



# Sustainability and sustainable development

Magdalena Stefańska  
Editor



eISBN 978-83-8211-074-6

<https://doi.org/10.18559/978-83-8211-074-6>



© Copyright by Poznań University of Economics and Business  
Poznań 2021



This textbook is available under the Creative Commons 4.0 license – Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works



# MARKETING CAMPAIGNS AND SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES



**Atanaska Reshetkova**

D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics

**Abstract:** The concept of sustainable development has left its footprints on marketing strategy and, today, it has strong impact on the consumer's mind and behaviour. Globally, consumers are focusing their preferences towards products and brands implementing different innovations to promote sustainability. Marketing managers face the challenge of incorporating the main dimensions of sustainability—environmental, social, and economic, into their strategies. These cases are intended to encourage critical thinking of readers regarding issues related to sustainability marketing strategies and campaigns.

**Keywords:** marketing, retail sector, sustainability.

## 1.1. Love for local brands

Among the top trends in consumer behaviour in 2020 is the preference for local products and brands (Euromonitor International, 2020, p. 54). People are expressing environmental responsibility through buying from local businesses, and this makes them feel proud of their choice (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1. Purchasing priorities by region**

Source: (Euromonitor International's Lifestyles Survey, 2019).

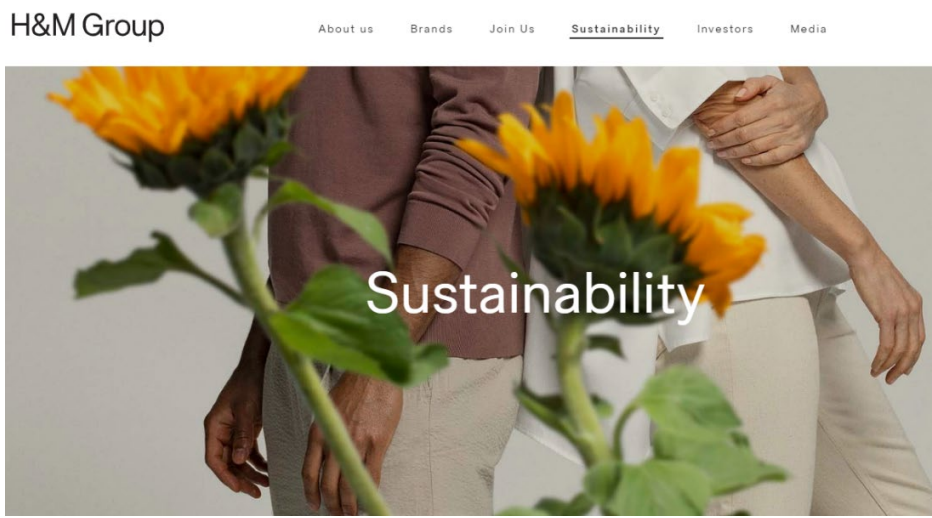
## Questions / tasks

1. Describe 3 possible consumer segments on the market of a sustainable product of your choice in terms of socio-demographics, psychological characteristics, and lifestyle of consumers.
2. Give an example from your country (region) of eco-conscious products that are produced and sold in locally-owned stores.
3. Explain the link between the preference for niche brands and unique products and the concept of sustainability marketing.

## 1.2. Sustainable fashion: the case of H&M

The global fashion giant H&M was positioned as a fast fashion brand for many years. A number of nature-damaging practices are attributed to fast fashion, such as the use of chemicals and pesticides on cotton, and great amounts of water needed to grow it; the production of greenhouse gases; low wages of workers in factories and bad working conditions. These issues were serious enough to make the Swedish

company change its strategy to a greener one a decade ago. In 2010, the company launched its H&M Conscious Collection, which was marketed as being made with sustainable materials—organic, recycled or more durable fabrics. Later, this product line was introduced globally and sold in 54 countries. Today, H&M is shifting its focus entirely towards sustainable fashion and communicate their new vision on their website (Figure 2).



**H&M Group**      About us      Brands      Join Us      Sustainability      Investors      Media

**Sustainability**

**It's time for reinvention**  
Fashion and design enrich our lives, lifting us from the everyday, providing style and identity. But our industry faces urgent challenges, such as climate change, water and resource scarcity, and the need for greater equality globally.

