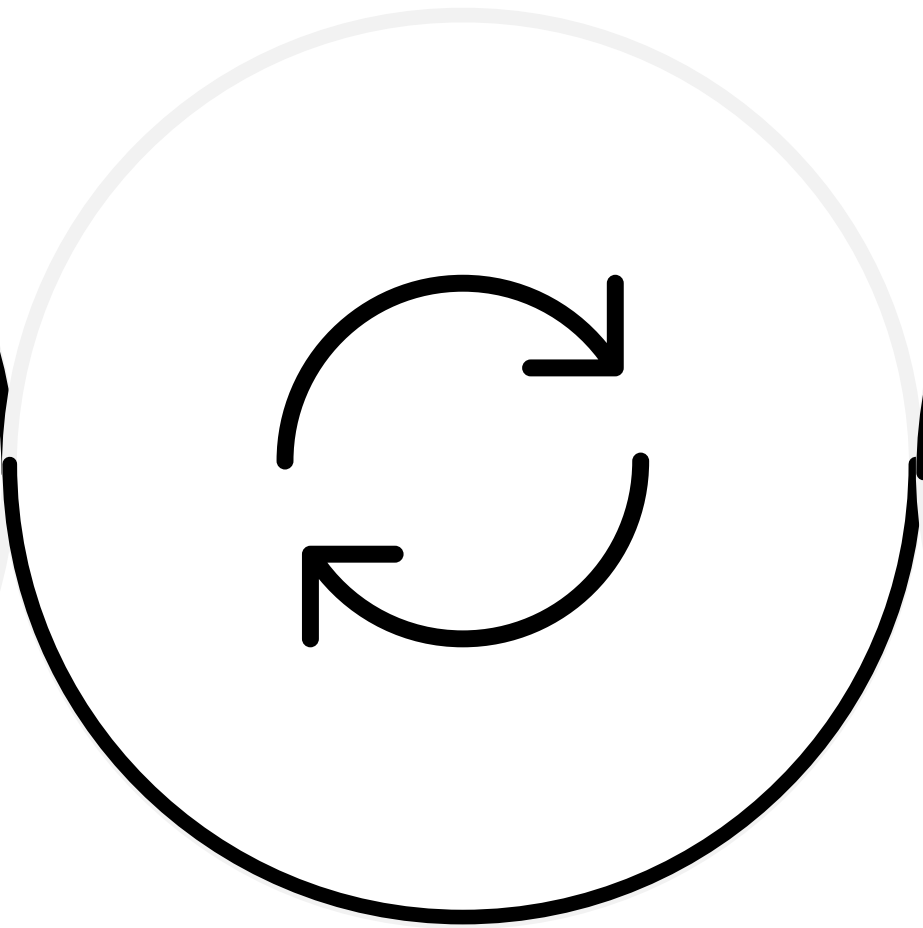
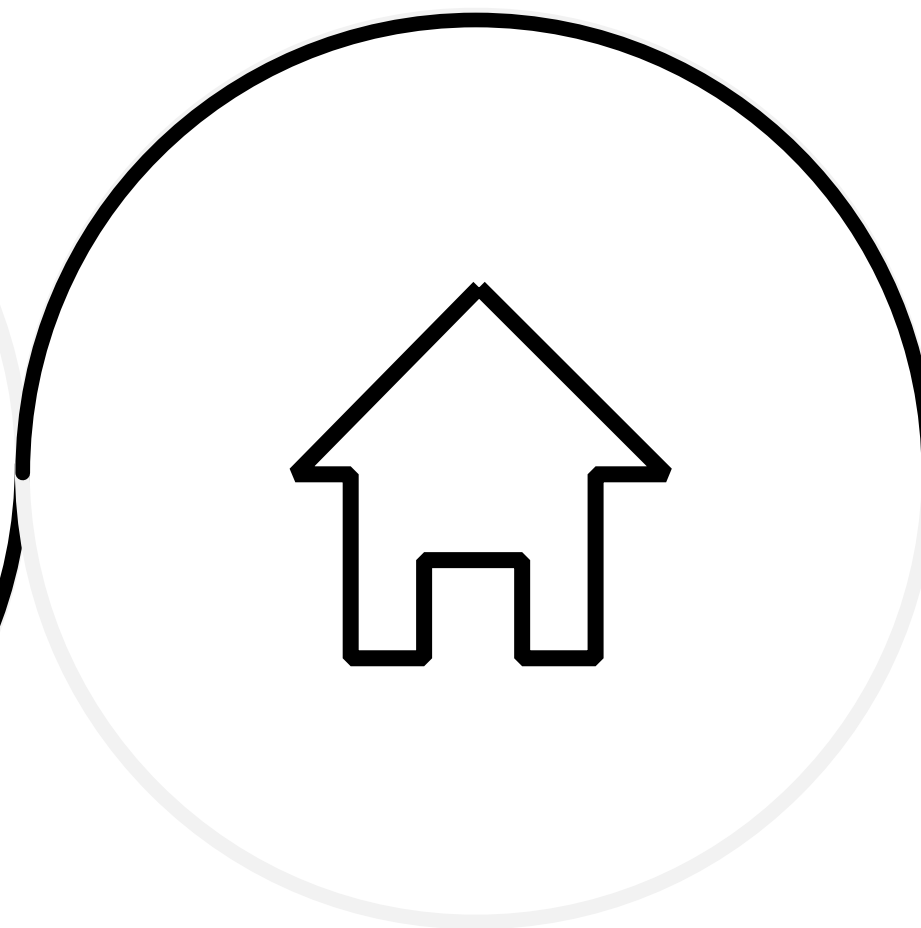
TRACEABILITY  
&  
TRANSPARENCY



AUTHENTICITY



SPECIFIC,  
MEASURABLE GOALS



CONSISTENCY

ACCOUNTABILITY



# 5 STEP FRAMEWORK

## 1. TRACEABILITY & TRANSPARENCY



Don't make claims that you can't back up with evidence.

Be transparent about your supply chain and manufacturing practices.

Traceability of your supply chain gives you possibility for full transparency and insight into your operations.  
There's nothing to hide!

You can improve once you have the data.

# 5 STEP FRAMEWORK

## 1. TRACEABILITY & TRANSPARENCY



Claims need to be accurate, clear, specific and complete.

Claims need to be easy to understand for a non industry person.

