

## 2024 Fashion Scholarship Fund Case Study

### ESG: The Intersection of Brands, Environment, and Society

## Design and Product Development

The fashion industry's growing interest in environmental, social, governance (ESG) has developed from increasing sustainable actions and the desire to measure brand impacts, reporting actions and results to consumers. ESG is still new for many brands, but it is fast becoming an important framework in the fashion industry as leaders seek to align environmental, economic, and social actions with the desires of customers ([Morgan Stanley, 2022](#); [Fromm, 2021](#)). Building on widespread interest in corporate social responsibility (CSR) which allows business to be socially accountable through self-regulation ([Heyward, 2020](#)), ESG takes a brand's commitment to transparency a step further emphasizing quantifiable actions. ESG enables brands to track their actions which are integrated into three pillars: environmental, social, and governance. ESG is not only about taking action, it is also about reporting impact, and giving back to the environment and society ([Chua, 2020](#); [Morgan Stanley, 2022](#)).

### Design & Product Development: Considerate Design

Advances in materiality, product development, and technology have allowed fashion designers to become more environmental considerate while simultaneously advancing their creative vision. As brands seek materials that cause minimal harm or give back to the environment ([Thomas, 2021](#)), leading fashion brands are exploring new avenues. In the Spring 2023 collection, Coperni utilized Fabrican, a spray-on fabric made of organic compounds that creates an instant material reducing environmental impact through minimal supply chain reliance ([Kessler, 2022](#); [Fabrican, 2022](#)). Emphasizing zero waste, the Elder Statesman created a knitwear capsule collection utilizing deadstock yarns ([The Elder Statesman, 2022](#)). Meanwhile, upcycling continues to thrive in sustainable design with new upcycled brands and collections entering the marketplace including Hôtel Vetements ([Hôtel Vetements, 2022](#)), Miu Miu launched a upcycled capsule collection with one-of-a-kind pieces redesigned from the 1930s and 1980s ([Chan, 2020](#)).

The integration of ESG into design and product development is through meaningful social influence in addition to environmental considerations. Many brands see environmental and social considerations as going hand-in-hand. Ester Manas prioritizes sustainability and inclusivity as dual aspects of the brand's mission ([Childs, 2022](#)). Focused on garment longevity, Ester Manas garments are intended to be worn through life changes. Additionally, for the brand's SS23 runway show which emphasized swimwear, many of the brand's models were non-professionals ([Diderich, 2022](#)). The brand emphasized the pleasure behind a beach-going experience and walked away from expectations of a "bikini body". Similarly, Nike integrated the highest levels of environmentally sustainable and performance in the 2020 Olympic uniforms while also emphasizing diverse wearer benefits ([Shatzman, 2020](#)). As the official brand behind the 2020 Olympic uniforms, the brand sought to minimize environmental harm while maximizing wearer benefit by addressing the diversity of the wearer. The brand created size and fit variety across uniforms for the Olympic and Paralympic Games.



### *Your Role*

You are the Creative Director for an existing fashion brand of your choice. It is your responsibility to evolve the environmental and social design strategies in line with the marketplace and consumer demand. As Creative Director, you are able to bring new concepts and vision to the brand's design strategy but must also maintain the brand ethos and design heritage. Your designs will set company standards that emphasize specific brand qualities based upon the ESG goals and customer's needs and desires you identify.

### *Case Study Objective: Create a Considerate Collection Serving People and the Planet*

Your objective is to design a collection that evolves the sustainable practices of a fashion brand with an environmental and social focus. You will address emerging sustainable product trends and how they will be incorporated into your designs. To advance the environmental pillar of ESG, your vision must reflect changing product trends, such as advances in materials, production processes, and/or design technique. You may address advances in the design and product development process. For example, technology may enable your selected brand to improve their environmental impact in the production process by using 3-D prototype or digital design, requiring fewer physical samples thereby reducing waste. You must consider the design details (e.g., fabrics and trim) and rationalize your design choices.

