

Sustainable consumerism in the Nordic region

THE REPORT

by Nordic Ecolabelling

Eco-lectivism

How to leverage the positive impact of the collective on an individual's green behaviours

The necessary add on

How to create a product that is both sustainable and attractive for the consumer – because only being sustainable won't do the trick

Streamlining sustainability

How to make it easier for the consumer to make sustainable decisions in a life full of other things to handle

Values for the money

How to build a business based on sustainable values – something consumers are both demanding and supporting

 **Featuring** Vincent Stanley (Patagonia), Halla Tómasdóttir (The B Team), Per Bolund (The Swedish Government), Malene Teller Blume (Coop Denmark), Per Espen Stoknes (BI Norwegian Business School) and many more.

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For almost 30 years, the Nordic Swan Ecolabel has been a guide to more sustainable choices. The Nordic consumers have been able to choose products that meet high environmental, health, and functional requirements. For manufacturers, we have been an effective tool for using the environment as a competitive advantage; with the Nordic Swan Ecolabel they have been able to merge their own brand with sustainability and get easier access to the market and increase sales.

The development has been strong. We have gone from labelling paper and detergents to entire buildings, and most recently, funds. Thousands of companies carry the Nordic Swan Ecolabel on their goods and services and develop their products when we tighten our requirements. Annually, this translates to goods worth billions that meet our high standards and, this number is continuously increasing.

But while the Nordic Swan Ecolabel has grown into one of the Nordic countries' strongest brands, the challenges have increased. Through the UN, the world has agreed to 17 global sustainability goals that shall be reached by 2030. We see that the work of the Nordic Swan Ecolabel aligns with many of them, and we want to help companies, buyers, and consumers to contribute to meeting the goals by producing and prioritising products carrying the Nordic Swan.



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Our vision: With the Nordic Swan Ecolabel as a driving force, the Nordics have become a leading example for a sustainable lifestyle.

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Just choosing the right product is not enough – we also need to adapt to a sustainable lifestyle. Our vision is therefore to help the Nordic countries become an example of such a change. Goods and services with the Nordic Swan will help us achieve more sustainable consumption behaviours, and the companies working with the Nordic Swan will support consumers to live more sustainably.

With this report, we want to help our customers, stakeholders, and partners to understand the zeitgeist, lay one step ahead, and know how people in the Nordic region think about sustainable consumption. Which needs are there and what opportunities and obstacles do we see? With the best possible partners, we have dug into consumer behaviours and future challeng-

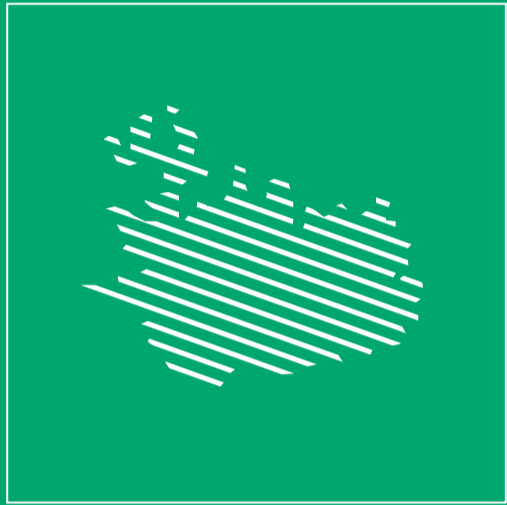
es, and talked to visionaries and thought leaders from a wide range of areas, from the Nordics and beyond.

The world is undergoing change, and only the companies who see it in time, and contribute to that change, will gain the market's trust. Insight, credibility, and communication power are needed, and this is what we at the Nordic Ecolabelling want to deliver; with our requirements, our control, and our own brand development. And with this report!

We hope you will have a nice and thought-provoking reading.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ragnar Unge'.

Ragnar Unge, Chairman of Nordic Ecolabelling Board of Directors



The Nordic context

The Nordic region has breathtaking nature, modern societies, and a sophisticated way of living. It is the stronghold of sustainability as shown by countless global surveys and rankings. In addition, we are among the best countries in which to do business, as well as the most innovative, the most equal, and even the happiest. But are we as far ahead as we are being portrayed? What's clear is that we cannot rest on our laurels. Instead we need to keep working for a society where nature and society truly can thrive.

In this first chapter of our report, we interview Dagfinn Høybåten, the secretary general of the Nordic Council of Ministers, and advocate of the Nordics, to help us explain the context in which the Nordic consumer is placed. We share an overview of the results from the very first Nordic Swan Ecometer and scope the following chapters of this report.

Introducing the Nordics

Our common narrative is that we integrate nature into our everyday lives, it is part of our DNA.

“ **T**he Nordic Swan Ecolabel was established as early as 1989. It was the ambitious idea of the Nordic Council of Ministers. What is their perspective on the label and the role it plays in the Nordic region? How can public, private actors and individuals work together? And what is the context of the Nordics?

” It might be hard to find a better person to talk about this than Dagfinn Høybråten, the current Secretary General of the Nordic Council of Ministers who has been a Nordic advocate for all his life. Dagfinn has spent his entire career with politics, in the Nordics and internationally, showing how to use policies to make societies more sustainable.

Dagfinn grew up close to the forest around Norway's capital Oslo. Playing, trekking and skiing in the woods were part of his childhood. He also lived on a farm and learned how farmers think about the weather and climate and experiencing the close connection between nature and human life, something that had a deep influence on him.

Today he is in charge of ensuring collaboration between the Nordic countries and promoting the region internationally. An important part of the work of the Nordic Council of Ministers is to foster exchange and to develop initiatives and projects that primarily support policy-making, but also business practices and production to include environmental parameters

and thus enable sustainable consumption.

What is specific with the Nordic region?

Even if our personal stories are different, our common narrative is that we integrate nature into our everyday lives, it is part of our DNA. We are always close to nature, and very much focused on an outdoor-oriented lifestyle with basic respect for the conditions in nature such as the weather, the harshness of the climate and the principle of common access to natural recreation areas, independent of ownership.

Another common denominator of the Nordic region is that we share a set of fundamental values through which societies are mobilized and developed. “We cherish democracy, in open societies characterised by faith in each other as well as in our political leaders. Our welfare systems, with equal access to health, education and social security make us among the most equal societies in the world. Equality across generations is also important: We strive for sustainability and manage our natural resources in a manner that pays heed to future generations. We respect differences and acknowledge that all human beings are equal, as reflected in our endeavours to bring about real gender equality. These values are both our competitive advantage and a necessity.”

All around the world people have been fascinated with Nordic cuisine, design, film, music, and literature for a long time. One explanation for the enormous demand for anything Nordic is the fact that our societies work, explains Dagfinn. “Our models work.



The Nordic context

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Our models work. In a time where a lot of things are falling apart, we're standing together.

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In a time where a lot of things are falling apart, we're standing together. I think it has to do with the authenticity and the quality of what we deliver, that is the design, films, music, literature, and food. It represents some of that integrity of our culture, of our way of living.”

People even turn to the Nordics for lifestyle advice, shown by the popularity of concepts such as *hygge* and more recently *lagom*. Books about these topics are floating the internationally bestseller lists. This interest gives our region the opportunity to inspire people to live a more sustainable and balanced life, a more *lagom* life so to say.

“I think *lagom* is a great concept because it links to current megatrends such as simplicity, and it goes against the problematic aspects of the global development such as greed and overconsumption. But at the same time, one should not forget that we have our own challenges when it comes to sustainable production and consumption.”

To meet today's challenges, the interplay of government, businesses and individuals is key.

“Individual choices influence the path that the society takes. However, the political system carries the stick and the carrot, and through the stick and the carrot it is possible to guide individual choices. The political system can also set standards, forbid certain products that do not meet these standards, so in this way policy-makers influence individual choices and can even exclude choices. People like

to be led into some choices that are not only right but also smart and economically favourable.”

“As a small region, the only way to succeed is to cherish the assets we have and to act on knowledge, combining cultural heritage with knowledge-based policy.”

Dagfinn knows what he is talking about. One of his political achievements is pioneering the law that bans smoking in public places as Norway's minister of health. The law made Norway the second country in Europe to act based on the available knowledge on the risk of smoking and leading the way for more than 100 countries to follow suit.

“As we speak we see businesses in the Nordic region and all over the world adapting to the fact that the whole world is lining up to see how climate targets and other sustainability targets that the countries are committed to through the UN 2030 agenda can be met. And it is interesting that the businesses are seeing market opportunities in this. Politicians and authorities set standards, frameworks, and regulations, and they are made so ambitious that you need innovation, and innovations create market opportunities for businesses. So, there is a fine interplay between regulatory side and innovative side, and the market development side of the green transition.”

Some of the biggest private corporations in the Nordic countries are urging politicians to take a lead in the area of green transition, says Dagfinn. They

believe that if they meet higher standards here, it will give them a market advantage, a competitive advantage internationally.

To him the Nordic Swan Ecolabel is a significant driver in the interaction between politics, businesses, and consumers, as well as a stronghold of the Nordic region. It has integrity and provides consumers, businesses, and public actors with trustworthy guidance.

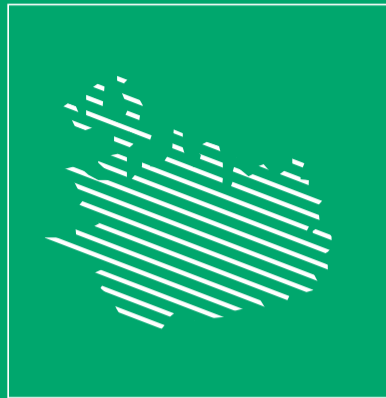
“The Nordic Swan Ecolabel is a strong symbol of Nordic cooperation in the area of environment and climate. And the fact that so many people know about it speaks for itself. It's a treasure of the Nordic cooperation. Without the Nordic Swan we would hardly have the same positive environmental awareness in the Nordics, and even the positive image that we experience today.”

To support the Nordics as a leading example for sustainable lifestyle, the Nordic Swan Ecolabel has an important role to play and is more relevant than ever before, as products and services constantly evolve and change.

“Last week the Council received a review of the Nordic cooperation on climate and environment, and the Nordic Swan Ecolabel was mentioned as one of the strongholds of the Nordic cooperation, but also one that should continue to strive for development and renewal in the years to come. Product requirements for ecolabelled products of today are requirements that will be the standard for all future products I believe.”

The Nordic countries at a glance

When zooming in on the Nordic countries, we find that although they are small individually, the importance of them as a group is considerable. The combined gross domestic product of the Nordic Region makes it the world's twelfth largest economy. And as a whole, the Nordic Region is bigger than India, making it the seventh largest landmass in the world.



Sweden		Denmark		Finland	
Population:	9,995,153	Population:	5,748,769	Population:	5,503,297
Area:	447,435	Area:	42,926	Area:	338,430
Density (inhabitants / km ²):	22	Density (inhabitants / km ²):	134	Density (inhabitants / km ²):	16
Capital population:	2,269,060 (Stockholm)	Capital population:	1,295,686 (Copenhagen)	Capital population:	1,138,502 (Helsinki)
Norway		Iceland			
Population:	5,258,317	Population:	338,349		
Area:	323,781	Area:	103,492		
Density (inhabitants / km ²):	16	Density (inhabitants / km ²):	3		
Capital population:	1,281,127 (Oslo)	Capital population:	216,878 (Reykjavik)		

The Nordic Swan Ecolabel in short



The Nordic Swan Ecolabel is the official ecolabel of the Nordic countries. It has been around for almost thirty years, connecting policy, business, and people, with the mission to make it easy to make the environmentally best choice. It was established in 1989 by the Nordic Council of Ministers and is one of the world's toughest and most recognized environmental certifications.

Nordic Ecolabelling is the non-profit organisation behind the Nordic Swan Ecolabel that offers independent third party certification and support for a wide range of goods and services.

The Nordic Swan Ecolabel works twofold and is both a symbol and a tool:

For consumers and professional buyers

The Nordic Swan Ecolabel makes it easy for consumers and professional buyers to choose among the environmentally best goods and services. Goods and services that live up to strict requirements on environment, health and quality.

For organisations

The Nordic Swan Ecolabel is an effective tool for organisations who wish to move ahead, reduce their negative impact on the environment, and receive a visible proof for their efforts.

The Nordic Swan Ecolabel:

- Is a type 1 ecolabel and following the ISO 14024 standard.
- Strives to be a positive force that provides inspiration and solutions to foster sustainable development.
- Sets strict requirements for resource consumption and waste, effect on climate, use of chemicals, and biodiversity.
- Evaluates the environmental impact of a product or service in all relevant phases of its life cycle from raw material extraction, production, and use, to waste/recycling.
- Continuously reviews and tightens its criteria. Licences are time-limited and companies must apply again to create sustainable development.
- Works proactively to show the Nordic governments how to put the UN SDG's into action.

Employees 152
Industries 58
Licences: 2135

Nordic Swan Ecolabelled products and services (globally): More than 25 000

89%

of all people in the Nordics recognize the Nordic Swan Ecolabel as a brand.

72%

of Nordic consumers think that the Nordic Swan Ecolabel makes it easier for them to make environmentally friendly choices.

The starting point

– The Nordic Swan Ecometer 2018

Last year, we conducted a Nordic consumer and segmentation study for internal use, to learn more about consumers and their relationship to sustainability and The Nordic Swan Ecolabel. The results showed that the Nordic Swan Ecolabel is a strong and well-recognised brand. However, we also saw that almost three out of four people in the Nordics are concerned about what they personally can do to protect the environment. This opened up for more questions, and we decided that we wanted to get to know the Nordic consumer even better. To do so, we asked people in all Nordic countries about their relationship to nature and their attitudes and behaviours towards sustainable consumption. We also wanted to dig deeper into the phenomena of the green gap, which is the gap between consumers' green intentions and actual behaviours.

The picture that emerged was very positive, and the Nordic Swan Ecometer 2018 (as we chose to call this study) revealed different reasons for the green gap than we first anticipated.

We found that consumers are highly aware of the impact that their individual consumption has on the environment, and although the issues of climate change and environmental degradation can feel overbearing, most Nordic consumers feel hopeful about the future. They feel in charge and believe that they can make a difference by making better decisions and choosing better products and services. And they want to do this. They want to be a part of the solution – to consume better, and support brands and companies that offer sustainable products and services. What they are lacking is easy access to attractive sustainable products and services.

There are many opportunities for businesses and policymakers to meet the consumers' needs, and businesses that choose to offer environmentally-friendly products will be greatly rewarded in terms of a supportive customer base. This builds a strong case for the Nordic Swan Ecolabel to continue with our mission to make it easier to make environmentally friendly decisions.

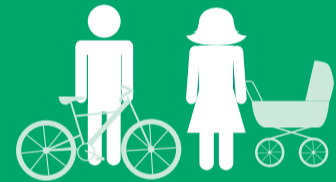


...believe we are heading towards an environmental disaster unless we change our habits quickly.



... of the Nordic consumers think of nature as a community to which they belong.

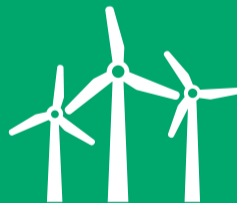
53%



believe individuals have the biggest responsibility to protect the environment.

63%

say they actively reflect on how their actions affect nature.



1/2 often think about the impact of their consumption on climate and environment.



6/10 think that their consumption choices can make a positive difference.