Information needs to be shared in a clear and easy to find way.

# 5 STEP FRAMEWORK

## 1. TRACEABILITY & TRANSPARENCY



Provide traceability on all claims.  
Show methodology and sources - show where the evidence comes from.

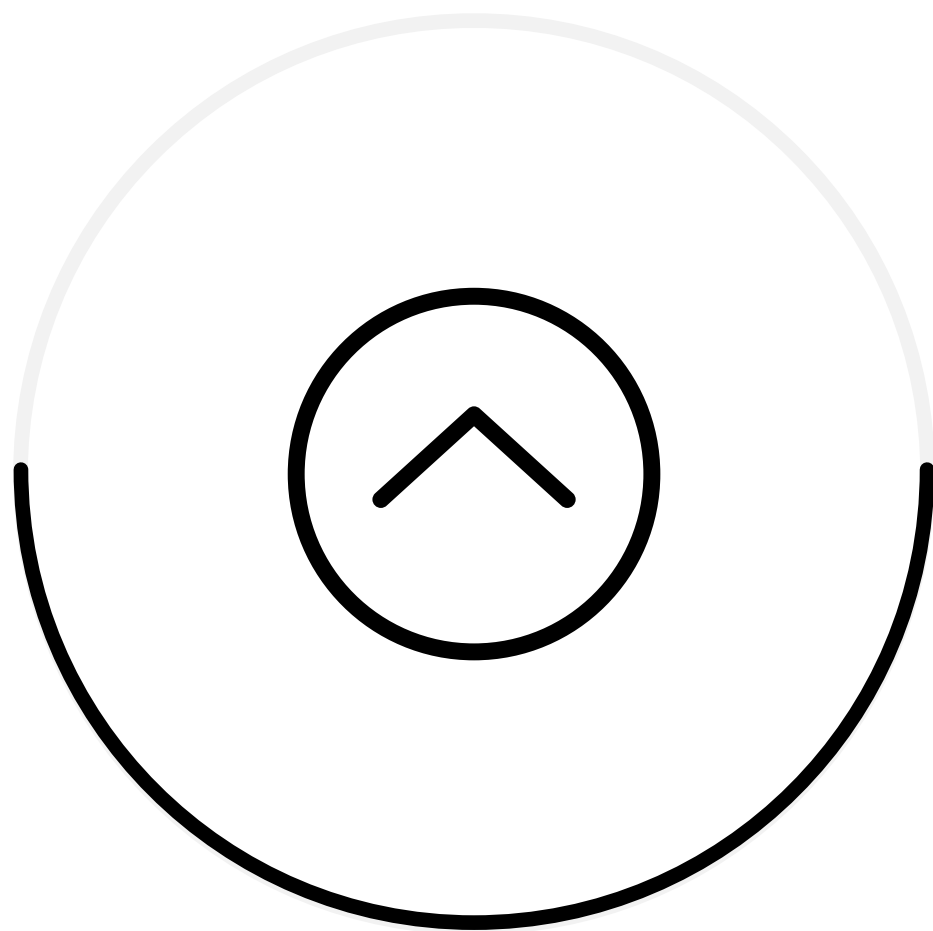
**YES:** Tee made of 60% organic cotton, 40% recycled polyester. More info on suppliers, manufacturers and certifications - [click here](#)

**NO:** Tee made from sustainable materials



# 5 STEP FRAMEWORK

## 2. SPECIFIC, MEASURABLE GOALS



Avoid vague statements like "we're committed to sustainability."

Set specific and measurable goals, such as replacing all your virgin polyester fabrics to recycled polyester by 2025.

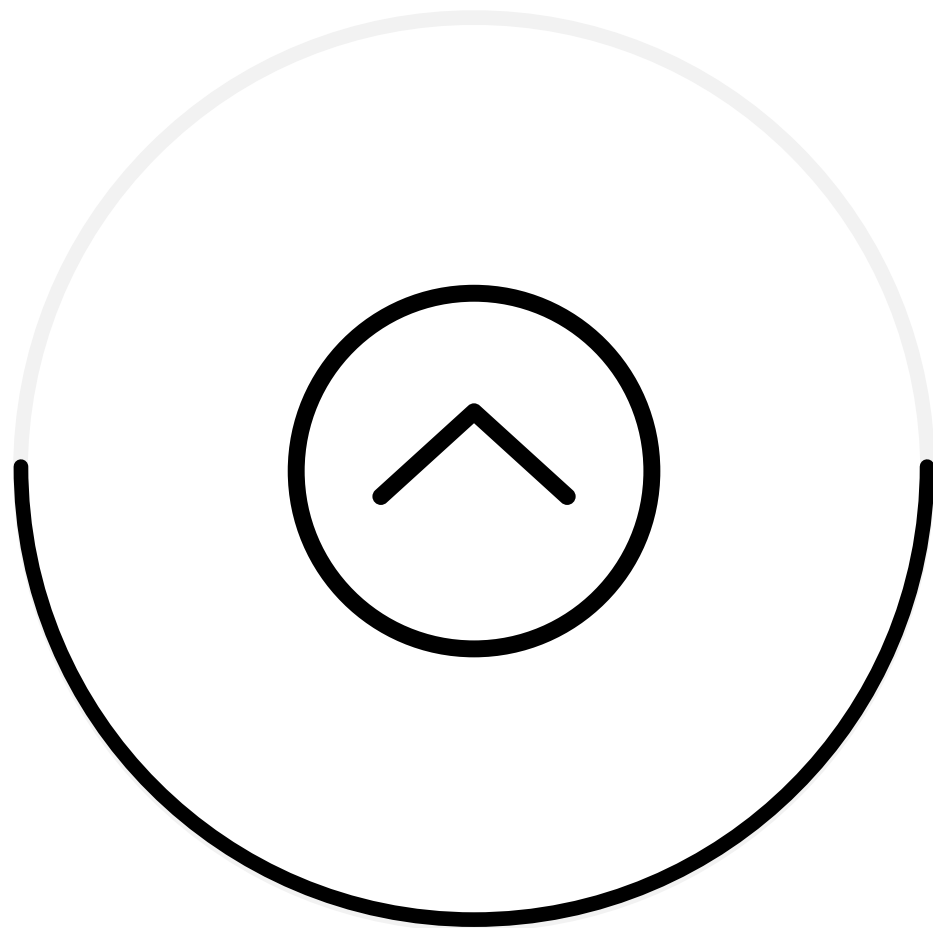
Helps you track and ensure progress

Goals - Measurable & accompanied by facts:

- Sustainability claim - 100% organic cotton
- Sustainability benefit - less water, no chemical pesticides, no artificial fertilisers, no GMO seeds
- Third party certifications - GOTS

# 5 STEP FRAMEWORK

## 2. SPECIFIC, MEASURABLE GOALS



Work with established third-party certification companies and accepted industry data sources to provide evidence.

