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UNIVERSITY OF WALES TRINITY SAINT DAVID

Identifying If Profit And The Planet Can Coexist

The Comparison Of Accredited Social
And Environmental Certifications
Within Outdoor Industry Brands,
And Challenging The Worthiness.

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Declaration Statement:

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any other degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any other degree. This work is the result of my investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged giving explicit references and a bibliography is appended.

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Date: 28th February 2023

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Executive Summary:

Outdoor brands started by those in the mountains, which is where the biggest signs of environmental change are noticed. That generation of company starters is still around; hence fast brand reactions as climate change is affecting their playground. The outdoor industry is calling for a practical and pragmatic policy in supporting both positive action and penalising harmful practices. With a market value of nearly three billion euros in 2021, apparel was the largest category within the European outdoor goods market, followed closely by outdoor footwear (Tighe, 2022).

2023 is predicted as the year of the purpose-washing trend, moving from purpose to impact and putting words into action so transparency and integrity take the lead. A certified social and environmental accreditation can be seen as a powerful way to help people make decisions aligned with their ethics. Although, as more companies certify it becomes even less descriptive and confusing for people to know which company to work for, buy from and invest in. Brands need to tell the stories of their purpose, learnings, failures, the measurable difference they are making and achievable strategies, to inspire the rest of the industry to create change. There is power in a brand's voice, sharing its ethical and social responsibility, and promoting a positive brand image helps to build relationships with consumers and stakeholders.

Concentration should be sustainability as longevity. Ethical practices have now become a certain level of expectation, for example, including an impact or sustainability report in the footer of a website or declaring carbon labelling is standard practice. The question being asked is, can an ethical company create impactful action without the validation of an accredited certification alongside its brand?

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List of Abbreviations:

<i>Abbreviation</i>	<i>Explanation</i>
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
EBITA	Earning Before Interest, Taxes, and Amortisation
EUR	Euros
CE	Circular Economy
UK	United Kingdom
POW	Protect Our Winters
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
BoF	Business of Fashion
GenZ	Generation Z
B2C	Business To Consumer
Vivo	Vivobarefoot
I4.0	Industry 4.0
Storm	Stormcare
EU	European Union
ACM	The Netherlands Authority for Consumers and Markets
CMA	Competition and Markets Authority
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
1%FTP	1% For The Planet
USD	United States Dollar
CO2	Carbon Dioxide

TYF	TYF Adventure
HQ	Headquarters
PFAS	Per- And Polyfluoroalkyl Substances
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
EOT	Employee Ownership Trust
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
EOG	European Outdoor Group
Storm	Stormcare
BSI	British Standards Institution
POP	Points of Parity
ROI	Return Of Interest
SBT	Science Based Targets
RDS	Responsible Down Standard
Higg MSI	Higg Materials Sustainability Index
USA	United States of America
COP 27	United Nations Climate Change Conference
NFT	Non-Fungible Token
GRI	Global Reporting Initiative
MAS	Monetary Authority of Singapore
PR	Public Relations
AIDA	Attention, Interest, Desire, Action Model
R&D	Research and Development

1.0 Introduction

The textile industry is the fifth highest for Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions and fourth highest for the use of raw materials and water after food, housing and transportation (Technavio, 2022). This industry is one of the world's biggest manufacturers and there is an abundance of research already conducted around the accelerated 'fast-fashion' model that came from the 1980s (Linden, 2016). This study will specifically focus on the comparison of highly influential outdoor apparel brands at both a large scale and small to medium enterprise (SME) size, and whether any social and environmental accredited certifications are held. The purpose of this study is to look at the comparisons and conclude whether a business within the outdoor apparel sector would benefit from investing in an accreditation, or if similar policies can be applied and be equally as impactful without the badge of honour.

After the COVID-19 turmoil year in 2020, the textile industry is still facing deteriorating macroeconomic and geopolitical conditions, from the ongoing war in Ukraine to the rising energy crisis. Despite ongoing issues with supply chains and the minimal restrictions being lifted from economies around the world, this industry has entered into 2023 surprisingly strong due to monumental growth in the last twenty-four months. The textile industry has seen a huge rise in consumer demand globally, for example in 2021 revenue grew to 21 per cent each year and the average EBITA margin nearly doubled (Tighe, 2022). Nevertheless, brands are struggling to remain desirable to the consumer post-pandemic. As this industry steers into another period of uncertainty with a turbulent global economic crisis on the horizon, brands must create value that is beyond the cost of a product. Although inflation is the obvious worry for most executives in the next twelve months and brands are doing all they can to minimise any further cost

increases, the value of a product is the combination of quality, style and price. The growth of this industry is shifting, brands are wanting to do business differently by rethinking their operations.

The global outdoor industry has an expected consumer base of around 195 million people by 2025 and a wholesale value of over 6 billion euros (EUR)(EOCA, 2006). This sector has a strong impact that spans globally and unfortunately, due to greenwashing, there is a huge distrust between the customer and businesses. The gear and apparel that comes from the outdoor sector are made up of a surfeit amount of components and materials that cannot be recyclable nor are biodegradable, which is why there is great importance to changing business infrastructures. Many brands are already on a journey for positive change and many are looking for opportunities to do good, for example, some brands started a recommerce scheme, taking back used gear and recycling it into a new product to sell. Moving away from a linear economy and adapting the circular economy (CE) model, see Figure 1.

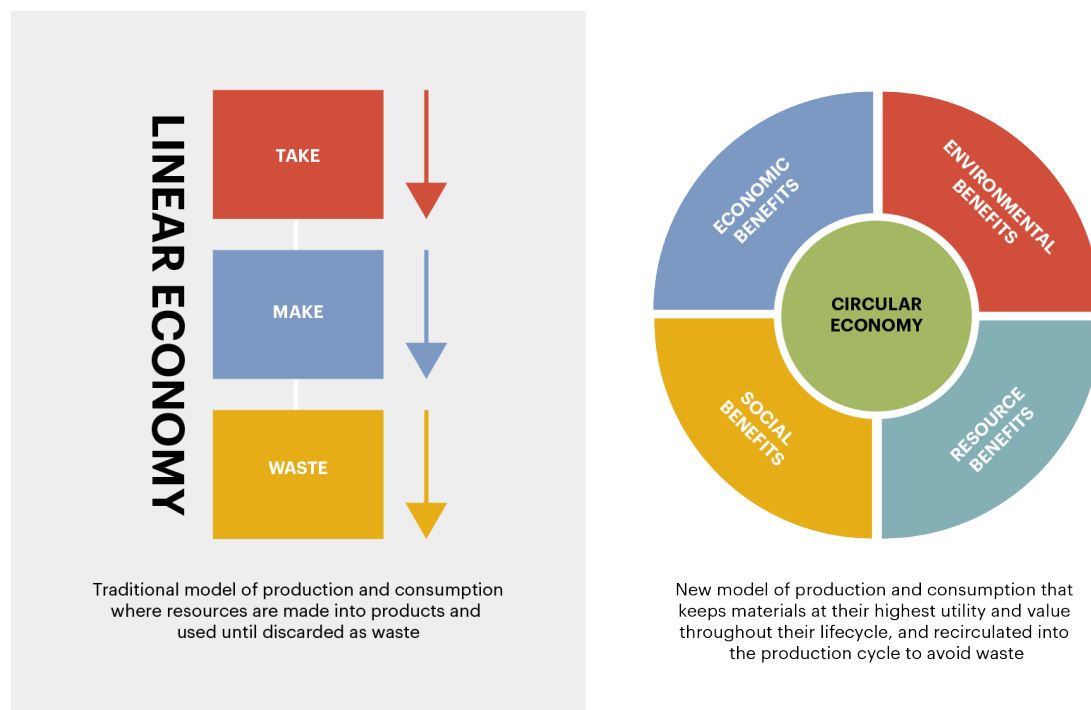


Figure 1: Circular Economy Model

This study will be beneficial for any brand with a customer because consumer behaviour is changing. People are used to coping with an abundance of information and want to see transparency within supply chains. The research conducted during this study has been collated from similar outdoor industry brands that share high social and environmental values to make the comparison more valuable. Previous academic research has been conducted on specific accreditations such as B Corp, although a study has never compared a selection of certifications within the outdoor sector. There are many benefits in paying for accredited certifications as they can be seen as a tool used in a wider marketing strategy, justifying social and environmental claims to avoid any greenwashing counter-blast. The consolidation of these policies is powerful in steering brands in a positive direction, although, is paying for accreditation the only way to verify this impact or can good business practice simply be applied?

The structure of this study is as follows: (1.0) After this introduction, the aims, objectives and justification of the study, including research limitations and ethics. Then (2.0) literature review is the gathered research supporting the knowledge and understanding of the topic, and identification of gaps in the literature via a PESTEL analysis. Next (3.0), will include the four comparative accreditations, followed by (4.0) eight chosen outdoor brands/ companies for the case study comparison. Subsequently (5.0), the methodology and data collection will be discussed. Finally (6.0), the results and analysis will be presented to give an overview of the study, along with a benchmark tool and recommendation. The conclusion will be summarised at the end.

1.1 Hypothesis Theory

While long-established business methods have focused on the balance between both growth and sustainable practices, imminent evidence is being shared demonstrating that avoiding transparency of a product's social and environmental value will affect sales. Due to this noticeable shift emerging, the customer's decision on whether to buy from a particular brand depends on their business transparency. Customers are changing the way they shop, and how they are discovering new brands. For a brand to succeed they must stay close to their customer and move with them in supporting what its values are, and aligning them by creating authenticity.

1.2 Aims

This study aims to compare accredited certifications that verify a high standard of social and environmental performance within businesses in the outdoor industry. Comparing ethical outdoor industry brands that have either accreditation or apply their ethical policies affirming specific values, and challenging whether being certified affects a brand's business model and service. Identifying whether profit and the planet can coexist within an industry that is already embracing existing legislation. Recommendations will be provided on how a company within this industry can commit to doing business better.

1.3 Objectives

The aim of this study will be achieved by classifying a selection of globally recognised accredited certifications and ethical outdoor brands of varying sizes. The collection of both qualitative and quantitative data will be used to measure these comparisons. This data will be collected through

analysis of government reports, academic studies and constructed interviews with outdoor industry brands. These interviews will give an insight into the business infrastructure used. Identifying emerging technologies that are spearheading the future of technical textiles and revising new policies for those innovative outdoor brands. A critical analysis of the research outcome will be made to devise recommendations for this study.

1.4 Justification

Fashion and textiles are one the most fast-paced industries on the planet, and still follow a take-make-waste linear model where products have minimal use and are then disposed of (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2022). Consumers own on average twice the amount they did at the start of the millennium, and four times the amount compared to two generations ago (Bialik & Fry, 2019). The areas of concern for the industry are to move away from the linear economy and move towards becoming fully circular, reducing carbon emissions and improving sustainability. There is an innovative shift in improving how technical textiles for outdoor brands want to do business differently, with the promotion of transparency being essential, using information and data as a creative tool and the sharing of processes through storytelling. The results of this study will provide comparative insight to support outdoor industry brands, practitioners within technical textiles and researchers looking for innovative business solutions for social and environmental impact. Furthermore, this study may provide businesses with information that potentially can be used to address the rethinking of business models as well as products, technology and processes.

1.5 Literature Review - Objective

The literature review (2.0) will include a research-based comparison of outdoor apparel brands both with and without social and environmental accredited certifications, and the benefits and/or challenges that might be accompanied by either. The comparison of limitations and any innovative methods to achieve positive social and environmental practices will be explored. The purpose of this study is to compare the benefits of accredited certifications with brands that are already demonstrating good ethical practices, although, choose not to pay the price for the verified badge. Presenting the results of the comparing brands will give a good understanding of how organisations are doing business better and the lengths they are going to for a positive change.

Across the globe, every year 92 million tonnes of the 100 billion garments produced each year end up in a landfill, that is one rubbish lorry of textiles goes to a landfill or is burned every second (Ditty, 2020). Alongside this, 76 per cent of the United Kingdom (UK) public think businesses have a responsibility to protect the natural environment (McKinsey & Company, 2022), and 73 per cent of consumers are willing to pay more for products that guarantee total transparency (European Commission, 2022). With these staggering figures of consumers wanting businesses to do better, brands could take responsibility to protect people and the planet, and support customer demands. There is no solution for a sustainability journey, all brands are constantly learning. The customer and the industry is confused about what the best practice is, which is why brands need to collaborate as there is enormous potential for businesses to help solve some of the biggest social and environmental problems.

Based on these positive impacts on society and the environment, this study will outline the need for these fundamental changes in the outdoor industry, including key challenges, implementations and consumer behaviour, especially how brands are educating their customers on decreasing garment purchases and increasing product lifespan. The future hopefully brings back the performance messaging from an outdoor technical textile point of view, because most brands have positive responsibility already embedded.

1.6 Research Limitations

This study has potential limitations due to the topical subject that is continually changing. As most practices are still ongoing, it is not formally written up yet, a good example of this is textile micro-filaments that break off in the laundry process also known as plastics-in-the-ocean from washing a fleece (Purane & Panigrahi, 2007). This problem has been known for over a decade but is still not even considered a metric on any scale. Another example is the outcomes of COP27 and new policies that are changing the way business is done, the evidence stated in this study may be outdated within twelve months. Considering conflict arising from cultural bias about the topic, interviewees might hold a biased view that can affect the study's legitimacy. Also, the insufficient sample size for statistical measurements is not large enough to see results, and the limited data found is difficult to identify a significant relationship. These limitations have influenced the research findings. In the results section (6.0) of the study, recommendations for further research are highlighted to strengthen study limitations.

1.7 Research Ethics

The research being collated will have ethical considerations at each step during the research process, including the appropriate attention towards the research participants and their businesses. The businesses and brands that will be chosen for the comparison of this study all share similar ethical practices, regardless of their accredited certificate status, as this allows for fair and equal results. Consent will be obtained from participants either in writing or verbally, if electronic surveys are supplied a box will be available for the participant to tick confirming their willingness to take part. The study will be fully explained to each participant and they will have the option to withdraw at any time. Any sensitive data will be stored confidentially and securely.

2.0 Literature Review: What Does it Mean to be Ethical?

For this study, having a selection of outdoor industry brands that are already supporting ethical practices, and vary in location, size and operating lifespan will be the best comparison. Working through the six factors of a PESTEL analysis will identify the forces an organisation in the outdoor industry encounter. Analysing this stage of the study will highlight both positives/strengths and negatives/weaknesses, it is important to consider each factor as interdependent and should be considered for the outdoor industry as a whole and not brand specific. From this, gathering qualitative or quantitative evidence to support the study with the PESTEL findings will help refine the hypothesis of the worthiness of social and environmental accreditations. Figure 2 summarises the outdoor industry PESTEL factors.

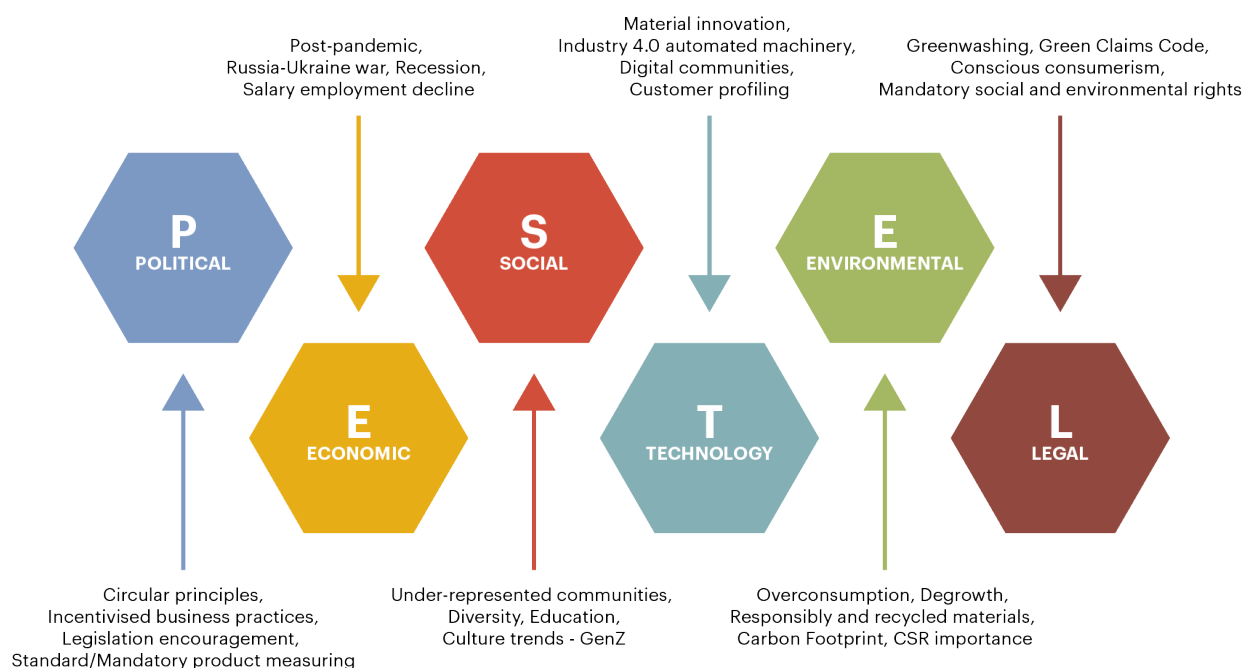


Figure 2: Outdoor Industry PESTEL Factors

2.1 Political

In 2022, the Protect Our Winters (POW) NGO sent a letter at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27) with supported outdoor brand signatures asking for policies to be put in place to reduce the outdoor industry impact. The industry is already working towards improving its footprint but with unpredictable seasons, biodiversity fading and global warming to +1.5°C, stronger practical and pragmatic policies need to be applied in supporting both positive action and penalising harmful practices. With a predicted global consumer base of around 195 million by 2025 and a wholesale value of over 6 billion EUR, this can only be tackled by acting globally at a political level (Protect Our Winters, 2023).

The French government have declared a 30 per cent target reduction of natural resource usage with GDP between 2010 and 2030, a 50 per cent reduction in the amount of non-hazardous waste landfilled by 2025, and 3,000,000 jobs will be created including new professions (Ministry for the Economy and Finance, 2018). The major outdoor brand Salomon has set internal goals to embody circular principles for all products by 2024 in preparation for the French mandate (Bellamy, 2023).

2.2 Economic

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a steep decline globally in outdoor purchases when countries declared an extensive home quarantine period. After the initiation of vaccinations across global governments, the industry noticed an increased demand for outdoor activities subsequently seeing a rise in outdoor clothing consumption (Beery, 2021). Per contra, the Business of Fashion (BoF) McKinsey State of Fashion 2023 Survey is expecting market conditions to decline or stay the same in 2023 as brands navigate through recessionary risks uncertain of how the next twelve months

will look. As inflation and geopolitical tensions persistently weaken a delicate world economy, the global GDP growth is expected to drop to approx 2.5 per cent in 2023 (McKinsey & Company, 2022), foreshadowing a recession and salary employment decline for many countries. Most recently, the Russia-Ukraine war has affected relationships within the global supply chain resulting in raw material pricing systems having to adjust.

2.3 Sociological

Fashion satisfies the needs of a customer whether that is specific to an activity, climate or social identity. Brand identity and quality serve as an advantage over competitors, and to an extent, consumers are becoming slightly more interested in a brand's ethical status. Unfortunately due to the current economic crisis, the cost of a product is forcing people to make financial-based choices rather than ethical ones (Winters, 2023).

Looking at the importance of cultural trends in the industry, quantitative research has shown 36 per cent of Generation Z (GenZ) refuse to buy from non-sustainable brands, and 45 per cent want brands to challenge societal issues (Bergh, 2022). To counteract this argument, the dominating international business-to-consumer (B2C) fast fashion e-commerce platform SheIn, is currently the fastest-growing apparel brand with zero social and environmental credentials. Although consumers can accelerate positive change, they can also be a barrier (Curry, 2023).

Opening Up The Outdoors Change-maker Programme is an inspiring creation of necessity, working alongside others to diversify the outdoor space. The organisation Black Trail Runners graduated as the first cohort from this programme at the end of 2022. This OUTO grant will enable them to implement innovative ideas for 2023 and increase the participation, inclusion

and representation of black people in trail running (Opening Up The Outdoors, n.a).

Natural foot health company Vivobarefoot (Vivo) supports underrepresented populations by recycling used material from their products to create callisthenic training park surfaces, from pull-up bars to gymnastic parallel bars. The brand ambassadors that promote this work are from underrepresented communities and these bar parks are located in underrepresented communities (Tracy, 2023).

2.4 Technological

Material innovation is thriving within technical outdoor apparel, for example, Pertex® fabrics that are well-known as being light, breathable and waterproof have developed a collection of fabrics designed for circularity. The offspring Pertex® Revolve™ still has the conventional construction from multiple different polymer layers and is now easier to recycle at the end of a product's life closing the loop on waste fabric (Karaca, 2023). The principle of permaculture, ecology and nature-based design is the future for the outdoor industry, nature based solutions could provide an answer that is not just about rewriting the equation (Bellamy, 2023).

New technologies are drastically changing the nature of work across all industries and occupations. The fourth industry revolution (I4.0) advocates up-skilling in the workforce and the creation of new occupations for the company and industry, unleashing a new era of prosperity leading to progressive social change (Schwab, 2016). The waterproofing brand Storm Care (Storm) invested in an automated filling system reducing a team of 180 employees down to a lean ten, resulting in two employees on the production line filling millions of bottles a year and the others are either chemists or admin staff. Through this new technology, Storm has also moved away from

the two-wash cycle process of cleaning and then waterproofing, instead using them together in the manufacturing process has resulted in saving on electricity, water, time and money (Wilson, 2023).

2.5 Environmental

Being a sustainable brand is more than an impact report in the footer of a website, sustainability is driving innovation with recycled materials being a new type of fashion that is media-positive. Brands must minimise the supplier and customer environmental footprint that is driving the increase in global temperatures by avoiding the extreme impacts of climate change.

The biggest concern is overproduction and overconsumption, which is the reason behind the pioneering technical outdoor brand Early Majority and the radical theory of degrowth to reduce the material intensity and avert climate catastrophe. The brand can see the underutilisation of products, which is why they have chosen to focus on membership models instead of inundating retail shelves for maximum profit (Early Majority, n.a). GenZ is also being seen to be making more ethical choices with an increase in second-hand or 'vintage' purchasing.

The difficulty with technical fabrics is making them sustainable, especially with a product that needs to perform at its best, such as a pair of leggings or a waterproof jacket. One of the problems startup brand Dryad found is the elastane in leggings because once blended it is hard to separate making the product linear and not circular. Finding a natural solution for this would solve a huge problem in this sector (Thomas & Barnard, 2023).

2.6 Legal

As governments monitor the operation of apparel businesses, implementing unethical practices is leading to legal consequences. In March 2021 the European Union (EU) took necessary action by issuing fines to brands that demonstrated a disservice in their supply chain, such as unfair wages, modern slavery and warming the environmental climate (European Commission, 2022b). In May 2021, the Netherlands Authority for Consumers and Markets (ACM) investigated seventy clothing companies falsely alleging their sustainability claims, also known as greenwashing, ACM enforced fines of up to 900,000 EUR or a proportion of their turnover (ACM, 2021). In October 2021, the UK's Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) launched the Green Claims Code, comprising six points to check the legitimacy of environmental claims and support companies in applying a legal framework to comply with consumer protection laws (GOV UK, 2021). If brands want to be seen as avoiding greenwashing they can prove this by committing to credible change while obeying newly appearing regulated rules.

3.0 Comparison of Social and Environmental Accredited Certifications

For this study four social and environmental certifications have been analysed and compared. The reason for choosing these particular accreditations is after extensive research they are all globally recognised, follow similar ethical values and goals and are familiar with the outdoor industry. When deciding on brands to compare against, these accreditations will be considered. Brands are continually looking at how they can better serve their customer and community, which is why these existing frameworks are becoming more successful and attractive. The advantages and disadvantages of each accreditation will be discussed later in the study, for now, this is an overview of what they are, and who are they for.

3.1 B Corp

B Corp's mission statement is to help companies use business as a force for good. B Corp is for any company as long as they have been operating for profit in a competitive market for at least twelve months, although pending certifications can cater for those companies who do not meet the threshold. B Corp says that gaining the status certifies that a company has met rigorous and high standards of social and environmental performance, transparency and accountability (Honeyman & Jana, 2019). Currently, B Corp has worked with 537,010 workers, within 6,346 companies, across 159 industries, in 89 countries on this one unifying goal (B Corporation, n.a).

The first step for any company, whether or not they want to become certified, is completing the free digital B Impact Assessment tool and scoring between 80 and 200 points to pass. The five impact areas covered are governance, workers, community, environment and customers. A risk review needs to be passed making a legal commitment, and the entire certification

is renewed every three years to retain status (Honeyman & Jana, 2019). See Figure 3 for the B Corp Roadmap.

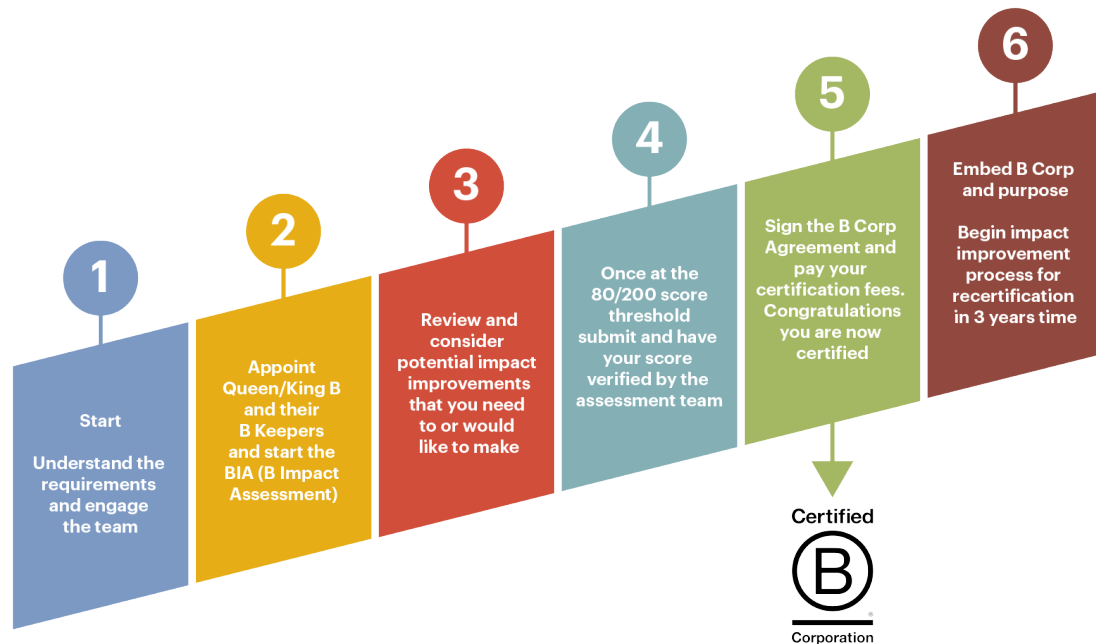


Figure 3: B Corp Roadmap

The certification is conducted by the non-profit B Lab network and takes an average of six months or more to complete. A submission fee is charged and an annual certification fee is dependent on the revenue of the company. One of the biggest benefits of becoming certified is being part of a like-minded community of companies committing to use business as a force for good, which can lead to innovation, thoughtful initiatives and increased trust among stakeholders says Patagonia CEO (Honeyman & Jana, 2019).

