

Using the Case Study Method to Teach Sustainability in Fashion

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The case study method (or case method) of teaching is a popular and effective way for students to learn and apply concepts to real-life situations, strategies, and dilemmas. The typical case study provides an overview and background information associated with an issue a company is facing. In the case study teaching method, students review and analyze the background material, evaluate multiple alternative solutions, recommend and justify an optimal solution for the company, and predict outcomes of the solution. As a teaching method, case studies provide students with opportunities to apply and practice critical thinking, analytic, evaluative, problem solving, and communication skills. As such, using the case study method is ideal in effectively teaching topics and issues on sustainability in fashion. This paper described five case studies on topics and issues on sustainability in fashion that faculty could use in a variety of courses. Attendees received copies of each of the case studies along with Study Questions and Teaching Notes to readily incorporate the cases into their courses or adapt to fit their particular course and/or teaching style.

- “Should Everlane Pursue Becoming a B Corporation” – shared by permission from *Bloomsbury Fashion Business Cases*. This case study examines the advantages and disadvantages of a fashion brand company becoming a certified B Corporation™. Students examine the role of certifications in the fashion industry and evaluate strategies for fashion brand companies to communicate authentic practices. This case is designed for courses in fashion business, fashion law, and fashion marketing.
- “Should Stella McCartney Implement Zero Waste Design Strategies?” – shared by permission from *Bloomsbury Fashion Business Cases*. This case study examines the advantages and disadvantages of zero-waste design strategies a fashion brand company may incorporate to decrease pre-consumer textile waste. Students evaluate the strategies and make a recommendation for the fashion brand company. The case is designed for courses in fashion design, fashion merchandising, and environmental sustainability in the fashion industry.
- “G-Star RAW and Life Cycle Assessment of Cotton”—shared by permission from *Bloomsbury Fashion Business Cases*. This case study examines the advantages and disadvantages of strategies a fashion brand company may implement to decrease their environmental footprint in product design, production, distribution, and use. Students are

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introduced to product life-cycle assessments (LCA) and how LCA data can inform product design, development, and marketing decisions. The case is designed for courses in fashion design, product development, textiles, and environmental sustainability.

- “Picture Organic Clothing: Supply Chain Assurance and Transparency” – shared by permission from *Bloomsbury Fashion Business Cases*. This case study examines strategies a fashion brand company may use for supply chain assurance, traceability, and transparency. Students evaluate advantages and disadvantages and make recommendations for the particular company. Students are introduced to risk management, legal compliance, and both mandatory and voluntary supply chain reporting. The case is designed for courses in fashion marketing, sourcing, fashion law, and supply chain management.
- “Sustainable Packaging for Icebreaker” – shared by permission from *Bloomsbury Fashion Business Cases*. This case study examines advantages and disadvantages of packaging alternatives a fashion brand company can use to enhance their environmental sustainability. Students are introduced to business logistics, packaging technologies, and research on packaging alternatives. The case is designed for courses in fashion product development, fashion marketing, and business logistics.