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FAST FASHION AND ECOLOGY

Fast fashion is the term used to describe clothing designs that move quickly from the catwalk to stores for the lowest possible costs to take advantage of trends. Since 1900 the clothing silhouette began to change every 10 years due to international publications of magazines such as VOGUE and the development of information communications. Due to World War II, the trend of more functional styles and fabric restrictions led to the standardized production of clothes, the middle-class became more receptive to the idea of mass-produced clothing. It was the 1960s and 1970s when the young generation started to use cheaply-made clothing as a form of personal expression. But there was still a clear distinction between high-end and High Street fashion. Thus manufacturers started to develop supply chain management.

Supply chain management is the management of the flow of goods and services that includes all processes that transform raw materials into final products. [2]. The main representatives in this area are ZARA and H&M.

Spanish retail chain Zara is all but synonymous with fast fashion, serving as an exemplar of how to cut the time between design, production, and delivery. Zara's designers can sketch a garment and have the finished piece appear on store racks in as little as two weeks. It can modify existing items in as little as two weeks. Its secret to this rapid turnover is its ownership of a relatively short supply chain. Over half of its factories are closely located to its corporate headquarters in A Coruña, Spain. Another key strategy is to stuff the stores with more goods, offering the consumer an unparalleled amount of choice. It produces 10,000-plus pieces annually (around 450 million items a year., vs. an industry average of 2,000 to 4,000 pieces.

Founded in 1947, Sweden-based H&M is one of the oldest fast-fashion companies. It does not own any factories but instead relies on 800 independent suppliers for its garments. However, these suppliers are overseen by 30 H&M production offices, using state-of-the-art IT systems to track inventory. Part of H&M's strategy has also been not to offer just knockoffs, but original creations, via its much-ballyhooed designer collaborations [3].

When it comes to the efficiency of today's retail supply chain management strategies there is no way not to admire their accuracy. But there is

another side of Fast Fashion. The fashion industry takes third place in the ranking of the most polluting in the world. The emission volume of CO₂ by the textile industry is more than all international air travel and shipping emissions. One of the most destructive ecological disasters was caused by cotton cultivation. In 1960 to support cotton plantations in Uzbekistan the flows of two rivers flowing into the Aral Sea were changed. As a result, the sea almost disappeared [4]. Furthermore, synthetic textiles excrete tiny fibers due to splitting in a washing machine. It leads to pollution of wastewater and the world ocean.

According to MSDI report fast fashion production has doubled since 2000 and reached 100 billion tonnes [5]. Whereas one third will never be sold and a half of it will be used less than 1 year. The Guardian journalist Lucy Single counted that with the current fairly limited number of processing technologies H&M needs approximately 12 years to use only 1 ton of recycled material. Meanwhile, the company produces this volume just in a couple of days [6].

The solution to this problem is sustainable fashion. Green Strategy has identified seven sustainable approaches: On-demand & Custom-made, Green & Clean, High-quality & Timeless design, Fair & Ethical, Repair, Redesign & Upcycle, Rent, Lease & Swap, Secondhand & Vintage [7].

It is customary to criticize the mass market, but thanks to it we began to think about how the clothes we wear are created. And who, if not us, the consumers, is the reason why so many unnecessary clothes end up in landfills? The only correct choice - and this applies in general to everything - is to consume less. However, it is not easy to achieve success in this direction when everything around is aimed at consuming more. Therefore, both buyers and manufacturers should reconsider their attitude towards modern economic models.

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