The difference between other similar accreditations such as Fairtrade is B Corp looks at the entire company and its practice rather than just one area. Achieving the status is timely but proves worthwhile for the opportunity for change that can be made. The industry is questioning if B Corp is the next evolution of corporate social responsibility (CSR).

3.2 1% For The Planet (1%FTP)

Founded by Yvon Chouinard (Patagonia) and Craig Matthews (Blue Ribbon Flies) in 2002, with a joint appreciation for the outdoors and wanting to put people and the planet over profit. This global movement has a diverse network of companies, individuals and environmental partners giving one per cent through either donations or volunteering. For companies, the certification is only given once a high-bar commitment has been met by donating one per cent of the company's annual sales to an environmental cause.

There are over 5000 members globally united with the same purpose of protecting the future of the planet. 1% For The Planet (1%FTP) states that it creates high-impact partnerships by matching companies with approved environmental partners amplifying the member's impact, and has already given more than 435 million USD (United States Dollar) to support approved environmental partners (One Percent For The Planet, n.a). For some brands becoming a member is a great way to make a positive impact, and can be held alongside other certifications as it is more about donating than anything else. The flexibility with 1%FTP is that members can choose a specific area of the company that it wants to measure for one per cent donations, the reason for this is that 1%FTP believe that one part of the company should be one per cent rather than no per cent (Yates, 2023). The potential negative implication of this will be discussed later in the study.

3.3 Climate Neutral

Established from the experience of two founding organisations, both having been carbon neutral since 2018 and 2012, intending to eliminate carbon emissions by building a globally recognised and trusted climate label. Since its launch in early 2019, Climate Neutral has completed a total of 814

certifications and certified 322 companies that all measured, reduced and compensated their carbon emissions. These companies have offset 1,156,260 tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the last twelve months through verified carbon credits from projects such as reforestation and renewable energy development. A certified carbon credit is issued when an action in eliminating or avoiding emissions of one metric tonne of carbon emissions is taken (Climate Neutral, 2022). With its accessibility, action-focused tools and resources this nonprofit permits both consumers and brands to take action immediately.

The certification is a three-step process and takes between 3 to 4 months to complete depending on the size of the company. Step one measures the emissions and assesses the carbon impact of the brand's products and/or services from making to delivery. Step two is the development of a reduction action plan to cut down emissions over the next 12 to 24 months. Finally, step three asks for the company's last year's emissions to be compensated by purchasing eligible verified carbon and clean energy credits (Climate Neutral, n.a).

Climate Neutral are continually improving on existing tools, workshops and content for companies to expand proficiency and break down obstacles for climate action. Climate Neutral does raise the topic of off-setting, especially where the off-setting is not using native species, the trend is now leaning towards in-setting (Tipper, 2009), see Figure 4 for offset versus inset.

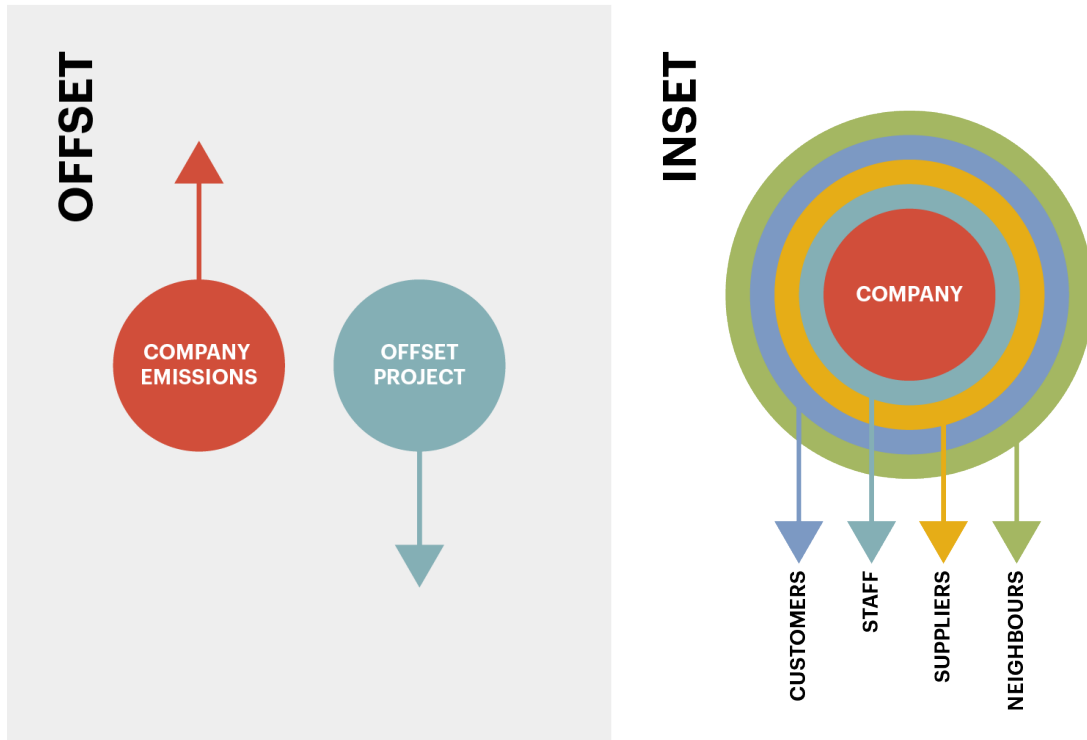


Figure 4: Offset versus Inset

3.4 bluesign®

Created in 1997 by an innovative group of individuals with a multitude of experiences in the textile and chemical industry. bluesign® technologies are shifting the standard mentality within the manufacturing industry, focusing on sustainable chemistry and aiming to motivate suppliers, manufacturers and brands to reduce its textiles value chain with a specific focus on the chemicals being used. The concept of sustainable chemistry is designed for circularity, aiming to minimise the negative impact on the environment, economy and society during the life cycle of chemical products (Bluesign, n.a).

bluesign® aims to ensure safe chemicals are being used at the start of textile production and throughout the entire supply chain. A three-tiered service package is offered and yearly impact reports are provided. Checks are made to ensure the company is continually developing its chemical substance to meet governmental regulations, stakeholder guidelines and specific bluesign® requirements. If these are not met, companies are

encouraged to resolve any problems and re-apply in a few years. Once authorised, companies will receive the bluesign® approved label which is seen as transparency validation for brands and consumers within textile manufacturing. Thousands of materials have been approved through risk assessments carried out on over 28,000 chemical products (Bluesign, n.a). Verifying the traceability and transparency of data at every stage of production is important, consolidating the textile value chain to lower impacts for people and the planet.

4.0 Comparison of Outdoor Industry Brands

Based on the research carried out during the PESTEL analysis, and the four elected accreditations, eight outdoor brands and companies have been selected for the comparison study. All eight will meet a high standard of ethical value and practice, and some will have committed to a paid-for accreditation. Consideration of varying company sizes, demographic locations and length of time the company has been opened for business is important for a comparative study. Measuring the effect of CSR by disclosing the importance of activity from stakeholders and customers, improving decision making and aligning any corporate goals will also be considered at this stage. Appendix B Table 1 presents an overview of all eight companies.

4.1 TYF Adventure (TYF)

Located on the coast of west Wales, TYF Adventure (TYF) is leading the way in sustainability, adventure and education by helping governments, businesses, schools and people to reconnect to nature since 1986. The mission statement for the company has always committed to using the power of play and learning in nature by closing the gap between knowing and doing in all areas of sustainability (TYF, 2023). Over time this mission has given focus to people from all backgrounds by transforming responses to climate and nature emergencies, and naturally developing the TYF's planetary repair centre concept. In February 2021, TYF received funding to launch a customer repair centre at the company's headquarters (HQ) in St David's, supporting the development of the company's CE department.

Founder Andy Middleton is a sustainability catalyst, and advocates in his DO Lectures talk that retail is not about putting stuff in the landfill, but instead creating a better service such as taking clothes back, fixing them and extending their lifespan (The DO Lectures, 2013). The interview (see

Appendix A Interview 11) revealed that over the last two years since the repair centre launched, TYF has seen a month-by-month growth in the number of repairs that are coming in. This has changed the business model and extended the service by becoming repair partners for other brands such as Lululemon, Fjallraven as well as continuing customer repairs (Lawrence & Lindström, 2023). Alongside this new venture, TYF validated their social and environmental impact by becoming the first accredited B Corp in Wales, UK. At the time of certifying TYF found the accreditations available were limited, and the B Corp framework for improving performance and building a community of people to learn with and from was the most appealing. TYF were previously part of 1%FTP for many years, although, decided to stop because the impact they were doing daily was more radical than what they were giving away, according to Appendix A Interview 1 (Middleton, 2023).

4.2 Vivobarefoot (Vivo)

Originating from a family history of cobblers, Vivo has created a natural foot health business to regenerate people and the planet, giving back more than they take and not only being sustainable but going beyond that to have a net positive impact. The definition of 'regeneration' within a business can differ, for Vivo, they have a regenerative way of being, and are thriving for an actual regenerative product that is fully closed loop. Although they are not a regenerative business yet, the company reports (see Appendix A Interview 4) they have a good sustainable model within the footwear industry against competitors, and they believe that their B Corp certification proves this (Tracy, 2023). Vivo chose to become B Corp accredited as it aligns with the company values, and the framework that B Corp has developed is useful because it highlights areas that need improvement.

Within the footwear industry, many degenerative materials are still being used and companies are lacking innate innovation to find end-of-life solutions to achieve circularity for footwear. The recommerce offering named 'Re-Vivo' is one of the best things about Vivo, says the product and value chain employee at the company, this part of the business is located 195 miles North of Vivo HQ in London and offers a selection of styles from the Vivo range (Tracy, 2023). This purpose-led company supplies globally and is a leading light in the outdoor industry by making resourceful decisions, which have been shown by promoting transparency, circularity and social and environmental impact measurements for each product. Vivo is using business as a conjugate to improve.

4.3 RAB

RAB, alongside Lowe Alpine, is owned and operated by Equip Outdoor Technologies UK Ltd (RAB & Lowe Alpine, 2022). This international business is for mountain people, equipping them for adventure with gear that is made to last and driving global change by addressing challenges within the outdoor industry. The social and environmental impact at RAB is dynamic and prevalent in the company, for example, RAB has a large focus on getting children into the outdoors and supporting athletes because they understand the barriers and want to better serve their customers and community. From a product perspective, RAB knows that gear is not indestructible but wants to keep it going for longer avoiding landfill, which is the reason for the repair service offering 'Second Stitch' that has been available since the company's early foundations. Alongside plans to reduce product impact, in 2020 RAB was one of the first outdoor brands to certify as Climate Neutral and set a goal to reach Net Zero carbon emissions by 2030. These goals are set for product designs, fabric selection, manufacturing process, shipping, and

order book management (RAB & Lowe Alpine, 2022). The sustainability team at RAB aim to have multiple stakeholders in the business to successfully get people on board and understand the journey (Karaca, 2023). RAB is also a Fair Wear Leader, an early adopter of the Responsible Down Standard and has a rental service. These validations and offerings demonstrate the company's ambition for improving clothing production for everyone. The interview (see Appendix A Interview 8) disclosed that by having these accreditations, RAB regards it as holding merit by forcing brands and businesses to think about issues they are avoiding (Karaca, 2023).

4.4 Protect Our Winters (POW)

POW, an NGO with an internationally driven footprint, uniting passionate outdoor people in helping to protect the places they love from climate change. Founded in the USA in 2007 by professional snowboarder Jeremy Jones, POW now has a presence in most continents with a united goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. To reach that POW believes the world must embrace renewable energy, low carbon mobility and a just price on carbon, and are supporting companies to advocate these systemic actions (Winters, 2023).

To make the most impact POW has country chapters and within those are regional chapters, for example, POW EU has nine regional chapters and six of those are registered as 1%FTP. POW can see consumer attitudes changing through brands that approach the NGO asking how they can give to 1%FTP because they want to offer something that aligns with their values, and know that philanthropy is important to their community but are not sure where to begin. The brands who have worked with POW for a while want to put a personal stamp on their impact and push for project-based initiatives. These brands do not have to be the greenest nor 1%FTP accredited, the

decision to work with them is based on an initial conversation with a member of the POW team. The intention should be about wanting to make systemic change within the outdoor industry and not about the product. POW wants to support brands in reducing their impact and turning them into advocates for climate change. POW believes that consumers are looking at brands to have a viewpoint with concrete action behind it and should be giving, which is the reason why 1%FTP works well for POW's infrastructure (Yates, 2023). At POW UK a toolkit guide to reaching net zero has been developed to help companies understand where they are currently and where they want to be. There is a lot of advice out there, just starting even if a business doesn't decide to go for accreditation is encouraged says POW UK in Appendix A Interview 6 (Winters, 2023).

4.5 Salomon

Located in a lakeside Alpine town of Annecy France, this engineering-led brand Salomon was one of the first to make ski equipment and skiwear followed by shoes in the early nineties. A recent rebrand for the French sports equipment manufacturer has applied subtle undertones of protecting the world so that it is there tomorrow. Salomon states (see Appendix A Interview 3), their new brand mission 'tomorrow is yours' is about self-attainment, self-fulfilment, making the most of who you are whomever you might be and being there for the world tomorrow (Bellamy, 2023). Although Salomon does not currently hold any social and environmental accreditations, they see sustainability as the cost of doing business rather than the point of difference. Social and environmental concepts are being developed to highlight the brand with various initiatives and targets being set, for example, all products being PFAS-free, all packaging being FSC certified, and no plastic packaging to be used by 2024 (Salomon, 2021).

These are implemented by Salomon, not the French government. This corporate roadmap is a starting point and is based on broad simplified approaches, which Salomon is aware will be generally satisfactory although not for some specific products, for example replacing the thin plastic 'blister' packaging on skis with a large FSC cardboard box needs optimising (Bellamy, 2023).

Salomon has committed to transparency and collaboration with its partners throughout the value chain and improving the footprint of a product through a science-based approach (Salomon, 2022). Although these conversations about the adoption of these principles are being had internally at Salomon, there is scrutiny over the limits of profit potential from higher-ranking executives within the company (Bellamy, 2023). The option to resolve this might be to look at new forms of value and ownership to achieve both halving the impact and doubling revenue.

4.6 Nikwax

In 1977 hill walker Nick Brown struggled to find a good waterproofing wax for his boots, so decided to invent his own and subsequently Nikwax was born. The brand is about enjoying the outdoors whilst protecting and preserving the natural environment. Nikwax's mission is to help people look after their gear so it keeps them warm and dry, with sustainable treatments that extend the life of gear and elevate performance. The chemicals that Nikwax use are environmentally safe, breaking down into simple compounds that do not pollute the environment.

Despite Nikwax not having any social or environmental accreditations, their formulas are one of the best globally as reported by a performance sportswear specialist (Ross, 2023a). Investing in a high-priced accreditation such as bluesign® would result in Nikwax either losing margin or increasing

product prices, instead Brown decided to turn Nikwax into an Employee Ownership Trust (EOT) to pass on the brand when he retired in 2022. The same values are still the essence of the company as everyone shares the same vision, although now the company is EOT the decision towards bluesign® could change as there may be more of a democracy according to Appendix A Interview 12. Nikwax holds itself to a higher standard than what the accreditations are for and feel that it would not add value to the brand, for example, Nikwax's chief executive officer (CEO) was chair of the European Outdoor Conservation Association (EOCA) which brought credit to the company (EOCA, 2006). In the future, the decision to apply for accreditation listed in this study might change due to commercial reasons. At a brand level, Nikwax acknowledges the downside of not having the validation of accreditation and how it may result in outdoor brands not wanting to work with them. The company have always been transparent and published statistics on its website endorsing any decisions with evidence and not following competitors. Their ethos is about monitoring, measuring and improving (Hewitt, 2023).

4.7 Dryad

The youngest brand in this study Dryad is at the start of its journey and has set an ambitious goal to make the best sustainable women's sportswear stated in Appendix A Interview 7. After twelve months of behind-the-scenes preparation during a global pandemic, Dryad launched in 2021. Founder Matt Thomas has a background in sustainability strategy and is well-informed in carbon markets, value chains and impact assessments. Thomas was very aware of the sustainability and supply chain issues surrounding the outdoor industry, and also noticed outside of work, whilst attending triathlon events, that professional female athletes were not getting enough money to access

or travel to these events (Thomas & Barnard, 2023). Through further research, Thomas found that there is less access for getting women to the sport than men. Extensive information about how women are negatively impacted by supply chain issues, usually deal with toxic work environments and also suffer from having a lack of job security if they choose to have children. One of Dryad's five goals is closing this loop by building a brand that highlights these issues for women in supply chains and raises awareness of the problems on both sides (Thomas & Barnard, 2023).

Dryad is transparent as possible and ensures a percentage of profits go into supporting grassroots. There are many accreditations Dryad could register with, though whilst profits are marginal the brand believes they can have more of an impact as they grow. For now, Dryad works with Petrutex which the brand believes is a highly accredited manufacturer and feels comfortable knowing they are doing everything as well as possible. If anyone challenges Dryad's decisions, they publicly explain the actions taken and what changes will be made when the time is right (Thomas & Barnard, 2023).

4.8 Storm Care (Storm)

In the early two-thousands Tim Wilson could see a change in direction for the waterproofing market, with a new environmentally friendly chemistry and Wilson's inquisitive nature this led to the launch of Storm. Innovation and collaboration are still at the core of the Storm brand, affirming to be the best aftercare solution for gear and planet (see Appendix A Interview 10).

Waterproofing products will always have a large customer demand, nevertheless, when it comes to chemistry there is a lot of information and option, when in truth customers just want a functional product. Consumers want to buy more sustainably and Storm appreciate ingredient branding is confusing especially when it comes to chemicals, being clear with

communications is important and has more impact than accreditation (Wilson, 2023).

Storm is not bluesign® accredited and believes accreditations do not prove that a brand is using the most environmentally friendly technology, as often things will be approved that are not ethical (Wilson, 2023). Storm feels confident in knowing that their suppliers are bluesign® approved, and see more value by investing in solar panels, building a water-catch to utilise rain in the products, and developing a new easily recyclable aluminium range because the brand understands that 91 per cent of discarded plastic is not recycled (Wilson, 2023). Large and medium-sized businesses have more resources to get accreditations than SMEs, time and finances are a big factor so the study suggests that doing something is sometimes easier than trying to get an accreditation.

Although Storm sells to well-established private label companies in the UK, the company has found business more successful internationally as people are more open to discussing new technologies. Competitors Nikwax and Grangers are the biggest suppliers in the UK, and Storm has noticed that retailers in the UK do not want to change their thinking about the products they are already loyal towards (Wilson, 2023).

5.0 Methodological Review: Can Profit and Planet Coexist?

To produce a comparable case study, various research collection methods have been used within the methodological review. Taken from the literature review, a qualitative pre-study was carried out on the outdoor brands, consisting of the analysis of website homepages and sustainability reports, followed by interviews with the brands and experts. This method has produced a large amount of data that will be collated where relevant. Quantitative research has been conducted through online polls with close-ended answers, to an audience of people that are associated with social and environmental impact. An ethnographic approach from an EMIC and ETIC perspective has been taken, drawing on statements and first-hand experience. Reporting the research in this section will give a framework to demonstrate the methods employed. The use of this data will support the findings when analysing and assessing the results.

The outdoor brands chosen for comparison in the study demonstrate a high standard of social and environmental performance. Varying company sizes, geographical locations and whether or not accreditation is held have been considered, as this will allow for a well-balanced analysis. The interviews were carried out over Zoom, the benefit of using this method allowed for the conversation to be relaxed and further related topics about ethical practices could be discussed. All interviews were between 20 to 30 minutes long, and were recorded and later transcribed (see Appendix A). A series of four neutral questions were compiled for all interviewees, alongside three questions specific to the accreditation status, see Appendix B Table 2.

5.1 Advantages and Benefits: Comparison Findings

Using comparison findings, this section will look at the advantages and benefits of holding an accreditation. Research has found that accreditation helps to build awarenesses with customers, retailers, stakeholders and the supply chain. Having a framework in place and asking the right questions carries a lot of merit by holding brands accountable and forcing them to recognise improvements within specific areas of the company that may not have been considered before, such as reducing carbon footprint from financial banking activities known as 'green banking' (Karaca, 2023).

The overall consensus of the brands that hold an accreditation is that they are proud to be associated with the accreditation they have chosen, this is demonstrated by making the logo visible on websites, packaging and social media platforms. With accredited companies on the rise, as well as consumer recognition there is a strong market pull for businesses to get involved.

The research found that 1%FTP is great for a company getting started and does not have much influence within its manufacturing supply chain, because it can support that systemic change (Winters, 2023). Any brand or company can be 1%FTP alongside other accreditations because it is more about donating, and is seen as satisfying for brands to be ticking at least one positive impact box. Described as a low bar of entry, 1%FTP allows brands to choose aspects of their company which are 1%FTP, this helps in building brand confidence for the companies that are new to philanthropy and want a framework (Yates, 2023). The interview (see Appendix A Interview 5) revealed that POW EU feels that it is important as an NGO to be registered with 1%FTP because consumer brands find this attractive, and it is paramount in the POW community because of what 1%FTP stands for (Yates, 2023).

Next, the B Corp framework is a living accreditation that is always changing based on feedback from the B Corp community. Companies that are B Corp accredited are required to withstand a verification process every three years to renew their certification, as a result, that score will not change if the company has not improved (Middleton, 2023). Since the EU passed legislation of single-use plastics being banned by 2040, B Corp has declared that all B Corps will comply and if not will lose their accreditation (Middleton, 2023).

When TYF first started looking at social and environmental accreditations, British Standards Institution (BSI) was the only option for the company, although TYF felt it was too clinical, scientific and measurement based. The BSI 5750 is good for some processes, although TYF wanted an accreditation that looked at all aspects of the company. B Corp had not been around long and appealed to TYF because the framework aimed to improve business performance and build a community of people to learn with and from. Andy Middleton at TYF describes B Corp as imperfect but still the best framework that exists, with fewer hiding places brands cannot pretend areas of their companies are doing good. In relative terms, if CSR was a tickbox it would be like completing Couch to 5K, going through the B Corp process is like doing an Ironman, it requires a lot more commitment (Middleton, 2023).

As a younger company starting, B Corp provides a very simple recipe, which while it is not as thorough or as detailed as brands hoped it would be, at least provides that starting framework especially when founders have limited thinking space to work out what a sustainable company would look like, what is involved, and how they should do it. From a product management perspective, the job of weighing up cost, performance, quality and accreditation is important for making sure sustainable values fall into one of those categories (Bellamy, 2023). Also for startups with a small amount of

funding, investing in B Corps frameworks early on means that they never need to reinvent what they are doing later (Middleton, 2023).

In TYF's retail store, when looking to stock brands without an accreditation they ask the supplier two questions; 'what is the difference that you are proudest having made in the last year' and 'what is the biggest thing that you dare talk about in public that you are trying to change in your industry'. Without that validation of an accreditation, TYF wants to know more about the brand so they can share their story with the customer when visiting the store in St David's. TYF believe that it is these stories that can help make positive social and environmental changes (Middleton, 2023).

For brands within this study that do not hold any accreditation, they have validated their standards by only working with manufacturers who hold accreditations. Both Dryad and Storm communicate this on their website showing transparency with their customers and stakeholders. Alternatively, Nikwax feels that customers deal better with visual logos, whether that is a paid-for accreditation or not, it can be used as a visual shortcut (Hewitt, 2023).

In conclusion, an accreditation can add value if it is the right certification for the brand. It certainly adds customer trust providing a way for consumers to quickly identify a product or brand that aligns with their values, and as a result, can mean that consumer becomes loyal to the brand. Customers do not want to go into the detail, they want to trust brands and hope they will always make the best ethical choice. Accreditations can also show a brand has put in a lot of work to achieve a certain certification, for example, companies growing on a broad platform of doing good may never measure what they are doing, and are often found to have scrappy impact and governance through poor management. Consideration of a customer's

shopping habits has come through in the data due to outdoor clothing being quite similar, for example, the same materials, almost the same designs and the same trusted colour-ways. Figure 5 highlights how people buy their gear primarily on the look, followed by the price which is not always the lowest, next is the fit and material claims, and the final stratification is CSR. The theory, shared by a sportswear design specialist (see Appendix A Interview 2) is to move down the layers if a product is comparable, hence always choosing aesthetics. If two products have the same visual appeal, consideration of fit and materials will only happen if the price and look are the same (Ross, 2023a). The outdoor industry is crowded with similar brands so there is real competition to differentiate at this fourth level.

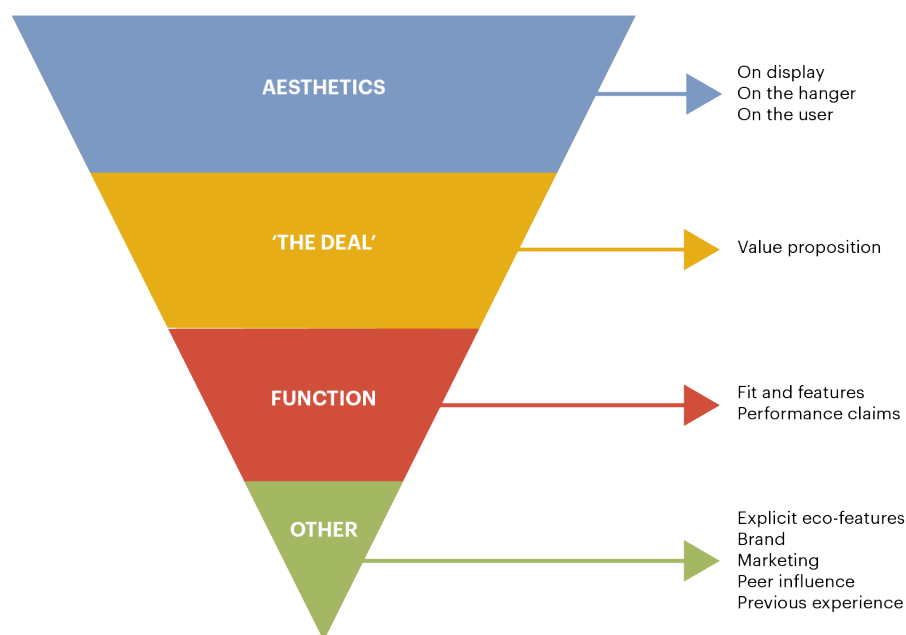


Figure 5: Model of Outdoor Buying Behaviour (Ross, 2023a)

5.2 Challenges and Limitations: Comparison Findings

Using the comparison findings, this section will look at the challenges and limitations of holding an accreditation. From a brand and company point of view, going for any accreditation takes time and should be a full-time role within the company to ensure a good level of social and environmental impact for the brand. Having someone on the board with that experience means the right decision will be made as to whether accreditation should be applied for or not (Cristofaro, 2023). From a project management perspective, what makes someone purchase a product might come down to one or two points of difference, and the rest will be points of parity (POP). The industry has seen the rise of ingredient branding in recent years, some brands that have not innovated significantly are seen to be throwing ingredient branding to add value and seem more important (Bellamy, 2023). Appendix A Interview 3, feels that accreditations can be seen as ingredient branding.