To create a collection that advances the social pillar of ESG, address how your design affects people, such as the consumer. The collection should create a meaningful connection to your identified consumer group and advance their well-being. You will undertake research regarding the group of people you want to focus on, such as your target market and/or the wider consumer base. You will also conduct brand research and explore social trends to align your concept with market demands. Address how your collection will maximize the connection between the brand, the environment, and society. Also consider how the collection promotes brand goals. The brand goals may be existing goals or may be goals that you establish based on your ESG research.

You are to select a mono-brand, *not* a multi-brand retailer. Examples of mono-brands include those mentioned above (e.g., Coperni, Ester Manas, Nike). The brand that you select should be generally well-known. Your brand may be pure-play or operate across channels (e.g., brick-and-mortar, e-commerce, or multichannel). The brand that you chose must be a fashion apparel, accessories, footwear, home, beauty, or health & wellness brand. Your collection can be for an existing product category addressed by the brand, or it can propose a brand expansion into a new product category or to a new target market. The brand may already have an environmentally or socially sustainable assortment, but your collection must evolve the existing offering or reach a new customer.

### **Design Submission Format**

The case study should be submitted as a minimum 21-page slide deck and no more than 26-pages including appendices and references. The slide deck should be in landscape orientation, with slides sized for on-screen show 4:3, 10" x 7.5". Submission files can be created in any software of the applicants choosing (PowerPoint, Keynote, Adobe InDesign, Illustrator etc.), however **all cases must be submitted in a flat PDF format** without video or sound.

*The following slide sections should be followed. Minor adjustments to slide order may be made.*



### Section 1: General Introduction Slides (2-3 Slides)

- **Must be the first page/slide of the deck.** Include a title, your case study discipline, and one sentence summary of your collection concept. Do NOT include any identifying information (name, school, etc.).
- Write an executive summary, covering all components of your case study. People reading your executive summary should get the essence of your case study without the fine details. The executive summary should be in paragraph format, no longer than 300 words. Be sure to briefly summarize your personal vision for your collection and how it resonates with the retailer's identity and consumers. Explain how the collection will allow the retailer/brand to continue to evolve.
- **Optional.** Include a one-page table of contents outlining the subsequent sections of your case study.

### Section 2: Research (3-4 Slides)

Summarize key findings from your research regarding the evolving fashion marketplace and consumer drivers related to ESG. This research should relate to your collection development while demonstrating rigorous research across best-in-class market players that support your conceptual direction and choice of brand/retailer.

- Address evolving environmental trends, social trends, and product trends that are important to your retailer/brand and influenced your design direction.
- Address how established market and consumer drivers relating to ESG will impact your retailer/brand and create an opportunity for your creative vision.
- Address how your collection will utilize these drivers as a part of your ESG strategy.
- Visually summarize key trends derived from your research. Look to innovative ideas and concepts. Your research will be derived from various cross-industry resources to *lead* design direction for environmental and social design.

### Section 3: Conceptual Direction (1-2 Slides)

Introduce your collection concept.

- Addressing environmental and social pillar of ESG, applicability to the brand/retailer, and any specific design and development processes that support your environmental and social goals. Present in paragraph form with relevant supporting imagery.

### Section 4: Design Development (4-6 Slides)

Create a concept board for your collection and show your design process.

- Develop a concept or mood board that visualizes your concept and design direction. Include a 3-5 sentence conceptual statement that speaks expressly to design direction.
- Present your documented design process. Can include development sketch work, iterative strategies, 3D and/or digital development efforts, fabric/material studies, etc. Documented process should expressly communicate your translation of your research and conceptual direction into design outcomes.
- Create a color and fabric board presenting the master color palette and all materials used. Include a photo with name and a content/quality description of each fabric/material chosen. Briefly explain how your materials and color story ties into the collection concept.
- **Optional.** Develop three original prints/patterns that match into the color palette.



### **Section 5: Collection Presentation (5-8 Slides)**

Design 10-15 products for your chosen category.