**We're taking the lead**  
That's why we're pioneering the search for new solutions, using our size and global presence to catalyse the transformation of our industry.

**And speeding up change**  
We make sure we use our planet's resources responsibly and supporting the many people who depend on our industry for a living. We've made good progress—and now we're speeding up.

Figure 2. H&M sustainability statements

Source: (H&M Group, 2021b).

The company lists the strategic areas describing their intentions:

“Being **Fair & Equal** to the people and the communities around us. Using our planet's resources consciously and becoming a **Circular & Climate Positive** company. And **Leading the Change** by pushing ourselves and the industry to reinvent and transform”.

- Leading the Change

In 2020, the company was ranked #1 in the Fashion Revolution 'Fashion Transparency Index' and beat companies such as Adidas, Esprit, The North Face, and many

others. The company has used artificial intelligence for sustainable decision-making in areas like designing for better resource use and improved forecasting of demand. Relevant information about materials, factories, and suppliers is made public by the company, which increases transparency for customers.

- Fair & Equal

H&M's production supply chain has more than 1.1 million workers, for whom the company provides Industrial Relations and Workplace Dialogue Programmes. Topics like diversity and social inclusion are featured in their new training programmes, completed by over 3,600 employees. The company also improved its Wage Management System in order to provide benefits for its workers.

- Circular & Climate Positive

In 2019, H&M collected 290,005 tonnes of garments for recycling and reuse, which is equivalent to about 145 million T-shirts. The company started using sustainable materials made from pineapple, algae and citrus. They also offer more sustainable ways for customers to enjoy products, such as repair and rental. The company explored new business models that enable a more circular fashion industry, for example, on-demand, resale and remanufacture.

## Questions / tasks

1. What aspects of sustainable development are addressed by H&M's sustainability strategy?
2. Read the following press-release and comment on the specific goals for the future and steps already taken by the company in order to implement their sustainable business strategy: <https://hmgroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/HM-Group-Sustainability-Performance-Report-2020.pdf>

For more information visit: <https://hmgroup.com/sustainability.html>

### 1.3. A social experiment to raise consumer awareness

The global Fashion Revolution movement unites people from the fashion industry—designers, business leaders, policymakers, brands, retailers, marketers, producers, workers—who work towards “a global fashion industry that conserves and restores the environment and values people over growth and profit”.<sup>1</sup> In 2015, they created a social experiment that featured a vending machine offering €2 T-shirts. But before people could get the T-shirt, they had to watch a video showing the unfair treatment

<sup>1</sup> (Fashion revolution, 2020).

of workers who made these cheap clothes. Here is how the Fashion Revolution described the experiment and its results<sup>2</sup>:

“We all like fashion for a bargain but don’t often consider how our clothes are made. Fashion Revolution made it their mission to make people aware. We created a simple experiment: would people buy a €2 T-shirt if they knew who really paid the price. 90% changed their minds and decided to donate, proving people do care when they know. 24 hours after the video was posted we sparked discussion on all big social media channels and it spread around the globe. In just seven days our message went viral reaching over 300 million people in over 200 countries. People flooded the internet with their ideas in the search for a greater solution. Even international celebrities supported our mission. Most importantly, the video was used to speak directly to brands and the brands responded”.

## Questions / tasks

1. What sustainability issues do the campaign address?
2. What kind of impact does this experiment pursue?
3. How did marketing help the success of this campaign?
4. Can you think of other industries that can use a similar approach to educate consumers on the negative consequences of their poor product choices?

## References

- Euromonitor International. (2020). *Top 10 Global Consumer Trends 2020*.  
 Euromonitor International’s Lifestyles Survey (2019).  
 Fashion revolution. (2020). Retrieved from [www.fashionrevolution.org/about/](http://www.fashionrevolution.org/about/)  
 Fashion Transparency Index. (2021). Retrieved from <https://www.fashionrevolution.org/about/transparency/> <https://hmgroupp.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/HM-Annual-Report-2020.pdf>  
 H&M Group. (2021a). *Sustainability*. Retrieved from <https://hmgroupp.com/sustainability.html>  
 H&M Group. (2021b). *Sustainability performance report 2019*. Retrieved from <https://sustainabilityreport.hmgroupp.com>  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=KfANs2y\\_frk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KfANs2y_frk)

<sup>2</sup> Watch the video at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=KfANs2y\\_frk/](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KfANs2y_frk/)