From a consumer point of view, it can be difficult to understand the many accreditations in circulation as they are becoming more powerful in presence rather than if they are reputable or not. Accreditations can help someone go to a brand, although it can be difficult for the customer to know what it means. Customers do not want to spend time looking into the different accreditations, an ethical spectrum takes place when making buying choices. Another point to consider is even though the average consumer is becoming slightly more interested in whether their product holds an accreditation, unfortunately, due to the current living crisis, particularly in the UK, the cost of a product is driving people to make financially based choices rather than ethical (Winters, 2023).

Accreditations can be costly for smaller brands and might not necessarily provide a return on interest (ROI) especially when it comes to

product-specific certifications, as this often involves a yearly cost per product. With the overwhelming list of standards, unless a company is making a profit, accreditation can feel pointless and can feel that the cost of obtaining one could be better spent elsewhere (Thomas & Barnard, 2023). For example, if a product is certified carbon neutral, this does not mean that the product is a better alternative, just that the company have paid to offset the emissions from the production process (Hewitt, 2023).

The challenge with most accreditations is the diversity of the scoring system. To achieve 1%FTP accreditation, only one single product or area of the company needs to be registered, for example, POW EU declined a partnership with the outdoor clothing company Dakine because the brand recently registered as 1%FTP but only on their e-commerce. The problem with this selective technique, unlike Patagonia which stands for one per cent of everything, is that brands are complaining about those who are being selective and are requesting for a delineation of level or logo to be applied (Yates, 2023). POW EU reported, that 1%FTP consciously decided on this approach because they believe that one part of the company should be 1%FTP rather than none of it. When POW seek out brands to partner with it does not come down to the accreditation that is held, but rather if the brands have aligned values (Yates, 2023). This challenge is similar within B Corp when companies are scored differently over the five impact areas, for example, a company could have a high social impact but low environmental impact so it does not necessarily work fairly. B Corp as a business is aware of this and does not require companies to work equally across all areas, as a result, some B Corps are doing not-so-great stuff within their organisation (Middleton, 2023).

The research found that bluesign® is one of the most expensive accreditations, and the option of whether a company should attain the certification usually comes down to the price. Nikwax feels that bluesign® is not completely clear and honest, and does not want to pay towards an accreditation that is also accrediting other companies that might not be behaving honestly. At a brand level, the downside of not holding this accreditation means other outdoor brands might not work with or recommend Nikwax (Hewitt, 2023).

Similar challenges were shared by Storm, for example, all suppliers of Storm are bluesign® approved and although the brand has not paid the colossal price tag of being accredited the question being asked is why would Storm need to pay, in theory, again (Wilson, 2023). Although the validation does need to be vetted somehow, otherwise it could lead to greenwashing or in some cases an illegal offence, the structure and process do feel very rigid and not very ethical.

A specialist in performance sportswear design Charles Ross states (see Appendix A Interview 2), that very few people understand what the chemical management certification bluesign® is about. Ross feels that the outdoor industry should know better because 95 per cent of the industry thinks bluesign® tracks the chemicals and identifies when a company is not using good ones, which is not completely true. Those in the industry who are a bit more informed know that there were two different certifications, one is chemical management and one is process management. Those in the industry who are a bit more informed again, know that Gortex is known for using knavish chemicals have a bluesign® endorsement and their endorsement is for process management. At Gortex the process management is where they make their waterproof membranes, so despite them still using these untrustworthy chemicals, they are being captured and as a result, creating a closed-loop process. In theory, this 'greenlighting'

method, explained in more detail later in the study, displaying the bluesign® logo on a product demonstrates to the consumer as a company using suitable chemicals, although this might not always be true (Ross, 2023a).

In conclusion, time and cost is the problem with attaining most accreditations. Sustainability can be seen as a one-way slope, people tend to only talk about the positives ignoring how to stop the negative things from happening. For example, encouraging carbon offsetting results in larger quantities of products being made, and the unsustainable overconsumption of products within the industry continues (Bellamy, 2023).

The brands that do not hold accreditation in this study feel an accreditation would not add any value to them. Through in-depth consumer research, studies and innovation Salomon finds that decisions often get made based on who is placing the orders. The difficulty is influencing the buying representative to make these purchases on behalf of the brand and ensuring they are voicing the brand's sustainability priority, as this is the customer demand they want to appeal to (Bellamy, 2023). Another reason whether accreditation is worthwhile is often based on the company's biggest market size, for example, international standards within manufacturing might differ between countries. The research found that some factories might not know, or are even interested in what B Corp is, they also might not be able to apply for this sort of accreditation due to their demographic restrictions. Brands should look at suppliers and manufacturers, especially when they supply globally if accreditation is considered.

5.3 Alternatives: Comparison Findings

This section has considered alternative methods of delivering social and environmental impact, with alternative accreditations or ethical measurements supporting beliefs and values.

From the research recommendations, Science Based Targets (SBT) were the most common, providing a clearly-defined pathway in supporting companies to reduce GHG emissions. Targets are intentionally science-based if aligned with the latest climate science, meeting the Paris Agreement goals of limiting global warming to below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and following efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C (Science Based Targets, n.a). The benefit of SBT is that current emissions can be highlighted and solutions can be held accountable because these targets are based on science and there is no leeway. The challenge can be that they are not particularly consumer friendly as they are not designed with the consumer in mind and can be difficult to understand. Salomon is looking at SBT as they feel it is a good way of committing and could be more valuable to them as a company of their size than other accreditations such as B Corp (Bellamy, 2023).

Sustainability and impact reports have become popular with brands following much debate in recent years. The outdoor industry is experiencing the first dynamic change coming in because of sustainable legislation, research has shown many brands feel as though a report should be produced although there is no legislation for it currently. With no legislation, this leads to repeated greenwash statements and the real question about whether an organisation has reduced its environmental and/or social impact are not being directly answered (Ross, 2023a).

Companies do not have the time or resources to build these reports, and with a climate emergency impending, spending three months writing about the year that just passed is not the best use of CSR personnel time.

Greta Thunberg has voiced her opinion about the unnecessary purpose of these reports, and others are wondering if the one hundred or more page report is hiding the lack of actual real progress (Ross, 2023b). Companies can be setting work on resolving these issues immediately.

Understandably, compiling these reports can be useful and permits transparency around public scrutiny about the company's risks and opportunities in encouraging goal setting, and recognising the significant and positive change. Whilst it is important to maintain the brand's voice to avoid it becoming generic, the key is to be specific and proactive rather than compiling a heavy two-hour read. Delivering the data can be conducted in many ways, for example, a presentation or video might be more engaging for others than reading through a fifty-page pdf, or a short one-page on the company's website (Ross, 2023b).

Research has found that many companies are developing their internal standards, and although there is an endless choice of standards in circulation, brands are wanting something specific to their needs. POW UK has created POW Pledge to support transparency, delivering community education and engagement programmes, organisational climate action support, and campaigns for systemic policy solutions (Winters, 2023). Although there are similar pledging systems available such as One Tree at a Time, Race to Zero and Planet Mark, POW UK felt these lacked clarity on the requirements and wider stakeholder influence side. POW Pledge is currently only available in the UK with a minimum of 150 organisations registered and most of those completing within six months, depending on company size. The pledge is a great way for companies to create their policies through personal experiences, listening to their community and making decisions based on what is needed instead of assumption (Winters, 2023).

Another successful framework that has been developed by Vivo is named the V Matrix, an internal scoring system for each footwear product style based on its sustainability. Moving away from an excel spreadsheet, Vivo has developed its V Matrix into an online software platform with a life cycle analysis partner to break down all the materials involved, looking at the supply chain and questioning the impact. Vivo believes that if every shoe brand used the V Matrix model it would make a hugely positive impact across the entire industry (Tracy, 2023).

One of the most successful accreditations within the outdoor industry is the Responsible Down Standard (RDS) developed in partnership with The North Face and Textile Exchange in 2015 (The North Face, n.a). This incentivised standard is committed to improving animal welfare and traceability in the goose down and feather supply chain, giving companies and consumers a way of knowing what is in the product. Adam Mott, Director of Sustainability at The North Face hopes the use of RDS will promote positive welfare and traceability at a much larger scale than The North Face could ever accomplish alone (The North Face, n.a). Products must be audited and certified to meet the RDS, each time ownership of the downs material changes hands a certificate is issued verifying the conformity of the RDS. With huge momentum from the start, figures showed that by the end of 2015 over forty brands initiated the certification within their supply chain to RDS, over 1200 sites certified in Europe, North America, and Asia, and around 240 processors, garment factories, and trading units became certified (The North Face, n.a).

Finally, a free-to-access tool is the Higg Materials Sustainability Index (Higg MSI), measuring sustainability within the supply chain and is fundamental to the Sustainable Apparel Coalition's mission of transforming

business impact growth. Fast-fashion clothing company H&M has scored highly on selected products, despite having a poor value chain reputation, which makes brands question the tool's transparency (Thomas & Barnard, 2023). Nevertheless, Higg MSI does consider all factors in production and supports companies in switching to more ethical practices (Ross, 2023a).

5.4 International Legislation and Cultural Differences

This section of the study included specifics that became apparent from the gathered data, with each country within the industry demonstrating different focuses on operations and concluding that no one solution fits all. Besides legislation, the indisputable factor was a cultural difference, for example, whilst trading in the United States of America (USA) Storm experienced a minority of organisations asked about the ethics of their waterproof products. Although the USA is home to one of the most ethical outdoor brands Patagonia and the B Corp movement, the hunting trade known as Hook and Bullet contributes heavily to the USA economy and is a huge demographic needing a waterproofer, yet has minimal concern whether the product holds an ethical accreditation (Southwick Associates, n.a). See Figure 6 for the Hook and Bullet government data of the top activities by gross output in billions of USD. The hunting fraternity prioritises the need for a waterproof product offering no optical brightness, is odourless and will keep the user completely dry over an extended period. Storm have noticed that globally their products are seen in different ways, and accreditations have different values in each industry, as well as each country (Wilson, 2023).

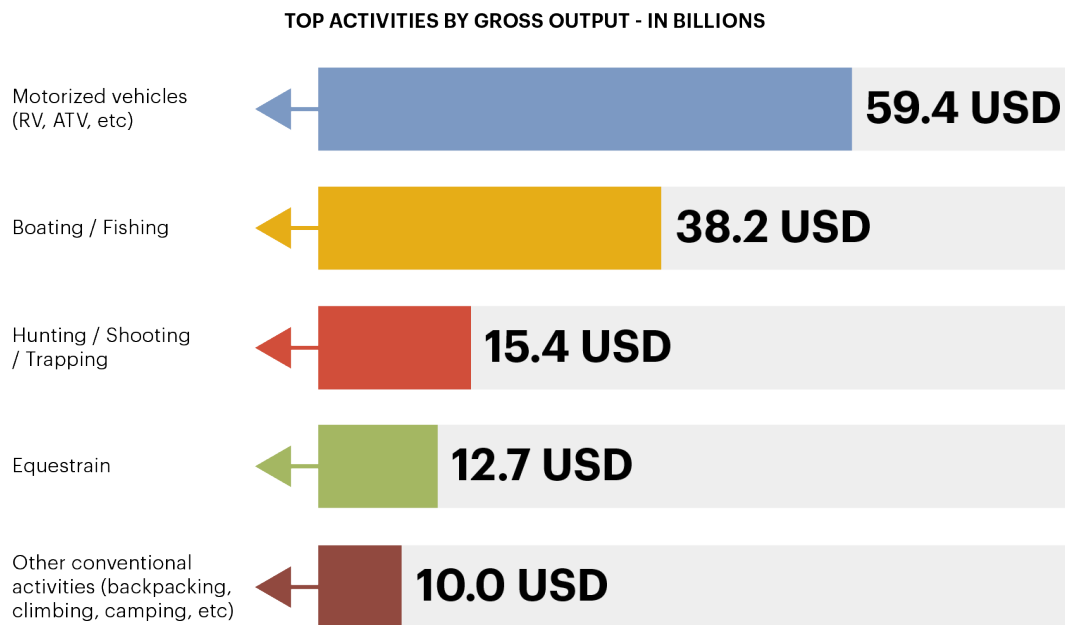


Figure 6: Hook and Bullet Government Data, USA Economy (Southwick Associates, n.a)

Continuing the topic of waterproofing, in the last millennium the outdoor industry had not realised that the rain test for Gortex USA is different from Gortex Europe (Ross, 2023a). The USA tests with the rain falling vertically down on the product, with only the upper side of the garment needing protection. In comparison, the European test is both vertical and horizontal spray. As a result, there are many discrepancies about when garments pass the USA test and are imported into Europe with the Black Diamond accreditation validating its waterproofness because it would fail the European rain test. From a consumer point of view, trust is put in the brand and the customer is not interested in that level of difference (Ross, 2023a).

Most recently, New York state announced a ban on PFAS in clothing taking effect in 2025. Described as the forever chemicals, PFAS have been linked with many health concerns and the chemicals have been discovered in drinking water across the state (Tucker, 2023). PFAS is a group of man-made

fluorocarbons and is one of the three families of waterproofing chemicals. Fluorocarbons are most associated with being the best waterproofing chemical because it does not breakdown, for example, if a Gortex coat was buried in the ground over 1000 years, the coat would no longer be there but all the fluorocarbons would still be in the ground (Wilson, 2023). The interview (see Appendix A Interview 10) revealed that Storm believes fluorocarbons cannot be beaten unless someone invents a fourth waterproofing family. Leading the way, Patagonia has already committed to removing all PFAS from products by 2024 (Tucker, 2023).

In November 2022 COP27 brought eleven countries from across the world together to discuss how efforts can be strengthened in addressing the climate crisis. POW EU wrote an open letter ahead of COP27 calling all those in the outdoor industry to sign the letter demanding action from European policymakers to reduce carbon emissions and improve sustainability. The letter identified three outcomes; to incentivise the increased sustainability of business practices, standardise measurements for products' environmental impact and help businesses move to renewable energy for manufacturing. The outdoor industry is united in wanting to do business differently by moving ahead of legislation and penalising bad practices (Protect Our Winters, 2022). Dimitrios Zevgolis at the European Commission responded with shared concerns over the lack of harmonised sustainability standards for companies and understands this is leading to the well-known phenomenon of greenwashing. To tackle this, the Commission will be presenting the Green Claims Initiative later in 2023 to ensure a level-playing field for companies making a substantiated environmental claim. With the objectives of the Paris agreement, Zevgolis shared sources of funding to support companies in the area of circular economy through the Innovation Fund, the LIFE programme, and Recovery and Resilience Facility funds (Zevgolis, 2022).

Textiles is the fourth highest pressure category for the use of primary raw materials and water, and fifth for GHG emissions. With an estimate of less than one per cent of textiles being recycled globally, there is a priority to resolve these poor practices within the textile industry (European Commission, 2022a). In 2020, the EU Green Deal was approved in providing legislation aimed at Eco-Design, Due Diligence and Green Claims. Based on feedback from industry and stakeholders, the Commission aims to respond to these challenges with a comprehensive EU Strategy for Textiles (European Commission, n.a). The strategy aims to strengthen competitiveness and innovation within the industry, scaling the circular textile market, reducing the gap between textile reuse and fast fashion, and encouraging new business models. If sustainable claims are made, brands must be able to provide data to support better ethical practices (European Commission, n.a).

For brands, ensuring the customer with trustworthy and relevant information about the product at the point of sale is central. A sustainable product policy framework must be provided, along with the option of repair services, spare parts and repair manuals. Brands need to protect themselves and consumers against greenwashing by setting minimum requirements for sustainability labels/logos and information tools (European Commission, n.a).

From a consumer point of view, the CE approach will provide high-quality affordable products that are designed for reuse, repair and recycling, implying that waste itself will become a resource (EPRS, n.a). The Green Deal assures sustainable services and digital solutions will bring a better quality of life, innovative jobs and upgraded knowledge and skills (European Commission, n.a).

Overall, companies are encouraged to work together in creating frameworks for sustainable products providing opportunities in the EU. Currently, there are four million jobs linked to the CE in the EU, by scaling the CE will improve decisive contribution in achieving climate neutrality by 2050,

and will ensure the long-term competitiveness of the EU (European Commission, n.a).

5.5 Innovation Advancements

Innovation is making huge progress within the outdoor industry, especially to improve social and environmental impacts. Technology is moving fast and many brands are not sure how to navigate within it and stand out, thus embracing open innovation and acknowledging flows across the organisation's boundaries (Bogers, 2018) will allow for an increased consumer engagement towards circular products or services (Fuchs & Hovemann, 2022). Powered by digital technologies, innovative models are advancing relationships with customers, mass customisation, sharing and a collaborative economy. For example, according to the European Commission the internet of things (IoT), big data, blockchain and artificial intelligence (AI), are accelerating circularity and dematerialising the economy making industry countries less dependent on primary materials (European Commission, n.a).

Digital creates another channel with a better touch point than the consumer being present, for example, 3D printing and 3D knitting can create a perfect fit trainer for a foot, which will be difficult to surpass. Although the outcome is still a physical product that will need to be replaced or renewed, the brand is giving its customer the perfect fit (Ross, 2023a). This is similar to body-scanning technology, designed so that garments fit exactly how the customer wants them to.

An interesting observation made by product developer Steven Cristofaro (see Appendix A Interview 9) is about the customisation of products and garments. If a customer can customise their product they will never get bored of it, for example, patches being sewn onto luggage as a

valid stamp from a recent trip, or the revolutionary Croc shoe that supports individual small badges hooked into the holes (Cristofaro, 2023). The idea of customisable and interchangeable products keeping the item desirable is enormous, one of the biggest reasons fast fashion is so attractive is because of the need for individualisation through styling garments together. Human instinct is wanting to be creative and showing this through the clothes being worn. Innovations within fabric development are still so new and expensive with very few options in between. Cristofaro believes that supporting these innovative developments at an early stage will keep companies going as a business and in time, hopefully, scale it out to larger brands at an affordable price (Cristofaro, 2023).

Nature-based solutions are providing answers without having to rewrite the equation. Progressive processes are happening at the Swedish textile recycling company Renewcell and Worn Again Technologies eradicating textile waste. Nature-based design is seen as the future, from a business perspective Middleton at TYF believes that hypothetically putting nature on the board in a company, in front of decision-makers from across different advisory, strategy and operations, and governance can be powerful. The simplicity of asking what would nature say removes the acronyms and technical jargon that are flooding today's discussions (Middleton, 2023).

An innovative solution towards circularity through fermentation and biodegrading is from a study (Biomimicry Institute, 2011) that proposes merging technology and biology into a biological cycle producing only biomaterials materials that can be composted at the end of life. The research behind this biofuel process development uses second-generation feedstock that is either waste or by-products from food and the agricultural industry, such as cereal straw and municipal waste. For waste textiles, this is seen as a cellulose-rich feedstock for second-generation bio-refinery in an open-loop

recycling process. The study (Ribul, 2021) took this data further by exploring ways an enzymatic and biological process can be used to establish a circular approach towards closed-loop resources used within the textile industry. The study presented the advantages of bio-based processes aimed at renewables rather than fossil carbon, as they typically have low energy demand, and resulted in extending mechanical and chemical textile recycling systems in the technical cycle, allowing for greater circularity of textiles before composting (Ribul, 2021).

Innovation is important within the outdoor industry although it needs to be used correctly. Digital technologies are beginning to reduce the need for a physical product whilst improving the experience and maintaining the engagement of the customer. Early Majority, is an outdoor community brand with a strong emphasis on its membership model. Currently, the annual membership offers discounted member prices, exclusive access to new products and tools, resources and support for living adventurously, artistically and with a voice in product creation. Alternatively, a lifetime membership offers the same benefits as the annual one, plus minting a member badge non-fungible token (NFT) so the member can become a stakeholder. The benefit of the lifetime membership is as the community grows so does the value of the membership (Early Majority, n.a). In an interview with founder Joy Howard, ex-Patagonia, Howard states that it is so expensive to make technical outerwear ethically, so Early Majority will never make cheap garments. The brand wants to make things that will last, so have included that all products come with a lifetime guarantee and free repairs (Webb, 2022). By applying the degrowth model, Early Majority has a goal to shrink the material intensity of the economy rather than grow it by using the membership fees to outweigh product sales in terms of revenue (Early Majority, n.a).

According to the World Economic Forum, it is expected that by 2025, 90 per cent of the global population will have regular access to the internet (World Economic Forum, 2015). Leveraging this data, TYF has found a way digital technology can improve a customer experience by creating tutorials to help customers repair or waterproof gear at home. The marketing team at TYF are currently working on what the future of marketing for the TYF repair service could look like, with easy-to-access information that engages with the viewer (Lawrence & Lindström, 2023).

6.0 Results: Discussion and Analysis

This study has demonstrated a good piece of research with frameworks supporting research approaches, data collection and technical analysis through the medium of primary research, secondary academic studies and tertiary sources. This section highlights the results from the evidence gathered and has been discussed based on the findings of the literature review. A thematic analysis has been conducted linking the literature review and methodological review. The original hypothesis theory, the study aims and the study objectives have been met, although the results highlighted areas that were not considered major factors at the beginning. The results in this section present the quantitative and qualitative data that has been collected.

6.1 Discuss Results

Following the qualitative pre-study a benchmark tool has been collated (see Appendix B Table 3) to identify performance gaps for the eight comparison brands allowing for any reference points to feature. The reason for comparing each of the brand's social and environmental performances is to allow for a fair study to be conducted. With a large number of outdoor industry brands in circulation, this method selected eight brands fairly. The results did not show a significant difference between each company, which is what the tool intended. Direct questions about paid-for accreditations were avoided. Figure 7 shows an overview of the results of the eight brands, all information was taken from the publicly available literature. The accreditation labels have been included for reference on the bar chart, and the ISO standards for both Salomon and Nikwax have been included for a fair observation although ISO is not part of this study comparison.

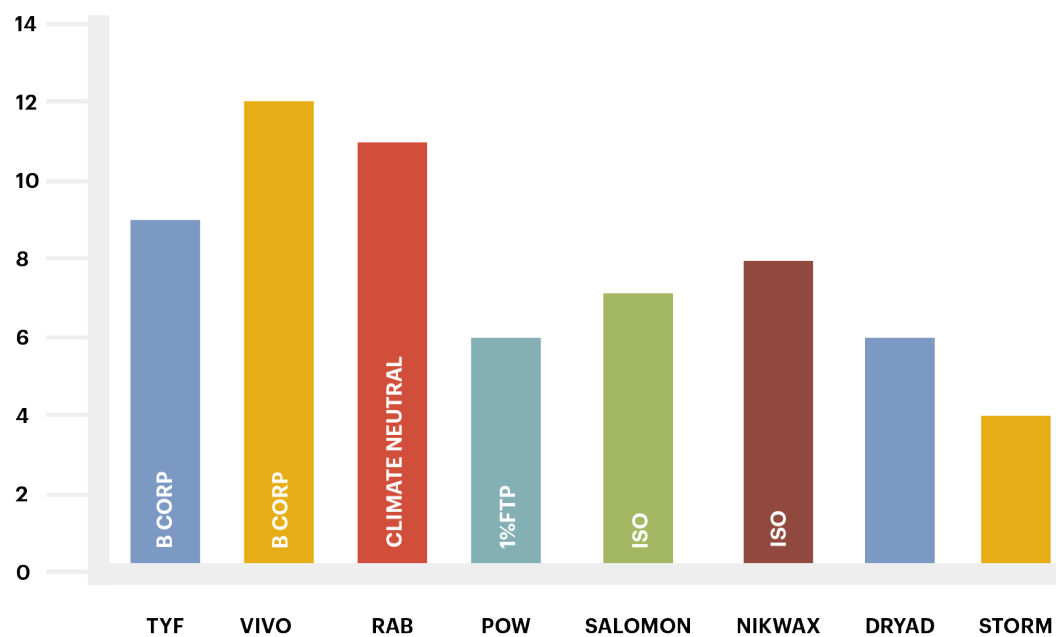


Figure 7: Benchmark Tool Results

Following this, the brands were contacted via electronic mail and all were willing to provide information regarding their brand's social and environmental impacts. Interviews were organised over Zoom, they were between 20 to 30 minutes long and were recorded to then be transcribed afterwards, see Appendix A. Four predetermined questions were asked, alongside three questions specific to the accreditation status, see Appendix B Table 2. These questions were used as anchor points and allowed for an impromptu conversation around the topic, with any time remaining, questions from the benchmarking tool were used as prompts.

In addition, a public poll was released on the business-focused social media platform LinkedIn over seven days to gather external data (see Appendix C). Sampling from a larger population aimed to add an extended perspective to the data. The platform's inbuilt analytics allowed for the questions to be targeted at users with an interest in outdoor activities or

those who are involved with an outdoor brand. The results revealed the majority of participants are within the outdoor retail apparel industry, and other industries including design services and advertising. The results concluded that transparency should be a brand's main focus (see Appendix C Table 7), out of the four chosen accreditations, B Corp was the most familiar (see Appendix C Table 4), people consider recommerce most of the time although product dependent (see Appendix C Table 2) and people mostly make conscious ethical decisions when purchasing (see Appendix C Table 1).

Comparing these results against the data established in the literature review and conducted interviews, it was revealed that brands and companies care about people and the planet and how we communicate through technology needs to be more trustworthy. Also eliminating waste and pollution, and moving towards a more regenerative system involving nature, can close the loop on material production. Production each year can be up to 160 billion garments, albeit by introducing an inclusive, equitable and regenerative economic system for all people and the planet, and using business as a force for good, this can drastically help to reduce the amount of clothing going to the landfill (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2022).

An interesting point made was that neither of the four accreditations is perfect, B Corp in particular is always changing based on feedback from existing B Corps as it is a living accreditation (Lawrence & Lindström, 2023). Data suggested B Corp could collaborate and use the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) metrics to strengthen their already established framework (Ross, 2023a). GRI is an international independent standards organisation communicating impacts on issues around climate change, human rights and corruption (GRI, 2023). Another point to make is the consumer recognition of accreditation, and the influence it can have on a brand's perspective. Brands

have noticed that accreditations add customer trust and provide consumers with a way to quickly identify a product or brand that aligns with their values. It can also demonstrate the time and dedication spent in achieving a certain certification, therefore authenticating that the brand is worth investing in (Hewitt, 2023). It was surprising to find out the flexibility of applying any of the four accreditations to a business, for example, the data revealed challenges towards the 1%FTP due to the selective scoring system. For brands that hold the certification, there is a request for a delineation of level or logo to be applied to reduce 'greenlighting' (Willis, 2023) and single out the brands that do not carry out ethical practices throughout their entire business (Yates, 2023). The interview (see Appendix A Interview 3) believes accreditations can be seen as ingredient branding with a risk of saturation. With multiple tags hanging from a product, one or two are points of difference the rest are POP. It is considered that strategic choices are not being made based on corporate objectives, the only time a corporate strategy might come into play is when there is a mandate (Bellamy, 2023).