- Present the creative designs for your 10-15 items. Illustrations may be done by hand or by CAD. If you have chosen apparel as your focus, you can do head to toe looks or individual pieces- head to toe looks would be counted as each item not the look itself.
- Create technical front and back flat sketches for three of these products including design callouts to explain how research, trend, and/or your design process facilitated the development of functional, technical, or aesthetic details appropriate to your concept.
  - If you have chosen beauty, include ingredient details and rationale for the selection.
- Develop tech sheets (abbreviated tech packs) for three items/products. The tech sheet must include a minimum of 2-3 of the following for each item: specs, bill of materials/trim list, construction details/callouts, colorway/print details, and/or hangtag and garment label details.
  - The purpose of the tech pack is to support the overarching design aesthetic through functional details and to provide construction instruction.
  - You should approach this process as though it is technical development to share with vendors for the actual production of your items.
  - The tech sheets should be integrated into your slides, not attached as a separate document.

### **Section 6: Appendix (3-5 slides)**

**Optional.** Use the appendix to present additional ideas that supports your project concept. Your appendix may be a research appendix or a technical appendix.

- Examples of how to use the appendix:
  - **Research Appendix:** Summarize any research you have done on what factors contribute to the success of fashion collections, such as benchmark apparel, accessories, footwear, home, or beauty lines. You may present further insights or development on the target market that address the demographic/psychographic traits of the population cohorts.
  - **Technical Appendix:** Develop and present an additional conceptual aspect of your proposal that did not fit into the sections outlined. This may include a marketing plan, a visual merchandising guide, or an idea for how the brand will execute a further environmental or ethical aspect of the idea.

### **Section 7: References (1-2 Slides)**

Use the final slides for footnotes and a bibliography.

- References should be properly formatted using a format such as APA, Harvard, or Chicago style.
- Include a list of image sources in the reference section or provide the source for images on each slide/page under the relevant image.

### **General Guidelines**

No specific font or format will be enforced. You are encouraged to utilize visuals throughout your presentation. It is advisable to not overload each slide with information, and to keep your presentation concise and to the point: each slide should take no more than 1-2 minutes to absorb by the reader.

All references should be annotated in footnotes visible within the slide and/or on a references/bibliography page at the end of your slide deck. Do not use hyperlinks in a footnote as the content cannot be accessed once the case study is uploaded.



**Do not include your name or college/university affiliation** on the title page or anywhere in the case study as the review process is anonymous.

Be sure to proofread your case study. Points will be deducted for not following format directions, as well as for grammar and spelling errors.

### **Judging Criteria**

Your case will be reviewed by industry professionals including the FSF Board of Governors, FSF Mentors, and FSF Alumni. Judges will use the following criteria to score your case:

#### *Creativity & Feasibility (20%)*

- Is the applicant's idea unique, inspiring, and innovative?
- Is the applicant's idea well-thought-out and conceivably executable?
- Is the applicant's idea clearly connected to the selected brand?

#### *Research & Development (20%)*

- Has the applicant completed exhaustive research on best-in-class market players to identify the best brand for their concept?
- Has the applicant conducted thorough research regarding the retail landscape and the attitudes, behaviors, and lifestyle traits of the intended consumer?

#### *Collection Presentation (40%)*

- Has the applicant presented their concept development in a manner that is clear and supports the final collection design?
- Has the applicant presented a final collection that conveys strong presentation of design and is fitting to the intended concept?
- Has the applicant presented technical design details (through tech sheets) that are easy to understand and add value to the creative concept?

#### *Clarity (15%)*

- Does the scholar display strong business acumen and common sense?
- Does the applicant's case follow logical development and a clear structure; is it easy to follow and summarize?
- Did the applicant clearly complete each portion of their prompt?

#### *Format (5%)*

- Did the applicant use correct grammar and spelling?
- Did the applicant include a title page with one sentence to summarize the case?
- Was the applicant's name and school kept anonymous?