7 out of 10 say their choices as consumers are not as environmentally friendly as they would want them to be.



1 out of 4 (26%) think we can trust leading businesses to improve the economic and social conditions of our community.

1 out of 3 (32%) say a barrier for sustainable consumption is the difficulty to find sustainable products and services.

Almost every second person (46%) is often overwhelmed with deciding what is the right thing to buy from an environmental perspective.

1 out of 4 (25%) thinks more ecolabelled products would make the greatest difference in promoting sustainable consumption.

The survey has been planned, monitored and analyzed by United Minds between 20th of April and 4th of May 2018. The data was collected via digital surveys and distributed by e-mail to a nationally representative sample in the five Nordic markets Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Iceland. The total number of respondents was 4876.

Diving deeper

– The interviews

To compliment the results of the **Nordic Swan Ecometer 2018** we interviewed thought leaders from an array of fields to pick their brains on our hypotheses, and receive input on different strategies and approaches for closing the green gap, based on their extensive knowledge and experience.

This resulted in four chapters, where each chapter is dedicated to uncover a consumer insight, and find ways for organisations to address them.

Chapter 2	<h3>Eco-Ilectivism</h3> <p>We travel into the mind of the consumer to understand why they tend to buy things they know are bad for the environment and themselves, and learn how to engage social norms in order to nudge the consumer into making more environmentally friendly decisions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Katarína Graffman & Jacob Östberg• Per Espen Stoknes
Chapter 3	<h3>The necessary add on</h3> <p>We talk to people who have successfully created a product that is both sustainable and attractive for the consumer – because only being sustainable won't do the trick. The consumer wants it all.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jonas Arrelöv• Malene Teller Blume• Anne-Sophie Skjødt Villumsen & Jørgen Skjødt• Tine Emilie Svendsen & Tanja Gregersen
Chapter 4	<h3>Streamlining sustainability</h3> <p>We explore how to make the easy choice the right choice, hence making it easier for the consumer to make sustainable decisions in a life full of other things to handle.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Per Bolund• Mattias Goldmann• Sigríd Barnekow• Lisa Book Taube
Chapter 5	<h3>Values for the money</h3> <p>We speak to visionary leaders and change makers about how to build a business based on sustainable values – something consumers are both demanding and supporting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Halla Tómasdóttir• Vincent Stanley• Magdalena Lönnroth & Anne Kvam

7/10

believe that their choices as consumers are not as environmentally friendly as they would like them to be.

Eco-Ilectivism

Consumption is a big part of our identity. It creates a sense of being a part of a larger context and belonging to a group. For the Nordic consumer specifically, making sustainable choices is integral in how we view ourselves.

But we do not always do what we know is right, creating the so-called green gap, and a bad conscience. Having the information is not always enough. In order for us to change behaviours we need to activate the social brain - that is engaging social norms and putting facts into social and historical contexts. At Nordic Ecolabelling, we strongly believe in the positive impact the collective such as society or a region has on an individual's behaviour connected to sustainability. We call it eco-Ilectivism.

In this chapter we talk to leading researchers who link sustainable consumption to psychology, anthropology and advertising to better understand the choices of the Nordic consumer.

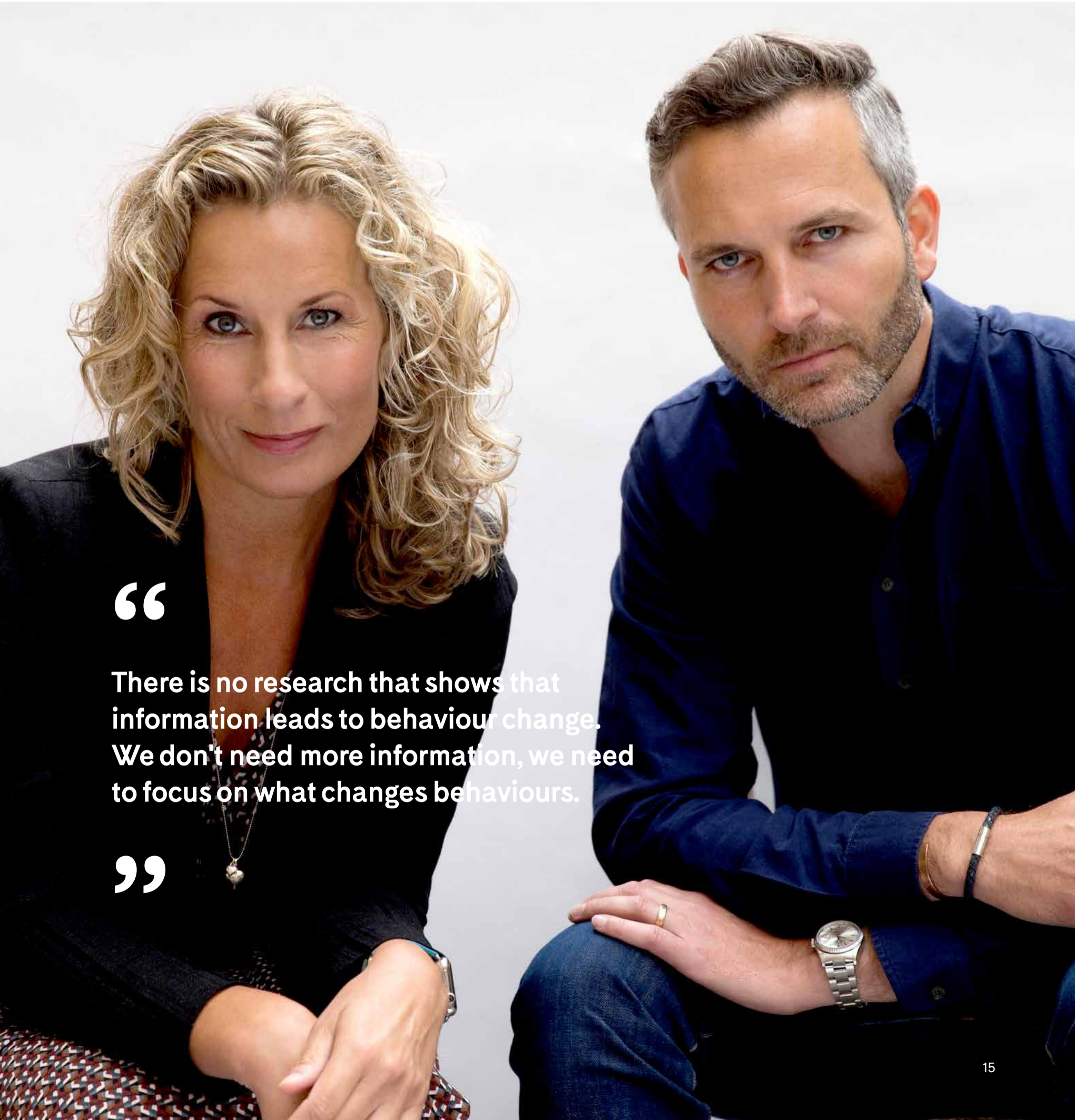
**Katarina Graffman
& Jacob Östberg**

The power of the group

To kick off our journey across the Nordic region and to dive into the mind of the Nordic consumer, we met with Katarina Graffman and Jacob Östberg, who recently released their book “We Are What We Buy”. The book describes how brands can leverage new types of consumption patterns and which common stereotypes about consumers should be challenged. Reading about the book made us curious, and luckily, they had the time to meet us to discuss sustainable consumption.

Katarina is a doctor of cultural anthropology and an experienced consumer anthropologist. For over two decades, she has helped companies understand their consumers, as well as consumer culture, and media behaviour. Jacob is a professor of advertising & PR at Stockholm University's School of Business. He was the first professor in his field in Sweden and is interested in how individuals in the consumer society create meaning and value through consumption, and how brands are filled with meaning in the intersection of popular culture, marketing, and consumers' daily lives.





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There is no research that shows that information leads to behaviour change. We don't need more information, we need to focus on what changes behaviours.

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**Katarina Graffman
& Jacob Östberg**

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**Forget about
individualism.**

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**You have a lot of principles
for how to behave, but most
often that just means that you
will find a lot of reasons not to
follow them.**

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**hat do you mean
when you say that
we are what we buy?**

Jacob: We live in a
consumer culture.
Consumption is
found just about ev-
erywhere. It is almost

impossible to not consume. There are certainly those
who define themselves by disregarding consumption,
but that still means they relate a part of their identity
to consumption.

**Given the physical and emotional proximity to nature,
is there a Nordic version of the consumer culture that
is more sustainable?**

Katarina: When we conducted food studies in which
we looked at organic vs. locally produced food,
we found similar studies that previously had been

conducted in England. England is quite progressive
and ahead with organic marketing. When comparing
the countries, it was very clear that the proximity
Swedes have to nature meant that they did not worry
as much about it. Because when Swedish people go
out into nature and everything looks nice and clean,
they think that it can't be as bad as the news say. This
results in the fact that Swedes do not feel the same
need to buy eco-friendly products, much unlike the
English people. So, it seems a close relationship with
nature means that we get the opposite effect.

**Can we see a difference in how different age groups
behave in relation to the environment and climate?**

Katarina: One thing that is interesting about the el-
derly and the younger generation is that the latter has
been given information about the environment and
climate together with their mother's milk. So, when
comparing the older with younger people, it is clear

**My social circles affect me
a thousand times more than
any influencer will.**

that younger people have extremely high theoretical knowledge, but they do not make sustainable decisions in their everyday life. When looking at older people, you see that they have practical knowledge. They switch off the lights, don't let the water run, etc. Thus, living more sustainable than young people with high theoretical knowledge.

Why is it that way?

Jacob: We have this idea that information leads to attitudinal changes which leads to changes in consumption and behaviour but there is no research to prove this. You can check people's purchase intentions before they enter a store and then see that they are not consistent with what they actually bought. A successful information campaign is typically defined as one that changes attitudes, but that does not necessarily lead to behavioural changes. Sometimes people will engage in another behaviour right after the information campaign, but after a while, we go back to business as usual.

about all the rest? For most people there are too many barriers. Therefore, I believe that nudging and regulations is what will lead to the major change.

So, there is no idea putting our trust in the individual?

Katarina: Forget about individualism. It would be a nice myth to cultivate that the age of individualism is here and that we are no longer affected by others, especially not by advertising. That we care less about norms and are more likely to go by our own rules. This idea makes people and businesses feel amazing – nobody wants to go shopping and feel that they're just one in the crowd. So, we keep this thought and it makes us go on as we do; shopping and thinking that everyone else is following the herd, except for you, which is not the reality.

In anthropological terms, it is said that the more individualistic countries are, the more you need group relationships. The Nordic countries are among the most individualistic countries in the world, but we tend to ignore the fact that the pack becomes even

with the whole family to Bali. Now, when you compare emissions to other families, you will notice an increased shame when flying the whole family to Bali. We are currently in a shift where these social aspects are being taken into account.

Katarina: All our behaviours are about what our close group does. Our social circles affect us a thousand times more than any influencer will. In order for the information to click in and become a behaviour, something additional needs to happen, and that something is almost always the close group.

Is it through the group that we can change behaviours?

Katarina: Yes, it is by getting groups of people to change by nudging them in the right direction. People will do what other people close to them do.

Jacob: And not to trust that the way to change is to inform. Make people change behaviours, either through nudging or not giving people the oppor-

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When consumers actually want a change, they will vote with their wallets, so we wait until things get a little worse and hope for it to change.

”

What happens between planning to buy something and then ending up buying something completely different?

Jacob: Life happens. We are not just brains, we are bodies affected by various stimuli. When we are inside the store, we are exposed to lots of messages that try to make us not follow our intentions. Many people go into the store thinking “it's vegetarian Monday” and leave with a steak.

Katarina: And you always find excuses. In my latest study, we looked at how we have these basic attitudes, such as; “I've given up snacking” or “I don't eat anything sweet to my coffee”. You have a lot of principles for how to behave, but most often that just means that you will find a lot of reasons not to follow them. It's not that we are lying, there are just so many contextual factors that influence us.

Does this mean that little will change even though we have more information than ever before?

Katarina: Say that twenty percent of the consumers make active choices based on information, what

more important because we can't become ourselves without someone else to relate to.

How does group dynamic work in decision making?

Katarina: In groups where you have constant contact with friends, the importance of the group for how to consume is increasingly important, often crucial. The closer the group are the more likely they are to cooperate around different decision situations. Messages that are perceived as meaningful, commercial as well as non-commercial, are secured by being mirrored to people we trust. In most groups, these informal leaders have become increasingly important for choosing whether to buy something or not.

Jacob: In studies about electricity consumption, where people have been informed about how much electricity their neighbours consume, we can see that they quite quickly adapt their own consumption to their neighbours. It becomes a contest. We are also beginning to see an interesting development with some consumption behaviours that have been stigmatised. Previously, it was seen as status to travel

tunity to be unaware. There is this idea that when consumers actually want a change, they will vote with their wallets. So, we wait until things get a little worse and hope for it to change. But we cannot really wait for that.

Numbers & figures chapter two

When looking at the results from the Nordic Swan Ecometer 2018, we see that a majority of the respondents want to make more environmentally friendly choices and that they believe we are heading towards an environmental disaster unless we change our habits quickly.

7/10

believe that their choices as consumers are not as environmentally friendly as they would like them to be.

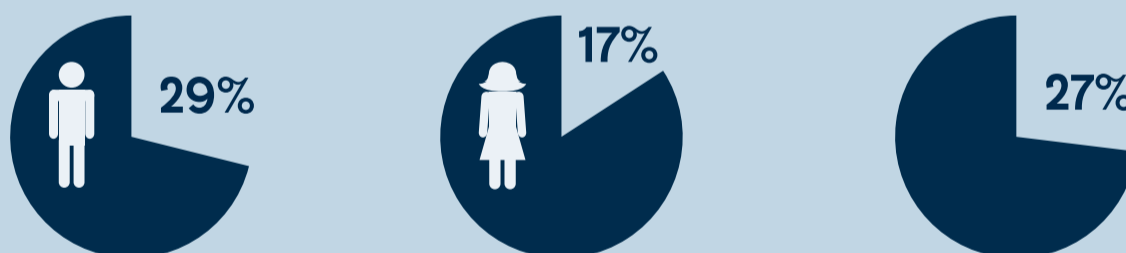
2 out of 3 consumers think we are heading towards an environmental disaster unless we change our habits quickly.

Only 20% of all respondents say that politicians have the highest responsibility and only 17% say businesses have the main responsibility.

However, even in 2018, there is a group of people who believe that global warming is a natural phenomena not caused by humans.

23% of all Nordic people say climate change and global warming is natural, and not a consequence of human activities.

Taking a closer look at this data point revealed that for certain demographics this number is even higher:



29% of all men, in comparison to 17% of all females, deny manmade climate change and 27% of all respondents under 25 years, the youngest age group.

Flip to the next page to read what we found out when discussing this paradox with the Norwegian climate change expert, Per Espen Stoknes.

The brain – the barrier and

The research is clear: Humans are causing climate change, and information about this is widely available and publicly discussed. However, even in the Nordics, a region considered the stronghold of sustainability, shown by countless global surveys and rankings, 1 out of 5 (23%) say climate change is a natural phenomenon, not caused by human activities.

According to Per Espen Stoknes, a psychologist with a PhD in economics and co-chair at the Center for Green Growth at BI Norwegian Business School, unsettling facts about climate change make some people cup their ears. By joining outspoken denialism, people find refuge from fear and guilt. Per Espen believes denial is based in self-defence, not ignorance, intelligence, or lack of information.

