

Introduction to Fashion Supply Chain Transparency

Handbook for Practitioners

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1. Introduction

Fashion Supply Chain Transparency refers to openly sharing details about the journey of clothing, including raw materials, manufacturing, and distribution. Supply chain transparency is crucial for fashion brands to support ethical claims and meet ESG objectives by revealing the intricate network of suppliers in material sourcing, manufacturing, and distribution.

2. Learning Objectives

- Define supply chain transparency and its components: Participants will learn the key components and strategies involved in achieving supply chain transparency, emphasising practical approaches to implementation.
- Explore the role of a transparency manager within an organisation: This module will provide insights into the responsibilities and functions of a transparency manager, highlighting their crucial role in overseeing and driving transparency initiatives within the organisational framework.

3. Methodology

The training programme consists of an online module and complementary facilitator-led activities to cover a variety of approaches to learning. The activities will follow up on the lessons learned during the online training. Therefore, we recommend that participants go through the online module first before attending any facilitator-led activities.

3.1. Online Module

The online module comprises the following structure and topics. Each section contains practical examples to illustrate the concepts covered. We also highlight two case studies of best practices within collaboration and networking for fashion transparency.

- 1. Overview of Fashion Supply Chain Transparency:** This topic explores the importance of transparency in the fashion industry's supply chain, emphasising the need for openness and clarity in the sourcing, production, and distribution processes.
- 2. How Transparency differs from Sustainability and Circularity:** This section clarifies distinctions between transparency, sustainability, and circularity in the context of the fashion industry, highlighting the unique aspects and goals of each concept.
- 3. Key Concepts for Supply Chain Transparency:** This section introduces fundamental concepts essential for achieving supply chain transparency in the fashion sector, providing a foundation for understanding and implementing transparency measures.
- 4. How Supply Chain Transparency Helps Companies Meet ESG Goals:** The discussion delves into the ways in which supply chain transparency supports companies in meeting Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) goals, emphasising its role in sustainable and responsible business practices.
- 5. The role of a Transparency Manager within a fashion company:** This topic outlines the responsibilities and functions of a transparency manager in a fashion company, shedding light on the pivotal role they play in ensuring transparency across the supply chain.

3.2 Facilitator Profile

The facilitator should be a skilled communicator, adaptable to the needs of the participants, and capable of creating an engaging and inclusive learning environment. Their expertise in the relevant areas will enhance the overall learning experience and contribute to the achievement of module objectives.

4. Workshops and Activities

4.1. Case Studies

4.1.1. SEPIIA

<https://sepiia.com>

<https://www.instagram.com/sepiia2080/?hl=es>

<https://www.facebook.com/sepiia2080/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/sepiia/?originalSubdomain=ar>

Sepiia is a Spanish clothing brand born in 2016 in Madrid. It produces comfortable, durable and easy-care clothing with innovative and sustainable materials, using 100% Circular, recycled and recyclable raw material using recycled polyester, which turns it into antibacterial technical yarn. As part of a commitment to sustainability and to fight the decline of the textile industry in developed countries to reduce costs to countries with lower wages, Sepiia decided that anyone can see on its website where each part of the production process takes place, and get information about its workshops. It works locally with workshops and laboratories in Spain and Portugal. It is committed to making the traceability and transparency of its production chain accessible to all. It is also transparent with its prices, something that consumers increasingly value in order to understand why its garments are worth what they cost.

Knowing that behind the garment there are people with guarantees, investing in I+D and supporting conscious consumption, they are willing to pay to make a difference. After use, Sepiia offers to the consumer returning the garment to recycle the yarn and give it a third life. Sepiia is a B Corp company, in the top 5% of B Corp® companies. B Corps are purpose-driven companies that use the power of business to build an inclusive, sustainable and regenerative economy for all people and the planet. They meet the highest standards of social and environmental performance, transparency and accountability, and commitment to positive impact.