Be transparent on processes and suppliers/manufacturer partners - create and publish a downloadable list to all your partners.

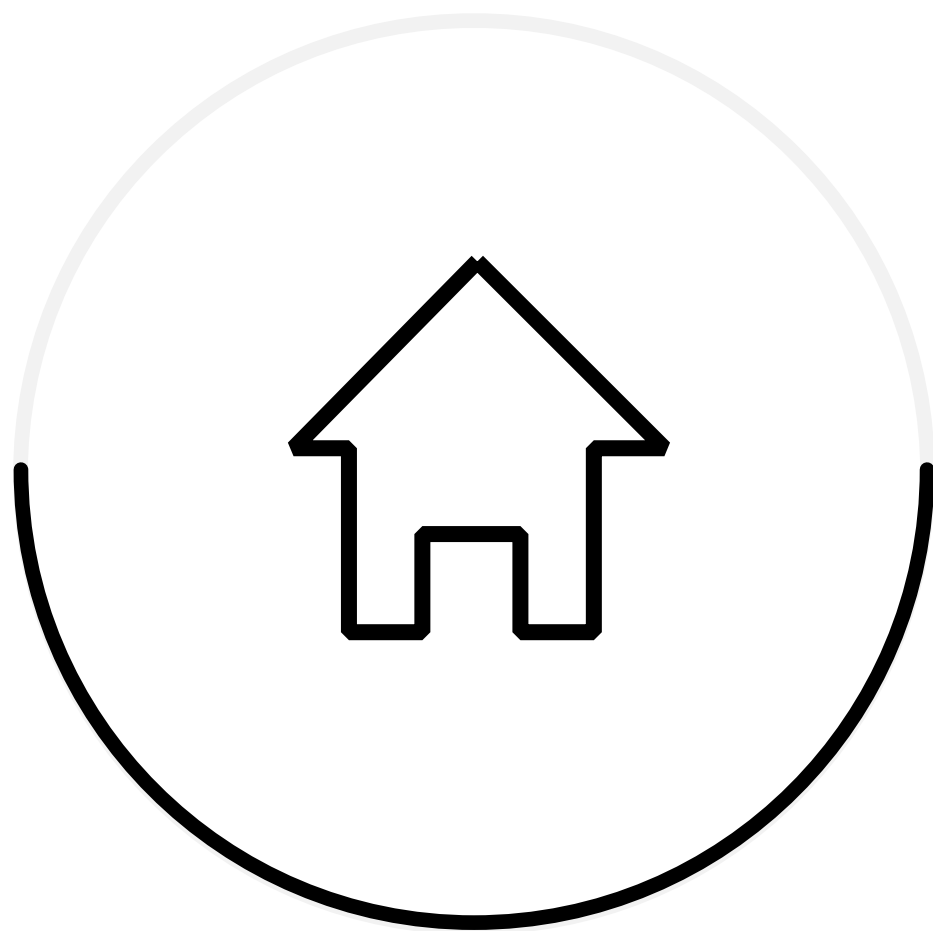
Communicate goals, where you are right now in your journey and why you might not have reached your targets.

It's not about perfection - it's about honesty.

# 5 STEP FRAMEWORK

3.

## AUTHENTICITY



Claims need to be accompanied by facts.

Don't try to be something you're not. If you're just starting out on your sustainability journey, be honest about that.

Don't exaggerate your accomplishments or make false promises.

Authentically promote products from a functional, emotional and social aspect - to keep product in use longer.

# 5 STEP FRAMEWORK

3.

AUTHENTICITY



Comparison with other brands and products must be fair and meaningful.

“Our product are more sustainable!” - than what?

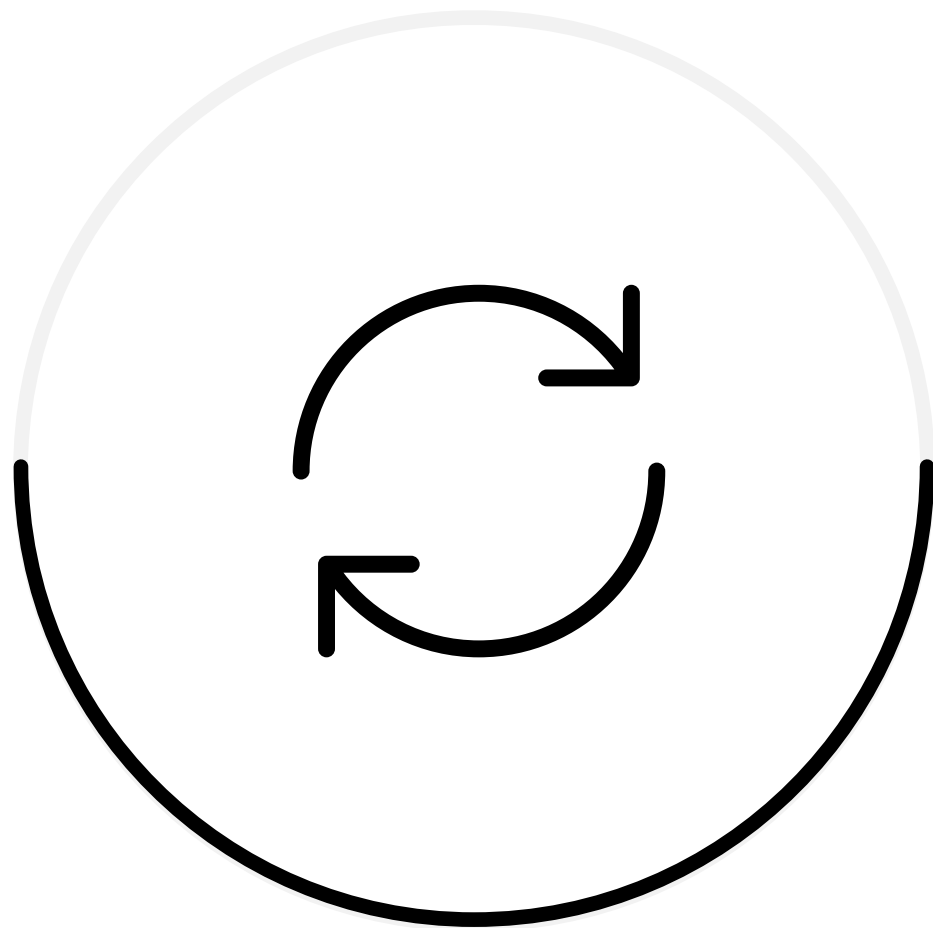
Communicate about your products first.