In 2005, Per Espen Stoknes stumbled on statistics, showing that the concern in richer Western countries for climate change was declining in 1990, meaning while climate science became more certain, people started to become less concerned. Being a psychologist, he got interested in exploring the reasons beyond this psychological climate paradox as he calls it. Today, Per Espen is a renowned thought leader for a new psychology behind climate change, always advocating for finding positive stories to talk about climate crisis to avoid fatigue.

We warmly recommend checking out his book *What We Think About When We Try Not To Think About Global Warming*. For this report, we got the chance to sit down with him to discuss how we should talk about climate change.

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The biggest barrier to stopping climate change is between our ears. It's about six inches thick, it's our brain.

”



solution

Per Espen Stoknes

“
If you could activate social norms around the Nordic Swan Ecolabel, it would have a bigger behavioral effect.
”

People need to get this sense that we are moving towards the society that we want.

Per Espen argues we need to find a new way to talk about climate change:

“Conventional climate and environmental communications are operated by the assumption that people are not aware of the facts, or that knowledge will change behaviour. This approach of “if only the public would understand climate change”, or “if only they would understand the issue of plastic in the oceans” — and people will agree and change their behaviour — is not the correct model of human mind, or of how change happens. It has been proven insufficient and wrong many times over.

To make things worse, the focus is often on the

disaster, rather the solutions, e.g. most media articles use around 80% of disaster framing and less than 10% of solutions. Humans are social animals first and foremost. Trying to reach the abstract brain, as done by most climate and environmental science, is not powerful. So that is why we need to talk about climate change in a new way.

I also think it is difficult to use conventional advertising to initiate change, e.g. working with celebrities or good-looking people to promote sustainable products and hoping for people to copy their behaviour.”

We increasingly see tools that allow you to calculate your individual footprint or consumption. According to Per Espen just calculating numbers in kg or tons doesn't help much.

The five barriers:

Distance

– The climate issue remains remote for the majority of us from a geographic or time perspective.

Doom

– When climate change is framed as an encroaching disaster that can only be addressed by loss, cost and sacrifice, it creates a wish to avoid the topic.

Dissonance

– If what we know (for instance, our fossil energy use contributes to global warming) conflicts with what we do (drive, fly, eat beef, heat with fossil fuels), dissonance sets in. The same happens if my attitudes conflict with those of people important to me. In both cases, the lack of convenient behaviours and social support weaken climate attitudes over time. But by doubting or downplaying what we know (the facts), we can feel better about how we live. Thus, actual behaviour and social relations determine the attitude in the long run.

Denial

– When we negate, ignore, or otherwise avoid acknowledging the unsettling facts about climate change, we find refuge from fear and guilt. By joining outspoken denialism and mockery, we can get back at those whom we feel criticise our lifestyles, think they know better, and try to tell us how to live. Denial is based in self-defence, not ignorance, intelligence, or lack of information.

iDentity

– We filter news through our professional and cultural identity. We look for information that confirms our existing values and notions, and filter away what challenges them. If people who hold conservative values, for instance, hear from a liberal that the climate is changing, they are less likely to believe the message. Cultural identity overrides the facts. If new information requires us to change ourselves, then the information is likely to lose. We experience resistance to calls for change in self-identity.

“Those numbers are still very abstract. You have to connect them to the social dimension – how much is this compared to my friends? How much is this compared to a year ago? How much is this compared to the average person in my area? In my city? You have not only to provide the number, but also the meaning or the insight of this person's relative position to others. This is where you get acknowledgement and engagement,” he says.

“The biggest barrier to stopping climate change are between our ears. It's about six inches thick; it's our brain. My research shows that there are five barriers called distance, doom, dissonance, denial and identity that make people not act on the information.”

Per Espen's perspective on the Nordic region is that there has been strengthening narratives and stories around the Nordic model, focusing on a shift to maximise wellbeing and the good life, instead of maximising economic growth at all costs.

“I think this is an important story to build on. However, I believe it is important going forward that we don't rest on our laurels and compare ourselves with others, but that we keep on comparing ourselves with ourselves from an historic point of view to make sure that our progress is real and quick enough. People need to get this sense that we are moving

towards the society that we want.”

What is most important message that you have for businesses and consumers?

“For businesses, I would say it is to set science-based targets for their resource productivity when it comes to climate emissions and other resource usage. Because that could help them to say that “our operations are compliant or aligned with the Paris agreement.” Or “what does the Paris agreement mean for my company?”, and we can calculate that,” he suggests.

“And for the individuals, I would say the combination of voting in the marketplace with your wallet, and then voting for a party that gives real priority to the climate and the environment is equally important and the most important things you can do.”

Having the attention of this master mind we could not resist the temptation to ask him straight out about his views on the Nordic Swan Ecolabel, and to what degree he thinks this is a way to bridge the green gap.

“It is a good tool as it helps in terms of nudging. You reduce the cognitive complexity of evaluating the options and develop a simple habit of just picking products with the Nordic Swan Ecolabel, hence, making my purchase less complex.

“Businesses that have the Nordic Swan Ecolabel should find a way to give feedback to customers based on the difference they make through picking this label. What are the implications of me choosing this product? And what are the accumulated effect of myself and others in my city or country. People need to feel that their choice has made a difference.

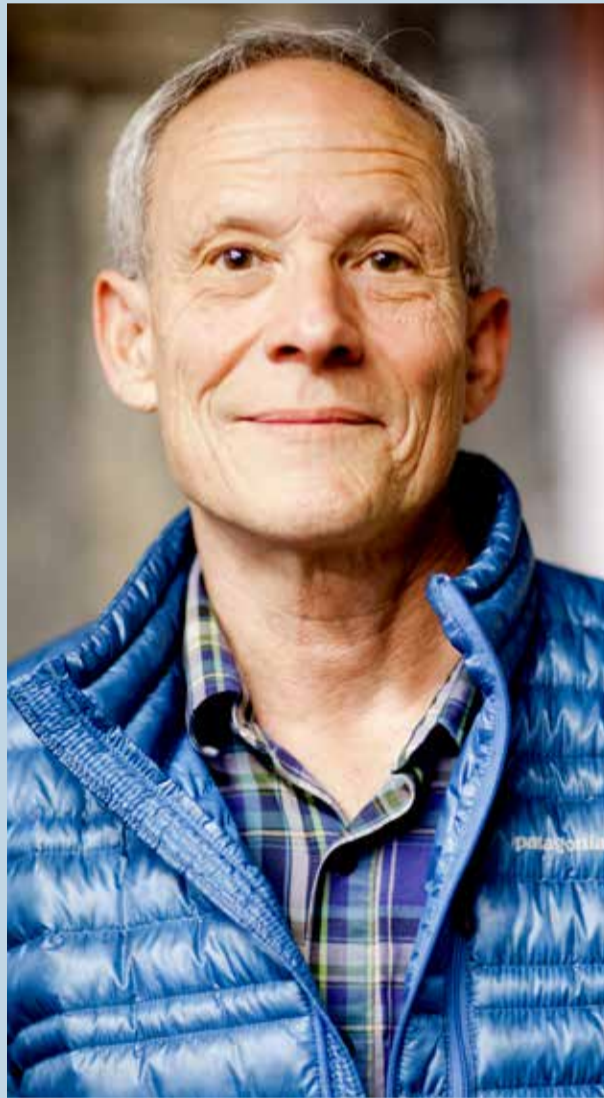
We could also engage social norms, where I get feedback about how many other people in a similar situation to me have chosen this product. There is this famous study about the use of towels in hotels where they changed the signs in the bathroom that said “Please think about the environment”, or “Don't change towels more often than you need to”, to say “7 out of the 10 people who previously lived in this room used their towel again”. It created the impression of a social norm – that most people in my situation are actually doing this. That has a much bigger effect on the number of people who are reusing their towels than the previous labels. In the same way, if you could activate social norms around the Nordic Swan Ecolabel, it would have a bigger behavioural effect.”

But there are also five solutions:

- Make climate change social – by activating social norms.
- Make it simpler to act – through nudging.
- Use supportive framings – so rather than doom, disaster and cost we should speak about framings that create engagement such as health and opportunity.
- Use storytelling – engage people in green growth, the good life, stewardship or rewilding. Also use more personalized storytelling, so not just numbers and the global average and threats, but the heroes and heroines. Who are they? What are the scientists personally feeling and doing?
- Give signals – feedback your customers on how they together with people in their neighborhood are making many good decisions. More good decisions than they did last year, or than the neighboring community.

– Vincent Stanley, Director of Philosophy at Patagonia

I think there has been interesting work in psychology over the past 10 years. People don't really change the way they look at things and then change their behaviour, people change their behaviour on the basis of experience and then they change the way they think. So for those of us who are trying to persuade customers with an argument, I think that it's good to remember to also provide the occasion – that there's an actual change in the experience for the customers, and if you're doing it right they'll come along with you.



I have 5 brothers and sisters and they made fun of me when I started recycling, but now within two to three years, they've started recycling too. I think people are moved by the authority of the words of the people they respect, and

whenever they have an experience that improves their lives, it changes their minds. So for those of us who are trying to bring about change, we can influence, but we have to provide the opportunity for people to change behaviours, and then minds will change.

Key takeaways

- Doomsday communication is counterproductive. Be positive and highlight the benefits that come with sustainable choices, such as quality and health.
- Information is not enough. Engage social norms and activate the social brain – we are pack animals and look at each other when forming behaviours.
- Put numbers in historical and/or social contexts to enable comparison.
- Make it simple to be sustainable by adopting nudging strategies.

Glossary

Consumer culture

– A culture in which people often buy new goods, especially goods that they do not need, and in which a high value is placed on owning many things.

Doomsday communication

– Using negative framing and painting a dark picture of the climate situation to scare people into action.

Eco-Ilectivism

– The positive impact the collective, such as society or a region has on an individual's behaviour connected to sustainability.

Green gap

– The gap between what we know we should do and what we actually are doing.

Nudging

– Helping people change behaviours by promoting the preferred choice in different ways.

Social brain

– As pack animals, our brains are connected, and we adapt to each other's behaviours.

8/10

say quality is most important when buying products or services.

The necessary add on

The Nordic consumer wants products that are of high quality, look good, and are good for them - all at the best possible price. These criteria can be difficult to give up for a product that only has got the sustainability part right. Sustainability is an add on, but a very important one, that people are increasingly demanding.

This means that the days of ill-fitted organic clothes, and home-made soaps are counted. And so are the days of fast fashion chains without a sustainability strategy. The good news for both the consumer and the producer is that these criteria go hand in hand. Environmentally friendly products are often healthier, tastier, and higher in quality, meaning that if an effort is being made, there is much to gain.

At Nordic Ecolabelling, we continuously develop the criteria for our certifications, to make sure that products carrying our stamp are healthy, of good quality and of course sustainable, so that the consumer can have it all.

Being smart about denim

“ Oh, by the way it's sustainable. ”

Denim is Jonas Arrelöv's passion. He can look back at more than 15 years of working in the fashion industry with jeans design, production, and quality management. As head of the jeans department at Cubus, he has labelled their most popular jeans model with the Nordic Swan Ecolabel. From his point of view, companies have to treat sustainability as a crucial add on and make it easier for the customer to choose a more sustainable product. When talking to us, he generously shared his most important lessons on how you make sustainable fashion desirable and accessible for a broader audience.

Jonas, what does sustainability mean in the fashion industry?

It's a very important word to start with, but it can mean many different things, from fibres up to var-

ious certifications. The big question is how much knowledge the end consumer have. I think it's important to make clothes that the end consumer actually wants, and that they love and use. And of course, then as an added value, it's even more fantastic when they can buy a product that is sustainable.

Are corporate sustainability initiatives in the fashion industry just another example for companies aiming to find commercial potential trends, or do they reflect a larger shift?

Sustainability will be crucial for the textile industry to survive in the future and I think many companies share this view. A lot is happening at the moment, especially in my field, denim, but everyone communicate their commitments in different ways. There are companies who talk very loudly about it and there are companies that just do it without too much buzz. Either way is great as long as you do the actual work.

“
I think that's the beauty of it, that we are helping factories to become better, even if they are located on the other side of the world.
”

Many consumers take it for granted and believe that it's the industry's task to evolve and adapt, and to offer sustainable options.

Then as an added value, it's even more fantastic when they can buy a product that is sustainable

Is it the consumers or the companies that are pushing the industry towards becoming more sustainable?

I think it's the companies. Clearly, the many reports where you see that the consumers are increasingly interested in more sustainable garments has been a great motivation for the industry. But it's our industry itself that's been the frontrunner for change.

How can a company engage their customers in its quest for sustainability?

My mindset has always been to make a product that hopefully a lot of people will enjoy. And today we have a lot of opportunities to make clothes that have a lower impact on the environment, without compromising the look or quality of the garment. That's the key to everything. I believe it is not enough for a garment to be sustainable. It has to be attractive to the consumer, and then secondly - "oh, by the way, it's sustainable". This is the order you should think about.

So, the customer should just be able to pick a good-looking product that also happens to be sustainable?

Our approach is to make it easier for the consumer to make a better choice. There are very different groups of consumers out there. Some are very interested and want to learn and read about the products, but some just want very nice garments without thinking too much about it. We don't want to make every consumer read an A4 page about why certain products are sustainable. Instead, we are making it easy for them to buy a good product without having to think about it. I also think many consumers take it for granted and believe that it's the industry's task to evolve and adapt, and to offer sustainable options.

There is this notion that ecolabelled products are more expensive. How do you work with affordability?

Just because a product is more sustainable doesn't mean it has to be exclusive in a way. We have our business strategy when it comes to what

type of products we want to do and we need to attract a big group of consumers. We know that we have fantastic jeans that are really good, they fit great, and you look good. It's a lot of value for the money. And now, when we offer jeans with the Nordic Swan Ecolabel, we offer our customers even more value.

Why did you choose to go with the Nordic Swan Ecolabel?

Because we felt it is not easy for consumers today; it is a bit of a jungle out there. There's so many different types of diversions and types of certifications. I don't think people will understand what BCI (Better Cotton Initiative) is, but the beauty of the Nordic Swan Ecolabel is that the consumer has this image in mind: "Oh I found a product, it has the Nordic Swan Ecolabel, and it's a better product for me". In that aspect, it goes hand in hand with our strategy to make things easy. You don't have to read so much about the Nordic Swan Ecolabel, you automatically understand that this is something that is better. And since it's not our own label, it gives us recognition and credibility and adds value for us.

We started with the babywear and then we just added more product groups. Jeans were the second one. For us, it was important to not make collections on the side that were sustainable, but to make our most popular products sustainable. That's what we did with the jeans particularly.

Are you planning on adding more product groups?

We are adding on a bit, but one important factor is that it takes time to get our factories approved. I see that as a good thing because it also drives us. It's not like "Oh I want the Nordic Swan Ecolabel and then tomorrow I receive the product." It takes a long time for a factory to get the proofs you need, so you need to plan far ahead.

How do you approach a factory on the other side of the world with a request of making it certified, according to Nordic Swan Ecolabelling requirements?

The Nordic Swan Ecolabel is very Nordic indeed, and if you ask somebody in the US with a new factory and say that we would like them to start a collaboration with Nordic Ecolabelling, even if no one else in USA will use the branding, it will help them to evolve their factory and reach a higher level and that attracts them. I think that's the beauty of it; that we are helping factories to become better, even if they are located on the other side of the world.