4.1.2. CECILIA SÖRENSEN

<https://www.ceciliasorensen.com/>

<https://www.instagram.com/ceciliasorensencollection/>

<https://www.facebook.com/ceciliasorensencollection>

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/ceciliasorensen/>

Cecilia Sörensen Studio is an independent fashion design company founded in 2002. Cecilia is a Finnish-born designer working and living in the Tramuntana mountains in Mallorca, Spain. The collection is entirely produced locally in Mallorca. The aim is to use certified organic materials throughout the collection and to ensure quality in all aspects of production

while being fair to the environment and people. Her commitment is based on the traceability and transparency of her entire value chain, evaluating the quality of each of her products according to fundamental criteria: social, environmental, traceability, recyclability, and sustainability. As an independent label, its essence rests on Slow Fashion in small quantities, no unnecessary stocks, no wage slavery, no harmful chemicals, and no cheap mass-produced use and throw garments.

4.2. Case Study Analysis & Reflection Exercise (1h30)

Sepiia & Cecilia Sørensen

Purpose:

Analysing a case study involves reading the case study and leading to well-informed conclusions and recommendations.

Based on the case studies provided above, participants will engage in a reflection exercise to consider the real-world implications of supply chain transparency in 2 fashion industries. This exercise aims to deepen participants' understanding of the practical implications of supply chain transparency and encourage critical thinking about the complexities involved in implementing transparency initiatives in the fashion industry.

Instructions:

1. Divide the participants into 2 groups.
2. Provide each group with one of the 2 case studies looking at the webpage. [Sepiia & Cecilia Sørensen](#)
3. Respond to the questions below and instruct the groups to discuss the following points
4. Ask each group to present a summary of their case study analysis and the insights gained.
5. Facilitate a broader discussion by encouraging participants to reflect on the common themes, complexities, and potential strategies identified across the different case studies.
6. Conclude the exercise by asking participants to individually reflect on how the case studies have influenced their understanding of supply chain transparency and its challenges in the fashion industry.

SEPIIA:

1. How does Sepiia's use of innovative and sustainable materials contribute to its commitment to sustainability?
2. What is the significance of Sepiia's decision to use 100% Circular, recycled and recyclable raw material in its production process?

3. How does Sepiia's transparency initiative on its website help to promote supply chain transparency in the fashion industry?
4. What are some potential challenges that Sepiia may face in implementing its transparency initiative, and how can they be addressed?
5. How can Sepiia's approach to sustainability and transparency inspire other fashion brands to adopt similar practices?

CECILIA SÖRENSEN:

1. What is the philosophy behind Cecilia Sörensen Studio's commitment to using certified organic materials throughout their collection?
2. How does Cecilia Sörensen Studio ensure quality in all aspects of production while being fair to the environment and people?
3. What are the fundamental criteria that Cecilia Sörensen Studio evaluates the quality of their products according to?
4. How does Cecilia Sörensen Studio embody the principles of Slow Fashion in their production process?
5. What are some of the harmful practices that Cecilia Sörensen Studio avoids in their production process? ex: wage slavery and the use of harmful chemicals.
 - What were the key challenges presented in the case study?
 - How did different stakeholders perceive and react to the challenges?
 - What potential solutions or approaches could address the challenges while considering the interests of all stakeholders?
 - What lessons can be drawn from the case study in terms of implementing supply chain transparency in the fashion industry?

4.3. Creating a case study (45 mins)

Purpose:

Choose a fashion brand and investigate if it has implemented supply chain transparency initiatives and has a clear commitment to sustainability. After analysing the Fashion Brand, write your own case study.

Fast Fashion Brands:

[INDITEX](#)

[ZARA](#)

[H&M](#)

Slow Fashion Brands:

[The circular Project](#)

[Ecolaf](#)

[Mayamiko](#)

[The trace collective](#)

1. The Brand:

- a. What is the name and background of the fashion brand?
- b. Who runs it? How many people work for it?
- c. What are the key products offered by the brand?
- d. Which is the target/public?

2. Supply Chain Overview:

- a. What are the different stages/ steps of the brand's supply chain visible in the web site? From sourcing raw materials to delivering the final product to customers?
- b. Are there any specific regions or countries involved in the brand's supply chain?

3. Transparency Initiatives:

- a. Has the brand implemented any transparency initiatives in its supply chain? If yes, what are they?
- b. How does the brand communicate its transparency efforts to its stakeholders, such as customers, suppliers, and the public?

4. Sustainability Practices:

- a. What sustainable practices does the brand follow in its supply chain, such as using eco-friendly / recycled/ upcycled materials or reducing carbon footprint?
- b. Does the brand ensure ethical and fair labour practices within its supply chain?