If you have to give a competitor benchmark - provide context.

Provide evidence or legal information for customers to compare.

# 5 STEP FRAMEWORK

## 4. CONSISTENCY



You're never done.

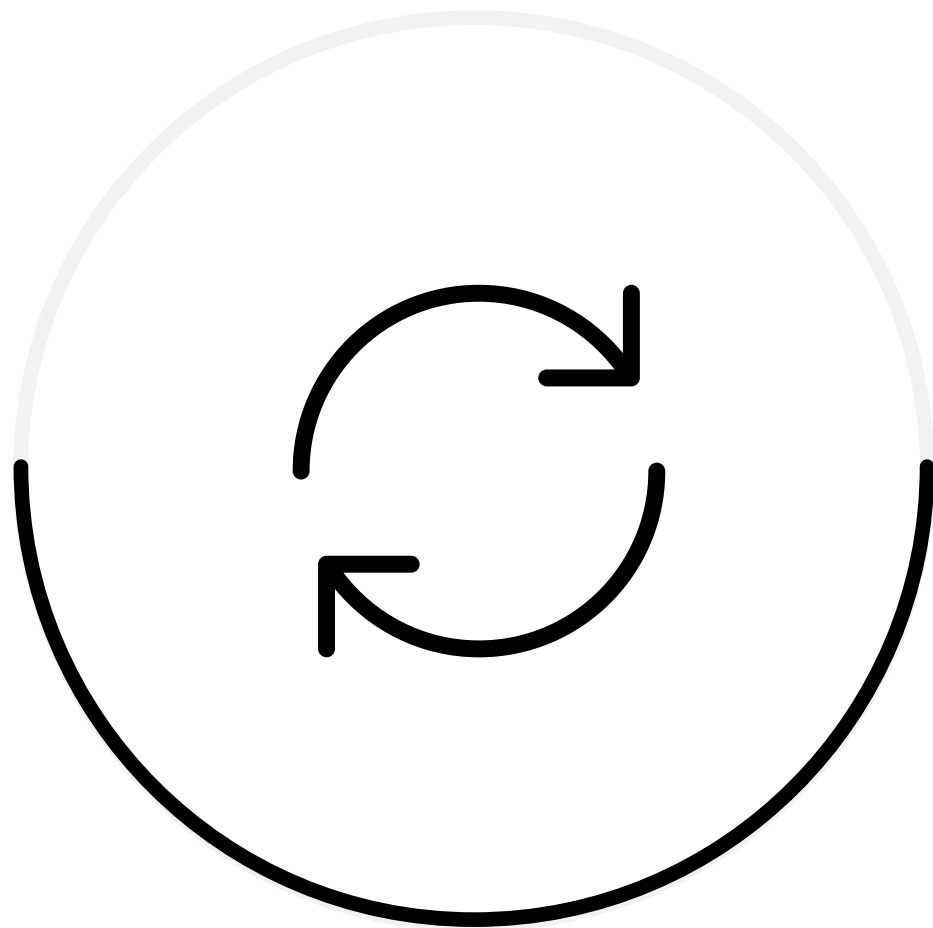
Sustainability is a long-term commitment. It's not enough to make a few changes and then call it a day. You need to be consistent with your efforts and continually improve your practices.

Don't exaggerate environmental benefits.  
Think LAGOM!



# 5 STEP FRAMEWORK

## 4. CONSISTENCY



Make all communication accessible to all consumer groups on all platforms - website, pos material, social media, print etc.

Promote sustainability as desirable - core value - not cause it's cool.

Educate and inform.

Communicate on an ongoing basis - bring out the latest evidence and information.

# 5 STEP FRAMEWORK

5.

## ACCOUNTABILITY



Direct customers to responsible consumption - purchases based on needs.

Show your products in a manner that increases the product value - lasting longterm items

Communicate clearly and differentiate between product and brand information.

Help consumers value and look after their clothes for longevity.

# 5 STEP FRAMEWORK

## 5. ACCOUNTABILITY



Be willing to answer questions about your sustainability initiatives and be transparent about your progress.

Be open to feedback and suggestions.

Use visual claims and labels to help the customer make the right choice, not confuse them.

Collaborate with other organisations

Educate ALL departments - not only one team.

# WHY TRANSPARENCY?

Transparency is the  
only way to operate  
your business in a  
responsible way.



Fashion Transparency Index



# TRACEABILITY?



Fashion Transparency Index

## Where does everything come from?



# CERTIFICATIONS - seals of approval

MISLEADING  
LABELS



TRUSTWORTHY  
CERTIFICATIONS



<https://www.apparelentrepreneurship.com/your-guide-to-sustainability/>

# CHARITIES?

Don't confuse your customers



# LEGISLATION

## **US GREEN GUIDES - FTC:**

- voluntary code
- products and services marketed in the US

## **EU GREEN CLAIMS DIRECTIVE 2024:**

- binding piece of legislation
- must provide evidence to support environmental claims
- products and services marketed in the EU

## **UK GREEN CLAIMS CODE:**

- voluntary code
- products and services marketed in the UK

## **FRENCH CONSUMER CODE - 2023:**

- binding piece of legislation
- products and services marketed in France
- penalty - 2 year prison, 300 000€ fine or increased to 80% of the turnover