With many accreditations in circulation, understanding them is a problem. It can be time-consuming to look into the different options so an ethical purchase spectrum is made, having a verified presence is powerful regardless of if it is reputable or not (Winters, 2023). The data gathered heavily favoured brands to think beyond accreditation and look at what works for them individually as a business.

Overall the results highlighted the need for more purposeful, ethical and socially beneficial areas for companies and brands within the outdoor industry. Reframing and revising the existing paradigm for business, technology and people will accommodate profit and the planet to coexist side-by-side through a collaborative ecosystem.

6.2 Analysis Results

Whilst technology continues to develop within the outdoor industry, for example, the invention of a fourth waterproofing family as an alternative to the forever chemical, fluorocarbon (Wilson, 2023). Alongside innovative nature-based design solutions that are not just about rewriting the equation (Bellamy, 2023). Some actions can be implemented forthwith.

Research in this study has revealed, the lowering of consumption and recognising the customer approach towards consumerism is changing. Brands are improving their offerings by listening to their customers and continually improving how business can be a force for good.

Another consideration highlighted in the research is building trust in the community, as transparent communication can be seen as more influential rather than holding an accreditation. For customers, having trust in a brand, especially as more companies engage in greenwashing, is monumental because it changes the human relationship with a product or service (Bellamy, 2023).

6.2.1 Overconsumption: Less Waste, More Value

Research in this study has shown that consumer attitudes are changing, for example, the younger customer demographic is reported to currently have the most money they have ever had and a better vocabulary to dispute these big breaking-point conversations around the ethical business. This knowledge has resulted in shopping habits changing, younger customers have noticed they can live with less and make conscious purchasing decisions with affordability not being a limitation (McKinsey & Company, 2022). This positive social and environmental mindset within this demographic is not going unnoticed. The in-luxury fashion brand Raeburn states that their brand does not currently appeal to the 20 to 30-year-old

market because product value is expensive, considering the data above, Raeburn is aware that current adolescents have access to a huge amount of readily available information online including social media platforms, so Raeburn feel they might appeal to that type of customer in the future (Cristofaro, 2023). Vocabulary becoming widespread was also recognised at the TYF repair centre, for example, the repair business venture was originally pitched as an open studio where customers can come in and the team would teach basic repairs supporting the CE (Lawrence & Lindström, 2023). A small fee is charged to cover the costs of materials, which is cheaper than getting the TYF team to complete the repair, but there was barely any up-take. TYF found that customers were willing to pay the team to fix garments for them because their baseline level of knowledge for clothing repairs was minimal (Lawrence & Lindström, 2023). In comparison to the present day, Cristofaro refers to family structures in the 1940s as being different, new clothing was more scarce, and household income was low so clothing could not be easily replaced (Cristofaro, 2023). Unfortunately, in 2023 the price of a basic sewing kit is around the same price as a new t-shirt from multinational fast fashion retailer Primark, this naive correlation could be the reason for the diminishing skill of repairing. TYF encourages the conversation about repairs and CE as it gives people the vocabulary to information share, especially children, which can make a huge difference (Lawrence & Lindström, 2023).

Consumption within any industry is a problem, especially outdoor technical garments, due to a technical agreement and gear being made from difficult-to-recycle materials. The problem of overconsumption exists because profit is made through the selling of more things. With the move to off-shoring, it is found to be cheaper to make more units than less, and a trend has emerged with businesses having spare stock on the shelf in case competitors have supply issues such as cargo being stuck on the EverGiven

boat in the Suez canal in 2021 (Buitendijk, 2023). Unsold gear at the end of the season in this industry is common, and the trend to have spare stock needs to be reframed (Ross, 2023a).

Capitalism is the economic system harming the planet and climate, organised around and dependent on perpetual GDP growth. In the 1970s a radical economic theory named degrowth aimed to decouple GDP from environmental impact by reducing excess resources and energy used in high-income nations (Thunberg, 2022). More growth equals more energy demand, presently, a degrowth strategy could cut CO2 emissions by 2050 surpassing any alternative economic growth strategy as reported by Jason Hickel, see Figure 8.

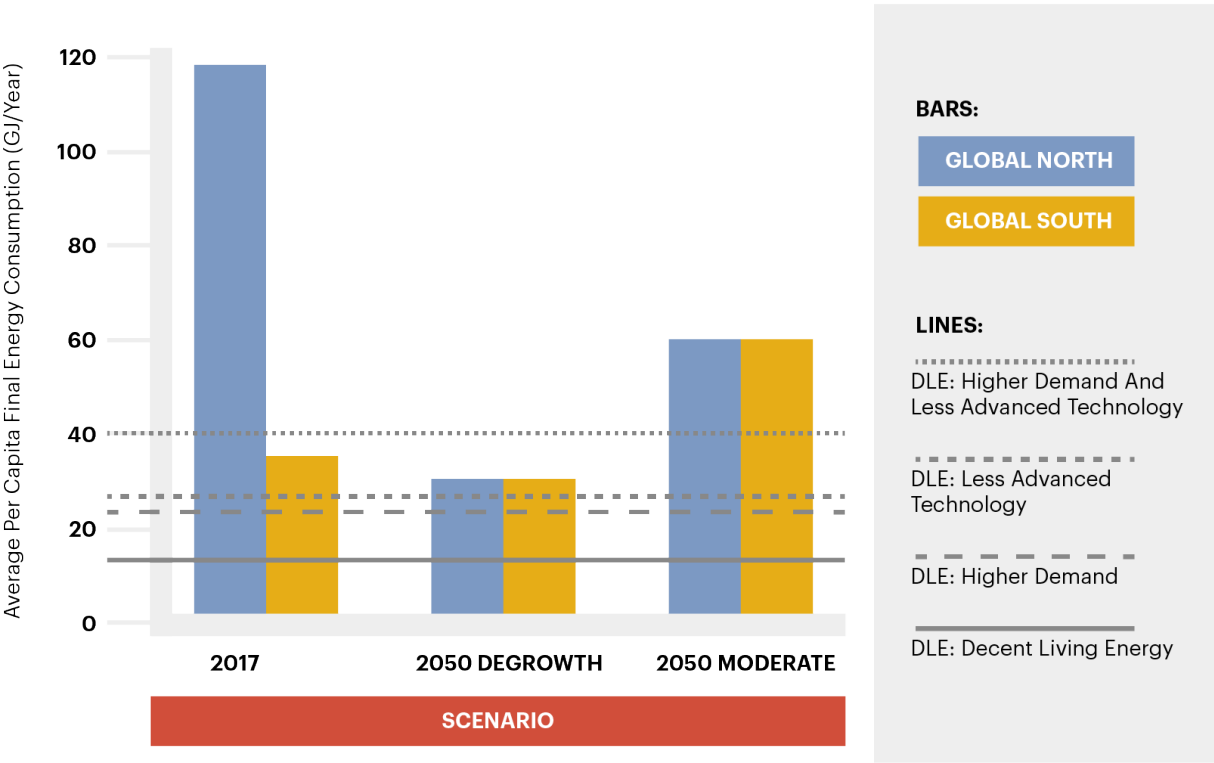


Figure 8: Degrowth Strategy (Masterson, 2022)

Sustainable choices are difficult in this industry especially when it comes to material compounds, for example, even the most progressive outdoor brands face limitations due to some technical garments being made

up of a type of plastic as it is still the most effective. An estimated 20 to 30 per cent of primary source microplastics found in the marine environment originate from synthetic clothing (Henry, 2019). Ross reported that people have around five grams of plastic passing through their bodies over a period of seven days (Ross, 2023a). Middleton also reinforces his question around the advice nature and future generations would give about how products are designed for civilisation, and how much more evidence needs to be presented before deciding that plastification can be rectified (Middleton, 2023).

Following this point, the most sustainable gear is what is already owned Appendix A Interview 7 stated, going on to explain that it is easier to start a sustainable brand, as they are agile and can work with customer feedback promptly, rather than rectifying an existing large organisation. The problem for a company like Salomon, due to bigger profit margins and practices already in place, converting the entire business process to a sustainable way of doing production is time-consuming and costly (Bellamy, 2023).

Research revealed that digital technologies are reducing the need for physical products whilst improving the experience and the engagement of a customer, for example, customer profiling can predict a purchase and reduce the urge to consume. This method could apply to the outdoor service sector, sharing information about the availability and accessibility of rental services in local areas. Reimagining the role of data would extend a product's lifetime and reduce consumption (Middleton, 2023).

In conclusion, every type of production has an impact and meeting product demand counteracts the commitment to reduce consumption. Once functional requirements are met, companies can look at CE aspects, for

example, repairability, recommerce of pre-owned products, degrowth and social sustainability aspects such as quality of life, equality, diversity, democracy and social cohesion (Fuchs & Hovemann, 2022).

6.2.2 Communication: Consumer vs Citizen

An accredited badge helps to tell the industry and consumers that a brand is trustworthy (Tracy, 2023) but could result in the brand story being missed. Although the ethical standard is verified, which is particularly attractive to stakeholders, it is often seen as an opportunity to attract public relations (PR) attention (Bellamy, 2023). As more companies certify, it becomes even less descriptive and confusing for people to know which company to work for, buy from, or invest in. If a brand is transparent about its purpose, learnings, failures, the measurable difference they are making and achievable strategies, it will inspire the rest of the industry to create change. Although sharing stories can be intimidating, especially in times of cancel culture (Vogels, 2021), keeping quiet is slowing down the progress of rectifying social and environmental impacts.

With the continual use of impact messaging, the consumer is questioning whether greenwashing is taking place, and building trust is key between the product and the customer. Alec Leach in his book *The World Is On Fire But We're Still Buying Shoes*, states customers expect brands to make ethical choices and are surprised when the best option is not made (Leach, 2021). Another point Leach makes is about cultural durability, and how society interacts with the garment, for example, how colour trends are represented within the outdoor industry. Ross shares his theory about his three types of durabilities, introducing culture as the fourth durability, see Figure 9.

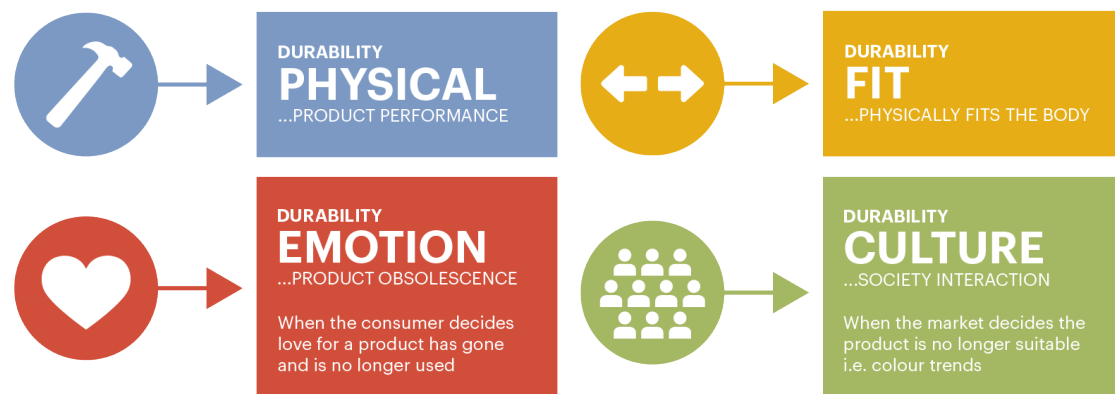


Figure 9: Four Types of Product Durability (Ross, 2023a)

A similar point was made in Appendix A Interview 8 when RAB started a low-impact repair option using redundant fabric off-cuts. The company noticed the bold contrasting colourway repairs became a status symbol for the owner through unique aesthetics and storytelling (Karaca, 2023). This supports Cristofaro's theory in section (5.5) around customisation and individualisation.

Research revealed that sustainability can become a differentiator when an impactful story is told, connected and engaged with the consumer, as a result, this can conclusively build a loyal community around that brand (Bellamy, 2023). Appendix A Interview 12 believes a customer reacts better to visual graphics regardless of it being an accredited logo. As a result, Nikwax has created recognisable in-house logos as visual shortcuts to communicate an ethical message. The feedback has demonstrated added customer trust and a way for consumers to quickly identify a product aligning with their values (Hewitt, 2023). Trust can come from building a strong voice for the brand and changing the human relationship with a product (Bellamy, 2023).

Malcolm Gladwell explains in his book *Blink*, communication is not the content of words but rather everything else such as mannerisms, linked to

the clothes someone wears (Gladwell, 2005). Gladwell reports a test that was conducted with experts making a gut reaction after 18 seconds compared to 18 hours of analytical work. A strict parameter over a longer period analyses the results with either a pass or fail, however, Gladwell believes that a quick gut reaction is the intelligent one (Ross, 2023a). Before virtual became a real medium, swing tags were the silent salesperson in a retail store when staff were busy. Customers could read about the garment on the swing tag and be informed about the company values and product specifics, thus deciding if this product is right for them. Although it has reached a point where brands are putting an increasing number of swing tags on their products, some carrying six or more, this endorsement gives brands a chance to voice it as a badge of honour in an already saturated area (Ross, 2023a).

Research revealed that there is an expectation for brands to not remain politically neutral, they want brands to lead on advocacy and push the agenda (Yates, 2023). For example, Patagonia has made a vocal stance through political messaging on the backside of a clothing tag, and encouraging consumers 'don't buy this jacket' (Patagonia, n.a) see Figure 10, highlighting the consideration of consumption. Marketing and advertising can be used to reframe and develop business models enabling people to buy less, ensuring products are sustainable and built to last and measuring carbon footprint to set targets and actions (Thunberg, 2022). The technology conglomerate Facebook is reported to receive 97 per cent of revenue through advertisers paying to influence users (Thunberg, 2022).



Figure 10: Patagonia 'DON'T BUY THIS JACKET' Advert (Patagonia, n.a)

Public communication is not currently audited, allowing for green advertising to take place which has increased almost tenfold in the last thirty years and nearly tripled since 2006 (Delmas & Burbano, 2011). Defined as the intersection between two behaviours; poor environmental performance and positive communication about environmental performance (Delmas & Burbano, 2011), greenwashing is misleading consumers regardless of ethical practice in a company. Planet Tracker identified six types of greenwashing, see Figure 11. Appendix A Interview 3 reported 'greenlighting' being used at Salomon for a recyclable running shoe. The concept for the Index Shoe was strong, although bio-mechanically it did not function well as a running shoe and ironically was only a 10 to 15 per cent sustainable product improvement. Salomon heavily promotes this recyclability story as a deceptive 'greenlighting' tool (Bellamy, 2023).

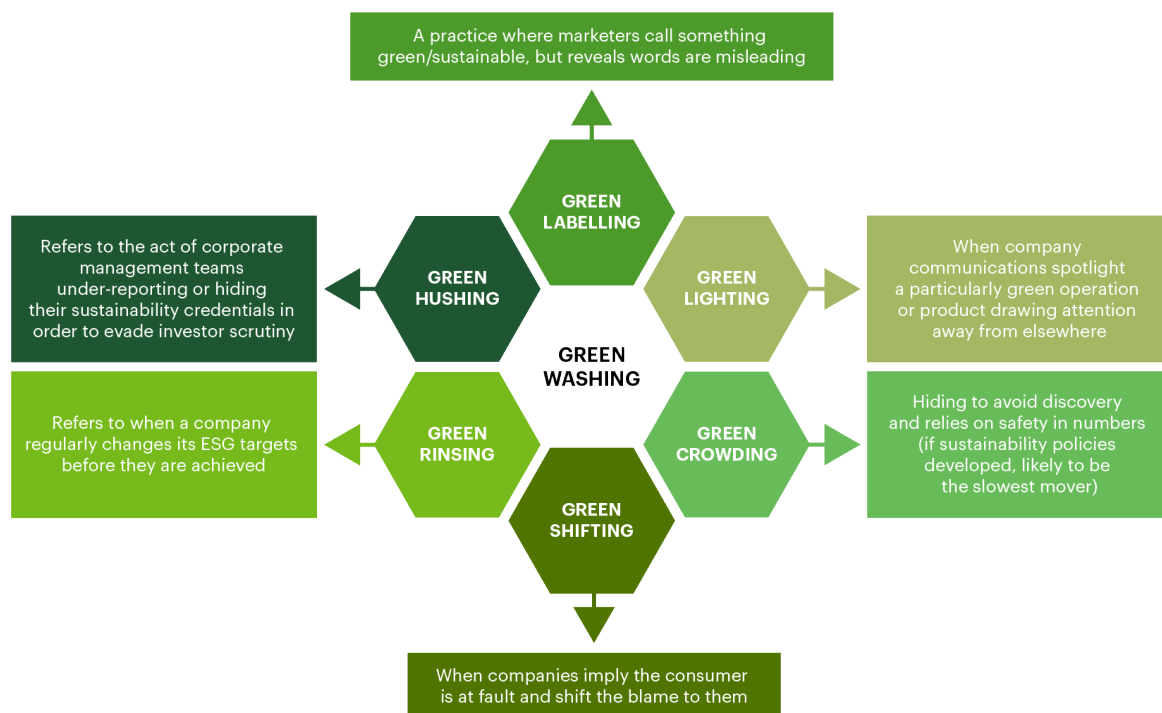


Figure 11: Planet Tracker Six Shades of Green (109)

Although greenwashing is not illegal, regulators globally are beginning to address the issue by proposing regulations, for example, Australia has enforced laws and has issued an information sheet (ASIC, 2022), the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) has integrated environmental risk into its supervisory framework and processes at system-wide levels (MAS, 2022), and China has issued the *14th Five-Year Plan* focused on improved green financial standard systems and addresses greenwashing (CSET, 2021). Putting regulations in place for companies to navigate, both at a legal and governmental level could be the solution.

Another point to make is the Carbon Tunnel Vision and race towards net zero, as companies are seen to be solely striving for net zero emissions whilst ignoring other sustainable development goals (Achakulwisut, 2022). Figure 12 gives a simple overview highlighting that a formal strategy for moving towards net zero needs to be applied.

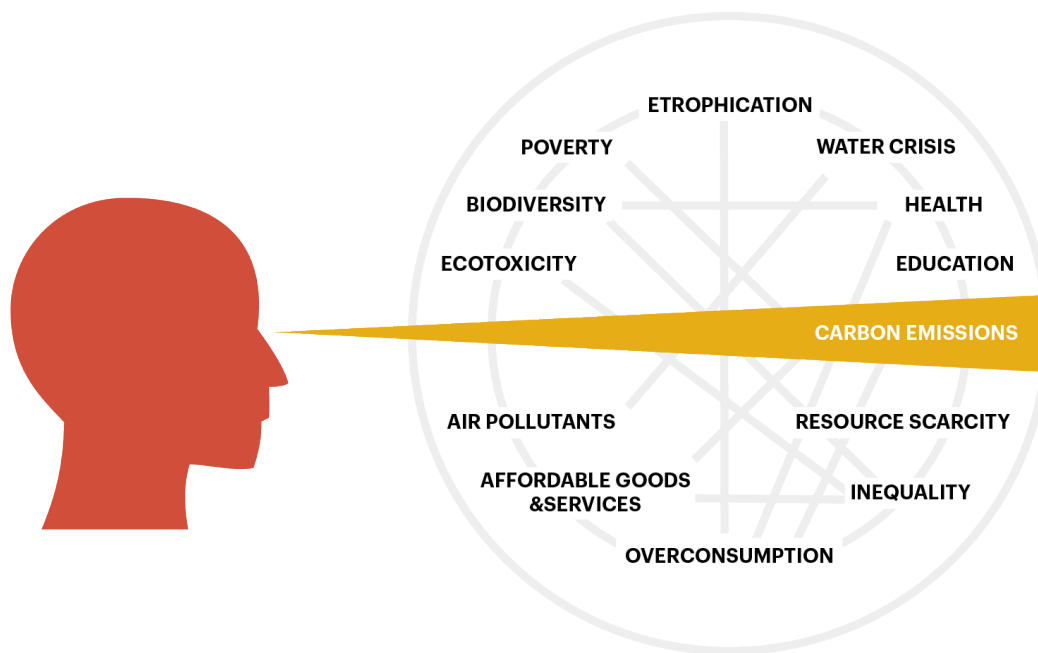


Figure 12: Carbon Tunnel Vision

In conclusion, the (Butow, 2014) study revealed that exposing someone to knowledge about ethical impacts on people and the planet advocates consumers to purchase more sustainably. Consumers can catalyse outdoor brands to increase ethical practices in manufacturing and retail, which could lead to financial performance upturn over the short and long term (Butow, 2014). Another study supported the ideology of the above, adding education being a key driver in encouraging ethical purchases and moving towards a better alternative (Brosdahl & Carpenter, 2010).

6.3 Recommendations

The current study revealed that circularity starts with the design and is an important prerequisite for identifying existing initiatives and building on acquired knowledge.

As a first step in the research of the identification of profit and planet coexisting, the results of this study should be used with vigilance due to the small sample size, limited details of the participants' characteristics and single point of view from each brand. The research found applying CE methods such as repairs and rental services must be cost-effective and accessible compared to purchases, nevertheless compared to production processes, consumption processes are less researched and (Kirchherr, 2017) study described this as a crucial research gap. Further research could be gained if an investment was put into research and development (R&D) to improve a company's footprint reduction, reverse engineering the end goal. Lack of access to financial funding for R&D in education and professional training limits outdoor brands' access to shared evidence of CE initiatives.

On this basis, future research should look at reducing overconsumption and overproduction considering degrowth to ironically grow. Presenting ways to future-proof businesses and identify consumers' intentions and behaviour around sustainable consumption. This could contribute towards the rationale as sustainability is longevity, challenging the Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action (AIDA) model of selling better outdoor technical gear each year, see Figure 13.

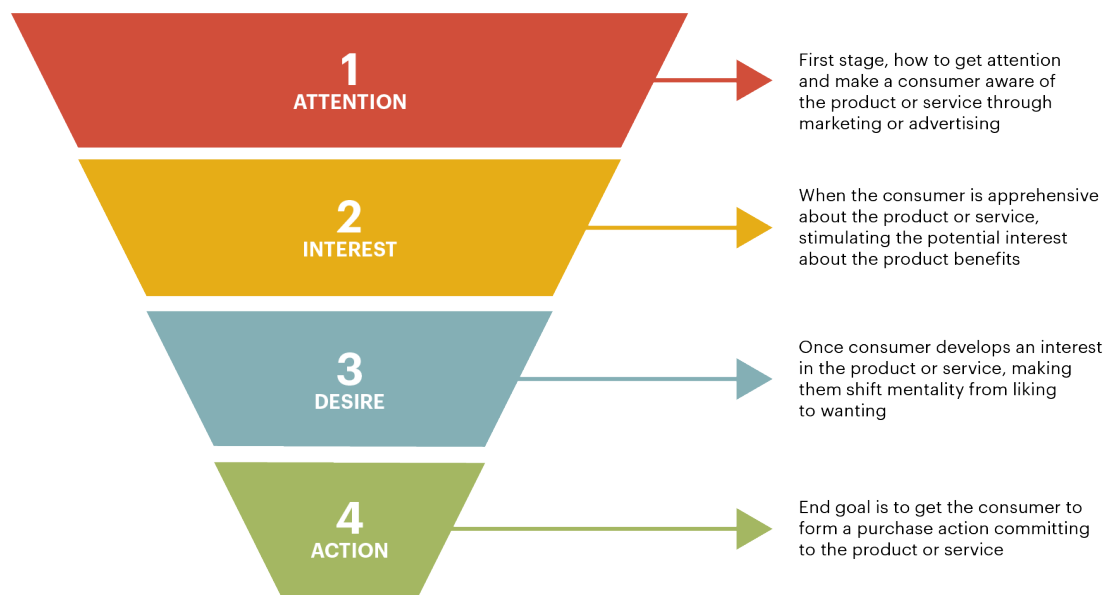


Figure 13: AIDA Model

At the beginning of the study, the author expected an emphasis on examining if certified social and environmental accreditations can become more flexible for a diverse industry scope area, however, communication is among the important set of skills that press for change. Refocusing the industry's attention and reframing the narrative can help provoke the systemic social change needed to prevent systemic environmental collapse (Thunberg, 2022). The main identified limitation with this particular finding is how the future might look if all brands communicated in the same way. Although a shared understanding of transparency and trust is needed, one resolution could be to look at new forms of value and ownership by halving the impact and doubling revenue to stand out from the competition (Bellamy, 2023). For example, Patagonia announced a revenue cap and a limit on company sales to grow revenue in other ways. This piece of communication was a developmental talking point, spearheading frameworks for other businesses.

Forwards from here, a wider context is needed allowing for a better depiction of the outdoor market globally. While this would allow for inter-country comparison, cultural regulations should be investigated. With a lack of existing studies on specific outdoor consumer demographics and addressing their predilection related to CE, further research can build reliable and valid findings despite the limitation (Fuchs & Hovemann, 2022). In addition, an interesting viewpoint might be from an athlete's perspective, in which gear is used regularly in their career.

Lastly, a specific outdoor product category could be analysed and then investigated comprehensively on ethical impact, for example, a waterproof jacket or hiking shoe. The reason is although nature-based solutions are seen as the future, consumers need to trust that the product is built to a high standard and is durable. Innovation is important within this industry and should be done right.

Conclusion

This study investigated accredited certifications within the outdoor industry and whether impactful action can be applied without paying for the validation. The body of the study is of a good standard and meets the hypothesis, aims and objectives. With evidence collated from a wide range of sources such as industrial findings via interviews, academic papers, governmental documents and public online polls. Consideration towards the limited number of case studies being compared does not support the research topic in its entirety. While this study illustrates further data and research is needed for an in-depth understanding of the thesis, the analysis presents important insights that are fundamental in regulating the current industry debate. Further research should be focused on a wider context to better depict an international outdoor market.

At the start of the study, original thoughts were driven towards the worthiness of certificated accreditations, when actually, the results have shown the importance of brand transparency and reframing the business growth model to be more ethical. Although the research examining social and environmental accreditations became a large part of the study, it was apparent that on reflection this did not support the final analysis of the study question. Appendix A presents further research and has been included within the appendices to support other empirical questions.

The main finding of the research demonstrated, regardless of social and environmental accreditation status, if methods discussed within the study are applied to brands and companies in the outdoor industry, ethical operations can react a positive impact. Research revealed that some brands are ticking boxes for sustainability and recyclability to make the consumer think they are ethical (Bellamy, 2023). Sustainability can be seen as a one-way

slope, the industry is only talking about the positives and ignoring the negatives. If no one talks about the negatives, how can they be avoided?

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Appendix A: Interview Transcripts

This appendix included all transcripts of interviews. All interviews were conducted over Zoom, a video-telephony software program, in a private setting. All interviews were around 20 to 30 minutes long and were recorded using the in-built functionality. Interview consent forms can be [found here](#).

Interview 1: Andy Middleton

Sustainability Catalyst and Founder at TYF Adventure

00:11:29 Jordan

When TYF went on the journey of becoming like the first B Corp in Wales, what made you choose B Corp and no other accreditation?

