Fashion Transparency Index hails OVS, H&M, Calzedonia, but Jil Sander, Tom Ford found wanting

By Sandra Halliday  ·  14 July 2022

Fashion Revolution’s latest Fashion Transparency Index is out and it makes encouraging reading for some labels. But some other big names are shown to be not doing enough.

The seventh edition of the Index shows that the world’s largest fashion brands (it looked at 250 of them) and retailers “must increase transparency to tackle the climate crisis and social inequality”.

Italian brand OVS scored highest again this year with 78%, tied with Kmart Australia and Target Australia, which improved their scores by 22 and 20 percentage points respectively. OVS, H&M and Calzedonia trended higher. Italian manufacturer Jil Sander and designer Tom Ford found wanting in the climate and social index.

Calzedonia
increased their scores by 22 percentage points vs 2021. They’re followed by H&M, The North Face and Timberland, all tied at 66%.

The biggest movers this year are Calzedonia Group brands (Calzedonia, Intimissimi and Tezenis). They massively increased their score to 54%, a significant improvement compared to last year’s 11%.

Now for the bad news. Some 17 major brands “score a dismal 0% rating”. These include Jil Sander, Fashion Nova, New Yorker, Max Mara, Semir, Tom Ford, Hellen Home, Belle, Big Bazaar, Elie Tahari, Justfab, K-Way, KOOVs, Metersbonwe, Mexx, Splash and Youngor.

In fact, a total of 73 brands score in the 0-10% range -- that's almost a third of the world’s largest brands and retailers.

“We need to see a significant shift in the next 12 months if brands are serious in their commitment to tackling global inequality and the climate crisis,” Fashion Revolution said.

For the overall index this time, brands achieved an average score of just 24%. That came as 85% of brands don’t disclose their annual production volumes, despite mounting evidence of clothing waste around the world.

And a massive 96% of major brands and retailers don’t publish the number of workers in their supply chain paid a living wage.

In the wake of the authorities globally starting to get tougher on greenwashing claims, it also seems that 45% of major brands publish targets on sustainable materials, yet only 37% provide information on what constitutes a sustainable material. And only 24% disclose how they minimise the impacts of microfibres, despite textiles being the largest source of microplastics in the ocean.

The index also includes a reprimand to those brands that “use their channels to talk about social justice”, saying “they need to go beyond lip service. Just 8% of brands publish their actions on racial and ethnic equality in their supply chains”.

Other failings that were called out include only 11% of brands publishing a responsible purchasing code of conduct indicating that most are still reluctant to disclose how their purchasing practices could be affecting suppliers and workers.
And less than a third of major brands disclose a decarbonisation target covering their entire supply chain which is verified by the Science-Based Targets Initiative.

Meanwhile, only 11% of brands publish their supplier wastewater test results, despite the textile industry being a leading contributor to water pollution.

That all sounds pretty bad, but Fashion Revolution said it’s “encouraged by increasing supply chain transparency among many major brands, primarily with first-tier manufacturers where the final stage of production occurs. Nine brands have disclosed their first-tier manufacturers for the first time this year”.

And it added that it’s “encouraging to see significant progress across market segments including luxury, sportswear, footwear and accessories and across different geographies”.

Co-founder and Global Operations Director Carry Somers said: “In 2016, only five out of 40 major brands (12.5%) disclosed their suppliers. Seven years later, 121 out of 250 major brands (48%) disclose their suppliers. This clearly demonstrates how the index incentivises transparency but it also shows that brands really are listening to the millions of people around the world who keep asking them #WhoMadeMyClothes? Our power is in our persistence.”

But the overall conclusion was that progress on transparency in the global fashion industry “is still too slow among 250 of the world’s largest fashion brands and retailers, with brands achieving an overall average score up 1% from last year.”

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