# DIGITAL PRODUCT PASSPORT - DPP

## WHAT

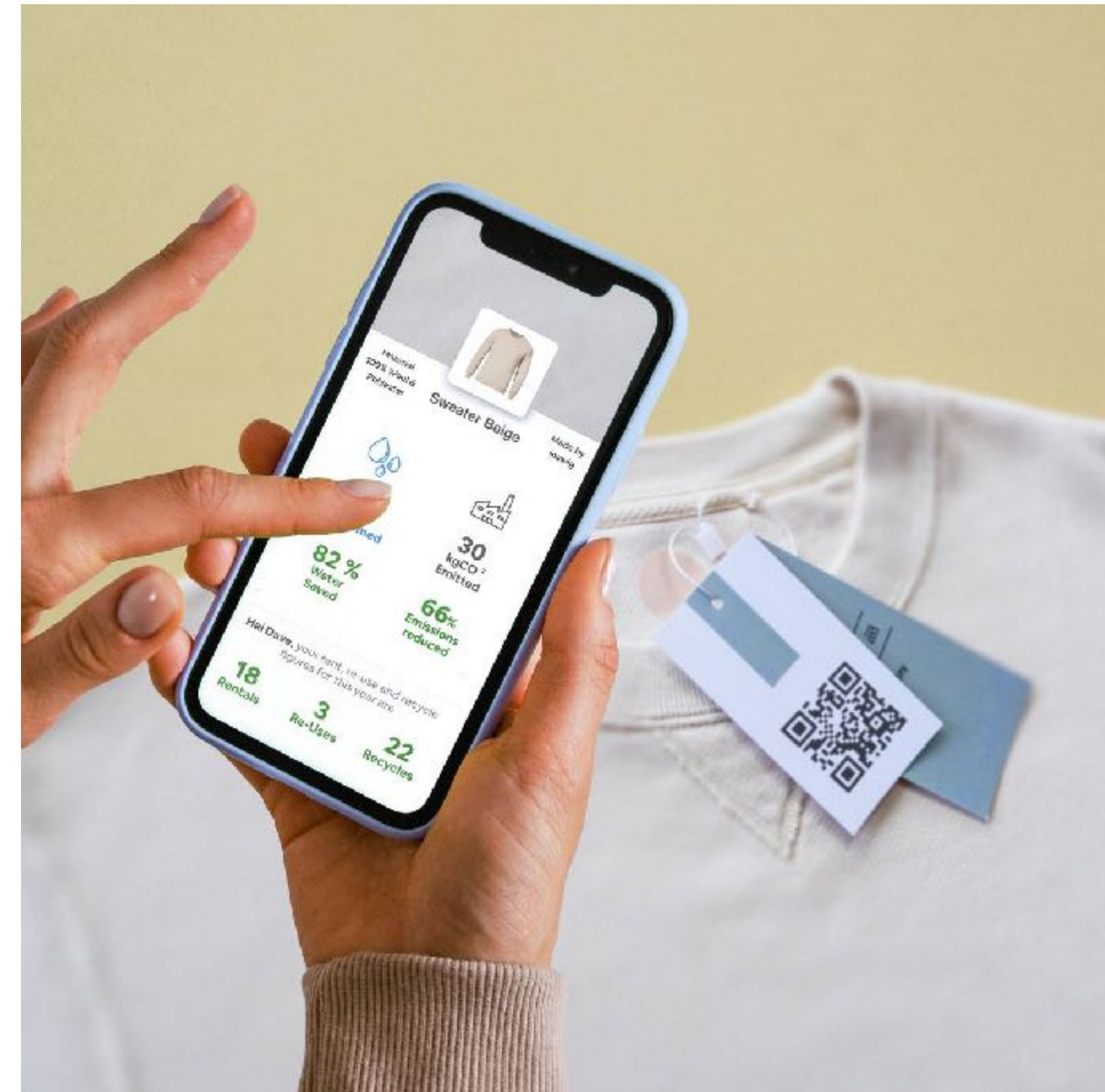
A tool for collecting and sharing product data throughout a product's entire lifecycle. It's used to show a product's sustainability, and recyclability attributes.

## WHERE & WHEN

EU - 2030

## WHY DOES IT MATTER

- It can help consumers make more informed choices about the products they buy
- help brands reduce their environmental and social impact
- support the transition to a circular economy.







# DIGITAL PRODUCT PASSPORT

**GENERAL INFO** - ID nr, weight, manufacturing location, date

**SOURCE** - origin of raw materials, components, chemicals etc

**FOOTPRINT** - carbon footprint from the manufacturing, lifecycle or usage

**OWNERSHIP** - details n ownership duration on past and current owners - great for second hand

**REPAIRS** - details on repairability

**WARRANTIES** - service, insurance, guarantee documents

**INSTRUCTIONS** - for disassembly for recycling, product usage, care, end of life disposal etc

# WHAT'S AT STAKE?

**REPUTATIONAL DAMAGE** - lose customer trust, customers go elsewhere

**LEGAL CONSEQUENCES** - fines, penalties or suspension of business

**COMPETITIVE DISADVANTAGE** - customers prioritize environmentally responsible brands and products

Won't attract the right customer on your core values

Hard to build the brand on the right pillars if people don't know what you're trying to do.