00:11:42 Andy

At the time, at the time there weren't that many accreditations. British standard route but that is a very clinical, scientific and measurement based. Good for some processes.

00:12:20 Andy

We were interested in having a framework for improving our performance. And the other thing was about building community of people to learn with and from.

00:12:37 Andy

You know all of the people are people worth talking to about change in the economy, whereas that's definitely not the case in other frameworks like BS 5750.

00:13:21 Andy

We've been part of 1% of the planet. We did that for a good few years, but stopped. We realised that the stuff that we were trying to do through our day job was more radical than any of the money we had given away. So made sense to continue to reinvest in our business rather than give that away.

00:13:46 Andy

B Corp has been really good. It's imperfect but still the best framework that exists and I described to lots of people that if CSR and in tick box stuff is like park to 5K in relative terms then doing B Corp is a bit like doing an Ironman. It requires a lot more commitment. There are less hiding places.

00:14:34 Andy

You can score differently in the five pillars. You can actually have a really high social impact or a high customer impact, but not do much on environment or vice versa. You're not necessarily working equal.

00:16:06 Andy

When we're advising businesses on B Corp, we always recommend that they take time and go for the highest level score in the first year, because partly it's what sticks with you as a badge for the next 3 years, but also you know it makes sense to go for as as much as you can.

00:16:29 Andy

In Wales, not so far from you, a guy called David Thorpe called the One Planet standard. It's much more rigorous than in effect what it's designed to do is to tell you as a business how close is your business plan for delivering against the one planets resources that you've got to use? Which is what B Corp clearly doesn't do. It's got a few councils doing it's externally validated and has definitely got scope to grow.

00:17:15 Andy

The thing that I like about B Corp it is if your score was 90 one year you won't get the same score in three years if you haven't changed what you do. The grade gets stronger all the time, which does mean that this won't be instant.

00:17:34 Andy

Europe has passed legislation around single use plastics. So there will be no single use plastics in 2040. Any businesses which are currently B Corps, will no longer be B Corps in 2014 if they're still selling single use plastic.

00:17:55 Jordan

Accreditation you would say does add value to a brand?

00:18:01 Andy

Yeah, I think it adds value as much as anything. I guess now probably like close to 1200 B Corps in the UK and 3533 in Wales. And growing quite quickly and what's interesting is for the businesses that have used big process to refresh what they're doing, things like impacts and governance are really scrappy and you know they're not managed in the right way.

00:19:53 Andy

Then investing in B Corp accreditation or certainly the frameworks around it in really early doors is a good thing to do because it just means that you never have to reinvent what you're doing later.

00:20:33 Andy

My view is that the only businesses that thrive in the future will be ones that have got standards like B Corp or better and can prove it. B Corp is part of what everyone does rather than just ticking it off. That structure and rigour to challenge those things in a positive way

00:22:38 Jordan

What would you recommend when delivering these essential services in the outdoor industry?

00:23:01 Andy

There are a bunch of brands you know broadly under that kind of headline in the UK Outdoor Industries alliance, who walk around lying to themselves.

00:25:00 Andy

With Tesco's and others saying stand up paddleboards for £150 which are completely un-recyclable that weigh the same amount as I don't know, 5 or 600 plastic bottles or more.

00:25:18 Jordan

Primark one of the fast fashion brands made wetsuits. It's going to be terrible for the planet, and terrible for you. Tricky because I think price point,

especially within the outdoor industry, is very high because it is a premium product.

00:26:20 *Andy*

The archetypal kind of mountain outdoor places where people who will never need the technical kit go and spend lots of money.

00:27:03 *Andy*

Come back to your question. If nature was on our board and we listened to it, what would we hear it saying about the way that we're working? And if you did the same with future generations. Look at a 200 year timescale and say. What would your great great grandchildren and in seven generations be saying about the way that you're designing your business and and most of the answers have been quite uncomfortable.

00:27:48 *Andy*

We've been working with Patagonia, over 20 years. When their reps come down they'll turn nothing to the store team about anything to do with the values of the business or what they're trying to do, they're just trying to sell product because that's what the target is.

00:28:18 *Andy*

Between outdoor brands and their retailers. Recognising it's OK to have holes in your jumpers which I may get around to fixing or not.

00:28:35 *Andy*

Repair centres in the store. TYF now repairing for Lululemon, Mayer and Fjällräven, I think. Every outdoor brand I think will have a repair center.

00:29:13 *Andy*

In time or overtime or depending on how you use this thing, there are ways of extending its life by this much. In this place near to you, it's just around the corner from here we're educating customers. Bring the industry together.

00:30:18 *Andy*

We're saying I couldn't believe the conversation I had in the store with whoever it was with, conversation about purpose and impact. Vast majority of people want to make more difference.

00:31:10 Andy

Bigger businesses are quite a long way down the supply chain, long way down the food chain in the businesses and many of them don't know that much about where you can buy things from.

00:32:34 Jordan

TYF shop purchases and how do you handpick those? Are they generally ones with accreditation, any B Corps? Or is it up with your value.

00:32:53 Andy

Bit of both. We've got a lot of B Corps and are constantly on the lookout for B Corps that fit what we're doing because we know they're gonna have a solid connotation behind it. If we write to brands and say what are you doing? It's impossible in effect to get a meaningful response from them because they'll come out with some kind of corporate spin.

00:33:50 Andy

Instead we ask two questions. What's the difference that you're proudest having made in the last year? And what's the biggest thing that you dare talk about in public that you're trying to do to change your industry?

00:34:09 Andy

It's a much better story to tell customers and it's the stories that make change. More interesting than another swing tag on a pair of jeans to say, you know, we are this certified.

00:35:29 Andy

What's the boldest thing this brand is trying? It becomes a door opener to a different conversation with a customer. What's top of your wish list in terms of the change you make for nature?

00:36:49 Andy

Big challenges like make designing an outdoor industry that as though it had been built by nature. What would it look like? Fleece wouldn't exist at all. I imagine that we'll end up having machine or lab grown wool. Lab grown biological materials that that perform like wool, but maybe better.

00:40:12 Andy

Digital side for me, one of the things I suppose is around how do you use? How do you use data to help people see in effect like the contour lines?

00:42:02 Andy

Tesco did customer profiling. Knowing that if you start buying newborn nappies now then in 18 years, you'd be buying 18th birthday cards. In terms of the outdoors and holidays, if you can predict when people really need stuff.

00:43:35 Andy

Just knowing where stuff could be rented easily or borrowed is dematerialising the outdoors.

00:45:35 Andy

At what stage do those businesses want to go OK we accept, we've got to change, and we're now going to start that journey. I think that's the conversation that's been missing, and partly because the industry has been hiding behind so much greenwashed.

00:46:06 Andy

The gross cost of mental health in Wales is £7.2 billion a year. That includes not performing when I come to work, as well as clinical treatment and everything in between. Roughly half of the entire Public Budget of Wales.

00:46:37 Andy

The whole of public infrastructure, so it's massive. What could the outdoor industry do if the outdoor industry said, we want to still make enough profit to a fair level of profit how do we redesign our businesses so that they drive the health of our country?

00:48:48 *Andy*

What's the innovation platform and what's the process of innovation to up-skill entire populations to that basic level.

00:49:38 *Andy*

First aid course, training and an exam can take someone who's not even thought about which side of the body your heart's on to the level at which they can be accredited workplace first aid. First aid in 30 or so hours you can teach that regardless to their level of literacy or anything else, what if you did 500 hours at school on first aid for the future on real world challenges, then you'd build quite a lot of muscle. 500 hours of applied innovation practice.

00:53:13 *Jordan*

What advice would you give to any brand or service that are wanting to gain a certification?

00:53:58 *Andy*

Don't get squeamish, write down the answers, and ask if we knew that we couldn't fail as a business and as a brand bringing our customers and our suppliers with us, what is it we'd set out to do? Write that down regardless of whether you have any of the budget or the resources or the permission to make it happen.

00:54:53 *Andy*

What could going through the B Corp process do to help you build the foundations on which you could grow and make that ambition, turn ambition into reality. That would be a good start point.

Interview 2: Charles Ross

Specialist in Performance Sportswear Design and Lecturer at RCA

00:00:22 Charles

We're having the first dynamic change coming in because of sustainable legislation. Now we're used to chemical legislation forcing things to change and it takes a long time to agree. A really good example of this is in the mid midway through the last decade 2014, 2015 we decided that fluorocarbons, even though we've moved from the bad long chain fluorocarbons which we call C8 and above. Fluorocarbons are called forever chemicals.

00:01:56 Charles

Blue sign, which is the chemical management certification. Very few people would tell me that it tracks the chemicals and identifies when you're using. That's what 95% of the industry think, not consumers, the industry. The people who should know better. The people who are a bit more informed know that there were two different blue signs. One is chemical management, one is process management.

00:02:39 Charles

Gortex, who used some dodgy chemicals, have a blue sign endorsement and their blue sign endorsement is for process management so where they make their membranes, they're still using dodgy chemicals, but they've captured them. They're closed loop, essentially. The water that goes into the factory is dirtier than the water that comes out.

00:03:16 Charles

Everyone sees blue sign on the garment and we all think blue sign is chemical management. It must be suitable chemicals.

00:03:35 Charles

Swiss company called Mammot but there's a big American company called Marmot. When Marmot clothing first came into the UK, it carried the Black diamond from Gortex. The Black Diamond swing tag means that it's

waterproof. Gortex is a worldwide brand. What you what we didn't realise was that the rain test for gortex America is different from rain test gortex Europe. In America it rains vertically down on you. So that you only really need to protect the upper side of the garment. The European rain test also has a horizontal spray. So garments that had passed the American would be imported into Europe with the black swing tag saying waterproof, but they would fail the European rain test.

00:04:42 Jordan

Where do they stand? Does it still get sold as black diamond?

00:04:51 Charles

Exactly because people don't know that level of difference you put your trust in the brand consumers want to trust the brand. They don't want to understand all the detail, I've just done an awful lot of stuff about sustainability reports.

00:05:09 Charles

There are a lot of brands saying you should actually produce a sustainability report. Yes, you should in a perfect world, but there's no legislation for it yet. Until there's legislation do not produce a sustainability report that goes through all the categories. I can name all 13 categories to you that you should cover and things like that, but you will be asleep within the second category of me explaining it. This is what sustainability reports are that everyone says that they read them.

00:06:07 Charles

At the end, but nobody goes through the detail unless there's a specific area you've got to cross check. The two biggest things which have changed sustainability in the outdoor industry in the last decade, the first one is Patagonia's don't buy this jacket advert that made us all consider amount consumption. The second one was The North Face, developed the responsible down standard. Which they then gifted to the textile exchange.

Now that RDS standard, even if I go into Sainsbury's and they have a down jacket, there will be an RDS swing tag on.

00:08:01 Jordan

Do you think having these transparent public facing accreditations add value to the brand?

00:08:08 Charles

Yes it does. Before virtual became a real medium because people interact differently with virtual swing tags with a silent sale salesperson in a shop, you went in a shop if the staff were busy doing something else, you could go and read about the garment on the swing tag and it told you an awful lot more. I'm not talking about a QR code. I'm talking about proper words, so you don't have to take out a phone and interact to get all the detail and it told you a bit about company values and about that specific product. Swing tags work and we went through a stage of everyone wanting to put on more and more swing tags and it almost got to the stage where you were picking up a garment and there were six swing tags on a garment.

00:09:08 Charles

Julian Lingz the CSR manager at The North Face VF Outdoor. When I spoke to him in November, he said, Charles I now have to monitor 132 different CSR standards. He says I don't have time.

00:10:23 Charles

In the outdoor industry, our most iconic hero product is the waterproof breathable jacket. There are four ways to measure the permeability, which is how much it breathes and they are the hockenson method which gortex use the DMPC method, which nano spinning or electrospun uses. There's JIS, and there's JIS inverted. Those are the four main measurement. I'm a bit of a nerd. I cannot tell you the difference between all four standards.

00:11:15 Charles

I only physically know two people who can describe the difference between all the standards. Remember these are these specialists within the trade. The general people in the trade. The retailers don't understand them. If we as a trade don't understand them. How on Earth is the consumer meant to stay up to date with it? And they're there to give reassurance to the consumer?

00:11:48 Charles

Back to that question, a swing tag and endorsement is brilliant but it just means that the consumer doesn't have to be concerned because it's got a swing tag.

00:12:07 Charles

If I look at the German brand VAUDE it does better practice than Patagonia, but they just have awful communications.

00:13:01 Charles

People don't want to go into the detail. People want to trust brands. Especially Gen Z really do trust brands and they think brands will always make the right choice. They are shocked their bubbles burst when they find a brand isn't doing things for good. By having an endorsement it gives a chance for the badge of honour.

00:13:51 Jordan

How do you think then a product can remain desirable and functional for its user over time?

00:14:12 Charles

You've heard me talk about the three durability. The physical durability, the fit durability and the emotional durability. The emotional durability I think for the most important Alec Leach's book. He talks about cultural durability and I'm prepared to say that's even better. There are now 4 durability. We're dealing with emotional durability is how you interact with the garment. Cultural durability is how society interacts with the garment. Society is very led on colour trends.

00:15:36 Charles

To make sure that your product lasts longer and longer and is used for more, I say you've got to de-risk it. You've almost got to take out what is colourful, what is trendy. I'm not talking about style, but I'm talking about what seasonal flavour is.

00:16:20 Charles

Zara has 26 new ranges every year. A range lasts for two weeks. When you go into Zara if you see a product you like, you buy it because the next time you go it won't be in there.

00:16:47 Charles

I think if you visit Zara 18 times a year you buy 11 times a year. Compare that to M&S. You visit 3 1/2 times a year and you buy 2.1 times a year.

00:17:30 Charles

They're actually using AI methodology at the moment to track it, but if something sells out on day one or day two, they will reintroduce something very similar in three or four ranges time. It's disrupting the business model and it's working very well for Zara.

00:17:58 Charles

Beyond which Zara sustainability at the moment is in the top five of European brands using organic cotton.

00:18:19 Charles

Primark are doing the best upping their game. I get really excited when Zara and Primark and the rest of it do something good because you can't make Patagonia that much better. They're so good they're not going to affect much change and the audience says speaking to already wants. If Zara can convert their customer to being more choosy on a sustainable factor front, you can educate a lot more of the audience.

00:19:02 Charles

Primark team put it really simply, appeal to people from the age of 12 or 13 until they're out of university, when they're out of university, then they're prepared to actually buy clothing that has a bit more values based.

00:19:21 Charles

Malcolm Gladwell's Blink Book talks about so much of communication, is not the content of your words but everything else. Your mannerisms, what you're wearing, your accent and everything. There's a strict parameter, you can make it pass that parameter, but your gut reaction is the really intelligent one where you take the snapshot just off your first reaction, and when he says 18 seconds will give you a higher consistency of right choice than 18 hours of analytical, analytical work.

00:20:38 Charles

The customer wants to put their faith into garments. We all like to be a bit more on trend, but in the outdoor industry we sell off technology. The brand sells you technology and that gets you to renew or update or swap your purchases. However, we buy on aesthetics.

00:21:19 Jordan

Do you think digital digital technology can reduce the need for the physical product while improving the experience and engagement of the customer?

00:21:27 Charles

Yeah I can't see why not whatsoever. You're certainly not going to make stupid purchases. The thing I like about digital is that it creates another channel and the channel actually gives you a much better touch point than being there.

00:22:58 Charles

Digital and in the case of trainers, the best thing about digital is 3D printing and 3D knitting. Get the most perfect fit for my foot, which will never be surpassed, so the channels they're creating are great. But they are still

ending up with a physical product. It's not a physical product which needs to be replaced or renewed. They're giving you the ultimate fit.

00:23:34 Charles

M&S body scanning was amazing. No longer do you have to put up with garments which arms are too long, or you know bodies too tight type thing.

00:24:39 Charles

Gen Z call it vintage and that just sums it up, no matter how much technology it's all about the aesthetic of the word. It's all about the trend. As long as you're using the right language.

00:27:00 Jordan

Finisterre posted on social media really simple how to videos. How to waterproof my jacket that I've had sitting in the cupboard for a year.

00:27:31 Charles

That's what TikTok is made for?

00:27:47 Charles

Tom Kay's presenting at the outdoor industry AGM. Tom doesn't pretend Finisterre's technical. So up against all the mountaineering brands he know he will lose, but every Mountaineer would rather wear thinner stair because it's a bit more stylish.

00:28:41 Charles

We don't want to the whole of our life, just wear practical outdoor gardens. We've got a life away from the mountain, and Tom walks that athleisure so well.

Interview 3: Chris Bellamy

Marketing and Concept Manager at Salomon

00:03:46 Jordan

What is the brand mission statement for Salomon?

00:03:59 Chris

The new brand of Salomon. The mission is tomorrow is yours and it's all about self attainment self fulfilment for you, essentially trying to be there for the world tomorrow with subtle undertones of we need to protect tomorrow as well.

00:04:47 Chris

We're launching a savoury sports nutrition brand, of which there is none currently in the world, it's quite an exciting project, and that is really because we're sick of sports nutrition being highly processed over engineered.

00:05:19 Chris

Starting out with food but really we're trying to ride this trend of this more natural approach. In sports you know the rise of wool fibres being used a lot more of cellulose fibres of whatever it might be, the natural approaches are coming.

00:05:48 Chris

Traditional styles, in Europe people are still wearing compression leggings and tight polyester T-shirts. This perception that technical is better.

00:06:05 Chris

The outdoor industry as a whole movement is more stylish, meaningful, classic, and timeless. Less functional but more versatile products seems to be, I think, a real trend that is associated both with peoples approach to consumerism and so on.

00:07:06 Jordan

What are your views on the accredited certifications?

00:07:38 Chris

Solomon perspective, I don't think they would ever look to become a B Corp and ever look to become part of 1% from the planet. I think they see themselves as sustainability as our point of difference or sustainability is our cost of doing business. And for salmon it's very much, sustainability is our cost of doing business. Now they also see that, this is an opportunity to gain attention to attract PR to green light.

00:08:26 *Chris*

They do sustainability projects then promote them very heavily but actually have no intention of significantly changing the business model. They're not rewriting their business to ensure that more sustainable products are successful. They are developing some sustainable concepts, which then are used to highlight the brand. But they're not going the extra mile to actually make the significant changes needed.

00:09:00 *Chris*

They developed the index shoe, which is this recyclable running shoe. It's a wonderful concept, except for the fact that it doesn't really function as a shoe. Biomechanically, it's very heavy. It's not very comfortable. Overall, it's a pretty terrible product, but the recyclability story is there. Like with all innovations, you need to have something as a starting point to innovate on.

00:09:32 *Chris*

One of the challenges is their forecast sale volumes are only about 10,000 units a year. For a company that's producing millions of pairs of shoes, that's a drop in the ocean. The actual environmental benefit for it is only about 10 to 15% better and actually most of that just comes from using different materials. It's not actually from the recyclability of the product.

00:10:04 *Chris*

The consumer has a significant part to play in this. Consumers want to have a product that's more sustainable and we believe that recyclability is more sustainable. A brand like Salomon all that's happening at the moment is that

the teams are responding to market demand. No one who is saying fundamentally, what do we need to do as a business? What science based targets should we follow and that isn't happening in a business like Salomon?

00:10:38 Chris

I think science based targets are actually value those more than B Corp or any of the other accreditations, because for me the science based targets means that you know someone in the company has wrestled with the facts of these are our current emissions and these are what our emissions need to be in the future and we need to work out some possible way of doing that.

00:11:37 Chris

We don't have the accreditation at the moment, but actually in terms of writing the company statutes as we're setting up, we are setting up to be a B Corp. From a business owner perspective its value is its dramatically simplified. Founders desire to become a sustainable company. Founder doesn't have a lot of brain space to think about what that means and what that involves and how to do it. B Corp provides a very simple recipe, while it's maybe not as thorough or as detailed as we all hope it would be, it at least provides that starting framework.

00:15:13 Chris

We can give 1% to the planet and then it's almost that Peace of Mind for them to say we want a sustainable brand. We don't know how to make it work, but we can tick the one 1% for the planet box and we can feel feel better about things.

00:17:42 Chris

Ingredient branding has risen in recent years, and there's also a risk of saturation ingredient branding. If you look at a pair of ski boots, you know they'll have 10, 20, 30 tags on them of all the different sub brands and a lot of saturation, and if you look at it from the product management perspective, you know what is it that makes someone buy a product. Realistically you can

have maybe one or two points of difference and then you know the rest are going to be points of parity.

00:18:27 Chris

They're trying to throw ingredient branding at something to add value to make it seem more important and seem more valuable.

00:19:24 Chris

French Government have a mandate which is all products must embody a circular principle by 2024.

00:20:09 Jordan

From a consumer point of view, do you think that the consumer attitude is changing?

00:20:50 Chris

From the question of do consumers care about sustainability, there is a big difference between first of all cultures. Second of all, what people say and then third of all, what people do. From a cultural perspective, it varies massively between country. For example in France, when you say a sustainable product, the most important thing for people is, is it made locally. Recycled material is not important.

00:21:24 Chris

The most important thing in the US is does it contain recycled material? Or is it recyclable and that changes around the world. Every country has a different perspective on what sustainability is. I haven't seen any research that shows what consumer thinks about sustainability at a holistic level and scientifically. What's the carbon equivalent output of this product?

00:21:53 Chris

Human brains are only so capable, and when you're buying a product, it's maybe two or three minutes of consideration, so the human brain is only able to take very simplified frameworks and that is really dangerous because it

means that if I tick a box for recyclability, then the consumer's going to think it's good.

00:22:17 Chris

The other aspect is what people say, there's a lot of quant research out there that says 60% of Generation Z you know would pay more for sustainable products. There's a lot of quant research saying would you pay more for a sustainable product, however, the reality is at a macro level the fastest growing fashion and apparel brand in the world right now, it's Shein. Do they have any sustainability credentials whatsoever? Absolutely not. So Generation Z saying that they value sustainability and would pay more for sustainability is somewhat nonsensical.

00:23:32 Chris

The only time when sustainability becomes a differentiator is when you have really, really impactful storytelling, which connects and engages with the consumer.

00:23:57 Jordan

Do you conduct life cycle assessments on your products?

00:24:04 Chris

Yes, currently Salomon have done 1% of their products. Try and choose the most indicative product, the one that's gonna be most helpful. Most mainstream products.

00:25:42 Jordan

When a company is as large as Solomon it's difficult. Time is very precious when you're having to get out the products into the world and meet customer demand. What are they doing to help climate change within the business?

00:26:05 Chris

There are initiatives. For example, there's a target to have all products PFC free by 2024. That's something they've implemented themselves. There is a

target to have all packaging 100% FSC certified by 2024. There's a plan to have no plastic packaging by 2024, so there is a road map starting to be followed.

00:27:03 Chris

It's based on these very broad, simplified approaches, which on the whole work. But for example, skis there's now a rule that you can't put plastic packaging on the skis. So instead of having the very thin, lightweight blister packaging they might now be putting a large FSC certified cardboard box and the issue is that people in the company don't have the skill, time or the autonomy to question that and to say we know we've got a rule about FSC certified packaging but actually in this context it doesn't work and we should do something else. For me is that's a challenge.

00:27:52 Chris

Ideally, you'd have everyone thinking from first principles, but that takes a lot of energy.

00:28:11 Jordan

Do you offer any reclamation project of recycling or reuse? Do you have any kind of recommerce at Salomon?

00:28:23 Chris

They're starting to this index shoe. The shoes get recycled, processed and put into the ski boot manufacturing line.

00:29:31 Chris

They have a partnership with a group called Riders for Refugees where the brand and stores try to encourage people to bring in unused or old ski kit and then they'll arrange for that to be sent to refugees. That's quite a nice initiative, but that's a passion project organised by the snowboard team within Salomon.

00:30:06 Jordan

Is there any training in place for social and or environmental mission as a brand, here people can get more educated within certain areas?

00:30:23 Chris

Currently none. They are working on trying to implement that.

00:30:41 Jordan

Is there any sustainability or greenwashing plan?

00:31:07 Chris

Not that I'm aware of. There's a thing called the Play Minded program which was launched about four years ago. It's now being changed because the company was seen as this pioneering sustainability program. It has four categories that has mind the players, getting our athletes to behave responsibly. Mind the playground, looking after the environment. Play with the products, which is about reducing product impact. The programme was a sort of sustainability policy.

00:31:53 Chris

The recycled shoe program, they moved my entire product category manufacturing from Europe to China. They would have to sell about 10 million pairs of those recyclable shoe to offset the the negative impact they made from the sourcing decision relating to my products. That's why I referred to this term of green light. For me sustainability is seen as almost a one way slope where people only talk about the positive and they ignore the negative. We talk about positive sustainability like, oh, we're going to do this recycled program. We're going to eliminate PFCS, but no one talks about oh, we should stop the negative things. Kind of a fascinating oversight that I see really everywhere in sustainability.

00:33:23 Jordan

How do you think a product could remain desirable and functional for its user?

00:33:36 Chris

For me changing the human relationship with the products. Salomon at the moment started to look at what science based targets would mean, and are currently forecast to double their sales in the next five years. Internally are started to talk about committing to a 50% reduction by 2030.

00:34:21 Chris

No idea how that could ever happen, essentially have a 75% reduction in the emissions of the product and if you talk to any expert in the business there's no way we can possibly achieve this. But on one side the science based targets are important, and everyone's doing them.

00:35:06 Chris

The only way you can start to resolve that conflict is to look at new forms of value and new forms of ownership and that is the only physical way that it's possible to achieve both those targets of doubling your revenue and halving your impact.

00:35:24 Chris

Whether that is increasing the length of product ownership, increasing repair and recycling. Limit our sales and grow our revenue in other ways.

00:36:39 Chris

Something that I didn't understand before I was working in the outdoor industry is the forces that are upon you when you're in the outdoor industry in terms of what's driving you and the decisions you make. Every design gateway you go through, four times a year you meet with the the markets who are the head of sales for North America, the head of sales for Europe, the head of sales for Southern hemisphere and you show to them what we're thinking for our products. These five or six guys sit there and criticise what you've done, then say I won't be able to sell that or I will be able to sell that. I really like it in yellow. I want more yellow. So all of your in-depth consumer research, thinking, studies and innovation gets boiled down to these

meetings, where you've got five dudes in their 50s who haven't really thought about anything.

00:37:53 Chris

These are the guys that placed the orders. I was designing new ranges of ski goggles for Salomon and we put huge amount of effort in. Fully recyclable goggle repairable, replaceable, with scratch proof lenses, was going to last twice as long, this fantastic innovation. And the guy in the US just says, yeah, I don't like the style. You've got zero sales from North America. You don't even get the chance.

00:38:34 Chris

The much bigger game is about how do you influence these reps to say sustainability is a priority? These are the consumer demands that we want to appeal to.

00:39:01 Chris

On one side you have market demands, but then you also just have a very small group of decision makers who are controlling a significant part of the direction of the company because it's the sales that talk.

00:39:26 Jordan

What do you think with your nutrition business? How do you think you can make that more desirable and functional for the user over a period of time?