Numbers & figures

chapter three

Although the consumer often thinks about the impact of their consumption on climate change and the environment, many factors are considered when making a purchase.

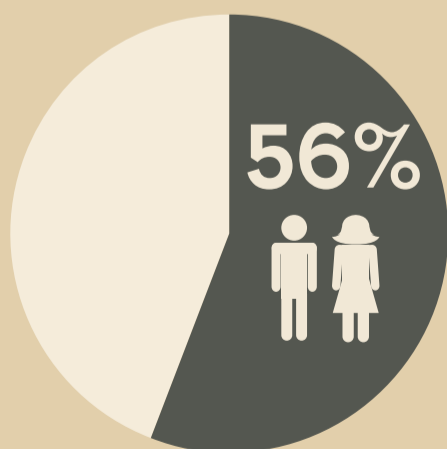
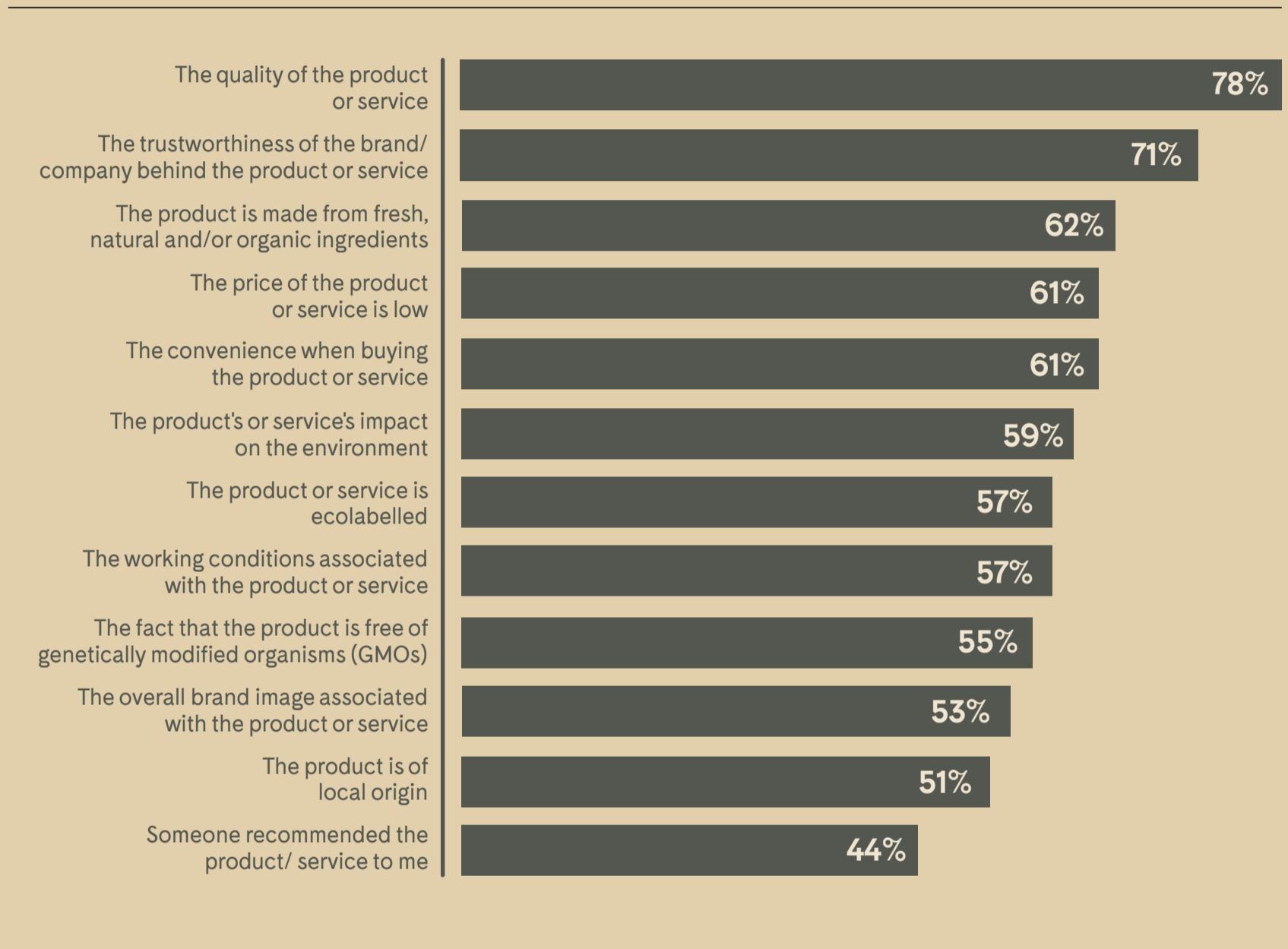
1 out of 2 often think about how their consumption impact the climate and environment.

8 / 10

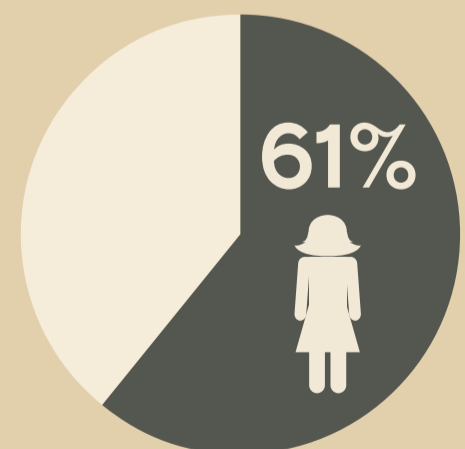
say quality is most important when buying products or services.

The necessary add on

Quality is on top, but sustainability proved by an ecolabel is also important. And consumers are demanding sustainability, although as an add on.



1 out of 2 says ecolabelling is an important criterion, for females this number is even higher (61%).



Malene Teller Blume

Entering the supermarket, you are bombarded with messages, claims, and a wide range of products to choose from. In front of the shelf is possibly where most consumers experience internal bargaining – weighing price against quality, sustainability, and health and safety aspects. In the Nordics, quality is a particular focus, with as many as 8 out of 10 consumers say that quality is the most important aspect for choosing products or services.

We sat down with Malene Teller Blume, the head of quality at Coop Denmark, the country's largest retailer of consumer goods. The chain is based on a co-operation that is more than 150 years old and has a long tradition of placing particularly strict requirements on the products they sell, which is "part of their DNA," according to Malene.

What is the role of the quality department in this, and how do they define the term quality?

"Our responsibility on the one hand, is to ensure that all stores comply with the requirements and regulations for food and non-food items. When we are convinced that

stances and chemicals that are deemed to be detrimental to either health or environment, from the products to the packaging, to increase awareness that they, for years, have set requirements beyond legislation for their private labels. Malene describes the process:

"Having strict requirements is our way of differentiating ourselves from the competition – to combine good business with being a responsible company. In the quality department we do not have a direct CSR responsibility, however, we are working with the topic in the way that products of the highest quality are the products that can be described as sustainable."

Coop is leading by example, pushing producers and public authorities while increasing awareness among consumers.

"Our customers are interested in a range of sustainability topics, such as organic, phase-out chemicals, animal welfare, and food waste – all topics that we have been discussing and addressing for many years. I think that we have a higher amount of concerned and demanding consumers than a lot of other shops in Denmark," states Malene.

“**Having strict requirements is our way of differentiating ourselves from the competition.**”

current legislation is not adequately addressing health and environmental risks, and we know that there are better alternatives, especially in the case of our private labels, we define stricter requirements for ourselves. This is something we have done for many years, says Malene. No products on our shelves should have any hazardous effects. Even for our cheapest private-label products and our discount products, these strict requirements apply."

Developing the requirements is often a balancing act and something that must be done on a case-by-case basis, explains Malene. When comparing concerns from consumers and publicly discussed issues with the scientific evidence. It's tough to keep the balance between concerns and science and we have a lot of work going on behind the scenes," continues Malene.


In 2015, Coop pulled all microwave popcorn from the shelves of their 1,200 stores in Denmark. This was until producers finally found a new packaging solution without the hormone-disrupting fluorinated compounds. Consumers' reactions were positive. In 2016, Coop launched the "Dirty Dozen" campaign to remove 12 sub-

Organic and ecolabelled products make up a big part of the assortment.

"We are by far the leading retail chain when it comes to Swan-labelled products and more than 1000 products on our shelves are certified with the Nordic Swan Ecolabel or Organic labels" says Malene – and she expects this share to rise. "Certified products like the Nordic Swan play a very important role in our strategy to protect the environment and health, while providing consumers with guidance in our shops."

A challenge that Coop has yet to solve is how to visualize in the stores how large the assortment of high-quality products actually is – products that are more environmentally friendly, non-allergenic or contain less chemicals, and that the range of these products is much broader than in other shops. Malene stresses this by saying

"We want to sell; however, we also want to act responsibly because that's part of our DNA and something we have done for many years."



The necessary add on

Leading change



Anne-Sophie Skjødt Villumsen
& Jørgen Skjødt

**It has to do the job
– and look good wh**

“

Even though people want to have a sustainable lifestyle, most of them only buy products that work. So you have to have a product that's at least as good as the competitors.

”

Not only large actors are responding to consumers' increased need for sustainable alternatives and products that are of high quality and safe to use. Other actors also realise the opportunity in doing good, while doing good. Our experience is that the smaller companies are much faster to adapt. An impressive case is Zenz Organic, a family-owned Danish company, run by Anne-Sophie Skjødt Villumsen and her husband Jørgen Skjødt. Anne-Sophie started Denmark's first green hair salon back in 1999. Today, Zenz Organic Hairdressing has grown into the largest organic hairdressing chain in the Nordic countries, with seven own green hair salons in the Copenhagen area in Denmark and franchise salons in Norway, Denmark, as well as concept salons in Australia, Iceland and the Faroe Islands.

Already during her apprenticeship as a hairdresser, Anne-Sophie developed allergies towards traditional hair products. In order to continue in the hairdressing business, while helping others with the same problem, she began to develop Zenz Organic products, encompassing healthier hair care, styling, oils, and skincare products certified with the Nordic Swan Ecolabel. Their vision is to work towards a better world by taking responsibility and helping to develop a healthier and more sustainable beauty industry for the consumer, the hairdresser, and others using or dealing with beauty products.

Today, Zenz Organic has around 600 resellers around the world, most of them hairdressers. Anne-Sophie teaches green hairdressers all over

the world and can look back at 20 years of fighting for a healthier beauty industry.

“I think as there is more information about allergies and harmful ingredients linked to cancer and problems of getting pregnant, more people are starting to think: “What am I really using?”, both at work and in the supermarket. It is a problem that many people still seem to believe that there is enough regulation to ensure that there are no harmful ingredients in the products you buy in the supermarket, or online”, says Anne-Sophie.

Their secret for success is that sustainability is a necessary add on for them together with quality and design.

“Even though people want to have a sustainable lifestyle, most of them only buy products that work. So you have to have a product that's at least as good as the competitors,” says Jørgen.

Zenz largest sales channels are hair salons that use their products and resell them to their customers, which provides a strong proof of concept. Anne-Sophie explains further that packaging plays a key role as well.

“We wanted our packaging to look like a stone in water – Nordic, natural, clean and simple. The packaging is very important, it's unisex, and it looks good in your home – and that is important.”

From the beginning, they decided that they didn't want to compromise on design and aesthetics. At the moment, they are running a project with the Royal Danish Design School to give their packaging a refresh and find materials that are even more sustainable.

Anne-Sophie has won several awards for both

her products and hairdressing talent. She became Hairdresser of the Year at the Danish Beauty Award 2015, and Green Hairdresser and Green Producer at the Scandinavian Green Cosmetics Awards 2014.

“I think about four years ago we changed the way we communicate. Instead of focusing on bad things, discussing diseases and allergies, our brand now communicates “Fashion with a Swan”, as being a sustainable fashion brand. This has given us success,” explains Jørgen.

Private green certifications are a big issue for the green product market. Products claim to be natural and sustainable, but still contain a lot of harmful ingredients, or only focus on small parts of the sustainability issues.

“It is a big problem for us,” says Anne-Sophie. “We hope the governments will start to do more to avoid the greenwashing because it can backfire for the whole industry. That was why we started to work with the Nordic Swan Ecolabel. We said that we need to have an independent certification, so that it is not us claiming that our products are good. We wanted to find a label that you can trust. The Nordic Swan was actually the only label that was taking care of both the health and the environment and thus, we chose it. Working with the Nordic Swan Ecolabel, being a government official label, has helped us tell the story that these products can be trusted”.

Their experience from marketing their products abroad is that their Nordic origin is a strong sales argument.

“Outside the Nordics we experience the same growing demand for products that can support a sustainable lifestyle. And the Nordic origin helps. The Nordic region is a quality stamp both with regards to design, but also, the knowledge that the Nordic region is greener than the rest of the world,” describes Jørgen.

Thinking about the future, Anne-Sophie and Jørgen are very optimistic that a change is on the way.

“We have been growing every year and believe there is a big market for sustainable, healthy, and environmental friendly beauty products some years from now” says Anne-Sophie. “But we also think that a lot of the big cosmetic companies are looking into this potential right now. So if you look maybe five years from now, it will be more normal to think about health in beauty products too. We also believe that many more hairdressers will go green, and we experience that younger people are much more aware on the footprint they leave in the world.”

hile doing it

Tanja Gregersen
& Tine Emilie Svendsen

Transparent makeup

Another case from Denmark is Miild Cosmetics, a makeup line run by makeup artists Tanja Gregersen and Tine Emilie Svendsen. Similar to Anne-Sophie, they became entrepreneurs out of plain necessity.

It all started three and a half years ago when Tine developed a severe allergy and her doctor recommended her to never use makeup again. As a makeup artist and enthusiast, this was a devastating diagnosis. What should she do? Her friend Tanja, who had been suffering from allergies most of her life, suggested they start their own cosmetic label, skipping chemicals and perfumes, combining professional results with healthy formulas, to create products that everyone could use, without thinking about the consequences on their skin or the footprint on the environment.

“Looking back at it, I think it was a really naive idea, but it was necessary because we had the problem ourselves and we knew that we were not alone,” says Tanja with a smile.

They approached Ecolabelling Denmark and became the first makeup line certified by the Nordic Swan Ecolabel. Working with makeup, they did not want to make any compromises with regards to the functionality of the products.

“We chose to partner with the Nordic Swan Ecolabel because we wanted to give the consumers transparency,” says Tanja. “Everyone can claim that their products are good for the environment. But we wanted to take it to the next level by following the strict requirements of the Nordic Swan Ecolabel. In Denmark, almost everyone knows and trusts the Nordic Swan and an addition to us was that we shared the same values. So, it made a lot of sense for us to apply for the Nordic Swan. Alongside the Nordic Swan Ecolabel, the products are also certified with EcoCert and AllergyCertified.”

We are talking to Tanja via Skype. The two of them are very busy at the moment. Next week, they will go to the industry event, Stockholm Beauty Week, to present Miild to journalists, buyers and influencers, and to participate in a panel debate about the makeup of the future.

Is Miild the type of makeup brand that can lead the way? Who is the typical target group?

Tanja explains that their initial target group was

women from 25 to 45 years old, living in bigger cities.

Today, only a year later, consumers all over the country are buying their products. Apart from people suffering from allergies and consumers who generally prefer ecolabelled products, there are teenagers, pregnant women and young mothers that are also key target groups.