# Places to learn from:



<https://changingmarkets.org/>



<https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/>



<https://goodonyou.eco/>



<https://greenamerica.org/>



<https://www.fashionrevolution.org/>



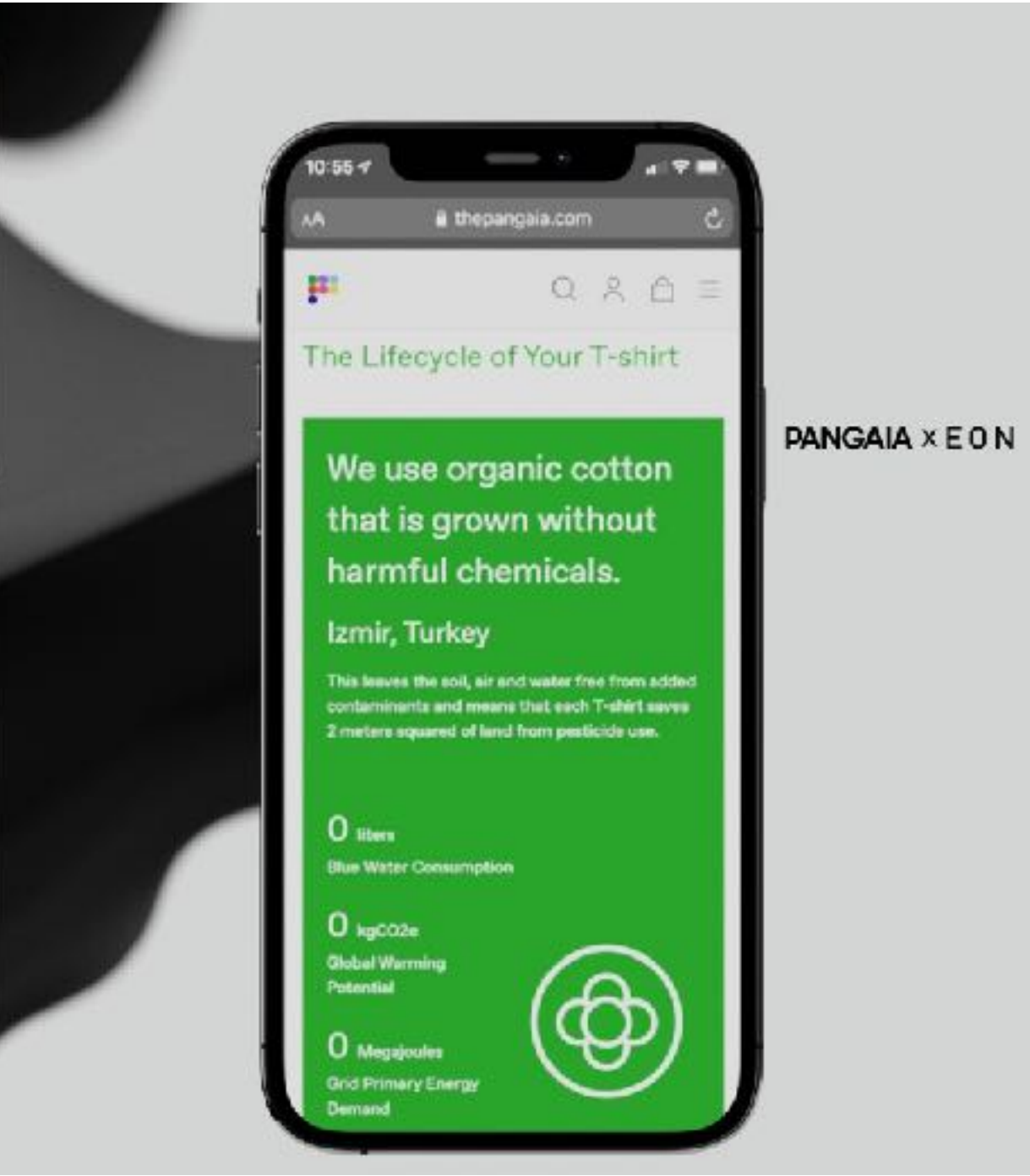
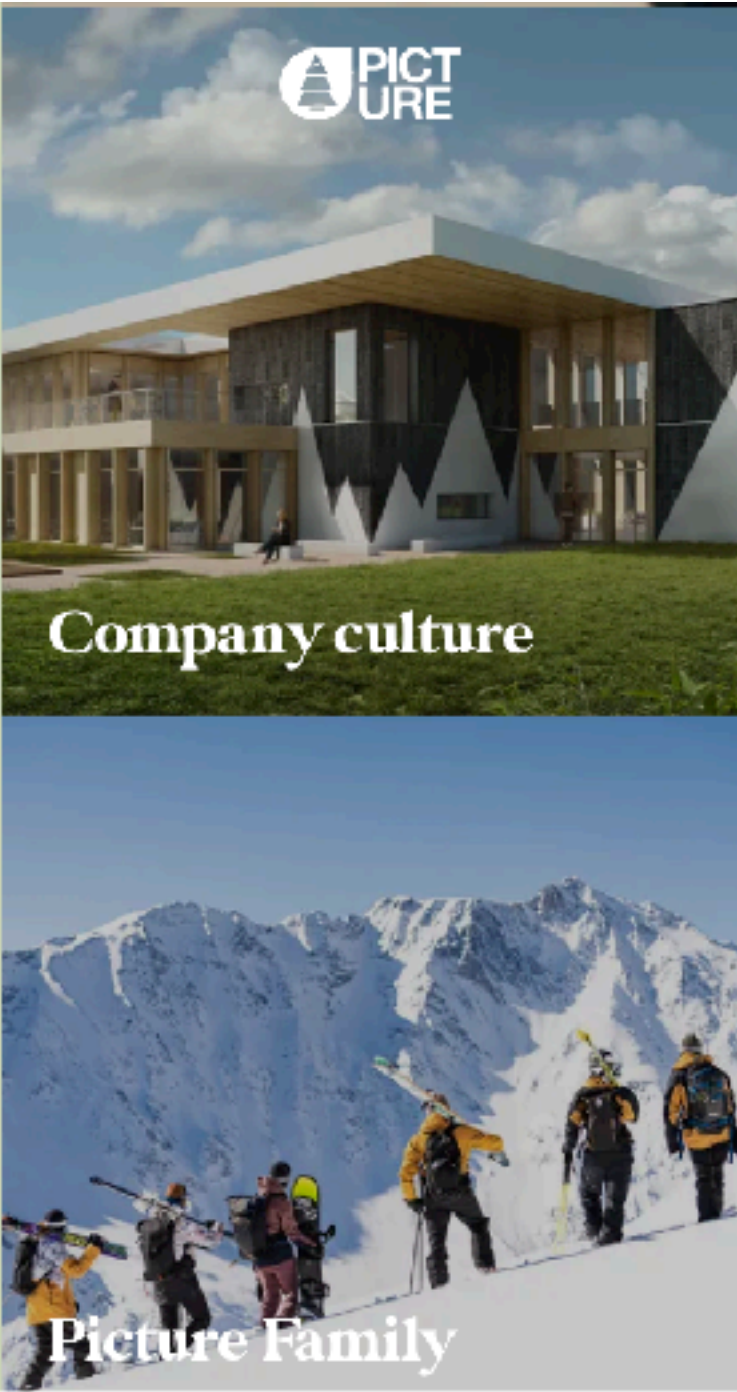
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# INSPIRING BRANDS