00:40:09 Chris

The nice thing about food is that people and particularly working in France, is that people's intuition is very sustainable. In France, you know something like 60% of groceries are organic. People are incredibly opposed towards kind of littering and plastic and luckily that's very aligned with what is actually sustainable if you look at the life cycle analysis of an item of food. For an athlete your biggest environmental impact is your fuel. Just like the petrol is in your car. By having locally sourced ingredients that are all based on legumes so it's all organically grown legumes that are the lowest carbon

source of carbohydrates available that are produced in France organically and putting that into a large package that is more convenient.

00:41:29 Chris

The food business where this naturally more sustainable approach is very easy to win there.

00:42:28 Chris

Social aspects in terms of people's health and well-being. Again, it's the much harder side of sustainability to quantify, but the objective of the nutrition company is to really be focused on people's health when there's a 15% rise in diabetes in the last 10 years in Europe due to our consumption of ultra processed.

00:43:33 Chris

I'm sick and tired of making things out of plastic and metal that people don't really need to do their sport. Part of our mission for the sports nutrition is going to be a very premium product. Don't invest that in a new bike. Don't invest that in a new pair of running shoes. You don't need them. Invest it in having high quality, healthy and sustainable nutrition because that is actually going to be far better for your performance, health and from our sustainability perspective.

00:44:37 Jordan

You don't want to be adding to the consumption but also you can't do these sports without a body so you need to look after the most important tool.

00:45:03 Chris

Future principles of permaculture principles of ecology and Nature based design, that for me is that for me is the future is. The outdoor industry is so far away from that right now. For me the nature based solutions are potentially the solution for the outdoor industry.

00:47:28 Chris

Two sides. One is the legislative side legislative side. One is, the consumer demand. The key to unlock design, because design is all about desirability.

00:47:42 Chris

Design is all about seduction. Design is the key by which we can get into a consumer's mind, change what they want, change how they behave because I think that seduction and desirability is the key to making the changes we need.

Interview 4: Connor Tracy

Product and Value Chain for Regeneration at Vivobarefoot

00:01:50 Jordan

Do you work with the B Corp section or is it sustainability as a whole for vivo?

00:01:55 Connor

We call it regeneration at vivo is our sustainability team. My role is product and value chain, so that's like continuous improvement of materials in our product styles. Looking at transparency through the value chain and how we can improve that and then B Corp alongside it as well. B Corp covers a lot of areas of the business. We involve a lot of people across the business and we asked them to collect all the evidence together before the the certification.

00:02:50 Jordan

What is Vivos's mission statement?

00:03:14 Connor

To regenerate people's foot health so we're a natural foot health business because being barefoot helps you reconnect with nature. It helps grow the muscles in your feet. Your feet become more natural, your posture becomes more aligned and the studies to show that it does regenerate your foot health and back health and all of that.

00:03:39 Connor

For me it's to regenerate people and planet in terms of through our supply chain through the products that we offer, and I don't think we're a regenerative business yet. We're a good sustainable business in terms of how we perform compared to our partners in in the footwear industry. We're doing very well as our B Corp certification shows, our North Star is to be regenerative for people and planets and giving back more than we take. Going beyond that to have like a net positive impact on people and planet.

00:04:42 Jordan

Do you put on regular training for other employees?

00:05:00 Connor

We do regeneration workshops to explain to people in the business as well as our partners in the supply chain of what regeneration means to us so various. Staff don't check all the copy that goes out in our comms and social media. It would be impossible.

00:05:28 Connor

This morning I've been doing a greenwashing assessment of our website and see all the claims that we've been making. Regenerative means in terms of product but you can also be regenerative in how your business operates.

00:06:09 Connor

We have a theory called regenerative leadership. The way that you work with internal staff and you have a positive impact on them and they on you, your feedback is honest and clear. There's a regenerative way of being and then there's an actual regenerative product, which means you have to have net positive impact for nature or people.

00:06:42 Jordan

What do you think made Vivo go for B Corp? Why was it B Corp that Vivo was the most attracted to?

00:06:58 Connor

B Corp is recognised so people understand and I think are starting to understand more what it means. Accredited businesses in the UK is only going up so but what it stands for the framework is very aligned to us. It stands for regenerative. When we first certified we didn't change anything and achieved B Corp certification over the score that you needed. We were already a B Corp business so it was just getting that certification was something we already knew.

00:08:16 Connor

We certified at 98.8 so this year in September we'll be recertifying again and we've got a target of 120.

00:09:10 Connor

We've been running these B Corp workshops with our in country teams in Asia. Our headquarters is in London, but we now bring in Germany back in-house and expanding in the US I think.

00:09:39 Connor

We've allocated every single question in the impact assessment to someone in the business and we call these people our B champs. It's their responsibility to evidence the questions that fall in that area because they're the experts. I set goals for them to fill out new questions and evidence questions that we're already saying that we do.

00:10:20 Connor

We use Trello cards and drop in their attachments to evidence questions then we can chat on the card, tag people and ask them what to put. There are more questions that fall under some people than others, there's loads for HR.

00:11:20 Jordan

Isn't it there anything that surprised you about B Corp?

00:11:24 Connor

It's just a massive questionnaire, I thought it would be more complex.

00:12:02 Connor

There's so much the people team can do right now to put a policy in place, or change the supply chain.

00:12:40 Jordan

Do you have a sustainability or green washing plan in place?

00:12:47 Connor

CMA guidance Green claims code, we've broke that down and have 5 areas that we look at across the website in terms of claims that we make.

00:13:23 Jordan

Can people publicly feedback and review their products?

00:13:30 Connor

We don't. This is something that I wish we had on the product pages and there's actually a B Corp question that says do you publicly show all reviews, whether positive or negative.

00:13:59 Jordan

So I'm guessing the accreditation is pretty significant to your brand.

00:14:06 Connor

Yeah, it's on our packaging. We're proud of it and B Corp actively discourages you from talking about scores. It's not about gaining extra points, it's about using the B Corp framework. Things we can improve on and that's how we should be progressing as a business, not just the score points and an accreditation that makes us more reputable but a good framework.

00:16:02 Jordan

Do you think consumer attitude is changing?

00:16:14 Connor

We hold values as a business and we want to lead light in the industry. I've seen the statistics and our customer insights, showing that people actually really care about quality and price a lot more than they do sustainability. We're doing it because we are a regenerative purpose led company.

00:16:59 Jordan

I know that Vivo do quite a few collaborations. When you look at brands for collaboration, is accreditation one of the things that you lean towards or is it similar purpose led businesses?

00:17:27 Connor

If they have a B Corp certification we immediately know that they're meeting some threshold of being sustainable. We do only work with people that align to our values.

00:18:58 Connor

Our product at the moment has a lot of plastic on it and uses a lot of degenerative materials that aren't sustainable and are far from regenerative,

but the more shoes we get on people's feet we are regenerating foot health and can make continuous improvement tracking that continuous improvement.

00:19:34 Connor

Our product at the moment isn't regenerative we're definitely on the journey to make more recycled products, more bio products and more natural products that is back to nature or fully closed loop circular.

00:20:04 Jordan

Do you conduct life cycle assessments of a product?

00:20:14 Connor

We have this system called the V matrix. Our internal scoring system to score every single style on its sustainability. Other businesses I think in the industry will choose a hero products, put a load of R&D into and it looks great, but our approach is for every single style, we're gonna break down all the materials in it. How complex it is, how durable it is, the supplier chain it's coming from and really account for every single thing in the shoe question whether we need like that extra bit of like padding or do we need that extra logo on there? Get that holistic view and then we take it on an improvement journey.

00:21:09 Connor

We give it a percentage rating and take it to our line meetings where our product and development team will come up with ideas and how we can improve the sustainability or regenerative nature of the shoe. That's how we score.

00:21:35 Connor

Moving it into an online software platform with a lifecycle analysis partner and they are doing life cycle analysis in our supply chain with energy. I think it can lead in the footwear industry how we account for environmental impact of products.

00:22:10 Connor

I don't know any other business that scores every single piece of its products like that and then uses that to benchmark.

00:23:01 Connor

Our founders are like Cobblers, shoe making family and they care about the performance of a shoe and and care about the environment aspects as well.

00:23:24 Jordan

How about Revivo?

00:23:45 Connor

Revivo is I think is one of the best things about Vivo. We don't offer our repair service to all of our styles yet, but I think the fact that we have a proper reclaim service that other companies say that they'll take footwear back and repair it, but they won't. It's up in Leeds and offer it for a good range of styles. We try and make products as durable as possible to start with, so it stays on feet for longer, and then that use part of the life cycle.

00:25:29 Connor

If every footwear business was using our V matrix, there would be substantial difference made across the industry. I'd love to open source it.

00:26:32 Jordan

Do you have any kind of commitment to donate a percentage of your revenues?

00:26:40 Connor

We don't a formal written commitment, but we're working on it.

00:28:01 Connor

Considering 1% for the planet, More flexible. You can kind of apply it to specific things and make it work for you.

00:28:39 Connor

We wanna have a registered commitment to charities that have our environmental and social values.

00:28:56 Jordan

Do you do anything for the community, inclusion for unrepresented population?

00:29:50 Connor

Recycled material from our shoes to create bar park surfaces in and it links to our calisthenics. We've created bar parks for our ambassadors to use, and I think they class from being on either from underrepresented populations or it's the community that it serves.

00:37:33 Jordan

What advice would you give anyone that wants to become B Corp?

00:37:37 Connor

Just start doing the assessment and get used to the questions.

Interview 5: Dan Yates

Partnership Manager at Protect Our Winters EU and Director at Save Our Rivers

00:01:38 Jordan

POW US, UK and EU are they all 1% for the planet? Or is it just power EU?

00:01:49 Dan

It's up to the individual chapters whether they register for 1%. Switzerland, UK, Norway, France are all registered as 1% for the planet.

00:02:12 Dan

Get around to completing the registration process is not super complicated, it takes an hour. You have to ask a brand to nominate you.

00:02:50 Jordan

Why do you think 1% for the planet is so significant to POW?

00:03:20 Dan

You can donate direct to the charity and then just tell 1%. Show them the accounts so almost nobody donates through 1% directly. But the fact that we're 1% is important to those NGO's who are registered at 1%.

00:04:29 Dan

1% works really well because it allows that diversity of giving to be recognised rather than just a donate.

00:05:47 Dan

The thing I'm critical of with 1% is the way that they allow brands to choose aspects of their business which are 1%.

00:06:41 Dan

I think a problem with 1% is it's not necessarily the way Patagonia do it, which is 1% of everything and brands can be quite selective on what they register as 1%.

00:07:32 Dan

There's a request from brands to have some sort of delineation of level or logo. 1% don't want to do that because their messaging is really clear.

00:07:46 Jordan

Do you think having an accreditation adds value to a brand?

00:07:53 Dan

Yes, as a consumer I look at brand with 1% and it attracts them to them as a brand and I can see that that is important for our community.

00:08:19 Dan

In terms of the recipient of funds 1% doesn't particularly add anything. From an NGO point of view for us I don't particularly seek out brands that 1% registered. We seek out brands on aligned values rather than whether they're registered as 1%.

00:09:16 Dan

I think it's it's nice for brands that are new to philanthropy that they have a structure.

00:09:45 Jordan

Do you think consumer attitudes are changing?

00:09:48 Dan

Yeah, completely. More brands are approaching us in terms of wanting to give but not really sure how. They want to give something that aligns because they feel it's important to their community that they're seen to be doing something.

00:10:30 Dan

The brands that have been giving for a while now really are looking at putting their personal stamp on project based stuff. I think consumers are looking at brands to be giving and I think looking at brands to have a viewpoint on that and a concrete action behind it as well.

00:12:03 Dan

There's an expectation for brands to not remain politically neutral. Brands to be speaking out or pushing the agenda. Patagonia are the best, printing vote the ***** out on your t-shirt. People want to see stuff like that. They want to see strong statements that are risky.

00:12:53 Jordan

Does POW have sustainability or a greenwashing plan in place when it comes to any posts that they put out or campaigns that are launched?

00:13:06 Dan

We don't.

00:13:31 Dan

Those those kind of conversations never go anywhere. We don't have a written greenwashing strategy, in place and we should. It's a question of capacity that we don't. It's done very much on I suppose my gut feeling and what's written in our partnership package.

00:14:51 Dan

We never lead with a picture of a product unless it's a collab.

00:15:00 Dan

We get criticised for greenwashing.

00:15:38 Dan

Core part of what we want to do is work with the outdoor industry on reducing their impact and becoming advocates so the reason that we work work closer with brands is not just because we exchange marketing for donation. We want them to know they're one of our audiences. Our audiences are the outdoor community.

Interview 6: Dom Winters

Head of Programmes at Protect Our Winters, UK

00:02:42 Jordan

What is the brand's mission statement for POW?

00:02:50 Dom

Protect Our Winters UK helps passionate outdoor people become effective climate advocates to achieve systemic solutions to climate change, protecting our world today and for future generations.

00:03:12 Jordan

1% for the planet does that apply to POW UK? Each chapter being a separate registered entity and a separate organisation, it's kind of up to each chapter whether they want to sign up for it. POW UK is.

00:04:17 Dom

If it's a UK based company interested in communicating with the UK, then we'll just discuss that with them directly.

00:04:23 Jordan

Why 1% and not climate neutral or B Corp for example.

00:04:40 Dom

Kind of separate things. 1% is specifically finding partners that will donate cash and programme oriented, helping them take specific actions. B Corp, if we could potentially try and approach B Corp members as a charity, B Corp is not set up to help companies donate like 1% for the planet is. B Corp is there to give companies guidance on becoming a better company.

00:06:52 Dom

B Corp does such broad stuff. More on the social side than it does on the climate. There's so much more on the social and other environmental issues. It's kind of separate to what we're mostly trying to achieve with POW. We're mostly trying to get companies to support those systemic level actions. Like writing open letters to politicians or supporting these campaigns that bring

about more train travel. We are asking the companies to change their internal policies.

00:07:51 Jordan

With accreditations, do you think they add anything to a brand?

00:08:33 Dom

For the general public making these decisions or the general consumer understanding them, they probably get more powerful by presence than they do from whether they're actually reputable or not.

00:09:27 Dom

A spectrum of how green people are or what their priorities are in purchasing. For some people that big driver and others it won't be at all.

00:09:35 Jordan

Do you think consumer attitude is changing generally?

00:09:43 Dom

To an extent I think the average consumer is probably getting slightly more interested in these things overtime, but at the same time the recent cost of living crisis is driving people to the cheapest product and not being so concerned about those topics. The attitudes might be heading in the right direction, but the practises might be hitting the other direction driven by price concerns. Generally people just aren't that interested to go out of their way to find out information, so it kind of has to be front and centre like.

People don't go and dig for negative press stories about our brand if they're gonna purchase from them.

00:10:29 Jordan

Do you have a sustainability or and a greenwashing plan in place?

00:10:43 Dom

Yes, when we we work with partnerships it's kind of a due diligence type criteria of what we're looking for. We're looking for case by case basis, not too

many hurdles like certain industries. Fossil fuel industry, tobacco or whatever, certain industries totally ruled out.

00:11:22 Dom

We're working for that systemic change, we don't need them to be at the forefront or be the greenest brand, either. We need them to be showing they have the right intentions.

00:11:38 Dom

At the UK level POW pledge, which is a pledge system that is a certification and does carry a logo. Complete all areas so it's basically helping businesses get climate strategy in place. Made out of reflection because we would be advising other people's standards, but we can't find one that is suitably well-rounded that does everything we want on climate change.

00:13:08 Dom

B Corp, which as we discussed is much more HR and it takes like a couple of years. Carbon neutral certifications. Other ones within outdoor space/

00:16:03 Dom

POW Pledge. There's eight areas of action, and within each we assigned the person for the net zero goal.

00:17:37 Dom

Transparency side we're trying to break it down into these areas, and each one have a specific date.

00:18:16 Jordan

How is your community responded to?

00:18:32 Dom

We've struggled to have the resource to do it as well as we'd like. It's step by step on the website portal. The usability of the portal we made wasn't great, and we're trying to redevelop that, but we've got stuck in the development so it's at the moment that's like it's more a live document with a spreadsheet to

fill in. Which allows you to work offline, but isn't as easy to follow, so we need to get back to videos describing each step.

00:19:57 Dom

We've had 150 odd registrations and 15 full completions.

00:22:56 Jordan

How many roughly are on your list that have gone through the process?

00:23:01 Dom

So we've got, I think 369. 14 or 15 have completed the full pledge.

00:23:37 Jordan

What date did the POW pledge launch?

00:23:41 Dom

October 21

00:23:45 Jordan

How long roughly does it take from sign up to completion? I guess it depends on the size of your business.

00:23:56 Dom

Yes, the bigger the company the longer typically. Bigger companies at least six months. Some of the smallest companies seems to be a matter of days between signing up and then completing.

00:24:30 Jordan

Do you go through regular training reminding you of the social and environmental impact? Values and mission statement?

00:24:55 Dom

We are a very small team like in the UK. 4 staff. It's more discussing these topics on a regular basis and every year we'll check in what our mission statement is and see if there's any updates to that.

00:25:33 Dom

We've had a couple of different trainings over the last few years on various elements including diversity and inclusivity. In terms of staying updated on

the sustainability stuff, that's kind of on me. Context keep changing. It's more bringing interesting stuff constantly to the fore and keep discussing it. We put in a specific training on the topic of climate change. Everyone in the team has done the carbon literacy training.

00:26:22 Jordan

What advice would you give other businesses wanting to gain an accreditation?

00:26:45 Dom

Difficult to give it in a generalised format cause what's suitable for a given business will massively depend on who that business is. If you want something that's well-rounded and well recognised then B Corp is good for that.

00:27:05 Dom

If you just make one product, it might be better to focus on a certification for that one product like 1%. Really great if you're just getting started and don't have much influence within your manufacturer, supply chain because you can be supporting systemic change. Anyone can do 1% and it fits alongside any other certification because it's more about donating than anything operational.

Interview 7: Dryad

Matt Thomas, Founder at Dryad Sportswear Limited

Joby Barnard, Designer at Dryad Sportswear Limited

00:01:35 Matt

December 2021 we officially.

00:01:45 Matt

We started probably at least a year before we launched setting everything up in the background.

00:02:01 Jordan

What is Dryad's mission statement.

00:02:30 Matt

Goal 1 to make the best sustainable women's sports where possible. Goal 2 is to be as transparent as possible with a fully traceable value chain, ensuring that everyone that works and the products is treated fairly. 3 is to allocate a proportion of profits to increase participation in sport women and girls. 4 is to provide local employment by bringing high tech manufacturing back to the UK, which is a kind of long term one. Then the 5th is to showcase the beautiful surroundings of the Brecon Beacons.

00:03:27 Jordan

What came up with the idea of starting something so specific?

00:03:48 Matt

Ambitious side hustle at the moment, which we are trying to turn into our full time careers, but my background is in sustainability. I'm currently a senior manager strategy manager for Gold Standard Foundation, which is best known for its carbon markets. Value chain impact assessments and we're trying to create standards and methodologies around measure impact throughout the entire organisation, supply chain and through that work that became really apparent that women are the most negatively impacted in supply chain issues. They are normally the ones that have to deal with more

toxic jobs. Have less job security. If they won't have kids then it's very challenging for them. I was very aware of all these issues and supply chains, but then outside of work I was also doing a lot of kind of triathlons and it was really shocking to see professional female athletes wouldn't be able to get enough money to enter event and not have enough money to pay for the tickets to get to the event.

00:05:19 Matt

Girls in sport when they become teenagers there's far less access for women and girls into sport than for men for all sorts of different reasons. It felt like it'd be really nice to try and close the loop a little bit on that, so I wanted to build a brand that highlights the issues for women in supply chains. Make sure we're as transparent as possible and we're making as big a difference as we possibly could and then always make sure that we're giving a percentage of those profits back into supporting grassroots access for women and girls into sports. Hopefully as we grow we can do more and can raise more awareness on on the issues on both sides.

00:07:09 Joby

We can only start giving back properly if we grow to a certain point.

00:07:41 Matt

There's a whole load of standards you can sign up to, but if you're not making any money, it's kind of pointless. We're in that stage where we're doing what we can based on the fact that we're a startup and our funds are really tight, but we're sort of setting ourselves up so we can have more impact.

00:08:24 Jordan

Is an accreditation a consideration for you?

00:08:35 Matt

You can set up an amazing business and not have any accreditation and it can still be amazing. You don't have that third party assurance to let people know that what you're doing. There's hundreds of different standards. If you

dig into them, they become not as good as they seem. Higgs index has H&M as a client and they score really highly. But then when you look at their supply chain, there's all sorts of issues.

00:09:58 Matt

B Corp is a strong one and then science based targets initiative I think is pretty key because it's based on science and there's no getting around that. Those are the two that I'm interested in. As we grow we're probably do B Corp.

00:10:47 Matt

As long as you know where your stuff's coming from, and you can tell people where it's coming from, why and how you're doing it, and can share that with your community then I think that's a really good place to start.

00:12:25 Matt

You can have an amazing part of your supply chain that's approved by the Higgs index and then have some really scuzzy bit that you don't mention and that's apparently OK.

00:12:42 Matt

Valuable certifications come in the greenwashing side. A certain brand calling themselves the world's first climate, positive, sportswear brand it's just an impossible claim. It's pretty much always gonna be a negative impact.

00:13:55 Joby

We got super lucky with our manufacturer. Well it was amazing for them to want to work with such a small brand in the first place, they are very highly accredited. Even though we're not accredited, Petratex who we mentioned quite transparently on our site who we work with, have a page on their site called certification and they've got a list.

00:14:53 Jordan

Have you got a sustainability greenwashing plan in place?

00:15:00 Matt

In my head, I think we're careful with what we're saying. One of the core principles of Dryad is to be as sustainable as possible, so its front and center in everything we're doing.

00:15:42 Joby

We're trying to be honest about not being perfect from the outset. I don't know if people even read the content on our site.

00:16:37 Matt

Consumerism has got an impact and as long as you can minimise that impact as much as possible then that's really important but you're never going to not have an impact. We have an impact by not existing.

00:17:56 Matt

I think the biggest challenge is elastane. If someone can solve the problem of elastane it fixes a huge problem in the sportswear sector because, our products will have elastane in them and we know once you've blended that it's really hard to separate. It makes it very hard to have a circular product because of that elastane content.

00:18:34 Matt

We haven't used Merino. Load of ethical questions around Merino as well, where it's coming from, carbon footprint shipping it from Australia. I've said about a million times. Everything's got an impact. It's just trying to choose which one you're comfortable with and then trying to explain explain what it is.

00:19:05 Jordan

By having a small amount of products, products that are done really well is going to have more of an impact than having this really wide selection.

00:19:19 Matt

We wanted to make products that were complementary to what people already had in their wardrobes. We're not a fashion brand. The branding's

subtle so if you've got a bright top, whatever, you can wear our shorts and it doesn't clash.

00:20:02 Matt

Then at the same time it's really hard. We've got four products at the moment, how do you keep your marketing and your brand fresh and interesting when you're selling the same four products over again, that's another challenge.

00:20:23 Matt

We want it to be as sustainable as possible. Commercial reality is we need people to be interested in the brand. We need to be able to sell products. We're finding out as we go where the level is and what we can actually do and what we can't do. We came in with these nice principles, but I think the reality hits if you're trying to be a for profit purpose driven business, you still need to make profit.

00:21:15 Joby

That's definitely a problem, but luckily other people have been talking about our products and winning that award for the shorts has been really good because when other people are talking about it for you.

00:22:41 Matt

We've got local ambassadors who are amazing and they work in the local community and they support grassroots trail running. We give them kit and discounts. We work with outdoor Partnership for Wales as well as similar supporting women's trail running.

00:23:21 Matt

Using influencers just doesn't feel genuine.

00:23:24 Joby

There's not a lot of integrity when you know people are doing it for money. Micro influencers, which is a horrible phrase, they're almost more valuable as people with smaller followings, but who are really genuine and who don't do

paid posts. The irony of it, as Matt just touched on, a lot of the people that are into trail running hate social media. It makes it really tricky. They'll wear your product, but they won't share it with the world because they don't care. They don't want to be on TikTok or Instagram because they want to be out running.

00:24:20 Matt

We've been so subtle with our branding as well, which we really like, but you can't see what the logo is, or the brand name is, and it then it's again another challenge.

00:25:06 Jordan

Are you testing your kit? Product lifespan.

00:25:16 Matt

Yes, we don't entirely know what it is yet. We tested pretty hard at the start and and we got a few of our next range of some jackets and things coming in. Shared those with a few ambassadors who are local who've been wearing them all the time. Everything goes through series of washing cycles just to see how it holds together. We haven't had any returns yet or any issues with longevity, everything's designed in a way to be repairable. Challenge is probably the leggings, but even those can be stitched up by hand so there's nothing in the product that isn't repairable.

00:26:55 Jordan

How do you think a product could remain desirable and functional over time?

00:27:15 Matt

We didn't really think our shorts were gonna be the thing that people liked. Every single person said we want a high waist and we want pockets and we don't want it to be too revealing but we want them to be high enough that we've got lots of freedom of movement and and we worked hard to create that. We've had such positive feedback about the shorts, and won the awards for them.

00:27:57 *Matt*

I think maybe how you stay relevant is you just have to make a really good product? We've create something that's brilliant, but we haven't really told enough people about it.

00:28:18 *Matt*

Also listening to feedback so where we've had negative feedback on things, that's been very minimal, like leggings slipping on certain body shapes. and things like that. We've got a small product range and we've got a few people that can test it. Whereas if one of these bigger brands, you're working to seasonality, and we're not doing that. We're trying to build something that people can have forever or for a really long lifespan at least.

00:29:12 *Joby*

We are still small enough to listen to feedback and write it down right so when people tell us what they like and what they don't like, we're able to record that, and then when we're ready to make our new batch, we can just feed that stuff straight in.

00:30:23 *Joby*

We set out a lot of stuff on the website where we want to get to, so we're not quite there yet. We would love to offer free repairs one day and we're not at that stage. It means that you can keep your customer interested for a longer period of time.

00:31:22 *Jordan*

Are you ever swayed by accreditation or is it more about a business doing really great stuff? Or is it more the necessity?

00:31:45 *Matt*

I buy everything based on the perceived sustainability of the brand and the product. But with that comes at an additional cost. Everything you buy ends up being expensive.

00:32:39 *Matt*

If you get a race T-shirt, they all go bobbly and disgusting pretty quickly. But if you spend money on good stuff it does last.

00:33:21 Joby

Everyone has those bits of clothing that they keep for ages, and I guess that's a good aim for a brand to be a brand that creates those pieces that people want. I'd love it if people thought that our shorts were the best shorts and they kept coming back every couple of years to buy them.

00:34:25 Joby

If I buy something, I'll be buying it for a brand where I think that stuff is built in.

00:34:46 Matt

We could create a locally woollen product using Welsh wool and have an amazing story about it. Ultimately, probably going to end up with a product that doesn't function as well as something made of polyester. Almost counterintuitive. It's really hard to find a sustainable membrane for a waterproof jacket. The most sustainable kit is the stuff you already have.

00:40:12 Matt

It's certainly easier to start as a sustainable business than to be a massive business and try to convert your entire business process to a sustainable way of production.

