

Introduction

The purpose of this case study is to provide an example of how a fashion company, Anita Dongre, is attempting to move towards circularity and how they can make more improvements to their operations and supply chain. The case study will explore the rationale behind Anita Dongre's sustainable initiatives, the specific actions they have taken, and recommendations for further improvement. Additionally, the case study will examine how Anita Dongre is communicating its sustainability efforts to its customers.

Background

Anita Dongre is a global fashion brand that was founded in 1995. The brand is known for its luxurious and handcrafted designs, which are inspired by Indian tradition.

Brand Overview

Anita Dongre is a leading fashion brand that has made significant strides in adopting a circular supply chain model. The brand has implemented several initiatives to reduce its environmental impact, including using sustainable fabrics, recycling plastic waste, and upcycling textile waste. However, there are still opportunities for the brand to further improve its circularity. This proposal recommends several additional actions that Anita Dongre can take to further reduce its environmental impact and become a leader in sustainable fashion.

It is a vertically integrated fashion house, which means that it controls all aspects of its business, from design and manufacturing to retail and distribution. Anita Dongre is a strong supporter of Indian craftsmanship employing over 2,800 artisans and works with a network of small and medium-sized businesses in India.

Brand Market Sector

Anita Dongre's brand operates in the luxury fashion sector. This sector is characterized by high-end, designer clothing and accessories that are typically sold at premium prices. Luxury fashion brands are often associated with exclusivity, craftsmanship, and prestige.

The brand's entry level products range from 50 USD-300 USD, and their formal range starts at 1,000USD and can go up to 17,000USD. Their product offerings include dresses, accessories, co-ord sets, sarees, lehengas, gowns, kaftans, tops, jackets, bottoms and more. The brand's products are higher-priced than those of many other luxury brands operating in the same market.

of Indian luxury, but they are also seen as being of heritage, sustainable and higher quality and craftsmanship. Anita Dongre's target market is affluent, fashion-conscious consumers who are looking for unique and stylish Indian clothing and accessories.

Current Initiatives:

1. Sustainable Fabric Sourcing:

- Bemberg™: Anita Dongre's use of Bemberg™, a sustainable regenerated cellulose fiber, exemplifies their commitment to eco-friendly materials. Bemberg™ is not only biodegradable but also compostable, aligning with circular principles by ensuring minimal environmental impact at the end of the product life cycle.
- The Better Cotton Initiative (BCI): By engaging with BCI, the brand supports ethical and sustainable cotton production globally. This initiative not only enhances the quality of cotton but also addresses social and environmental concerns, fostering a circular approach that prioritizes the well-being of both people and the planet.
- TENCEL™: The incorporation of TENCEL™ fibers, sourced from renewable wood, represents a circular mindset. These cellulosic fibers, being biodegradable and compostable, contribute to a supply chain that can naturally revert back to nature, minimizing waste.

2. Plastic Recycling Initiative:

- Partnership with Lucro Plastecycle: House of Anita Dongre's collaboration with Lucro Plastecycle is a pioneering effort in India's fashion industry. This partnership focuses on comprehensive plastic waste management. Through innovative interventions, they've not only reduced their plastic consumption but also set an example for sustainable practices in the broader supply chain.

3. Textile Waste Management:

- Collaboration with Goonj and NEPRA: The Anita Dongre Foundation's collaboration with organizations like Goonj and NEPRA showcases a circular approach to textile waste. By upcycling fabric waste into godharis, carry bags, and reusable masks, they contribute to a closed-loop system that repurposes materials and benefits communities.
- Local Tailoring Unit in Modgaon: The local tailoring unit's involvement in upcycling fabric waste aligns with circular economy principles. The transformed waste products, beyond being environmentally friendly, serve local markets, creating a sustainable and circular economic model.

Other current sustainability factors the brand has are mentioned in this image from the website:



Anita Dongre's current initiatives form a cohesive strategy that addresses various aspects of the fashion supply chain. By incorporating sustainable materials, managing waste effectively, and engaging in circular design practices, the brand is actively moving towards a more circular model, aligning with the principles of a sustainable and eco-conscious fashion industry.

Grassroot's Sustainability Efforts

Grassroot is Anita Dongre's line of sustainable fashion. Grassroot is committed to using sustainable materials, reducing waste, and empowering artisans. Grassroot has also implemented a number of initiatives to close the loop on its products.

Key Changes in Dongre's Supply Chain where innovations have been made:

Raw Materials:

- Sourced from companies like Bemberg, Tencel, and BCI, ensuring sustainable fabric manufacturing.
- Cotton specifically sourced from BCI, contributing to responsible textile production.