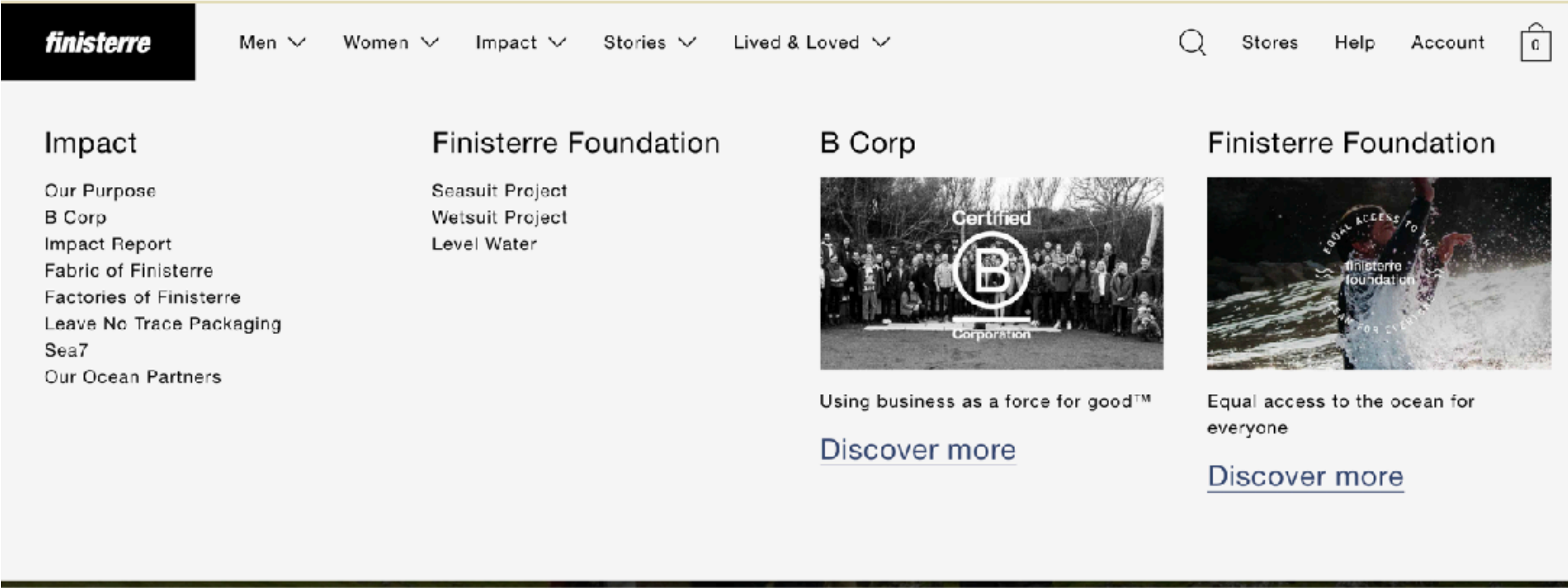
Picture



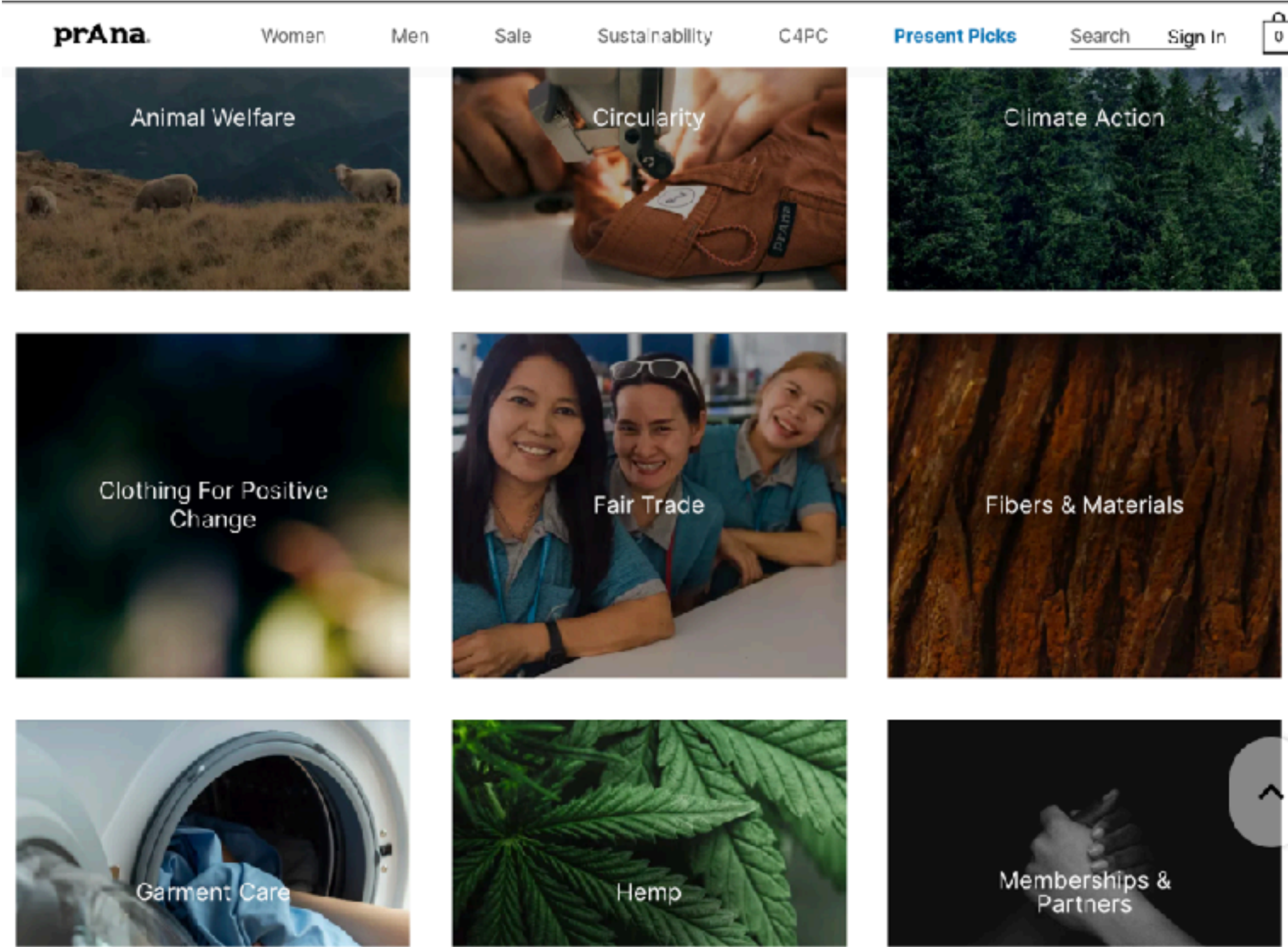
Pangaia



# INSPIRING BRANDS



Finisterre



Prana

# CHECKLIST



No Hiding Impacts



No Misleading Claims



Not Being Vague



Not Being False



Not Using  
Unvalidated Labels



Not Using  
Misleading Words



Not Using  
Misleading Imagery



No Comparison



Not Mention Unrelated  
Benefits



Not Doing This Alone



# FINAL WORDS

Traceability, transparency & honesty is the **ONLY** way forward.