“One group includes the teenager who has problems with her skin or with a mother who says “if you are going to wear makeup at this young age, I want it to be Miild, I’ll buy it for you”. Another target group includes moms who are really close to their kids, kissing them all day and feeling that they don’t want to risk causing harm to the children’s skin or health”.

“I think our customers come from all ages and different parts of the society. It is actually more about the values you have as a consumer and we experience more and more consumers viewing sustainability and organic products as a necessary aspect – making our products interesting for many more people than just those suffering from allergies.”

Miild is a young company. A key success factor has been how they have managed to use different digital channels to connect with their audience.

“ Before launching their first products, they started a blog and created accounts on Instagram, Facebook, and Snapchat. This allowed them to explore how to build their brand and showed their

followers who they are, how much they care and how much they know about beauty, fashion, and sustainability.

“From the very beginning, it was important for Tine and myself to communicate in an honest and transparent way with our customers. We want them to know as much as we do. We want to educate them, take them behind the scenes and show them how we produce the makeup, including the ingredients we use. We have tried at times to make blog posts that are a bit heavier and more informative, and it doesn’t really work. Consumers want to know they can trust you, but they don’t want to get overtaxed with all the details all the time. Let customers know that they can ask whatever they want and then provide them with information to the best of your ability. Use blog posts for more information and Instagram and Snapchat for tutorials and how-to content, keeping it lighter and engaging. And always communicate with your customers and followers the same way you would talk to your friends.”

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Key takeaways & glossary

Key takeaways

- Get the order right. Only being sustainable won't do the trick. Focus on making products that people want and make them sustainable. This makes it easier for the consumer to make sustainable decisions.
- If you already have a very popular product, certify that one instead of creating a sustainable collection on the side.
- Have a minimum standard for all your products, i.e. even for your low-price brands.
- Don't assume all consumers want to read a lot of information. A well-known ecolabel makes it easy to communicate, and easy for the consumer to act on.
- Be transparent. Let the consumer know that the information is available for them, and that they can ask you about anything.

Glossary

Phase-out chemicals

– Chemicals that are being phased out through legislation.

The necessary add on

– In the Nordics sustainability is an add on of which the product should not be without.

The necessary add on

**1 out of 3 feel
that they need
to make an
extra effort to
find sustainable
products and
services.**

Streamlining sustainability

We are many that feel that we want to live more sustainable. But it is not always easy to do the right thing when there is new advice every week on what to buy or not, and hundreds of different labels to choose from. On top of that, we have to recycle more, become better at taking care of our clothes and switch the car for the bike.

The Nordic Swan Ecolabel helps to remove some of the hurdles and barriers for a sustainable life thus, making it easier to make sustainable decisions, for both organisations and individuals. But more is needed. Luckily, we see a change in the society where ownership is increasingly seen as a burden and new services help us to streamline our lives into becoming more sustainable by finding business potential in our lack of time and patience.

How this works, and what role new technology and new terminology can play to make it easier and more convenient for the consumer to live more sustainable, is explored in the following chapter.

Making the easy choice the right choice

You can't make a life cycle analysis every time you go shopping

We are in a transition period where everyone needs to think about their role in the new society that we are heading towards.

Whatever you believe, the world will change, and you will have to change with it.

Not as something more difficult that is good for the environment, but as something better than the alternative and that brings added value.

“ **W** hat can be done to make sustainable consumption easier for consumers? Our next interview is with Per Bolund, Sweden's minister for financial

markets and consumer affairs. He has worked with politics for over 15 years as a member of the environmental party and is the first one from the party on this post. Earlier this year, he participated in the launch of Nordic Ecolabelling's first ecolabelled funds. His schedule is busy as the next election is approaching, however, he agreed to meet us for a short interview about sustainable consumption at his office in Parliament.

In 2017, the Swedish Government implemented a strategy for sustainable consumption. Part of it was to lower the VAT for repair services from 25 to 12 percent.

“This was a way to make it rational out of an economic perspective to repair clothes instead of buying new ones. We were recently visiting Malmö and met the founders behind a brand-new service called Repamera. If your shirt has lost a button, or your jeans need mending, you can put them in a bag and ship it to Repamera, and within two weeks your clothes are sent back to your home repaired. The founders were clear that the service had not existed without the VAT

reduction,” says Per.

“Economic incentives can lead to new businesses that see an opportunity and contribute to new forms of solutions. We see more and more of this. Another case where we have clearly seen that political reforms make a difference, was when we decided that the consumer should have access to information about where the meat in the grocery store is produced. Here, we immediately saw that sales of Swedish meat increased very much in comparison to imported meat. Now we are working towards having the same information in restaurants. In this way, we are constantly trying to ensure that consumers have the power to make informed decisions.”

When talking to consumer organisations and individuals, Per hears that people find it difficult to make sustainable decisions, and sometimes even he himself is struggling:

“It's difficult standing in the supermarket picking tomatoes. Should I buy the outdoor tomatoes from Spain that are flown here, or the greenhouse tomatoes from Sweden that might have been produced using non-renewable energy? The only thing that is clear: consumers can't make a life-cycle analysis every time they go shopping.”

So, how is the consumer minister himself handling this situation as consumer?

“I always try to find the most sustainable alternative available in everything I do,” states Per. “One easy

Streamlining sustainability

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By making it easy and convenient to act sustainably we can really succeed, one has to respect that there are many aspects that affect people's actions.

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way to make sure that you make a sustainable choice is by choosing ecolabelled products and services. I can only speak for myself as an individual consumer, but I do not know how I would manage my everyday life if there weren't labels such as the Nordic Swan Ecolabel. It simplifies my consumption very much. Humans are creatures of habits, so it can be difficult to change. It's easier to do what you have always done, which is why meatballs and "falukorv" are still at the top of the most common dishes, even though we try to eat less meat. However, we are many who want to change our habits, and here politics can help by ensuring that there are many alternatives to choose between."

Consumers need to find new ways, however, Per stresses that retailers and manufacturers need to lead the way.

"We are in a transition period where everyone needs to think about their role in the new society that we are heading towards. It's not just about providing the customer with what he or she is looking for at the moment and making that purchase as easy as possible. It is about what you want to achieve in the long run in terms of health and the environment. Here, I think the stores and grocery chains have got a lot left to do.

Whatever you believe, the world will change, and you will have to change with it. It is a high demand to ask consumers to choose things that sometimes are more expensive, less attractive, or more time consuming. By making it easy and convenient to act sustainable,

we can really succeed. One has to respect that there are many aspects that affect people's decisions."

What is your take on the future of platform and sharing services?

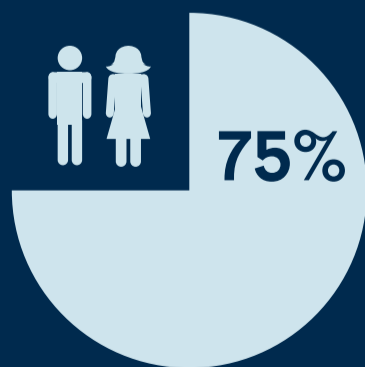
"When offered an option that can get you what you need in a way that creates even more opportunities, greater freedom of choice, and greater supply than you would have otherwise, I think most people would choose that option. At first, people will try these services carefully, but then it will become a part of our everyday lives. We have seen it in the digital markets, I mean, it's not very many who buy music in the form of plastic pieces anymore because it's simply more beneficial for the consumer to buy it digitally. As more and more industries begin to find these methods, the shift is already underway, and it is easier to apply it to other markets. Is it really necessary for me to have my own car? What I need is transportation. A carpool may be the right thing for me, and I do not have to inspect and replace tires, wash the car, pay insurance, and everything else that comes with owning a car. And that's how it needs to be sold to the consumer - not as something more difficult that is good for the environment, but as something better than the alternative and that brings added value."

Numbers & figures chapter four

Finding sustainable products and services is not effortless. But this is something it has to be in order for the majority to make sustainable decisions. Convenience is key.

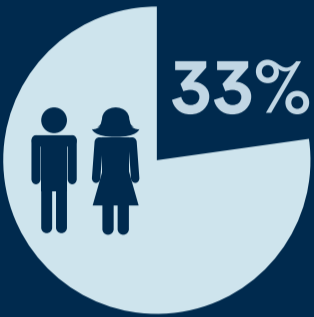
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think that their consumption choices can make a positive difference in society.

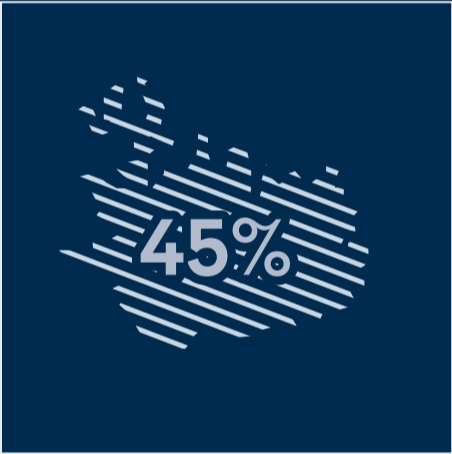


of Nordic consumers find it to be of vital importance that labelling schemes are objective and independent.

Streamlining sustainability



1 out of 3 Nordic consumers feel that they need to make an extra effort to find sustainable products and services. However, we saw large differences between the countries. Specifically, in Iceland people find it most difficult to acquire sustainable products and services.



Mattias Goldmann

Sharing is not always caring

Our interview with Per Bolund ended with platform and sharing services. This is a subject we wanted to investigate deeper. We met up with Mattias Goldmann, CEO at the green and liberal think tank Fores, and among the most influential in the Swedish sustainability community. He generously shared insights from around the world, and left us with plenty of good advice and inspiration on how to streamline sustainability.

Everyone is talking about the sharing economy. What are your thoughts on this?

"I'm glad you bring it up – it is hyped as something new, but actually it is not. When the library of Alexandria was burnt down, in I believe the year 24 AD, it

was the first major failure of the sharing economy. If you want to meet the experts of the sharing economy, go to a library and not an IT firm. Librarians can tell you how difficult it is to make people come there and wait for a week for a book they could get for 50 kronor at a bookshop straight away. But libraries are everywhere, and people go there to get help and advice on great books they might like," says Mattias.

What about new businesses that are founded on the sharing economy-model? Do you think that Uber and Airbnb ensure a better usage of our resources?

"Not necessarily. Large parts of the sharing economy are not better for our societies than the things they replace. If we want to lower the environmental impact from transportation, sharing a car might not be the right answer, but sharing public transport is. You should start by asking the questions: What do we

want to achieve? And what should be shared?"

Uber

"They are not a ride sharing service but a replacement to taxis. An average Uber car is an average car. It's not better or worse than the average car on our streets and most of them don't run on battery or green fuels and have no environmental standards. However, if you go to the Swedish taxis, an average Swedish taxi is either run on biogas or electricity, at least in the large cities. So if you move from a taxi, which is already shared economy, to Uber and you say "well I'm now a part of the shared economy", you're actually in a much worse part of the sharing economy."

Airbnb

"If you move from hotels, which is already a part of

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You should start by asking the questions: What do we want to achieve? And what should be shared?

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Large parts of the sharing economy are not better for our societies than the thing they replace.

the sharing economy — someone else slept there in that bed last night — to Airbnb, it's a much worse part of the economy, because it's destroying cities and hotels that are much more efficient. Barcelona doesn't have a single residence anymore. Everybody's renting out their homes because they're going to earn more money through Airbnb. So what you end up with is urban sprawl and only tourists in the city centers.”

There's a notion that Nordic people are a little afraid of connecting with people they don't know. This makes us wonder if it could be hard to introduce ride sharing, or if it is this something that we can achieve.

“I think it's absolutely true. I've been going a lot with BlaBlaCar in France, which is huge there, and there's no equivalent in the Nordics. I think a part of it is that we like to be in our own comfort zones. Also, when you look at the cars we have, they're much bigger in Sweden, for no particular reason, than they are in France. Even though the families are bigger in France and Italy. Our cars are so much bigger because we like to have personal space. And another thing that we also very much dislike in Sweden and the Nordics, is to talk about money. This means that an important part of having a shared mobility is for somebody else to step in and say 'If I'm going to be in your car, how much should I pay you?', because it's embarrassing for you to ask for 50 kronor. And it's even more embarrassing for me to ask how much money you want. So the ride sharer would need to step in and say “this will be 25 kilometres, that will be 50 kronor and if you get a parking ticket that's on you, not me.” But to really get this going in the Nordics, I believe we need to make an automatic contract for that part.”

“And then again — why do we share vehicles? Do we share to save money? I don't need to save that 10 kronor. Do we share to maybe meet someone? Do we maybe have a nice talk instead of just sitting there

on our own? How we frame it is important,” Mattias continues.

When talking about how to communicate smart services we got into the topic of fashion. Mattias believes that individuality and proven quality are two strong arguments that we have not used enough, that we have underplayed while overplaying climate, the environment, and future generations when discussing second hand. The same problem we have when talking about ride sharing. He explains:

“The selection at a second-hand store is much wider than at a regular store, which allows me to find unique items to express myself. But what I find most interesting is the notion of proven quality. I used to live in Nairobi and there, they have these huge markets for clothes and shoes. When I was looking to get a pair of I noticed that the used pairs were more expensive than the new ones. The sales assistant explained to me that the second-hand shoes had already proven their quality because someone had used them for a year and the shape was still good. Thus, it makes perfectly sense to sell the used shoes for a higher price than the new ones of which quality we know nothing about.”

Another widely discussed topic is the circular economy. Mattias provides us with an interesting perspective that companies are now presented with a whole range of new opportunities to interact with their customers.

“You can get your customers much closer to you if you actually ask them to come back for updates, repairs, upcycling and recycling, instead of just selling the products and saying; “go away and don't come back until you want to buy a new one”. So far only a few businesses have understood how great it is for the business to move into the circular economy.”

Public authorities also have an important role to play to support new business models and innovation. According to Mattias, the most effective tools is bans and regulations.

“We saw it with the light bulbs over many years, we never got the energy-efficient light bulbs to take off because the other ones were just so cheap. Everybody understood that they should get the expensive ones, but they were too expensive and didn't function very well. When the EU decided to ban the bad light-bulbs, it created a market for the better alternatives. And large players like Phillips were actually happy about it, so it's a misconception that companies are against bans. It's often very good for businesses to know what's allowed and what's not allowed.”

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The system is very static, and I expect that consumers will question this in the future and demand more offerings, uniquely adapted to their needs.

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Circular business models are a hot topic in all types of industries and the fashion industry is no exception. But how do you change mindsets and close loops? This is a question that is extremely important when looking at the apparel industry – an industry that is close to consumers' hearts and whose negative environmental impact is growing. Sigrid Barnekow is focusing on the big picture. She is the head of Mistra Future Fashion (MFF), a pioneering research program with the mission to find ways to transform today's linear fashion industry into a circular one. The beauty of it is that it is cross disciplinary, exploring the interaction between consumers, designers and producers, and how garments are designed, as well as produced, consumed and recycled.

We reached out to Sigrid to discuss how to close the loop and change consumers' mindsets with regards to fashion consumption.

Closed loops & changed mi

Streamlining
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Sigrid Barnekow

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If we extend the usage time of our current garments by 3 times, it is equivalent to a reduced environmental impact by almost 70%.
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Help consumers to activate their own wardrobe.