### Required Documents for Submission:

- 1) Completed FSF Case Study
- 2) Current Resume
- 3) Current Unofficial Transcription
- 4) Cover Letter: Please prepare a 250-300-word maximum cover letter containing your response to the following questions:
  - Why are you interested in the fashion industry?
  - What are your current career aspirations?
  - Why have you decided to select your case study discipline?
- 5) Cover Letter Addition: **Additional Question for “Post Modern” Scholarship Applicants Only.** Students who are **Black, African American, or African descent** are eligible for the “Post-Modern” Scholarship, a part of Virgil Abloh’s™ legacy. The “Post Modern” Scholarship was created to empower the next generation of black fashion industry professionals. This is an opportunity to move beyond a scripted idealized narrative to share your personal story. We encourage you to share not what you think we want to hear, but what makes you who you are. Applicants may use an additional 100 words to answer this one question. You will integrate this into your cover letter:
  - Please explain why Virgil Abloh’s™ “Post-Modern” Scholarship mission is important to you personally and anything else you would like the team carrying on Virgil’s mission to know about you.

### Eligibility Requirements

- A minimum overall G.P.A. of 3.20.
- You must be a full-time sophomore, junior, or senior enrolled in an FSF member school.
- You must be graduating no earlier than Spring 2024.

### Deadlines and Announcement of Competition Results

**February 1, 2023:** Wizehive, the digital platform used for FSF case study submissions will open. Your FSF faculty member will provide you with the Wizehive link. Complete the Applicant Profile on Wizehive to participate in FSF Summer Scholar Series.

**October 16, 2023:** Submit all four of your required documents mentioned above on Wizehive BEFORE 11:59 **AM** Eastern Standard Time (before noon) to avoid any issues with submission. The Wizehive portal will close PROMPTLY at 12:00 **PM** (noon). Be sure to allow sufficient time to upload all *four* required documents – the Wizehive submission portal will close automatically at the scheduled time even if an upload is still in progress. If all four of your documents are not fully uploaded, your submission will not be received by the FSF. Please contact Katie Simone, FSF Programs Assistant [ksimone@fashionscholarshipfund.org](mailto:ksimone@fashionscholarshipfund.org) who will help rectify any submissions that are incomplete.

You will receive a Confirmation of Submission to your Wizehive Homepage that your submission process was completed.



**Announcement of Scholarship Results:** The Scholarship competition results will be sent to the FSF faculty member at your school by the first week of December. Your FSF faculty member will share the results with you.



## Appendix: Case Study Insights and Resources

### ***What is Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG)?***

The first pillar of ESG is *Environmental*, addressing how the actions of the company impact the environment. In fashion, brands are rapidly advancing environmental initiatives, including tracing a brand's environmental impact through materials, sourcing, and transport of the product ([McKinsey & Company, 2021](#)). For example, in an effort to ensure long-term climate action, the founder of Patagonia recently transferred company ownership to ensure that all brand profits are used to combat climate change and protect the planet ([Gelles, 2022](#)).

The second pillar of ESG is *Social*, examining the brand's impact on society and relationship with people like employees, producers, and consumers. For many brands, social actions are being integrated with environmental actions. For example, Citizens of Humanity, Mara Hoffman, and Timberland are partnering with cotton farmers to advance regenerative agriculture practices and improve fashions relationship with the environment while also monitoring farmers right ([Kent, 2022](#); [Sgran, 2021](#)).

The third pillar of ESG is *Governance*, monitoring how a company is overseen, the diversity of chief executives and board members, and the structure of brand leadership. Recognizing both opportunities and challenges in recent years, fashion brands have started to introduce new executive positions such as chief sustainability officer and are increasing the diversity in the boardroom ([Butler-Young, 2022](#); [BOF Team, 2021](#)).

### ***What is a Brand?***

A brand *creates* product under one specific name. For example, Burberry is a brand that creates Burberry-branded footwear, apparel, accessories, and fragrances. Additional examples of brands include Louis Vuitton, Rains, and Levi's. In contrast, a retailer *sells* goods to the end consumer. Retailers like Macy's, Nordstrom, and Target are multi-brand retailers, meaning they carry a variety of brands. The focus of this year's case study is to select *one brand*, or a mono-brand. Brands like Nike and American Eagle also have retail operations; the distinction as a brand is demonstrated in the creation of merchandise under one label. In contrast, multi-brand retailers sell merchandise from a variety of brands.