Regulations are a good thing:

- opportunities to reinvent processes
- innovate with sustainable solutions
- build responsible brands

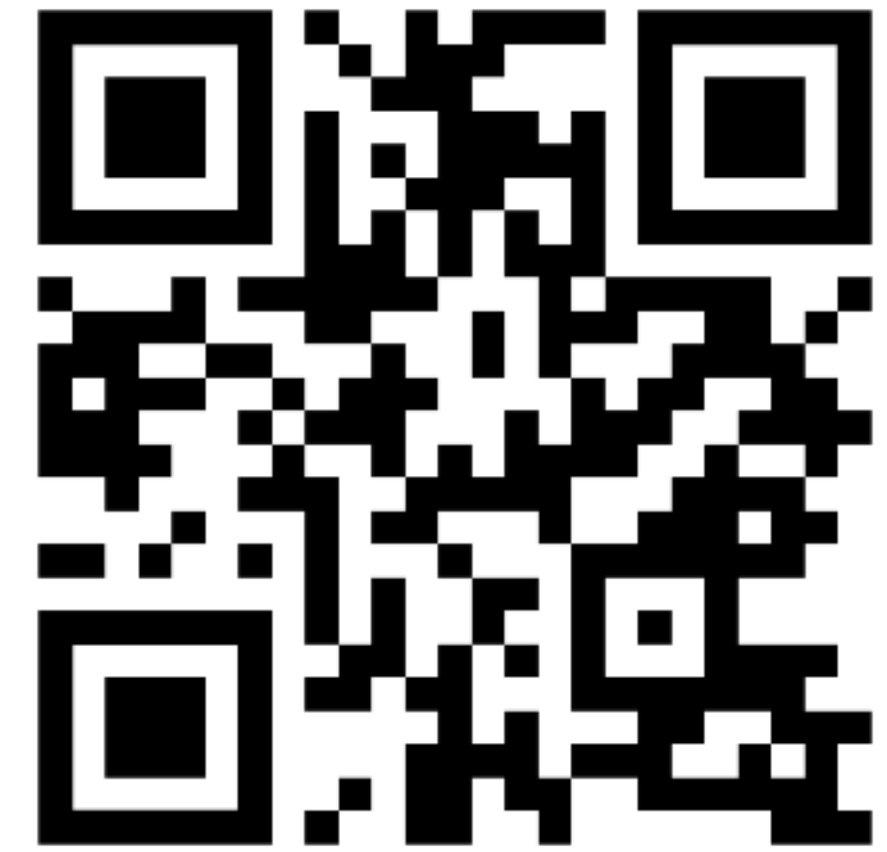
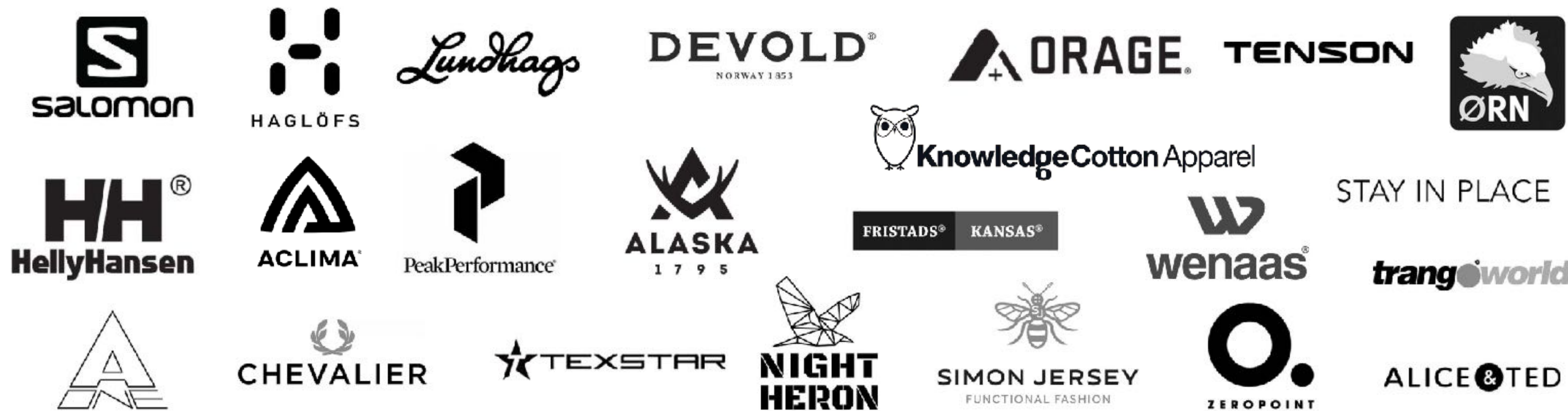
Under promise and over deliver

Create engaging and educational content

It's a collaborative effort







**SCAN ME**

## **ANA KRISTIANSSON**

22 years in the outdoor industry,  
Creative director & strategist  
for international outdoor brands.  
Advised, mentored & empowered  
hundreds of brands around the world.  
Launched and run 2 own brands.

## **DESINDER AGENCY**

A creative agency developing  
STRATEGY, BRANDING, DESIGN  
& COMMUNICATION solutions for  
purpose-driven sports, outdoor,  
and lifestyle brands.  
Based in Gothenburg Sweden.

## **APPAREL ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

Educational online platform  
helping entrepreneurs run &  
grow responsible apparel brands  
through a membership program,  
courses, lectures, book, podcast  
and YouTube.