Convenience is key for establishing alternative ways of consuming fashion.

We need to guide them where to find sustainable fashion and nurture new business models so that we have more suppliers.

What is the role of the consumer in the quest for a sustainable fashion industry?

I think that the consumer plays a very important role. I'm often participating in international conferences to discuss sustainable fashion and consumer engagement and there are always two camps: The ones who say that the consumer already has a bad conscience and should not need to be bothered with more information about sustainable fashion, and doesn't need to understand it all. And then you have the others who say that we need to inform and guide consumers and be transparent. In theory, I like the view of the first camp, that the consumer should just assume that the industry is taking care of it and that what is available in the market is developed under good conditions. However, this is not how it works in reality. Time is running out, if we want to change current operations then the consumers also needs to be part of that journey. Acknowledging the role they play and the power they have in their actions. It is too late to say it is only up to industry.

Why is that?

The fashion industry operates in an old-fashioned process, there are a few designers who set the trends of the seasons to come, clothes are produced in high volumes far away from the market, and shipped around the world. And all of this is scheduled months in advance. The system is very static, and I expect that consumers will question this in the future and demand more offerings, uniquely adapted to their needs, along with more transparency and customization – all made possible due to digitalisation and new technology. This puts the user at the center of influence and provides consumers with a lot more power.

Like we see now when people order directly from factories in Asia?

Yes, this is an example of that. I think this is a very interesting trend, but what is also interesting about it is that the same consumers might be very upset that the products they buy might contain chemicals. They are so used to be able to trust what is on the shelves that they forget this is not the case in other regions of the world. Research by Mistra Future Fashion shows that there is a clear behaviour gap, meaning consumers say they want to act sustainably, but then don't act accordingly. Research also shows that this is partly because consumers feel they cannot find the sustainable alternatives. So we, as industry and society, need to help them in finding these alternatives.

What are the alternatives?

When people ask me what they should look for when buying fashion my number one tip is to look for any labels that communicate sustainability and better

choice. However, I also try to encourage people to consider if this item has to be newly produced. Utterly important is to rapidly extend the life of the existing garments out there. Our research tells us that if we extend the usage time on our current garments by 3 times, it is equivalent to a reduced environmental impact by almost 70%. In this linear system we tend to buy new stuff, put it in the wardrobe and forget about it. We need to activate our wardrobes and change our mindsets, and view the clothes that we own as resources. Users need to understand that their wardrobe is of value. I think that would make us more prone to think about quality when we make the purchase, how we take care of the garments and what we intend to do when we are no longer interested in them.

What can companies do?

Help consumers to activate their own wardrobe. This would mean generate money of already existing garments on the market.

Are people willing to buy less and use their own clothes more?

Take the most trend-oriented consumers, who we know want to dress according to the latest fashion because this is part of how they express themselves. Many would assume these people might be materialists with a high need of buying new clothes all the times. However, a recent study conducted by Copenhagen Business School could not show that the purchase to own was not key driver for this target group. They found that this group's needs might be equally fulfilled by having access to garments, not in actually owning them. So they are an exciting and influential target group for concepts such as clothing libraries and subscription services.

Why is it that we are not seeing more of these concepts out there then?

Convenience is key for establishing alternative ways of consuming fashion. Familiarity increases convenience, it often plays a role for how long that type of model or service has been around. As an example, online second-hand shopping in the US has been around for a longer time there than here in Sweden. So it is a process that takes time. But there are other factors as well. In most cases, pre-owned garments are not available in the store in the mall where you go to look for a new pair of jeans. So no wonder that the users say they cannot find it. We need to guide them where to find sustainable fashion and nurture new business models so that we have more suppliers of pre-owned clothes.

Finally, I personally have a strong opinion about the terminology that we use when it comes to clothing,

such as “second hand” and “waste”. Politicians talk about textile waste and companies and consumers about second hand. We need a new terminology that is more positive. Textile waste is something that should not exist in the future and there’s a social stigma around second hand. It should be called pre-used by pre-owners or something that makes it more positive and attractive.

Only 2 out of 10 Nordic consumers believe that buying second-hand is for people who cannot afford to buy new things (22%).

42% of all Nordic consumers have bought second hand in the last 12 months. This number is higher for females, 48% have bought second hand, whereas only 35% of males have done so.

Almost half of all Nordic consumers feel they own too many things (49%).

Picking up where you left off

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Getting rid of things is perceived as a task that takes a lot of energy and time, and using our service makes this whole process quick and easy.

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hat does someone from one of the new bespoke businesses have to say about consumers? How did they manage to reshape the pre-owned market in

Sweden? We reached out to the Swedish startup and e-commerce platform Sellpy, and talked to Lisa Book Taube - their soon-to-be head of sustainability. Sellpy offers private individuals and companies the opportunity to sell items that they do not have the time and energy to sell themselves. In 2014, one of Sellpy's co-founders, Michael Arnör, returned to Sweden after studying in the U.S. Moving back in with his parents, he wanted to get rid of all his old clothes but, could not find a smart and time-efficient way to sell them. After discussing the problem with two friends (and future cofounders) the idea of Sellpy was born – an e-commerce platform for pre-owned items. Today it is one of Sweden's fastest growing startups.

“People in Sweden have a lot of things at home that they don't use. Our founders wanted to do something about it and developed the vision of Sellpy very early on – selling should be as easy as buying. So, first of all, a really great business idea – our founders wanted to start something new, but also something that really impacts the world and change the system. We are really inspired by Amazon,” says Lisa. Sellpy can be used for selling items. Users can order a bag from

them and fill it with the things they wish to sell. Sellpy will then pick it up and sell it on their behalf and keep a percentage of the selling price.

“We have really succeeded when users who started as sellers also return to us to buy from others. In this case, we are closing the loop and making consumption circular,” continues Lisa.

More and more people are using the service, and Sellpy is receiving packages from cities, as well as smaller villages. What is the strongest selling point of Sellpy? According to Lisa, it's the convenience:

“Getting rid of things is perceived as a task that takes a lot of energy and time, and using our service makes this whole process quick and easy.”


Technology plays a very important role for Sellpy's business model.

“Everything is technology driven, it's the key enabler to everything we do here. We have a great team of engineers, photo-robots that help us to select the right pictures, and we constantly invest in building our logistic system,” says Lisa.

Sellpy is continually collecting feedback from its users, even calling them to get their input.

“Our users want to influence almost everything, and we really need to adjust to that quickly.

As soon as we stop listening to them and fail to improve our offering accordingly, we are going to be out. Our ambition is to ensure the best possible customer experience so that we are the absolute smoothest, easiest, and best site to shop on.



Streamlining sustainability

We believe that making shopping and selling at Sellpy fun and easy is our big advantage. Our customer research showed that our customers want to have fast delivery and to be able to choose where it will be delivered. Some are even asking for the exact hour. Starting this week, we will offer delivery the same day.”

Lisa joined Sellpy more than three years ago. She started her career working in bigger organisations with HR, however, knowing one of the founders and being interested in working more hands-on in a startup, she decided she needed a change and started at Sellpy. She works with different aspects of the company including HR and user management. So, what has Lisa learned about Sellpy’s users?

“They do not think, they do. But most people have strong bonds to their things. This has surprised me over and over again. Things that have been in their wardrobes or basements for years — for which they couldn’t find the energy to sell or even throw away — are perceived as very valuable as soon as they put them into our bags and hand them over to us. Managing their expectations and ensuring they are not disappointed with the actual selling price is a key task for us to ensure their return.”

“Selling the items at good prices generates happier

customer and is of course something that makes us happy too. We believe that all things have a potential second or third life somewhere. There is a buyer for everything, and it’s our mission to find the demand.”

Another important aspect, according to Lisa, is that users get the opportunity to follow their items, in contrast to just handing them in somewhere.

“You can track clothes or stuff you sell with us and

Our users want to have an influence on almost everything, and we really need to adjust to that fast. As soon as we stop listening to them and don’t improve our offering accordingly, we are going to be out.

see what actually happens to them, where and for how much they get sold. This is perceived as very exciting by many.”

When talking to Lisa, we notice that she is explaining exactly what Sigrid Barnekow described as helping consumers to activate their wardrobe by making the consumer understand that the things they own are of

value, and encouraging them to sell the things they don’t use. Another thing we recognise from the discussion with Sigrid is the importance of terminology.

“During the past weeks, we’ve talked a lot about the terminology that we’re going to use in our upcoming marketing campaigns. We want people to use Sellpy because it’s a great site with clothes and stuff, for everyone. We are trying out terminology, such as unique, simple, and sustainable, and avoid saying that it’s second hand, affordable, or cheap. We want to attract people looking for nice and unique styles – not just bargain hunters.”

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Until now, Sellpy hasn’t used sustainability in its marketing messaging to a large extent. According to Lisa this might change - she is in the transition of becoming Sellpy’s first head of sustainability.

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“Going forward, I hope we will also gain users driven mainly by sustainability to use and sell via our platform and to be proud of it. We want to make people

understand that they will contribute to a positive impact by using Sellpy. I think it is really something to have this responsibility, and I am eager to start the work as our head of sustainability. Our ambition is to think about sustainability from a bigger perspective and to be in the forefront of sustainable companies in Sweden.”

Key takeaways & glossary

Key takeaways

- Offer economic incentives to business, it is needed to spur innovation.
- When looking into business models such as sharing, ask yourself; “what do I want to achieve? And what should be shared?”
- Communicate the many advantages of your product or service, such as proven quality, time efficiency, joy, and individuality, instead of overplaying climate, environment, and future generations.
- Regulate and ban the products and services that are not environmentally friendly. It's often appreciated by businesses to know what's allowed and what's not.
- Help your customers to fully utilise your products by extending the products' lifetime by offering services such as updates, repairs, upcycling, recycling, and reselling.
- Be flexible. Put consumers in the center and adapt to their needs.
- Use positive terminology. There is no such thing as waste – only resources. And “pre-owned” is less stigmatic than “second hand”.

Glossary

Clothing library

– A library where you rent clothes.

Platform services

– Services you obtain from digital platforms.
An important part of simplifying the sharing economy.

Pre-used/pre-owned

– An item that has had an owner prior to you.

Sharing economy

– An economy in which we share products and services among ourselves.

Streamlining sustainability

– When you remove all hurdles and barriers for a sustainable life thus, making it easier to make sustainable decisions.

Streamlining sustainability

11/3

say they choose sustainable marked products and services to support responsible brands.

Values for the money

Boycotting is dead! Long live buycotting! We must be careful to assume that attitude is directly translated into behaviour and that we stop buying things that we know we shouldn't. This calculation is not the whole story as we have shown in the previous chapters. However, we see that there is an increased interest in supporting businesses we believe in by buying their products and services – so-called buycotting. And just as consumers react better to positive feedback, supporting businesses that do good could be a more efficient way for consumers to influence industries in becoming better.

We have spoken to thought leaders who stuck to their values, and early on found ways to do good by doing good. By putting their values at the core of their businesses, and using storytelling as a tool to communicate them, they have successfully built authenticity and trust, and moved from reactive to proactive relationship building with customers, employees, and the community.

A close-up portrait of Halla Tómasdóttir, a woman with short blonde hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing a black turtleneck under a white textured sweater. The background is softly blurred, showing hints of an indoor setting with warm lighting.

Halla Tómasdóttir

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I am firmly of the opinion that gender balance and sustainability are related, with the former, comes greater emphasis on the latter.

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Gender equality eco

Why gender balanced societies and organisations outperform:

1. You release the economic value of all your citizens, and in organisations, all your people.
2. You experience greater social progress and are therefore better shaped to take advantage of future trends. You'll understand what's coming, and can build more innovative and resilient countries and organisations.
3. You experience better dialogue and make better decisions – decisions that consider all stakeholders.

Values for the money

Halla Tómasdóttir is on a quest to inspire and empower leaders to release the true value of principle-based leadership and gender balance. She is the Icelandic thought leader, entrepreneur, board director, and investor who became the first female CEO of the Iceland Chamber of Commerce. She was on the founding team of Reykjavik University and was the runner up in the Icelandic 2016 presidential election – a race she entered as an underdog in a crowded field of candidates.

She rose to fame in 2007 when she founded Auður Capital, an investment firm that incorporated feminine and sustainable values, and was one of few investment firms to withstand the test of the Icelandic financial crash in 2008. Today, Auður Capital has merged with Kvika investment bank, and Halla Tómasdóttir, who in recent years has devoted her time inspiring others as a very sought-after keynote speaker, will soon become the CEO for The B Team (www.bteam.org), a global non-profit initiative, co-founded by Sir Richard Branson and Jochen Zeitz in 2012. The mission of The B Team is to develop a “Plan B” - for concerted positive action that will ensure that business becomes a driving force for social, environmental, and economic benefit. Plan A – where business has been motivated primarily by profit is no longer an option.

We had the great opportunity to speak to her about profit, people, and the planet.

In your Ted Talk from 2010, you described that promoting the idea of incorporating feminine values in the financial industry was “almost like coming out of the closet” and that people, at first, laughed at Auður Capital. Why was that?

We founded Auður Capital 11 years ago, in 2007, at the height of Iceland's financial bubble. Very few people thought there was anything wrong with the way we were doing business and finance at that time, i.e. the relentless pursuit for economic growth without much regard for people or the planet seemed to be serving us well, but it wasn't. So, it took a lot of courage to come out and talk about the need for different values and a more sustainable approach to business and finance.

Auður Capital advocated risk awareness rather than pure risk taking in investments, and emphasised the importance of placing value on emotional capital, rather than pure financial capital. After the financial

meltdown in 2008, Auður Capital stood out among its Icelandic peers by making it through the country's financial meltdown without direct losses to itself or its portfolio. It was also the only Icelandic financial institution that the Government had no ownership of and needed no bailout assistance.

Have more companies embraced Auður's approach to doing business after the financial crash in 2008?

I often feel we haven't learned enough, both in Iceland and elsewhere. But I am also well aware of the impact Auður Capital made. After the financial collapse, all banks became concerned about gender balance on their boards and today we talk more about the importance of measuring more than economic profit. Although I would like us to do more.

I do believe Iceland as a country has realized the value of gender equality as a positive strategic positioning for our country, and as a way to achieve better dialogue and decision making in our society at large. I am firmly of the opinion that gender balance and sustainability are related, i.e. with the former, comes greater emphasis on the latter. I would like to see more female CEOs and more women executives, as well as female heads of state. I believe with more women in key decision-making roles, we will see a greater emphasis on what I have called a “bigger definition of success”.

What is your view on success?

I reject the view that one must choose between making money and doing good. Choose to do both. My definition of success is a holistic one; profit – people – planet. I would never be satisfied making money at the expense of the wellbeing of the planet and people in general. To me, true leaders don't choose, they do both.

What do companies have to do to create profit purposefully, or to put it differently, do good while doing good?

They should start by redefining their role beyond only growing shareholder value – include all stakeholders. Then set goals and start measuring their impact beyond profit and beyond the quarterly reporting. They will experience greater engagement and become sought after by employees, customers, and shareholders. This is smart business, as you can experience significant growth as well as cost savings – you will grow your company in the long term.

Earlier in this report, we spoke to a doctor in cultural anthropology and a professor in advertising and PR who said that information does not lead to behaviour

changes – we are influenced by other people, emotions, and various stimuli. You believe in a balanced approach to decision making that taps into both the rational brain and the emotional wisdom.

