

Sustainability Blog

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More than a Fashion Trend: Transitioning to a 1.5°C Lifestyle

Recap of the Circularity Salon on June 26

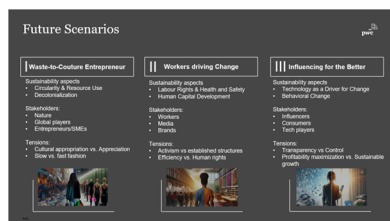
Our special Circularity Salon hosted in Berlin brought together leading stakeholders from the fashion industry including academia, supply chains, procurement, and leading fashion brands to explore the intersection of Circular Economy and sustainable innovation for an inspiring, critical dialog related to the societal and economic need to transition to a 1.5°C lifestyle. Together with our co-host, Circular Republic, we explored three fashion scenarios to call to action for more sustainability.

We started the transition journey with an overview of challenges and opportunity related to corporate sustainability. Raz Godelnik from the Parsons School of Design delivered a compelling talk on the current failures in corporate sustainability and discussed opportunities in areas such as awareness and attitudinal change, policy influence, and innovation in sustainable design. His insights underscored the need for companies to evolve their approaches towards more sustainable practices. Afterwards, we looked at Circular Economy in Action through a showcase from real-world projects presented by Carl Warkentin from Circular Republic. These projects, spanning production, retail, usage, collection, sorting, and recycling, demonstrated the practical application and effectiveness of circular economy strategies.

The event touched on the dominance of consumerist culture, with its demand for more, newer, and cheaper products, adding complexity for fashion brands attempting to adopt new circular business models. Regulatory pressures, sustainability reporting requirements, and social demands are pushing companies towards sustainability, despite these challenges. Investors are increasingly focused on solutions that revolutionize the linear value chain by closing loops to reduce raw material dependency. This includes enabling reuse, recycling, and repair. New business models are emerging to assist consumers in adopting sustainable purchasing practices, ultimately disrupting the status quo.



The core of the event, however, was the dialog resulting from three future scenarios. These designated future scenarios were used as a polarizing tool to guide the discussion about potential future pathways and a feasible transition agenda for the fashion industry. Thereby, the first scenario, “Waste-to-Couture Entrepreneur”, illustrated the journey of a former textile worker who becomes a sustainable fashion entrepreneur, merging upcycling with traditional craftsmanship. Scenario II, “Workers Driving Change”, highlighted a transformation story. It focused on a trash collector in Accra (Ghana) who transitions to a worker in a factory that values sustainable practices and human rights, setting new industry standards. Whereas the third scenario, “Influencing for the Better”, dealt with a fast fashion influencer turns into a sustainable style icon, promoting transparency and minimalism through smart technology.



The scenarios highlighted the significant changes required in the fashion sector, an industry notoriously known for being one of the most polluting and wasteful. Providing a platform for participants to discuss the necessary steps and measures required to enable this transition, the event encouraged attendees to envision a desirable future, examining how roles, responsibilities, incentives, and tradeoffs need to shift for the fashion industry to operate sustainably.



The event was more than just a discussion; it served as a call to action for all stakeholders to reimagine and actively work towards a sustainable future for fashion. By bringing together diverse voices and innovative ideas, the Circularity Salon has set the stage for driving the industry towards a more circular, low-carbon, and ethically responsible model. The insights and commitments from this event will be instrumental in guiding the fashion industry on its transformative journey.

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Kontakt



Hadas Zucker

Berlin

hadas.zucker@pwc.com