5. Challenges and Opportunities:

- a. What challenges has the brand faced in implementing supply chain transparency and sustainability practices?
- b. What opportunities has the brand identified through its transparency and sustainability efforts?

6. Impact and Future Outlook:

- a. Does the brand have future plans or potential improvements to achieve in terms of supply chain transparency and sustainability?
- b. What impact have the brand's transparency and sustainability initiatives had on customer perception?

4.4. Five questions that consumers can consider to evaluate Fashion Supply Chain Transparency.

Purpose:

These questions can prompt consumers to reflect on their purchasing decisions and consider the impact of their choices on the fashion industry's supply chain transparency and ethical sourcing practices.

1. **When purchasing clothing, do you consider the origins of the materials used and the manufacturing processes involved in creating the garment, how do you behave?** - This question encourages consumers to reflect on whether they take into account the origins and production processes of the clothing they buy.
2. **Are you aware of any specific fashion brands that are known for their transparent and ethical supply chain practices?** If so, what factors contribute to your perception of their transparency? - This question prompts consumers to identify fashion brands with transparent and ethical supply chain practices and to consider the factors that shape their perception of transparency.
3. **How important is it for you to support fashion brands that prioritise supply chain transparency and ethical sourcing practices?** - This question encourages consumers to assess the significance they place on supporting brands that prioritise transparency and ethical practices in their supply chain.
4. **What sources of information do you rely on to learn about a fashion brand's supply chain practices and ethical sourcing efforts?** - This question aims to uncover the channels through which consumers seek information about a brand's supply chain practices and ethical sourcing.
5. **In what ways do you believe consumers can influence and encourage fashion brands to improve their supply chain transparency and ethical sourcing practices?** - This question encourages consumers to consider their role in influencing and advocating for improved supply chain transparency and ethical sourcing practices within the fashion industry.

4.5. Understanding your garments to evaluate Fashion Supply Chain Transparency.

This exercise will help managers develop a better understanding of the garments they purchase and facilitate a more transparent and responsible approach to clothing choices within the organisation.

Materials Needed:

10 Different Garments:

- Collect a variety of garments, including shirts, pants, dresses, etc.
- Ensure they represent different materials and styles.

Notebook or Worksheet:

- In the notebook or worksheet, participants should record information about each garment.

Internet Access:

- Participants may need access to the internet for research.

Steps:

- **Select Garments:** Lay out the 10 garments you've chosen for the exercise.
- **Research Brands:** Participants should investigate the brand's background, values, and any publicised efforts towards sustainability and ethical practices.
- **Examine the Labels:** Look for labels inside each garment. These labels typically provide information about the fabric, care instructions, and sometimes country of origin.
- **Document Information:** For each garment, record the following information:
 - Brand Information: Founders, mission statement, key values.
 - Provenance: Where the garment was manufactured.
 - Materials: Composition of the garment (cotton, polyester, etc.), what else? Can you find information about yarns, buttons, interlining, etc.?
 - Ethical Practices: Any information about fair labour practices or sustainable initiatives.
 - Fabric Composition: Note the materials used in the garment. This could include cotton, polyester, wool, etc.
 - Care Instructions: Look for guidance on how to wash, dry, and care for the garment.

- Brand and Country of Origin: Identify the brand of the garment and where it was manufactured.
- **Reflect on the Findings:** Consider the patterns and commonalities you observe across the garments. Are certain materials or countries of origin more prevalent than others?
- **Discuss Sustainability and Ethics:** Prompt a discussion about the environmental and ethical aspects of the garments. Are they made from sustainable materials? Where were they produced? Was it in fair working conditions? Can you find any certifications?
- **Explore Alternatives:** Discuss alternative choices for more sustainable and ethical clothing. Look for brands that prioritise environmentally friendly practices and fair labour conditions.
- **Set Personal Goals:** Encourage participants to set personal goals for making more conscious and informed choices when it comes to clothing purchases.
- **Follow-Up Discussion:** Schedule a follow-up discussion to share insights and experiences after implementing any changes in clothing choices.

This exercise not only raises awareness about the garments we wear but also should promote a more conscious and sustainable approach to fashion choices.

5. Assessments

5.1. Quiz (10 min)

Participants must pass with a score of 84% to complete the module.