Yes. Human beings are not that rational, we are highly emotional beings. But we fool ourselves to think that data and excel will always provide us with the right answers. As an investor, I was as passionate about our emotional due diligence as I was about our financial due diligence. I believe success, as I define it, comes down to the leadership of people and their emotional intelligence and moral/ethical compass, as much as their rational intelligence.

Based on your extensive experience as a business leader and lecturer, what is the most important thing for engaging people for change?

Help them understand the why and the how of your business – i.e. know your purpose and principles – and make sure that both are about serving a greater good, not your own ego or economic profit alone.

In our quantitative study, we found that 37% of the respondents choose sustainable products and services to support responsible brands – so called “buycotting”. This means that there is a great opportunity for the businesses that follow your advice. Have you witnessed the phenomena of buycotting?

I know that young people already choose where to work (and not to work) and who to do business with according to the brand values that appeal to them, and sustainability/responsibility is at the top of their list. This trend will only become stronger and those who ignore this will not remain successful for long.

You have had a long and successful career as a leader, business person, and even presidential candidate. Looking back, what is something you would like to have known when you started your career?

That it would be OK to listen to my own inner voice and values. That I didn't need to buy into things that didn't sit well with me only because I was young and inexperienced.

What is your advice for young professionals, especially females?

Have the courage to embrace your own values and be a change catalyst for the world you want your children to live in.

What is your advice for public authorities?

Provide incentives to the corporations that walk the talk and have the courage not to let financial interests alone rule your decisions – you are there for the wellbeing of the general public.

Equality equals sustainability

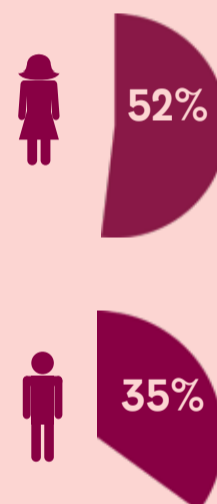
Numbers & figures chapter five

One of the strongest motivators for buying sustainable products and services is to support responsible brands, and Nordic consumers feel that they can make a difference by doing so. This creates opportunities for building strong and proactive relationships with the customers, as well as having a successful business while not causing harm to people or planet.

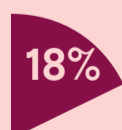
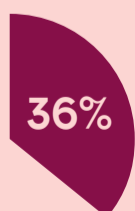
1 out of 3 say they chose sustainable marked products and services to support responsible brands (37%).

6/10

of the Nordic consumers believe that their consumption choices can make a difference.



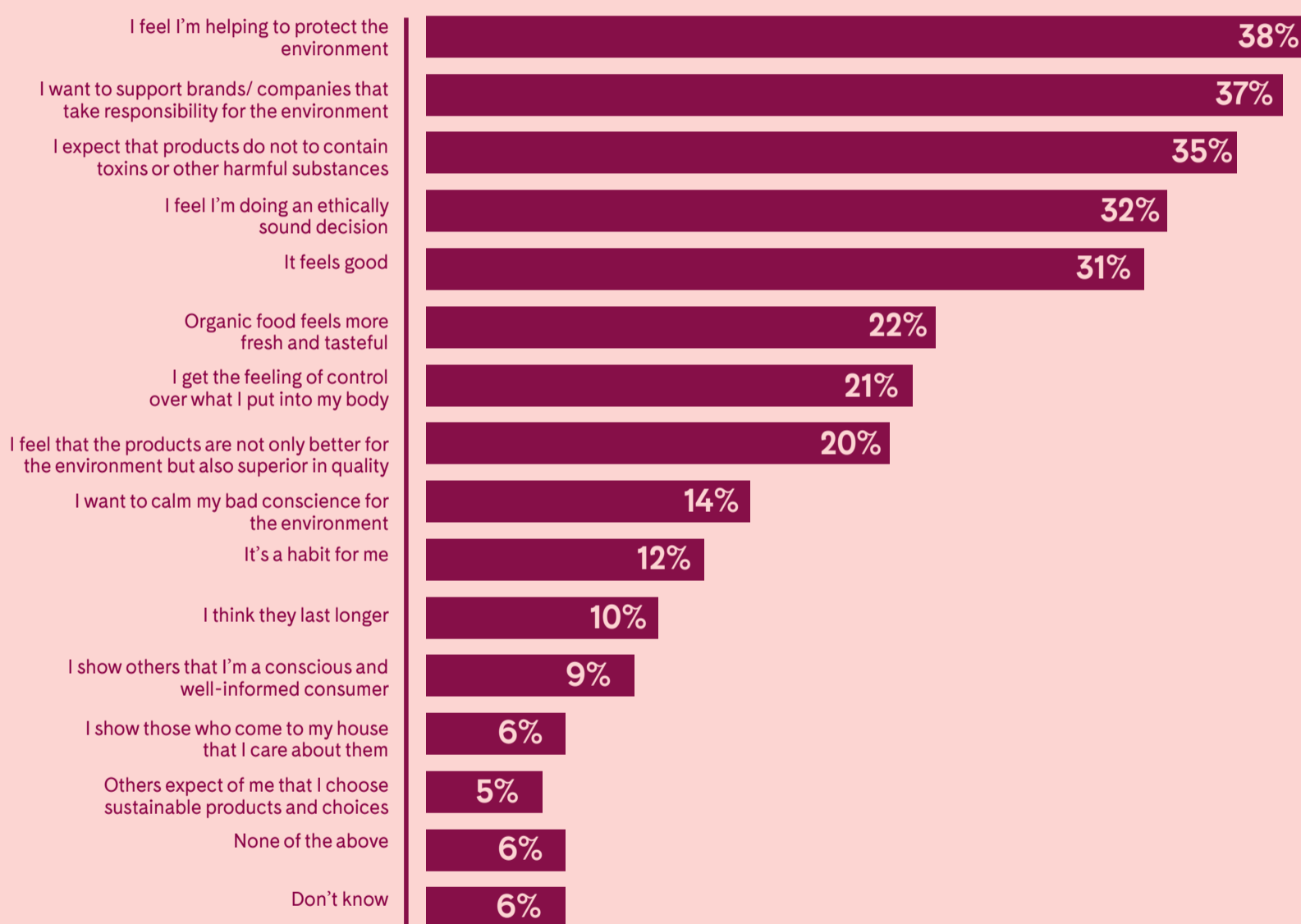
More than half of Nordic women (52%), but only one thirds of Nordic men (35%), want brands to be ethically or socially responsible, beyond making good products.



36% of young people (<25 years) trust businesses to contribute to society, meaning they are almost twice as likely as older people (>55 years) to trust businesses to contribute to society (18%).

Values for the money

Why do you choose products marked as sustainable over regular products and services?



The three most common feelings that people in the Nordics associate with sustainable consumption:

Hopefulness
(40%)

Commitment
(35%)

Participation
(33%)

The philosophy of the frontrunner

Patagonia grew out of a climbing equipment startup, run by self-declared rebels, into a top outdoor gear and clothing brand, advocating for the environment. Today, Patagonia is doing better than ever with current annual sales of over \$500 million.

Vincent Stanley is the director of philosophy and chief storyteller at Patagonia, and has been at Patagonia since the very beginning. During his 45 years with the company, he's been deeply involved in defining Patagonia's story and telling the world how to use business to inspire and implement solutions to the environmental crisis.

Together with Patagonia's founder Yvon Chouinard, he wrote "The Responsible Company". And he has worked for many years in key executive roles such as head of sales and marketing. Today, his role entails the important task of teaching the company's history and values to employees – something most would say is central to Patagonia.

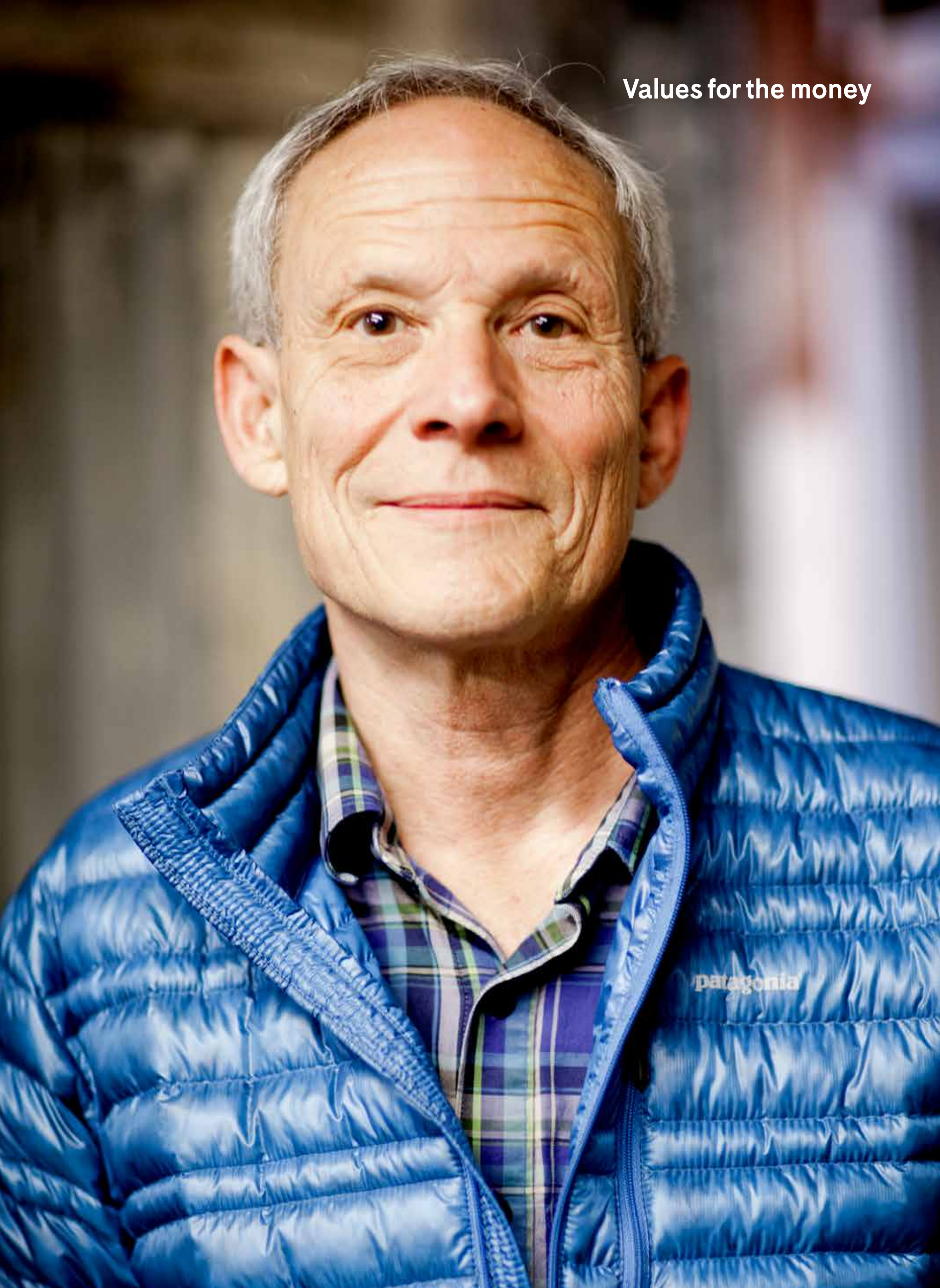
In addition, Vincent Stanley brings his extensive knowledge outside of the Patagonia walls and teaches business and environmental science students at Yale. He also helps companies interested in becoming benefit corporations, so called "b-corps". We were lucky enough to talk to Vincent about the importance of values and building proactive relationships with employees, customers, and the community.

“

You come to love the jacket because of all the places where you've worn it and all the experiences that you've had with it.

”

Values for the money



Vincent Stanley

“
The primary advice I would give anybody in business is to ask yourself what the central purpose of your business is.
”

When you start saying “it’s part of my work to address the world’s major social and environmental problems, as is reflected in what this company does”, you come up with very different ways to make your products.

You come to love the jacket because of all the places where you’ve worn it and all the experiences that you’ve had with it.

Is Patagonia’s success reflecting a generational shift and an example for the type of company and brand that consumers demand today?

Looking at the bigger picture, after the economic downturn in 2008, many people were disillusioned with business practices and put more thought into how to spend their money. The work that we have done to reduce the impact of our supply chains and build strong relationships with customers, attracted those consumers that wanted to buy from brands in line with their values. Today, this is even more the case than 15 years ago when Patagonia was mostly associated with high quality.

What would be your best advice to companies wanting to turn around to more sustainable ways of doing business?

The primary advice I would give anybody in business is to ask yourself what the central purpose of your business is. Identify that. What is its legitimate function in the larger world? And what are your practices as a company? Socially and environmentally. What actions are you carrying out and where can you make a difference?

Secondly, for most businesses, it’s easier to look at the labour among the people you work with. But a lot of companies have very deep supply chains, so it becomes harder to identify what your true impacts are. Here, the first step is to understand what they are and then stop doing things that are harmful to communities, individuals, or the environment. Always continue to make these improvements and share what you’ve learnt with other businesses. It’s as simple as that. If you do this, I think you’ll have a much healthier business, one that actually serves the needs of people and nature rather than the other way around.

Would you say efforts for sustainability provide opportunities for companies?

Absolutely! When you start saying that it’s part of your work to address the world’s major social and environmental problems, as is reflected in what this company does, you come up with very different ways to make your products. We encourage our employees to step up and help us with that process, so it’s also an opportunity when it comes to the company culture.

We see that fast fashion chains in the Nordic countries have started to collect textiles and put sustainability higher on their agenda. Do you feel that the fast fashion chains are part of the solution or part of the problem?

In a way, it’s both. I think that fast fashion will continue to be something that’s major for people in their late teens, and perhaps in their early twenties, when they care about fashion.

When it comes to recycling, we started doing it in 2005. Within 5 years, we took back anything we had ever made and tried to recycle it into something of equal value. What we’ve discovered is that recycling is only one aspect of the system. The relationship we wanted to change with the customers was to demythologise the initial purpose and establish a relationship with the customer based on their experience with the piece of clothing. You come to love the jacket because of all the places you’ve worn it and all the experiences that you’ve had with it. And if you have that relationship with your stuff, it becomes much more important that they’re repairable. And then, at the end you can recycle it. This is the behaviour we’re encouraging, and I think that the fast fashion brands in the Nordic countries have especially had struggles with their environmental responsibilities that perhaps work against their business model – selling cheaper quality to a lot of people based on repeated purchases.

Would you say that having this close relationship with your customers is also a way to create a meaningful relationship and to really reach out to them? A strategy to build relations?

Yes, we’ve always had that strategy. Long before we started to improve our supply chain practices. From when we were just making high-quality clothing we based our business model on a very high rate of return business with core customers and less transactional relationships, where you have customers that you never see again. So, this has always been important to us and has become more important to us over time, especially with the repair service where you bring a jacket with a broken zipper and we’ll fix it and send it back to you. There’s a bond there that’s very different than making a sale and say “bring it back to us within 30 days”.

Do you think that having this strong bond with your customers has enabled you to be an activist in regard to other things?

I think so. Again, I think this goes back to the origins of the company from when we were a small manufacturing company of mountain gear equipment, and our universe of customers and friends was very small. This meant that we communicated very directly with people and I think we kept that habit when we started the clothing company and as we grew. I think it would be very difficult to do what we do without that bond, and I can’t imagine the company without that bond to the customers. That’s been something that has defined

I can't imagine the company without that bond to the customers.