00:41:14 Matt

As long as you tell people what you're doing and why you're doing it, and it makes sense and you're comfortable with that, then I think that's good enough. Especially in this world, there's so much greenwashing. I feel comfortable where we are knowing we haven't got any certification. I think we're doing everything as well as we possibly can. And if people challenge us, we can explain why we're doing things this way.

Interview 8: Kevin Karaca

Corporate Communications Coordinator at Equip Outdoor Technologies (RAB/LOWE Alpine)

00:05:15 Jordan

Do accreditations matter to you? Is it more within the values and the mission statement?

00:05:31 Kevin

On a personal level, I look at them and use that as a bit of a guide to my decision making. I also end up looking at ingredients like what fabrics have been used. Is it recycled? Is it not? When it says recycled on the front label is actually just 2% recycled of the inner.

00:06:13 Kevin

As for specific accreditations I guess personally they don't really make that much difference. The values and narrative the brand goes with makes more of an impact on my decision making probably than I consciously know as well.

00:07:00 Jordan

On a professional level as well?

00:07:03 Kevin

On a professional level, I think the accreditation frameworks have a lot of merit because I think they force brands and businesses to think about things that they might not have thought about. B Corp, for example, when you go into the back end portal and start going through everything you're like, I didn't even think about that, that's totally new to me or of course, why don't we bank with a better bank?

00:07:56 Kevin

I think that there's value in an organisation to go through that process. Get nudged to doing different things better. How can that help us focus the business and strategy to move forward if we don't go down the certification route?

00:08:44 *Jordan*

Did RAB become climate neutral?

00:08:49 *Kevin*

Yes, climate neutral, fair wear leaders as of last year, RDS down certification. Fair wear is not important in the UK, really no one knows or understands what it is. Consumer wise in Europe, it seems to be huge.

00:11:22 *Kevin*

When a brand goes global and has different markets, it has to cater for all of them. So RAB was doing fair wear for Europe and then climate neutral was great in the UK and the states.

00:11:47 *Kevin*

One of the main projects I worked on was material facts, which is interesting because it said that new way of sorting ingredients looking at recycled content. With all that information people can look at the outer fabric to see if it is fully recycled and doesn't have PFC.

00:13:02 *Kevin*

Consumer products for autumn/winter 23 and was huge in the states. The American market lapped it up and this is exactly what we need. We need this granularity and clarity.

00:13:31 *Jordan*

Do you think consumer attitudes are changing?

00:13:36 *Kevin*

Slowly but surely. There's always been repairs going on, free with the product. You pay, it's heavily subsidised, but you pay from the nature of how the products are. You inherently rip your stuff.

00:15:04 *Kevin*

Second stitch came about because firstly we had lots of fabric from old colourways that was no longer useful and we needed to clear it somehow. What better way than just mix and match those off cuts? Leftover rolls of

fabric were used for repairs. People are starting to want to show off the fact that they've got something repaired.

00:16:29 Kevin

It becomes a bit of a status symbol particularly in the climbing world. To some extent you see people going around with duct tape over over their jackets and people cherishing old kit because everyone's a dirt bag and no one wants to pay for new.

00:18:14 Kevin

Mono polymer fabrics as well like Pertex Revolve, is a waterproof fabric. Traditionally you have a face fabric which is nylon and polyester then you have your membrane, which use cortexes, and you have a backer so you end up with these three layers and the backer is again nylon and polyester, and they're all glued together so you can't really take them apart. When it comes to end of life there's nothing you can do with it recycling wise. You have to just throw it away.

00:19:33 Kevin

Other bits that get thrown onto the jacket, like labelling. If you use a heat transfer, what's that made of? What's the glue behind it?

00:20:20 Jordan

Do you think digital technology can reduce the need for physical products whilst improving the experience and engagement of the customer?

00:22:34 Kevin

We've developed this concept called RAB Lab, which was around education and training. The focus was firstly, understanding the product what it is everyday, how to look after it, which involved loads of video content, various blog content very much focused around educating consumers on how to get the best out of their product.

00:23:09 Kevin

That was big part online digital, but there was some actual in person activations as well at Kendal Mountain Festival or trade shows.

00:23:35 Kevin

I think there is scope for more engagement with people online to build a community and build your brand through a community. To educate and help that community grow.

00:24:48 Jordan

How do you think outdoor brands could better operate to serve their community?

00:26:05 Kevin

There's a big focus on getting kids into the outdoors, which is great, and there's a big focus on supporting athletes. That mid ground I feel is where there's the big hole at the moment, when you're no longer a kid but not yet an athlete and you're in that really true developmental stage. How do you hone your craft to become an athlete potentially operating at that level.

00:28:27 Kevin

Alpkitt Foundation provides grants and money to groups, communities and individuals getting people out into the outdoors.

00:29:51 Jordan

Is sustainability and or greenwashing in place?

00:29:53 Kevin

There's a plan in place to reduce the impact of products. Currently a net zero by 2030 goal. That breaks down goes into product design, fabric selection, manufacturing process and then shipping.

00:30:38 Kevin

As a sustainability team, we try to have as many stakeholders within the business as possible, which is successful I think, and getting people on board and helping people understand that journey. There's a huge effort not to

greenwash. Really focused on being as clear and precise as possible with language.

00:31:29 Kevin

I wrote both the sustainability reports that RAB was produced and getting it right and not trying to shorten it so much that it becomes a load of garbage.

Interview 9: Steve Cristofaro

Product Developer at Raeburn

00:05:27 Steve

(Raeburn) We are a responsible design studio and also have our own brand. I work as a product developer.

00:06:25 Steve

The mission statement is to be the first sustainability fashion brand.

00:07:05 Steve

The ethos is the four R's, which is remade, reduce, recycle and Raeburn. The origins of the brand was based on women's wear design. Using military surplus based around reusing a military pilots parachute and also military wear.

00:08:07 Steve

Premise of Raeburn now, we call it a pyramid where we have these artefacts that are remade into really special one off pieces and then that encapsulates the concept of the entire collection. Then it filters down to more mainline pieces which is a lot of style details. Then we have remade which is in between. Then our standard issue collection, which is like the most commercial, the lowest price tees at like 65 pounds.

00:11:35 Steve

Our entire company, including our retail staff, is just under 25 I think. I think most of the money comes from projects we have on, but some of the agency projects that we've worked on, like with Disney they're really huge projects. Definitely be the most fruitful projects that we work on in comparison to our own product range.

00:16:13 Jordan

Do Raeburn hold any accreditation?

00:16:32 Steve

We do 1% for the planet and are a living wage company. Working towards becoming B Corp, but has been put on hold due to workload.

00:18:11 Steve

Our operations manager deals with the board of directors then choose how they want to shape the company into different quotations of that.

International standards we look for in manufacturers and make sure they have working for their workers. Maybe B Corp in Chinese factories probably don't even know or aren't really interested potentially in knowing or caring what B Corp is. Or even in certain circumstances might not even be able to apply for that due to being in China.

00:21:01 Steve

An experience where we ordered recycled fabric and then when it actually arrived for bulk production, so it already been manufactured and they had somehow changed the composition and it was no longer mono fiber fabric, which is what we tried to work with, but it was also not mono and not recycled.

00:21:30 Steve

That's not our choice to have got to this point and that's not our aim, but now that's been manufactured we can't really waste this product. So we try and just make responsible decisions as we're going. We do have beliefs for general, you have to be dynamic and do the best we can with situations.

00:22:20 Jordan

How is Raeburn operating to better serve their customer?

00:22:37 Steve

Positioning in our area of the market. We have some very accessible pieces in comparison to some of our competitors, we are actually very competitive and easy to access.

00:23:43 Steve

We offer free repairs and alterations, as well as events and bring people together that share our ethos. Get people talking, inspired and sharing ideas.

00:24:54 Jordan

Does Rayburn ever get caught out by greenwashing or is there a plan in place?

00:25:03 Steve

I don't think we have an official plan. Very aware of the term greenwashing. Outwardly from our e-commerce, we provide a lot of information about our product, probably a lot more than your High Street companies would do. We try to be as transparent as possible.

00:26:09 Jordan

Do you have monthly meetings or annually meetings making sure that everybody is on the same page with the social environmental mission?

00:26:34 Steve

We do have weekly Monday morning meetings. Everyone shares what the team's been doing and there is opportunity for that kind of stuff in there.

00:28:34 Jordan

Do you conduct any life cycle assessments on products?

00:28:51 Steve

Yes we do. Wear trialing within the team. Constantly evaluating products that get carried over to see if there's any possible way of improving it. We only try to use mono fiber fabrics to mono composition so that they will either be organic if they're natural fibres or recycled. Synthetic fibres, we'll always look for recycled and try and get GRS certified recycled.

00:29:59 Steve

We do have carryover products that is constantly getting develop to improve it and make it better season on season without drastic changes.

00:32:18 Jordan

Do you think the consumer attitude is changing towards the garment industry?

00:32:26 Steve

Yes, definitely.s

00:33:14 Steve

Younger customer base now currently have more money than they have ever had before, so they're able to buy stuff more in tune with sustainability. They have the vocabulary and talk about it amongst themselves. We're at a breaking point where vocabulary is very widespread, people understand and are able to talk to each other about it and now they form opinions and shopping habits based on that.

00:35:34 Jordan

How do you think a product could remain desirable and functional for its user over time?

00:35:40 Steve

I've been a big advocate of customisability. If you can change the product then you don't get bored of it because it's constantly changing. Making it changeable or customisable I think creating a very solid base garment that has a culture around customising it is very good for keeping the product in range for a lot longer. And stories to it. For example, luggage, travellers with backpacks and they've added patches for different places they've gone.

00:36:50 Steve

Crocs is another example of that. Keep your base base clog I guess. This digital age of fashion, which is definitely becoming more prominent and very interesting space and I think.

00:38:09 Steve

Constantly thinking about individualism, I think human nature will naturally always have people wanting to be creative and individual. Show who they are through clothing I think will always be a huge thing.

00:41:56 Steve

Some mill had a new development where they've managed to develop a yarn and twist in a certain way that they were able to use 100% recycled cotton, which would have been possible but never usually possible for clothing. Not very nice for clothing less like jersey quality for T-shirt and it was spot on for the heavyweight dry touch cotton. I was like really excited but it was 8 times more expensive than we could even maximum budget for because it's just so new.

00:42:58 Steve

I've come to learn about the importance of supporting these developments at the early stage so that these companies can keep going as a business and then scale it out to these larger things.

00:44:24 Steve

Changes they don't happen overnight and they're just so slow moving through industry to that scale. Maybe a business couldn't even handle production for H&M.

00:53:40 Steve

I'm surprised at the lack of people's baseline level of knowledge for repairing clothes. In the old days, I usually go back to around wartimes like 40s. I think when family structures were a little different. New clothing was a bit more scarce. Those skills are getting slowly lost. So accessible to buy t-shirts from Primark for £2.00 or less. Buying a set of needles and some thread, probably costs £2 if not more.

00:55:57 Steve

How impactful giving people vocabulary to talk about these things is. It made a huge difference you could teach some kids about it and then hear them having conversations about it. You feel confident that they're going to continue having these conversations at home. By just giving people

vocabulary to talk about it amongst themselves and share these ideas confidently.

Interview 10: Tim Wilson

Managing Director and Owner of Storm Care Solutions

00:01:41 Tim

I joined grangers, and they were quite a small organisation and we made it a very big organisation globally. But when the beginning of the 2000s started, I could see a change in direction of the market and my colleagues didn't see it.

00:02:24 Tim

We had a fantastic supplier and the lovely Rep that dealt with this. But one day somebody knocked on the door with this new chemistry. And I said this is the future. This is more environmentally friendly than anything we've touched. This is the direction the world's going. And I got thumbs down from everybody.

00:05:41 Tim

When I walk onto the shop floor, if anybody has a question they ask me we'll discuss it. The boss situation.

00:06:48 Jordan

Are you supplying globally?

00:06:54 Tim

Storm Care was born 2005 and the furthest away customer we've got is in New Zealand. We're through Asia, into Americas, pretty well most places.

00:07:15 Jordan

Environmentally, are you aware when making the products and any future products within Storm Care?

00:07:26 Tim

Yes, we work on all aspects of it, not just the chemical itself. Any products that we receive don't have a global footprint before we start.

00:07:48 Tim

We chose to go out of plastic bottles five years ago. Now we use aluminium. It's probably the nicest thing to dig out of the ground, but it was invented in

1880 and since then over 80% of aluminium ever produced is still inside. We now have 100% recycled aluminium container that we sourced in Italy.

00:09:01 Jordan

Yeah, do you offer any reclamation of getting the bottles back to you, or is that something you potentially could in the future?

00:09:09 Tim

We don't think we ever will because we've studied it and actually you still have to bring the transportation for an empty bottle back. What I would rather do first is get a trigger spray into the market. Most manufacturers test the trigger spray 10,000 times, so you buy a little bottle you use it 20 times and it's empty, and you throw it. So what I'm saying is we will offer a refill service so people instead of buying the trigger will just buy the bottle with the screw.

00:09:52 Tim

A dispensing sequence system so our retailers can buy in bulk, and then dispense that out to customers who bring their bottles back. We've been doing trials on all sorts of containers, but I think we're there now with something that's more manageable that will dispense the correct volume.

00:12:08 Jordan

What I'm looking at is whether or not accreditations are worthy or if actually just doing the right things is enough.

00:12:19 Tim

We're not blue sign approved. I can see some points in blue sign approved, but I personally can't get excited by it because it doesn't make you use the most environmentally friendly technology. It means you've tested everything and they've tested everything and it's as good as it gets. They will approve things that aren't very environmentally friendly.

00:12:59 Tim

If I buy from a supplier, a blue sign approved chemical and I dilute it with water. So we agree that we don't need the concentration. We don't want to ship water across the planet, so we'll just buy it from Germany and then we'll dilute it 50%. They won't let me use the blue sign accreditation. I have to reapply and they've told me it cost me 40,000 pounds to reapply for products which are already blue sign approved in manufacture.

00:15:15 Tim

It doesn't seem to affect people. They don't say, oh, we won't deal with you because you're not blue sign approved.

00:15:26 Jordan

Do you think having those accreditations publicly viewed at the bottom of your website or in your e-mail signature? Do you think they add value to a brand?

00:15:43 Tim

They can do it, I personally prefer to look at the possibility of putting solar panels on the roof and we're in the process of building a catch water situation, so we don't use any drinking water in our products. I always get those in place first before I start looking for accreditations.

00:16:49 Tim

I actually think that larger and medium sized businesses have got more resources to get those certifications than smaller companies and smaller companies. Time and cost are obviously big problems you don't have as much as a larger corporation, and so to actually do something it's sometimes easier than to try and get an accreditation.

00:17:18 Jordan

How many employees do you have?

00:17:21 Tim

We were up to 180 at one point, and we've now because Storm Care doesn't need many people. And I'll explain why in a minute. We're down to about 10.

00:17:46 *Tim*

I've invested in a UK made filling system. It's not labour intensive. If you can imagine my bottles arriving and there's a turntable that at the beginning of a production line, so I have one person who puts bottles on the turntable, then that feeds automatically onto a filling line.

00:18:26 *Tim*

The filling lines being set up with the width and the height of the bottle and the dispensing volume, so that's A6 head filler. It fills 6 bottles at once. It's all done by Gates which are operated by an electronic eye and a compressed air machine that just slides a bar out.

00:18:47 *Tim*

At the next point, somebody either ensures there's a screw cap going on. You have to screw it on, or a trigger spray and you just drop the dip tube in. And it's automatically tightened and the next part. And they also check weight every so often when it's come out of the tightener it feeds onto another conveyor automatically, which labels which was the second person in the line has put the labelling machine on.

00:19:18 *Tim*

And it also puts any inkjet coded message dates whatever, and collects it into a box. So literally two people can fill millions of bottles a year.

00:19:55 *Tim*

Two main lines one cleans as one does proofers and then after that most things are smaller volume. We've got some single head fillers which will do that, say smaller runs for bespoke clients with the hot fill. Machine that fills the waxes for people who want boot waxers and we've got a bulk filler for people who want one litres and five litres.

00:20:20 *Tim*

So literally, they're the only people you need in the factory. Somebody in the office organising orders. We've got the chemist for the lab and and and that's it.

00:23:10 Tim

Storm was unique in that we use our cleaning liquid as a detergent as you would in a washing machine, waterproof, we put in as a conditioner or as a softener we do the whole thing in one wash cycle and nobody else can do that. We're saving electricity, saving water, saving time and money.

00:23:41 Jordan

Do you do carry out a life cycle assessment on your products?

00:23:49 Tim

We don't do things like that as often as we ought to.

00:24:26 Jordan

Do you have any sort of green washing plan in?

00:24:33 Tim

Well, I think there's a lot of it going on. There are three families of Waterproofers. Historically waxes were just naturally occurring, so we call them hydrocarbons. Now silicones were developed and then fluorocarbons and they are the three families of waterproofing.

00:25:06 Tim

And fluorocarbons were really associated with gortex because they were the be all and end or they are the best waterproofing that money can buy. Unfortunately, the persistent chemical and that's what I was suggesting to my team 20 years ago that we should move away from. The problem is they are the best and they always will be. Chemically they can't be beaten unless somebody invents a fourth family.

00:25:35 Tim

If you buried a GORE-TEX coat in the ground and came back in 1000 years time, it would not be there but all the fluorocarbons would still be in the ground. They are so persistent.

00:26:28 *Tim*

Medically and militarily, I think fluorocarbons will stay but in a limited use because they work. They need the most effective waterproofer.

00:28:30 *Tim*

Whereas the day-to-day dog Walker, somebody who walks at the Peak District quite comfortable in a lesser performing product that they may have to reapply, which is where we come in, is the laws changing on fluorocarbons for day-to-day use?

00:30:08 *Jordan*

Is your background in chemistry?

00:30:13 *Tim*

No, I by chance got into the outdoor trade after school by a fluke phone call from a guy I played football with. I'm inquisitive and so I decided to research what was out there in chemistry and I came across this company who I now work with and I got to know. I didn't just go through the owners and the directors, I went straight to the chemist who signs off all the patents.

00:31:19 *Jordan*

Do you think consumers within the outdoor industry is changing? Do you think people are kind of appreciating the lengths that Storm Care are going to in making this product environmentally friendly/the best innovation on the market? Or do you think it is still price point?

00:31:41 *Tim*

I think there's some very interesting things the UK customer. I don't waste my time too much in the UK because everybody that sells to retail wants to sell Nikwax or Grangers.

00:33:32 *Jordan*

How do you think a product could remain desirable and functional for its user?

00:33:38 Tim

People are always wanting something to last a long time, and I think there's a poor communication on how you care for things after you've used them. Golfers are the worst, you go out and play golf that walked through long grass and that is one of the most abrasive things you can do, and they'll end up with wet feet. They'll put a jacket on, and when it's stopped raining, they'll just screw it up and throw it in the bag. They'll get it out in six weeks time and wonder why it's a bit mouldy and smelly. The mentality is not there to do anything with it, they just want to wear it when they can.

00:34:17 Tim

I think if you care for something between wearing, it lasts longer. There's a difference between waterproof and water repellent. With the membrane such as gortex, that's where you get your waterproofness, because on the inside you've got this membrane with the finest holes in it which protect the water from coming through it. Going through those those holes in the weave, whereas the chemical on the outside is the repellency that causes the water to roll off and people get very confused with the two.

00:37:51 Tim

I could have stayed in America the other week. I was there for the show in Salt Lake City and just after that there's something called the SHOT Show and the Salt Lake City or Denver places like that where they hold the outdoor retailer.

00:38:26 Tim

The product of the show was a gun that could take out a 6 inch wide tree from a mile. You suddenly realise you're dealing with a different mentality, so they ask you does this smell? Because they don't want any odour, because animals can smell them. They hunt well and so actually they stayed dry, they

need my products just the same. They need the cleaning products, but with no optical brightness like you getting normal detergents because optical brightness means animals can see you in the dark.

00:39:06 Tim

Suddenly you've got completely different market that couldn't care less if I've got a fluorocarbon or not. It may be somebody who's working in the logging trade and he's working there in heavy sort of industry, bad conditions just wants to stay dry, Couldn't care less about breathability, he just wants to plaster wax all over his boots. Everybody looks at your products and your company in a different way.

00:39:54 Tim

I bet they've never heard of blue sign at the SHOT Show and the industry for hunting. They call it hook and bullets in America because it's fishing hunt. The fishing trade gets slotted into it, but it is equally as big as the outdoor trade volume of turnover. And yet they couldn't care less what you are.

00:40:45 Tim

I've had more of an interest in going to the German one, which is the European equivalent because I have customers who are in outdoor, particularly in Scandinavia who actually cross over into the hunting area.

00:42:18 Tim

Nobody in America asked me anything about efficacy of my products.

00:44:28 Tim

Blue sign or whatever has a different value in each market and in each country.

00:45:54 Tim

I'm not saying we shouldn't do it, but I'm just saying don't think the world's going to change until the big hit has moved with us.

Interview 11: TYF Adventure

Lottie Lawrence, Retail and Repair Coordinator at TYF Adventure

Johannes Lindström, Retail Manager at TYF Adventure

00:02:09 Jordan

What is the mission statement for the repair centre?

00:02:44 Johannes

Giving people from all backgrounds what it takes to transform our response to the climate and nature emergency. Repair will sit in under there. Swansea University potentially help making a more for business plan for it to find a way to make it more self sustainable.

00:03:39 Jordan

When did it launch?

00:03:41 Lottie

February 2021.

00:04:09 Lottie

When we started off it was just customer repairs and now we're branching out into repairs for other brands or being their UK repair partners, and then the product creation side of things.

00:04:33 Johannes

In house repairs is a massive thing for us, the amount of material we save because outdoor center there's so much material that we use and keep it use longer, that's gonna have massive impact.

00:04:50 Lottie

Month by month seeing growth how many repairs we're having in.

00:05:14 Johannes

All the retail staff will be trained on basic repairs, like taping waterproofs, doing wetsuits repairs like gluing and taping. Also the waterproofing service that isn't that difficult to learn and all the retail stuff should be trained.

00:08:52 Jordan

What's been your biggest surprise with this whole journey?

00:09:00 Lottie

For me, how willing people are to pay for the service? I didn't have any kind of preconceived ideas on how I thought people would take it, whether they'd be put off by the price of things and we're definitely slowly learning that people are more than happy to pay, which is a really nice feeling and it means we're doing the right thing.

00:09:45 Johannes

It's really cool to see that it's still growing and we're still getting people from South pems coming in. Amazing the word is spreading and people are keen to use it.

00:10:26 Jordan

Do you think consumer attitudes towards buying is changing?

00:10:38 Johannes

Yeah, massively and I think part of that comes into the second hand market.

00:10:51 Johannes

People think about it before buying, and that's really good to see. People are more aware of where products are made, not so about what they're made from.

00:11:10 Johannes

More people asking for products made closer to home, whereas they don't really care if it's made from virgin polyester or what wool standards. That's not on their mind as much as where it's made.

00:11:31 Jordan

Do you accreditations has any added value to a brand?

00:11:47 Johannes

Yeah, I think so. It helps building that awareness with the customers. There's straight away a topic to talk about that you can then showcase.

00:11:59 Johannes

Like this down jacket is RDF certified. You can start talking about responsible down standards, where it's from and how the responsible brands in the world are using it.

00:12:18 Johannes

Why do we need accreditation at the moment. There is regulations on strict governance, chemical use and social laws. Thing that gives small, medium sized enterprises the chance to trust brands, we don't have the manpower as John Lewis or any other big businesses to go and send someone to factories and look at the products.

00:14:11 Jordan

Do you think digital technology could play more of a part in improving the customer experience and service?

00:14:59 Johannes

We're trying to introduce more tutorials. We can we maybe talk a little bit more about where materials are from and we're good at talking about it on the shop floor, but maybe that's another path to take.

00:16:01 Lottie

The marketing team are working on what they want our future marketing to look like.

00:16:25 Jordan

Do you have a sustainability or greenwashing plan in place?

00:16:35 Johannes

Yeah, we have a sustainability and impact policy in place already, and that's on the website available for anyone to read. We don't have a greenwashing plan in place at the moment. That is something to think about and I think as a business we talk about greenwashing quite a lot because we talk about transparency.

00:17:03 Johannes

That's one of the main things in the shop, I want the staff to be as transparent as possible about the impact of the products and when we talk about the main training we talk about 4 points of engaging with the customers, asking what they want. Asking what they need. Tell the customer what your opinion would be. Then why that's in our shop?

00:19:12 Jordan

Do you recycle the garments?

00:19:21 Lottie

Depends what it is really. We have taken things off people's hands before, we'll trying to find proper ways of recycling them. If that means us storing them here for a while so that they don't just get thrown in landfill.

00:19:44 Johannes

We recycle wetsuits. We take back sleeping mats and and beds, air beds and we take back footwear as well because I think we'll have a recycling solution for footwear hopefully in the next few months. If they don't know a solution for it, we look for a solution that's local to them.

00:20:17 Lottie

There's a couple of things that when I arrived had been left by customers and they were in really good condition apart from really obvious fault, so those fabrics then have been used to patch jacket windbreaks. Soft shell things, that's really useful if we can't find a recycling solution right now.

00:20:47 Jordan

How's your community responded?

00:20:57 Lottie

Great, we've run a couple of repair cafes, which a couple of people turned up. Haven't been crowds, but to be honest that was back when it was just me doing the repairs, so I was quite grateful for that.

00:21:22 Johannes

There's some people that bring repairs in monthly.

00:22:47 *Johannes*

Collaboration with Hiut denim and tarpaulin company. We want to support other companies with waste materials as well.

00:27:13 *Johannes*

You ask how does their brand operate to better serve their customer. You can bring your colleagues over in a Carbon Literacy Workshop and you can come and bring your jacket to get repaired at the same time.

00:27:49 *Johannes*

The same service throughout and you know we're planet and people focused because of our B Corp mission.

00:28:03 *Jordan*

Did you think these strategies that outdoor brands can apply when delivering essential services for their customers.

00:28:14 *Johannes*

Yeah, I think so. I think all brands should be able to offer spare parts .

00:32:28 *Johannes*

A living accreditation, they're changing and working on the process. It's going to change again in the next few years, we did it three years ago. The last recertification we got in October it's changed massively and it's it's going to change again based on feedback from B Corps.

00:33:05 *Johannes*

I do think as an overarching accreditation, it takes most things into account. Some companies don't go for accreditations at all, but it's a really responsible company.

Interview 12: Zoe Hewitt

Head of Marketing and Communications at Nikwax

00:01:54 Jordan

What is the brand's mission statement?

00:02:00 Zoe

To enhance the enjoyment of the outdoors whilst protecting and preserving the natural environment; with sustainable treatments that extend the life of gear and elevate performance.

00:02:28 Zoe

Looking after your gear that keeps you warm and dry, continues to perform as it should when you buy it so that it should last longer. We are all about enjoying the outdoors. Founded by Nick Brown who was a hill Walker. First product Nick invented in 1977 was for his walking boots. He wanted the kind of waterproofers that weren't available on the market at the time.

00:03:13 Zoe

He invented a new waterproof wax which kept his walking walking boots dry. He wanted to develop these waterproofing technologies that didn't have any impact, nor any negative impact on the environment. The chemicals we use are environmentally safe, they break down into simple compounds that don't pollute the environment. And we never use PFC's. We've never used aerosols in our products.