Design:

- Minimizes waste and maintains product quality, aligning with the sustainable sourcing of materials.

Garment Manufacturing:

- Limited energy usage reduces carbon footprint.
- Waste is recycled and transformed into:
 - Donations for those in need.
 - Products sold in local markets, promoting local communities.
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Distribution:

- Products shipped only to United States, India, and United Arab Emirates, minimizing unnecessary transportation and emissions.

Showcase:

- 90% of outlets use energy-saving LED lamps, demonstrating environmental commitment throughout operations.

Reuse, Recycle, Repair:

- Wet and dry waste separated for decomposition, closing the loop on organic materials.
- 67% of water waste recycled for toilet flushing and lawn irrigation, conserving precious resources.
- Reclaimed wood prioritized for their organic terrace garden, promoting sustainable construction.
- Partnership with Lucro Plastecycle recycles locally sourced plastic waste into packaging, reducing reliance on virgin materials.
- Textile waste upcycled into reusable masks, godharis, and carry bags, extending the lifespan of materials.

Residual Waste:

- Wet and dry waste separated for decomposition, minimizing landfill contribution.
- 100% of electronic waste responsibly disposed of or recycled, ensuring responsible end-of-life management.

Recommendations for improving circularity

1. Close the circular economy loop

- Develop a product take-back program of used clothes for the whole brand not just the Grassroots line. They could then either resell the products, recycle the materials, or compost the products. It should not be too complicated to implement as they already have the program for a section of the brand.
- Partner with other companies in the sustainable fashion industry to create a circular supply chain. This could involve sharing resources, such as recycled materials, or working together to develop new recycling technologies. Collaborate with other brands and stakeholders to create closed-loop systems for specific materials. This collaborative approach can lead to industry-wide solutions for recycling and repurposing materials.

Sustainability Performance Indicator: Circular Economy Closure Rate

Definition:

The Circular Economy Closure Rate measures the percentage of products from the entire brand, not limited to the Grassroots line, that successfully completes the circular loop through the product take-back program.

Calculation:

Circular Economy Closure Rate=

$$\left(\frac{\text{Number of Products Successfully Resold, Recycled, or Composted}}{\text{Total Number of Products Collected}} \right) \times 100$$

Key Components:

- Number of Products Successfully Resold: This includes products that are reintroduced into the market through resale initiatives, emphasizing the brand's commitment to extending the life cycle of its products.
- Number of Products Recycled: Indicates the quantity of materials recovered and reused in new products or other applications, contributing to a closed-loop system.
- Number of Products Composted: Reflects the brand's dedication to sustainable end-of-life solutions, with compostable products contributing to environmental regeneration.

Interpretation:

- A higher Circular Economy Closure Rate indicates a more effective implementation of the product take-back program, demonstrating the brand's commitment to closing the circular economy loop.
- Regularly tracking and reporting this rate provides transparency and accountability, showcasing progress toward the goal of a comprehensive circular supply chain.

Implementation Considerations:

- Regularly audit and evaluate the effectiveness of the product take-back program to ensure that the closed-loop processes are functioning optimally.
- Collaborate with third-party organizations or auditors to verify and validate the data for transparency and credibility. Such as the Good on You sustainability rating, Fashion Revolution Transparency Index.
- Communicate the Circular Economy Closure Rate in sustainability reports and marketing materials to keep consumers, stakeholders, and collaborators informed about the brand's progress.

2. Refrain from unsustainable practices

Refuse to use unnecessary materials in their products, such as packaging and tags. They should also refuse to use harmful materials, such as fur and leather.

Sustainability Performance Indicators for Refusing Unsustainable Materials:

- Percentage of products free from unnecessary materials (packaging, tags). Track the reduction in unnecessary materials used per product or per year.
- Percentage of products free from harmful materials (fur, leather). Monitor the complete elimination of these materials in new product lines.
- Supplier audits: Conduct regular audits of suppliers to assess their compliance with sustainable material sourcing policies.

Reduce waste by redesigning products and packaging to reduce waste. This could involve using less material, using recycled materials, or using compostable materials. Explore biodegradable or compostable packaging options to minimize environmental impact. Additionally, design packaging that encourages reuse or has a secondary purpose.

Measurable metrics:

- Average amount of material used per product. Track the decrease in material usage over time, aiming for continuous improvement.
- Percentage of recycled content in packaging and products. Set targets for increasing recycled content and achieving full circularity.
- Biodegradable/compostable packaging ratio. Monitor the percentage of packaging that can decompose naturally, aiming for 100%.

- Reusability/secondary purpose index: Develop a scoring system to evaluate packaging design for reuse and alternative uses.