Employees are very quick to sense the difference between what a company says and does.

The one thing that makes a real difference in why people come to us and stay with us, is the environmental work and the sense of great purpose that people have.

the company from the very beginning.

What would be your advice for any company that would like to activate their customers?

You have to find and communicate something that is closely related to your function as a business, to what you make, what you believe, in and what people are experiencing.

In 2011, Patagonia turned consumerism on its head running the "Don't Buy This Jacket" campaign on Black Friday, suggesting customers don't buy Patagonia products unless they really need them, and sales numbers went through the roof. Susie Tompkins Buell, cofounder of outdoor clothing firm, The North Face once said Patagonia's aim is to create a culture of things that serve you, not a culture of things you want.

You had a huge success with the "Don't Buy This Jacket" campaign. Would you say that there is a change in the consumer sentiment towards consumption, i.e. do people try to buy less now?

I would have to say that is an emergent movement and not a dominant movement. One thing that I find to be very interesting is that in the US, we see that fewer 16-year-olds apply for a driver's license. In the US, there used to be a sense of freedom when you were 16; you'd take your driver's license as soon as you can to get a car. Borrowing and sharing is becoming more and more common. I think there's a generational shift and also a sense of the environmental and social implications. But I don't think there's a general trend in the culture in the US, maybe it's more advanced in Europe.

How important is it to constantly discuss the company values and educate employees in order to keep those alive?

I think the most important thing is how consistent the message and culture are. Employees are very quick to sense the difference between what a company says and does. I think that you have to be very consistent in speaking to your employees, customers, and suppliers with the same message and the same degree of transparency about what your faults are, what you've

been able to deal with so far and what you still have to deal with.

What role does the values and purpose of Patagonia play to identify and keep the best talent, i.e. both recruit and retain?

In the last 10 years, we've been in a really good position for recruiting. For one position, we have maybe 100 applicants. So, we're able to find people who are well qualified, who are trained for this position, but also share the core environmental company values, and often have some experience with nature or some kind of connectivity with the world. And then for the last 2 years, we've become much better than we used to be at onboarding. I teach a company history and values class to all new employees. It is a 3 hours session with 12 employees at a time. Everybody also goes surfing and climbing for one session to get acquainted with the roots of the company and what human feeling is generated by these activities. Probably the core element in binding the community is the on-site childcare, which we have had for over 30 years. In the US, that's very rare, and we are pioneers in doing that. We have different schools for different-aged children that go up to 2nd grade.

There's also an after-school program for all the kids. This helps us with two things when it comes to retention. First, for all of the employees, there's a community feeling when you have kids playing in the yard. Remember, we are in California, so there are a lot of people meeting outdoors, always going back and forth between the buildings and that atmosphere is significant. Secondly is that for the parents, it's not only on-site child care, but it's also very good child care. It is in fact an excellent program. Parents don't leave. The turnover rate is very low among people with school-age children.

Finally, the one thing that makes a real difference in why people come to us and stay with us, is the environmental work and the sense of great purpose that people have. No matter what they're doing, they have this sense that they're engaged with their simplest, most deeply-ingrained values. They don't have to leave that behind when they're leaving the breakfast table to come to the office. This is why we have a comparatively lower turnover rate than other companies, and a higher level of engagement.



Magdalena Lönnroth
& Anne Kvam



Saving for the future – a case from Nordic Ecolabelling

When talking about boycotting and sustainable consumption one industry that is often overlooked is the financial industry. However, funds that follow sustainability criteria can make a large positive impact, and should be much higher on the consumers' agenda.

Interesting is that this decision makes a great impact, but demands little time - much less time than wondering about what to buy every time you enter a supermarket.

Nordic Ecolabelling got approached by the finance industry to help them develop a third party label, and when doing consumer research in Sweden we saw that there was also an interest among consumers where more than 4 out of 10 Swedes said they were interested in placing a portion of their savings in a fund that is actively working with sustainability (The report "Det är kvinnorna som vänder upp och ner på börsen" by Ecolabelling Sweden 2017).

It feels like a big step for us to enter the financial sector with ecolabelled funds. And it is also very complex. But many actors have encouraged us to

do so, including politicians, and to apply our proven methodology and control systems, and leverage our strong brand. So we took up the challenge to set up requirements to steer companies and the fund industry in a more sustainable direction. After all, the Nordic fund market encompasses over 6,000 different investment funds. As we go out to the public, we notice that it is being received positively, and that it is not a very big deal, almost as if they had been waiting for it and expected our arrival. Maybe it's because it's about the same thing as always with the Nordic Swan Ecolabel; to guide the consumer and make it easy to choose the environmentally best. Nothing more, nothing less.

Two people who helped us in this process were Anne Kvam and Magdalena Lönnroth. Anne is Head of Responsible Investments at KLP and Magdalena is Portfolio Manager and Head of Responsible Investment at the Church Pension Fund in Finland.

Magdalena reflects about the changes in the industry that she has experienced. "I'm happy about the change in attitude over the past 10 years. When I started working in the industry 12 years ago, very few asset managers had an interest or knowledge in the field of responsible investments. I remember how some portfolio managers thought that the responsible investment work we do at the Church Pension Fund is only suited for investors "like us". Today, the

“
It's about the same thing as always with the Nordic Swan Ecolabel: To guide and make it easy to choose right. Nothing more, nothing less.
”

“
When it comes to responsible investment, consumers are very much tied to exclusion mechanisms.
”

“ same portfolio managers are coming to us and are excited about responsible investments - they have realized that there is an interesting business case that they can calculate both in risk and returns.”

What is your view on individual savers?

“I think that the will to place your money in sustainable and responsible funds is there, especially among younger people and females, on a general level. But then many people lack practical knowledge on how the financial industry works and how to save your money in a sustainable way. Individuals know quite little about how their pension works, and I think it should be a part of the education in primary school. I am not sure how much support private investors receive from the banks on sustainable investment. Perhaps the match between preferences and solutions could be improved.”

Against this background, Anne Kvam calls the Nordic Swan for investment funds “an interesting addition”. “One important thing is to communicate it well and simple because sometimes it's difficult for the consumer to understand what lies behind the label. There are various competing labels. Many banks are making their own labels and they are all for different things, so it is extremely helpful to have the Nordic Swan Ecolabel as an actor who can bring transparency and trustworthiness.”

Anne shares her experiences from the investment fund perspective. “We get approached much more by individuals, via mail and phone, with questions about how we manage money. I think it is tied to the fact that they want us to be more transparent, and also because most financial institutions have become more transparent, putting more information on their websites and talking about responsible investment. Now, it is difficult to know what consumers do with this information, but a key driver for being more transparent is to empower the consumer by making it easier to swap products.”

Do they think that going forward, customers will have many more opportunities to easily move around their money and place their savings in funds that better align with their values?

Anne Kvam points out that FinTech, companies combining new technology and financial services are likely to disrupt the common industry logic: “I think that there will be a range of FinTech companies that don't do any financial service themselves, but are organized as platforms where people can log on and see all their bank relations and fund investments, and enable them to very easily swap banks, products, and compare them. In the old days, when you wanted to leave your bank, you had to fill in 10 formulas, go to the bank, and then it took weeks for everything to be finalised. Nowadays, technology has made it very easy. You don't like them? Bring out your iPhone and you are done within 2 minutes.”

“When it comes to responsible investments, consumers are very much tied into exclusion mechanisms. They want us to exclude companies from their portfolio, which is very one sided. You can exclude the company, but that will not necessarily change anything, because somebody else will pick up that share. The consumers does not seem to consider this as much. Whereas trying to change something, by being a responsible and active shareholder, might take longer time and be more difficult, but it can have a greater impact” says Anne.

– Mattias Goldman, CEO at the think tank Fores

The easiest thing is to buy less. And I think it's also the most efficient, no matter how green the product is, the one that you don't buy is the greenest.

We need active consumers and therefore, I sometimes feel that it's better to buy and choose carefully than to boycott. As soon as you decide to never ever board a plane again or eat a single gram of meat, you are no longer interesting for the airline or meat industry. In 2016, I travelled by train to the climate meeting in Marrakesh. However, I still fly sometimes which means I have leverage against the airline industry as their customer and



I try to be very picky. I eat meat very rarely, but when I do, I want to make sure that it's sustainable and good, which means that I have leverage. And of course what I try to do is to voice my concerns and contact the companies. It's interesting how businesses nowadays are very open to input. They don't

get nearly as much direct consumer input as you would expect. And they are now struggling to redefine their business ideas. We see not only startups, but also very big solid companies that are saying “we need a brand new business idea for our company”. So if consumers feedback to companies, instead of saying “I'm not buying” they can really make a difference.

Key takeaways

- Gender balance and sustainability are related, you can't do the second without the first.
- One does not have to choose between making money and doing good. Choose to do both.
- Use the world's major social and environmental challenges as a tool for product development.
- Ask yourself what the central purpose of your business is. Identify that along with its impact on the environment and people.
- Always continue to make improvements and share what you've learnt with other businesses.
- Educate your employees on the history and values of your business, and make sure to live up to them. Employees are very quick to sense the difference between what a company says and does.
- Create a circular bond with your customers. The opposite of a bond based on solely repeated purchases.

Glossary

Boycotting

– Supporting businesses by buying their products and services.

Do good by doing good

– Make profit by serving the environment and community well.

Greenwashing

– When PR or marketing is deceptively used to promote the perception that an organisation's products, aims, or policies are environmentally friendly, when that is not the case.

Principle-based leadership

– When you use your values as competitive advantage.

Storytelling

– An engaging way to communicate a company's values by painting a story with words and images.

Closing conclusions

The purpose of this report was to better understand the Nordic consumer so that we can support sustainable consumer behaviours. We were specifically interested in the theory of the green gap, which is the gap between an individual's green intentions and green behaviours, and set out to dig deeper into this phenomena. What we found was a positive situation with many opportunities.

What is driving sustainable consumer behaviours is not necessarily information and education, but rather the context we live in. The group influences us more than we think and some even mean that the concept of individualism is a myth. This means that information is not always the answer. People want to know what other people do, and then copy it. Remember, we are pack animals. We want to follow the norm and avoid the social risk of being different.

We also need to talk about how we talk about things. Human beings need hope to function. If the proposed path is dark, we won't take it. We put the information aside and try not to think about it at all. This means that the days of doomsday propaganda are over, and instead, we need to talk about the many advantages of sustainable products and services besides from sustainability, and rethink the terminology of yesterday. How we choose to formulate ourselves has never been this important.

When it comes to how we choose products, an important thing to remember is that life happens. As much as one could hope that everyone would just stop buying products that are hazardous for the environment and themselves, this will not just suddenly happen. People worry about the climate, but they worry about many other things as well, and we live in a system where making the right choice is often an active and more difficult choice.

Here, businesses and policymakers have a responsibility and an opportunity to offer products and services that are both sustainable and affordable, of good quality, and that looks good – so that consumers do not have to renounce any of their wants and needs. These products and services have to be offered in a convenient way, so that hopefully, in a not too distant future, the easy choice will be the good choice.

Because we see that people want to do good, and we need to help them make it happen. What is fantastic is that this is great for businesses as well. When looking at entrepreneurs who stuck to their values when others laughed at them, we witness a resilient and long-term success.

This is what we at Nordic Ecolabelling want for everyone – businesses, people, and planet - a resilient system where we all can truly thrive. And we believe that this all goes hand in hand.

Summary



How to achieve sustainable consumerism in the Nordic region – Overview of key takeaways

2

Chapter

Eco-Illectivism

- Domsday communication is counterproductive. Be positive and highlight the benefits that come with sustainable choices, such as quality and health.
- Information is not enough. Engage social norms and activate the social brain – we are pack animals and look at each other when forming behaviours.
- Put numbers in historical and/or social contexts to enable comparison.
- Make it simple to be sustainable by adopting nudging strategies.

3

Chapter

The necessary add on

- Get the order right. Only being sustainable won't do the trick. Focus on making products that people want and make them sustainable. This makes it easier for the consumer to make sustainable decisions.
- If you already have a very popular product, certify that one instead of creating a sustainable collection on the side.
- Have a minimum standard for all your products, i.e. even for your low-price brands.
- Don't assume all consumers want to read a lot of information. A well-known ecolabel makes it easy to communicate, and easy for the consumer to act on.
- Be transparent. Let the consumer know that the information is available for them, and that they can ask you about anything.

4

Chapter

Streamlining sustainability

- Offer economic incentives to business, it is needed to spur innovation.
- When looking into business models such as sharing, ask yourself; “what do I want to achieve? And what should be shared?”
- Communicate the many advantages of your product or service, such as proven quality, time efficiency, joy, and individuality, instead of overplaying climate, environment, and future generations.
- Regulate and ban the products and services that are not environmentally friendly. It's often appreciated by businesses to know what's allowed and what's not.
- Help your customers to fully utilize your products by extending the products' lifetime by offering services such as updates, repairs, upcycling, recycling, and reselling.
- Be flexible. Put the consumer in the center and adapt to their needs.
- Use positive terminology. There is no such thing as waste – only resources. And “pre-owned” is less stigmatic than “second hand”.

5

Chapter

Values for the money

- Gender balance and sustainability are related, you can't do the second without the first.
- One does not have to choose between making money and doing good. Choose to do both.
- Use the world's major social and environmental challenges as a tool for product development.
- Ask yourself what the central purpose of your business is. Identify that along with its impact on the environment and people.
- Always continue to make improvements and share what you've learnt with other businesses.
- Educate your employees on the history and values of your business, and make sure to live up to them. Employees are very quick to sense the difference between what a company says and does.
- Create a circular bond with your customers. The opposite of a bond based on solely repeated purchases.

This report is a result of the partnership and collaboration between Nordic Ecolabelling, United Minds and Prime.

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About Prime & United Minds

United Minds is a consulting company that specialises in context driven business and strategy development. From Stockholm, Cologne and New York, United Minds helps companies and organisations to adapt to the future. United Minds is a part of the Prime Weber Shandwick, a leading communication agency in Europe. Based in Stockholm, the group consists of more than 100 specialists in all aspects of marketing, corporate communications, public affairs, sustainability communication, digital media, business intelligence, planning and strategic counselling.

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The Nordic Swan Ecolabel supports sustainable consumerism and companies in becoming more sustainable. To be successful we need to know what is actually influencing and changing behaviours. Therefore, we set out to get to know the Nordic consumer better, understand their attitudes and behaviours, and learn what it is that happens when we stand in front of the shelves in the supermarket, or sit by our computers and smartphones, and make the decisions on what to buy or not.

We decided to ask people in all Nordic countries about their relation to nature, and their attitudes and behaviours towards sustainable consumption. This resulted in the quantitative study The Nordic Swan Ecometer 2018. What we found is a very positive situation, where people want to make more sustainable decisions than they do today and believe that they could make a difference in doing so.

To add depth to our findings, we reached out and spoke to thought leaders representing different areas and backgrounds. Among them are Patagonia's head of philosophy Vincent Stanley, Icelandic change catalyst Halla Tómasdóttir and the Swedish minister of consumerism Per Bolund. They generously shared their extensive knowledge and expertise, but most importantly, they showered us with inspiration of great examples on how to grab the opportunities and meet the needs of consumers wanting to contribute to a sustainable future.

“I got to read the report prior to launch. It is a highly interesting and inspiring read.”

Astrid Thors, Chairman of the Ecolabelling Board