00:04:18 Jordan

How long has the company been going?

00:04:23 Zoe

Since 1977.

00:06:52 Zoe

Letting people work from home reduces our carbon footprint even further.

00:08:39 Jordan

Do you make all your products in the UK and do you supply globally?

00:08:45 Zoe

Supply globally. Yes.

00:08:48 Jordan

Where do you think your biggest market is?

00:08:50 Zoe

Our biggest market is UK second biggest is US then it's Germany, Switzerland, rest of Europe, but particularly with a slight bias to kind of skiing regions as well. We sell in 50 countries worldwide. One thing we have looked into doing, is reduce our carbon footprint. Potential of having a production facility in the US to save shipping because that's our second biggest market, and we've also looked at having production facility in mainland Europe as well.

00:10:05 Zoe

What is the brand doing to help climate change? We've always been about making gear perform better and last longer, which is effectively about consumption, reduction and circularity, which obviously helps overall with consumption reduction. In terms of climate change itself, we've got a sustainability road map and climate action plan that takes us to 2025 and that addresses how we're going to reduce our scope. Where our production is we use renewable energy in all the facilities we own. Solar panels working with landlords where we don't own properties to ensure that we're using sustainable energy sources. Then taking a kind of proactive approach and ensuring that the facilities are run as smoothly as possible so we're using energy most effectively. We've also started work on how we can significantly reduce our scope for emissions as well. We do have a goal to achieve net zero in the future, we're not there yet. We have always offset our carbon emissions. We've offset our operational emissions since the company was founded.

00:12:20 Zoe

Actually, it's not about offsetting, it's about how do we reduce those emissions so that we can still hold our heads up as a market.

00:12:36 Zoe

We've got a climate change and plastic strategy We measure our carbon emissions on an annual basis. We measure our plastic consumption and have targets to reduce that every year.

00:13:30 Zoe

At the moment we are using 100% recycled plastic for our bottles and it is also recyclable. This area we need to improve on it's just such a high volume area, but we've been very focused on sachets or pouches. Historically, we haven't been able to find a recyclable material that works for the formulation that we use. The whole industry at the minute is really focused on developing packaging solutions made from recycled materials. We're at the point where we've been running tests on various packaging for about three years and finally found something that works for us. Packaging that will be 100% recyclable. It's not 100% recycled, however we just try and do whatever we can. We have looked at other materials, whether it's glass or aluminium. At the moment we believe we're doing what we can. Glass is the weight and aluminium I think it's there are still questions around the initial extraction of aluminium in the 1st place and trying to work out which is the preferable option. Also the volume of products that we produce and where it's travelling. The decision to stick with plastic as long as it stays in the loop.

00:16:28 Zoe

Sourcing the initial materials in the first place, because it all comes into the UK in terms of recyclability. It does change from country to country. We base our decisions on the biggest market.

00:17:26 Jordan

What is Nikwax doing to better serve their community and customer?

00:17:40 Zoe

We've always campaigned within the outdoor industry against PFC's. We're serving our customers by creating high performance, low impact products that aren't going to damage them or the environment. We also believe in pre-competitive collaboration so we work with brands across the outdoor industry to help deliver more sustainable products to help navigate the campaign against PFC's.

00:18:37 Zoe

Communicating what we do to all of our customers is something that I'm working on at the minute. We know that customers, particularly in the outdoor industry, want to buy more sustainable products. So many logos and things that's confusing particularly when it comes to chemicals, which is obviously an area we're into a little bit more than some of the clothing brands, but our sustainability report was for us the first step on clearer communication in this area. Putting a stake in the ground and saying yes. Over the last few years we've looked at what logos or accreditations could we be using. I think what we do really well is we walk our talk in that the actual core of the company and the brand about sustainability. It is about protecting the environment and there's so much going on within the company. I think we can improve how we communicate about it.

00:20:16 Zoe

We're acutely aware that there are many sustainability claims out there, and I think that's one of the reasons that we haven't over communicated. We're not perfect either. There's still areas that we need to improve on. What we do is we ensure that we thoroughly research and stay on top of any new data that's produced. That's why we've always had a sustainability person in post within the company looking at what's happening.

00:21:05 Zoe

Within that sustainability report there's a lot of accountability. Always published about consumption, energy consumption, and things like that on

our website. It's not always been particularly well presented. But we're very much about facts and figures. Nick is a scientist, and we're effectively a science based company. We've really tried to maintain that and measure everything really openly and try to collaborate with other people. Therefore we can then back our decisions that we make with evidence and and we don't follow the crowd.

00:22:09 Zoe

We haven't bought into any accreditations to date and there's a few reasons for that. It can depend on which accreditations. A brand has to, for customers and consumers I think, be helpful cause it's just a kind of tick box or a symbol to say yes, this is a great company.

00:22:55 Zoe

Maybe that is something that we will decide to do in the future, because it does add customer trust and provides a way to communicate quickly, but it doesn't need to be like a paid for accreditation. I've noticed from doing my research that a lot of, especially the big outdoor clothing brands, are much harder to tick all the boxes and get accreditation because you've got so much paperwork to sift through so they are creating these visual logos that they put on their websites.

00:23:59 Zoe

A visual shortcut I suppose in that area. We've recently launched new labels for all our products, I think that has got clearer communication and there are a couple of little logos that we use on there like 100% recycled recycled plastic and PFC free. We're now looking at using more internally developed logos that are still recognisable as communication pieces.

00:24:59 Zoe

Paying for a certification, we haven't felt like it would add any value to our brand at the minute.

00:25:24 Zoe

Blue sign, we consciously made a decision not to be apart of, the way it's set up and the accreditation is set up, we don't think it's completely clear and honest. We don't want to pay money to an organisation who's certifying us along with somebody else who isn't behaving as ethically as us. Quite a lot of resistance around that, but then the downside of that is there are outdoor brands that won't recommend us because we're not blue sign. At a brand level, that's not even at a consumer level, its quite challenging. For us, we hold ourselves to a higher standard.

00:27:13 Zoe

We have multiple audits assessing how we manage and minimise our environmental impact. Most of those are covered in the sustainability report, but we are very much about measuring, monitoring and improving.

00:28:19 Zoe

Also as an organisation, we're going through the transition of being founder owned for the last 45 years and then last year we became an employee owned trust. Nick had very strong opinions about all of this stuff because he's a massive advocate of doing the right thing and being environmentally friendly. Now we've become an EOT, those values have not changed. They're still the essence of the company. We are still about protecting the environment, helping people enjoy the outdoors comfortably and doing it without getting any nasties into the environment with as minimal impact as possible.

00:29:20 Zoe

Everybody works at the company really share those that vision and those values. But maybe now there are more people in the decision making process that might change for commercial reason.

00:30:58 Zoe

We did the transition to EOT last year and I think it's just taken a probably like a full year to kind of get to the point now where we're moving forward with new leadership.

00:31:32 Zoe

We've got 6 fields of action within our sustainability strategy. Four of them are planning and two of them are people.

00:32:32 Zoe

1% for planet I've been pushing for the last year, so as part of our transition to an employee owned trust, we've committed to donating 1% of turnover to environmental and social causes.

00:33:48 Zoe

From a marketing perspective, those accreditations are useful as communication shortcuts, at the same time, I thoroughly respect the ethics of the company, how Nick has run the company up until now, has led it to be the way it is and as successful. We don't want to undo everything good and just pay for a load of accreditations and not be walking the talk.

00:36:01 Zoe

Over the next year we've got targets for 2025, but every year we need to be reducing our emissions in all and our consumption in order to get to that target.

00:36:23 Jordan

Do you think consumer attitudes changing from a product point of view?

00:36:46 Zoe

I feel like there has been a change, probably over the last five years that people are becoming more and more aware. When they make the decision to purchase, are they thinking about the environment? Are they thinking about price? The complexities of all the different things that affect our decisions come into play.

00:37:27 Zoe

I don't think we make ourselves unpopular in the industry but we're always look at our key messages. Look after your gear and it will last longer and you'll be consuming less.

00:38:08 Zoe

Though it is our responsibilities to continue to educate, make decisions easier.

00:40:26 Zoe

I wouldn't say it's exciting from the point of view of the messaging about cleaning. It isn't the most exciting message, but it is so essential.

00:41:23 Zoe

We have really strong relationships with outdoor retailers selling as an add-on. When you buy a new jacket is like really quite easy for them to just buy a bottle.

00:44:01 Zoe

I love the whole like neuroscience how the brain works, how much you can actually kind of take in where your eye goes.

Appendix B: Tables

Table 1: Comparison of Outdoor Brands

Brand/ Company	Headquarters Location	Accredited Certification (if applicable)	Social + Environmental Positive Impact
TYF Adventure	St Davids, Wales	B Corp, (previous) 1% For The Planet	Rentals, Repair Shop, Living Wage Employer
Vivobarefoot	London, England	B Corp	Recommerce (Re-Vivo)
RAB	Somercotes, England	Climate Neutral, Fairwear Leader, RDS Certified	Rentals, Repairs, Recommerce
Protect Our Winters	Globally Remote	1% For The Planet	POW Pledge (POW UK)
Salomon	Annecy, France	ISO 14001, ISO 50001	Sustainable Apparel Coalition, Snowsports Industry Association, Climate United Coalition, Science Based Targets
Nikwax	Wadhurst, England	ISO 14001	PFC-Free, Higgs Index, Zero Discharge of Hazardous Chemicals Foundation (ZDHCF), World Land Trust
Dryad	Brecon, Wales	-	Supporting Females, Grassroots Donations
Storm Care	Alfreton, England	-	Refill Initiative, Educational Video Tutorials

Table 2: Interview Questions

Main Questions	Do you think the consumer attitude is changing?
	Can a product remain desirable and functional for its user over time?
	Do you think having an accreditation adds value to a brand?
	How can a brand better operate to service their customer?
Accredited Questions	Why do you think an accreditation is significant to your brand?
	What made you choose __ <i>(insert accreditation)</i> __?
	What was the biggest surprise when becoming accredited?
Non-accredited Questions	Have you considered becoming accredited?
	How can a brand be full transparent within the industry?
	Would accreditation status affect collaborations and/or future

Table 3: Benchmark Tool

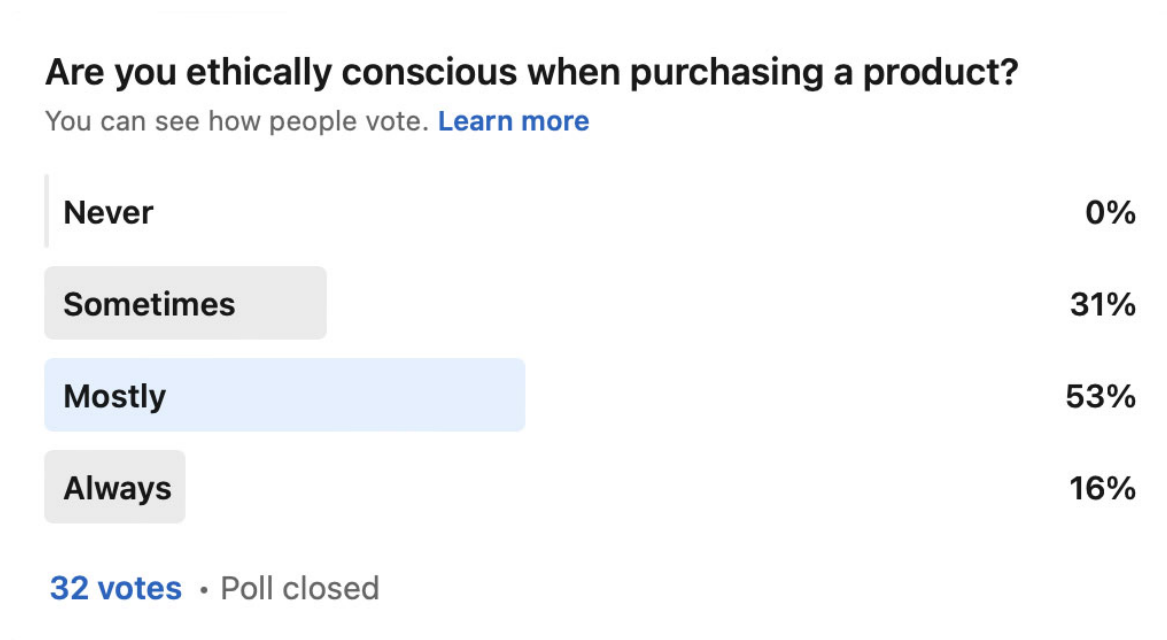
	TYF	Vivo	RAB	POW	Salomon	Nikwax	Dryad	Storm
1. Is there a publicly available mission statement showing the brand's commitment towards social and environmental improvements?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
2. Is any information offered on the brand's website for consumer knowledge describing social and environmental impacts?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
3. Does the brand report on their sustainability efforts and performance via a formal report, such as a Sustainability Report, CSR Report, or equivalent?	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
4. Has the brand performed a Life Cycle Analysis (LCA) for at least one product?	-	Y	Y	-	Y	Y	Y	Y
5. Is the brand's social and environmental performance verified by a third-party organisation?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
6. Does the brand offer or make available product repair information on its website?	Y	Y	Y	-	N	-	N	-
7. Does the brand advertise collection or processing information for apparel end-of-life, such as recycling collection areas or offer to take back worn products?	Y	Y	Y	-	N	N	N	N
8. Does the brand have a greenwashing plan in place?	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N
9. Does the brand supply globally?	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
10. Does the brand train employees on its social and/or environmental mission?	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N
11. Is the company Employee Owned (EOT)?	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N
12. Are products able to be publicly reviewed on their website?	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N
13. Does the company offer opportunities for underrepresented communities?	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N
14. Does the company have a commit to donate a percentage of revenue to charity and/or join a third-party organisation that verifies to charitable giving?	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N
	9	12	11	6	7	8	6	4

Appendix C: Online Poll and Results

Seven questions were compiled via an online poll across seven days through the business-focus social media platform LinkedIn.

Table 1: Question 1

[Accessed 25th January 2023]

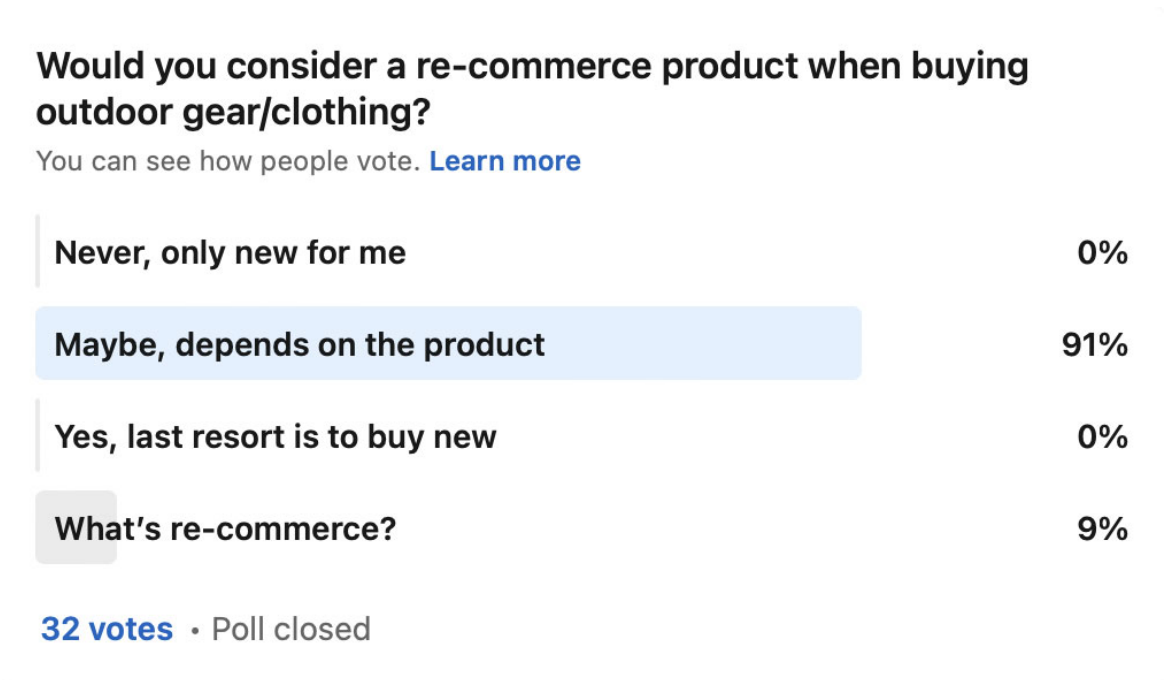


592 impressions

(Wright, 2023a)

Table 2: Question 2

[Accessed 26th January 2023]

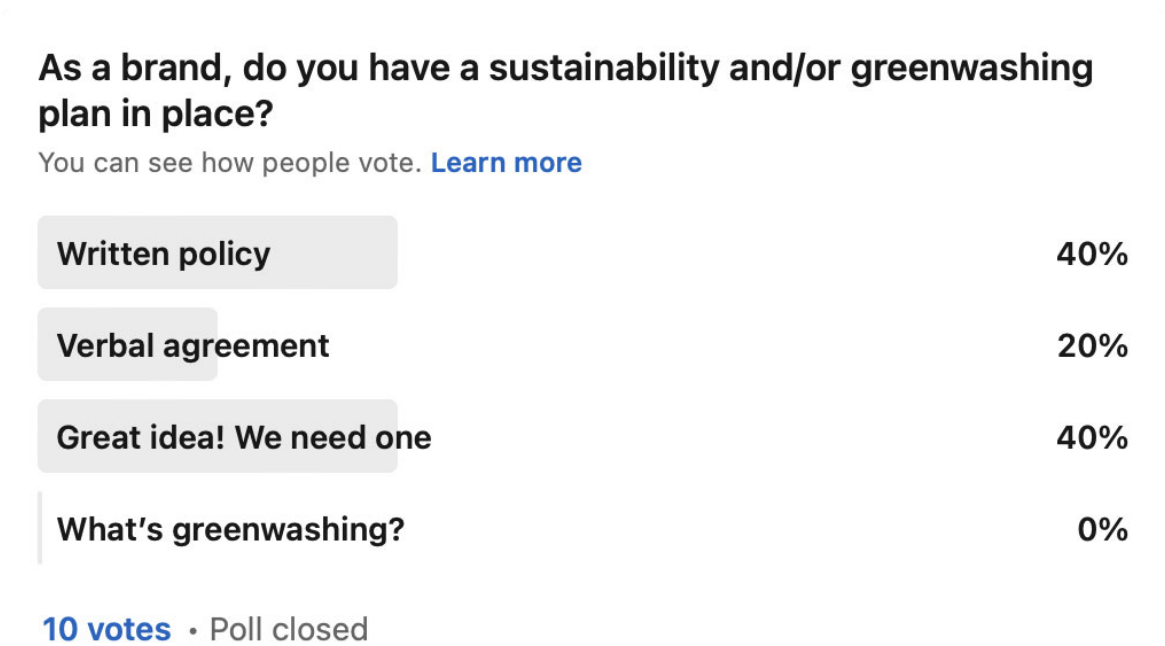


681 impressions

(Wright, 2023b)

Table 3: Question 3

[Accessed 27th January 2023]



338 impressions

(Wright, 2023c)

Table 4: Question 4

[Accessed 28th January 2023]

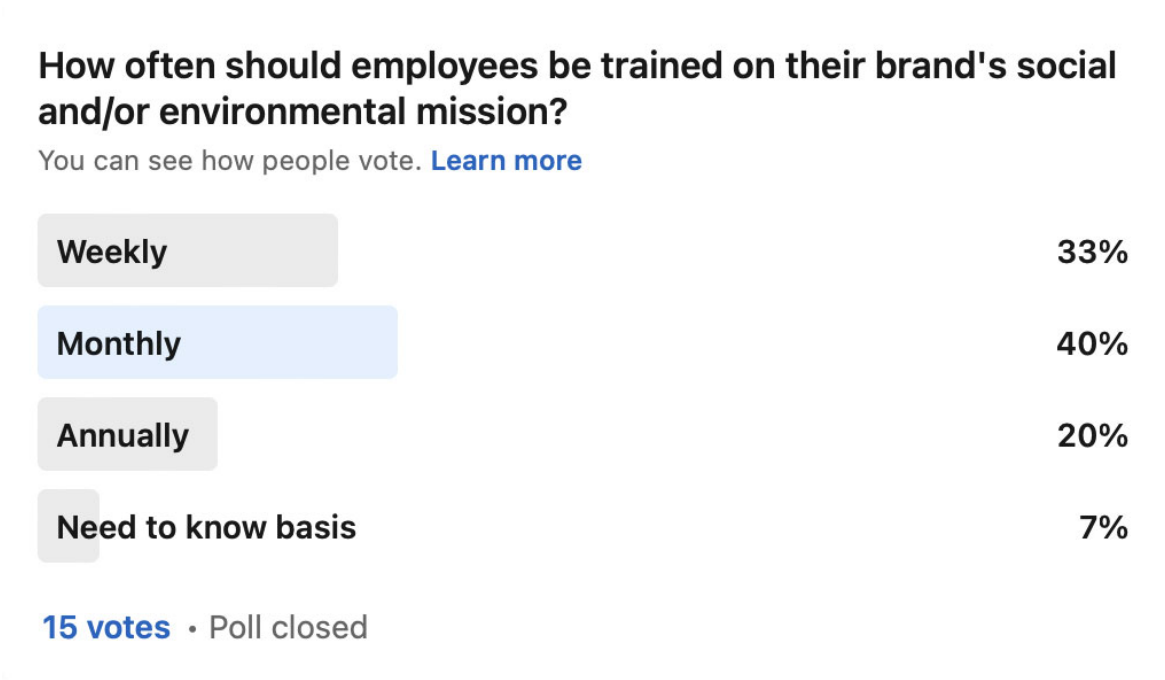


464 impressions

(Wright, 2023d)

Table 5: Question 5

[Accessed 29th January 2023]



465 impressions
(Wright, 2023e)

Table 6: Question 6

[Accessed 30th January 2023]

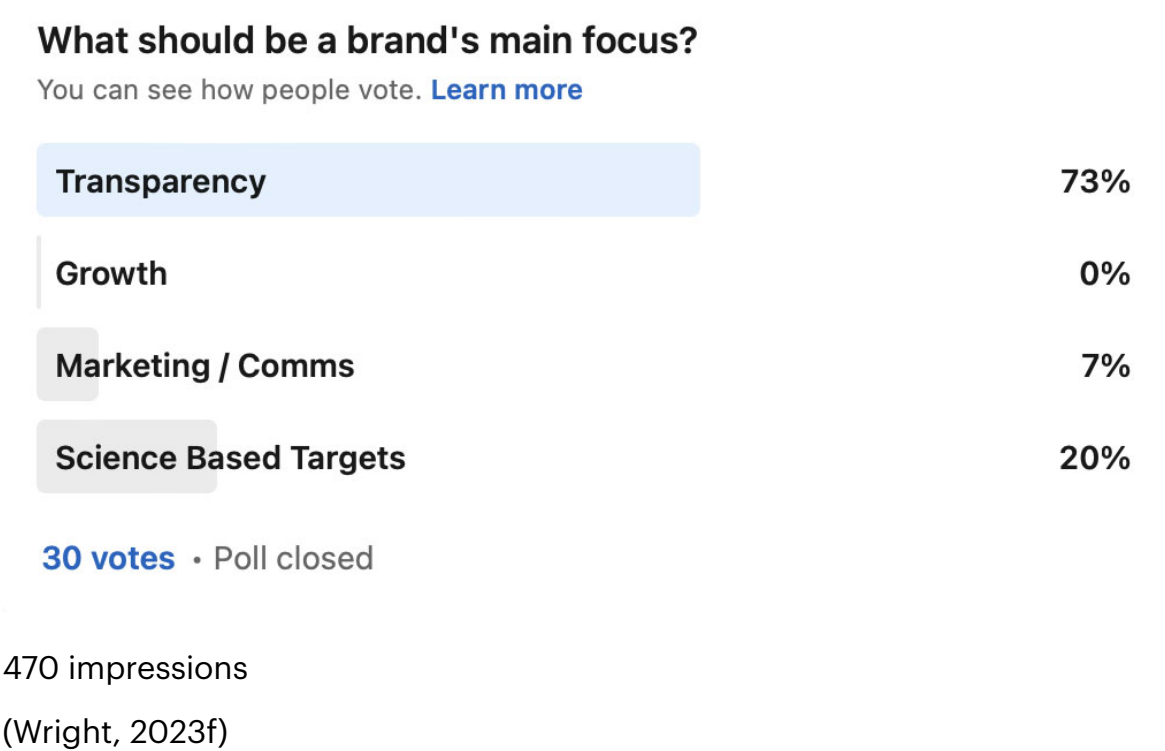
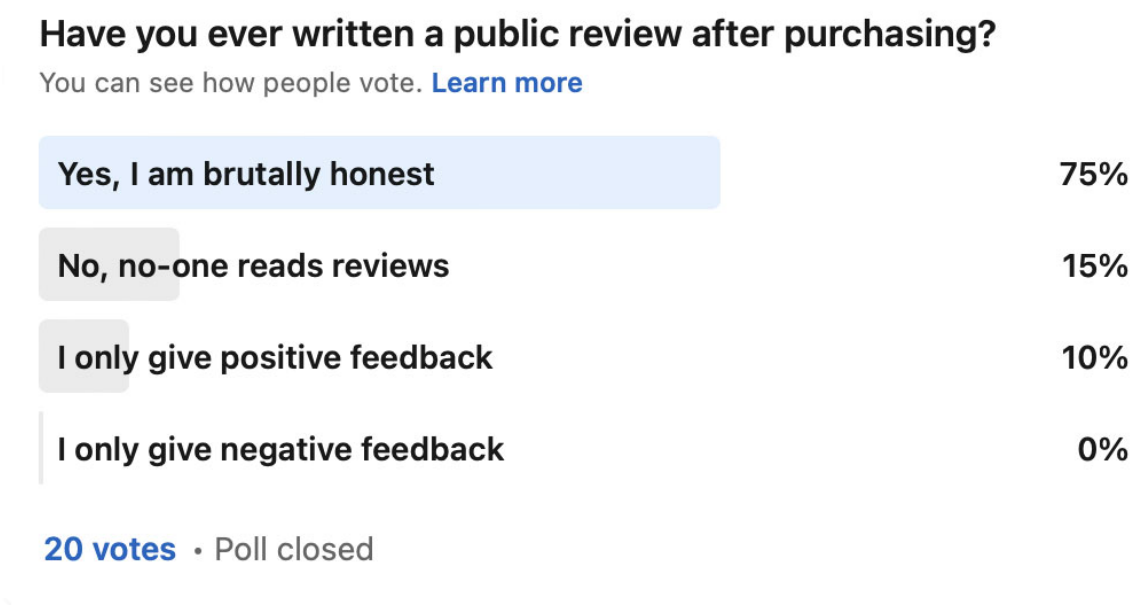


Table 7: Question 7

[Accessed 31st January 2023]



531 impressions

(Wright, 2023g)