### **Resources: ESG in Fashion**

Albella, E., Balchandani, A., Cornbleet, N., & Lee, L. (2022, June 28). In search of fashion's sustainability seekers. *McKinsey & Company*. <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/in-search-of-fashions-sustainability-seekers>

American Eagle (2022). ESG: Environmental, Social, Governance. <https://investors.ae.com/esg/default.aspx>

Bloomberg. (2021, July 8). Swedish Challenger to H&M Planning IPO to Lure ESG Investors. *Business of Fashion*. <https://www.businessoffashion.com/news/retail/swedish-challenger-to-hm-planning-ipo-to-lure-esg-investors/>





BOF Careers Team. (2022, October 31). What fashion marketing professionals need to know today. *Business of Fashion*. <https://www.businessoffashion.com/articles/marketing-pr/careers-market-insights-industry-news-fashion-marketing/> **\*For Marketing\***

Cernansky, R. (2021, December 8). Meet the silk startup replacing the chemicals in beauty and clothing. *Vogue*. [https://www.voguebusiness.com/sustainability/meet-the-silk-startup-replacing-the-chemicals-in-beauty-and-clothing?itm\\_source=manual\\_article\\_recommendation](https://www.voguebusiness.com/sustainability/meet-the-silk-startup-replacing-the-chemicals-in-beauty-and-clothing?itm_source=manual_article_recommendation)

Espirit. (2022). Sustainability Report (with ESG indices). <https://www.esprit.com/Resources/Persistent/1/4/f/b/14fb28e7655b4cc60f70dcc77170d8568aa6d7d7/Espirit%20Sustainability%20Report%20FY1920%20EN.pdf>

HKRita. (2022). *Garment to Garment*. <https://www.hkrita.com/en/garment2garment>

Klerk, A.D. (2022, February 2). #TheBrand | Stine Goya on how Scandi style is driven by gut instinct and individuality. *Harper's Bazaar*. <https://www.harpersbazaar.com/uk/fashion/a38951549/stine-goya-interview/>

LVMH. (2021). 2021 Social and Environmental Responsibility Report: Committed to Positive Impact. <https://r.lvmh-static.com/uploads/2022/04/2021-social-and-environmental-responsibility-report.pdf>

Nanda, M.C. (2021, February 23). Fashion Goes Green to Raise Capital: The likes of Chanel, Adidas and H&M are landing funds based on potential environmental, social and governance impact, relying on sustainability targets to secure both public and investor goodwill. *Business of Fashion*. <https://www.businessoffashion.com/articles/sustainability/fashion-goes-green-to-raise-capital/>

Roshitsh, K. (2022, September 30). 'Beyond Remade' Launches From Veteran Clothing Upcycler Bank and Vogue. *WWD*. <https://wwd.com/sustainability/innovation/beyond-remade-clothing-upcycling-fashion-bank-and-vogue-denim-1235365311/>

Segal, M. (2021, March 1). Nike Launches Broad Set of 2025 Sustainability Targets, Ties Exec Comp to ESG Goals. *ESG Today*. <https://www.esgtoday.com/nike-launches-broad-set-of-2025-sustainability-targets-ties-exec-comp-to-esg-goals/>

Sheehan, E. (2022). Sustainability in retail: Profit, people, and the planet. *Deloitte*. <https://www2.deloitte.com/global/en/pages/consumer-business/articles/sustainability-in-retail.html> **\*For Strategy\***

Solca, L. (2020, October 6). How the Climate Crisis Is Reshaping Luxury: Consumers and investors are becoming increasingly concerned about the environment. *Business of Fashion*. <https://www.businessoffashion.com/articles/luxury/how-the-climate-crisis-is-reshaping-luxury/>

World Fashion Exchange. (2022, May 20). Tech Pack 101: Everything you need to know about fashion tech packs. <https://www.worldfashionexchange.com/blog/tech-pack-101-everything-you-need-to-know-about-fashion-tech-packs/> **\*For Design\***