1. What is Fashion Supply Chain Transparency?

- a. The process of hiding information about a fashion brand's supply chain practices.
- b. The process of openly sharing details about a fashion brand's supply chain practices.
- c. The process of outsourcing a fashion brand's supply chain practices to third-party vendors

2. What are the benefits of Fashion Supply Chain Transparency?

- a. Improved brand reputation and customer loyalty.
- b. Reduced environmental impact and improved worker conditions.
- c. Increased profits and reduced production costs.

3. What are some of the challenges associated with implementing Fashion Supply Chain Transparency?

- a. Lack of supplier cooperation and resistance to change.
- b. Increased production costs and reduced profits.
- c. Limited consumer interest and lack of regulatory support.

4. What is the role of a Transparency Manager in a fashion brand?

- a. To oversee and drive transparency initiatives within the organisational framework.
- b. To hide information about the brand's supply chain practices.
- c. To outsource the brand's supply chain practices to third-party vendors.

5. How can consumers influence and encourage fashion brands to improve their supply chain transparency and ethical sourcing practices?

- a. By purchasing from brands that prioritise transparency and ethical sourcing practices.
- b. By boycotting brands that do not prioritise transparency and ethical sourcing practices.
- c. By ignoring the issue and continuing to purchase from any brand they choose.

Answers: 1.b, 2. a and b, 3. a and b, 4. a, 5. a

5.2. Self Assessment (10 min)

Instructions:

Please take a few moments to reflect on your understanding of transparency risks and challenges in the fashion industry. Rate yourself on the following statements using the scale provided.

Thank you for completing the assessment!

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

1. I understand the importance of supply chain transparency in the fashion industry.

My rating:

2. I can differentiate between transparency, sustainability, and circularity in the context of the fashion industry.

My rating:

3. I am familiar with the key concepts essential for achieving supply chain transparency in the fashion sector.

My rating:

4. I am confident in my ability to balance the desire for transparency with potential impacts on consumer trust.

My rating:

5. I can recognize and address potential risks that may arise during the implementation of supply chain transparency in the fashion industry.

My rating:

6. I can balance the need for employment with environmental and social concerns as a community representative.

My rating:

7. I am skilled in communicating a company's commitment to transparency while addressing past mistakes as a public relations specialist.

My rating:

6. Books and Articles

"The New Science of Sustainability: Building a Foundation for Great Change" by Sally Uren
This book explores the principles of sustainability and transparency, providing insights into how businesses can create positive change.

"Transparent: How Transparency in Business Can Make or Break Your Company" by Don Tapscott and David Ticoll- While not focused solely on supply chain transparency, this book discusses the broader implications of transparency in business, including its impact on supply chains.

"The Transparency Edge: How Credibility Can Make or Break You in Business" by Barbara Pagano and Elizabeth Pagano - Offers practical advice on building transparency in business relationships, which is applicable to supply chain dynamics.

"The Big Pivot: Radically Practical Strategies for a Hotter, Scarcer, and More Open World" by Andrew S. Winston - Explores the challenges and opportunities of sustainability and transparency in a rapidly changing world.

Fashion Industry and Environment:

"Fashionopolis: The Price of Fast Fashion and the Future of Clothes" by Dana Thomas - Investigates the environmental impact of the fashion industry, particularly the fast fashion model, and explores sustainable alternatives.

"Overdressed: The Shockingly High Cost of Cheap Fashion" by Elizabeth L. Cline - Examines the social and environmental costs of the fast fashion industry and its impact on global economies.

"Wardrobe Crisis: How We Went From Sunday Best to Fast Fashion" by Clare Press - Explores the environmental and ethical challenges in the fashion industry and advocates for sustainable and ethical practices.

"Fashion and Sustainability: Design for Change" by Kate Fletcher and Lynda Grose- Provides a comprehensive overview of sustainable fashion practices, including supply chain transparency and environmental considerations.

"To Die For: Is Fashion Wearing Out the World?" by Lucy Siegle - Investigates the social and environmental impact of the fashion industry, addressing issues such as supply chain transparency and ethical practices.

“Fashion and Sustainability: Understanding Luxury Fashion in a Changing World” by Farid Ahmed and Katja Schönherr - Examines the intersection of luxury fashion and sustainability, discussing the challenges and opportunities for more transparent and sustainable practices.

“Sustainable Fashion and Textiles: Design Journeys” by Kate Fletcher - Explores the ecological impact of the fashion and textile industry, offering insights into sustainable design and production.