Repair used products. Anita Dongre should offer a repair service for their used products. This would extend the life of the products and reduce the need for new products.

Measurable Metrics:

- Number of repair requests received and completed. Track the uptake of the repair service and identify any barriers to its use.
- Average lifespan extension achieved through repairs. Measure the additional years of use products gain through repairs.
- Customer satisfaction with repair service. Conduct surveys to gauge customer experience and identify areas for improvement.

3. Invest in research and development

Research new sustainable materials. Grassroot should invest in research and development to find new sustainable materials for their products. This could involve developing new plant-based fibers or finding ways to recycle existing materials more effectively. Investment KPIs:

- % of R&D budget for sustainable materials & processes.
- # of research partnerships/collaborations.
- # of patents/IP generated for sustainable solutions.

Invest in research and development to find new sustainable production processes. This could involve developing new ways to dye and finish fabrics or finding ways to reduce energy consumption.

Material Innovation KPIs:

- # of new sustainable materials developed (plant-based, recycled).
- Life cycle assessment (LCA) vs. conventional materials.
- Performance testing results vs. conventional materials.

Develop new technologies for recycling and composting and invest in developing new ways to separate different types of materials or developing new ways to break down materials into usable components.

Recycling & Composting KPIs:

- # of new technologies developed for material separation/breakdown.
- % of materials diverted from landfill through new technologies.
- Quality & usability of recycled materials.

Circular Economy Metrics and Reporting:

Establish key performance indicators (KPIs) and metrics to measure circularity in the supply chain. Regularly report on progress and achievements, demonstrating the brand's commitment to circular business practices.

Conclusion

Anita Dongre has already taken significant steps towards circularity, demonstrating a strong commitment to sustainable practices. However, there is always room for improvement, and the recommendations provided in this report offer a roadmap for further progress. By focusing on closing the circular economy loop, refraining from unsustainable practices, and investing in research and development, Anita Dongre can solidify its position as a leader in the circular fashion movement.

Implementing the proposed solutions will require careful planning, collaboration, and investment. However, the long-term benefits for the environment, the brand's reputation, and the local communities will be substantial. By taking these steps, Anita Dongre can demonstrate its leadership in sustainable fashion, make its supply chain more circular and inspire other brands to follow suit.

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ABOUT US

AT ANITA DONGRE, WE'RE MORE THAN JUST FASHION; WE'RE STORYTELLERS, DREAMERS, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, CHANGEMAKERS. WE BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF BEAUTY TO INSPIRE, AND WE'RE WEAVING A FUTURE WHERE STYLE MEETS SUSTAINABILITY.





OUR ROOTS RUN DEEP

Our story began in 1995, fueled by a passion for Indian heritage and a desire to empower artisans. We've grown from a single boutique into a global brand, but our core values remain the same:

- respect for tradition,
- celebration of craftsmanship,
- and a commitment to doing good.

CIRCULAR FASHION - A NEW CHAPTER

The fashion industry has a footprint, and we're not afraid to admit it. But instead of shying away from the challenge, we're embracing it. We're rewriting the narrative, one stitch at a time, by transitioning towards a circular fashion model. What does that mean? It means using sustainable materials like Bemberg™ and TENCEL™, partnering with organizations like BCI for ethical cotton sourcing, and upcycling waste into beautiful new creations. It means innovating in every step of our supply chain, from design to distribution.



GRASSROOT: WHERE SUSTAINABILITY TAKES ROOT



Grassroot is our love letter to the planet. This line is a living testament to our circular journey, crafted with recycled materials, minimal waste, and the magic of our artisans' hands. It's not just a collection; it's a movement, a call to action for conscious consumers like you.

BEYOND THE LABEL: CLOSING THE LOOP

We know that true change requires more than just pretty words. That's why we're investing in a groundbreaking product take-back program, aiming to close the loop on our entire brand, not just Grassroot. We're partnering with industry leaders, developing innovative recycling technologies, and measuring our progress with transparent metrics.

We believe in the power of collaboration. We're joining forces with like-minded brands and stakeholders to create a circular fashion ecosystem. Together, we can push boundaries, challenge the status quo, and leave a legacy that goes beyond fleeting trends.

OUR JOURNEY
IS SHARED



Choose Anita Dongre, and you're not just choosing a dress; you're choosing a future. You're choosing to be part of a movement that's rewriting the rules, one thread at a time.

Let's weave a sustainable future together, where style meets purpose, and every piece tells a story of conscious creation. Ready to be a changemaker? Explore our collections, discover our initiatives, and join the conversation on social media. Together, let's turn the tide towards a circular fashion revolution.