Alternative Fabric Strategy
This alternative strategy report is an advice for you as a company with an interest in alternative fabrics. It shows how to make sure consumers will buy your products made of alternative materials, through displaying various tools that you can use.

First of all, this strategy focuses on the trends with regard to fabrics and colours. These trends were spotted on the Première Vision and its website. It is important to show consumers that certain fabrics can be trendy and cool and that it does not have to look old-fashioned and outdated. That is why after the trends, this product shows a possible fabric chart within the framework of the trends and colour range. This section also describes the characteristics of these alternative fabrics and which mainstream fabric they can replace. Last but not least, a communication advice is displayed in this book, taking three important points into account.
Visionary Refinement

The unexplored terrain for the fashion of tomorrow is reinvented. Due to this, we look for a connection between the well-known and the unknown. It is about creating a new language by using symbols and traditional ornamentation, mixing rusticity and perfection. The imperfection of the near future is able to create an aesthetic difference. The possibility of alliances through a clash between thickness and delicate, creating volumes with the simplicity of fabrics.

The colours for visionary refinement show the journey to the unfathomed terrain. How to explore the unknown? The colour chart starts with fragile, simple colours, leading to soft tones and eventually end with a futuristic touch. The range brings out the bond between fragility and strength (premierevision.com, 2016), illustrating the clash between thickness and delicate. It reveals harmonies between unexpected alliances.

Fabrics & characteristics

All these fabrics presented here are alternative fabrics and can be used as substitutes for mainstream fabrics. However, at first notice, it is not obvious that the fabrics are in fact alternative, regarding the perception of consumers. Further, the characteristics of these fabrics are described. What sort of mainstream fabrics can they replace? And should they be treated differently?

Framework mainstream fabrics
Mainstream fabrics (also classic or conservative fabrics) are …
“... considered normal, fabrics that are accepted by most people”
(Research Report, 2.1, p. 10)

Framework alternative fabrics
Alternative fabrics are …
“... new or renewed materials within the fashion industry – something different from something usual, offering the possibility of choice”
(Research Report, 2.2, p. 11)
Fabric #1001 – Cork Regular
Cork is a sustainable material and can be used as a substitute for leather. Compared to regular leather, cork fabric is much lighter. At the same time, the material has many similar features compared to leather. For example, cork fabric is strong, the material does not fray and it is waterproof. If stems appear, cork can be gently washed by hand to remove them (Jelinek Cork, 2016).

Fabric #1002 – Cork Lace
Cork is a sustainable material and can be used as a substitute for leather. Compared to regular leather, cork fabric is much lighter. At the same time, the material has many similar features compared to leather. For example, cork fabric is strong, the material does not fray and it is waterproof. If stems appear, cork can be gently washed by hand to remove them (Jelinek Cork, 2016).

Fabric #3001 – Hemp Black Plain Weave
Hemp is a fabric that is reinvented. It was used often in the past, but since hemp production was used to produce weed, the material disappeared for a while. However, the use of this fabric is increased over the past few years, because of the properties. Not only is it a firm fibre, but the production of hemp is actually good for the soil. New techniques create new possibilities for this material. It can replace cotton and linen very well. Hemp in a twill weave is very suitable as alternative fabric to denims (Seshata, 2013)(Hemp Traders, 2016).

Fabric #6001 – Nettle Black Plain Weave
Nettle fabric is a strong, luxurious fabric. This fabric does not sting as the source does, so it is safe to wear. It is a sustainable and luxurious fibre which was already used in the sixteenth century. The fabric is now making its comeback. Nettle fabric is similar to linen, however much stronger. In fact, the strength increases when wet. It is a bit more stiff compared to linen. The idea seems ideal: to used tares for garments (Bucci, J. 2013).

Fabric #3002 – Hemp Jeans Fabric
Hemp is a fabric that is reinvented. It was used often in the past, but since hemp production was used to produce weed, the material disappeared for a while. However, the use of this fabric is increased over the past few years, because of the properties. Not only is it a firm fibre, but the production of hemp is actually good for the soil. New techniques create new possibilities for this material. It can replace cotton and linen very well. Hemp in a twill weave is very suitable as alternative fabric to denims (Seshata, 2013)(Hemp Traders, 2016).

Fabric #3003 – Hemp Jersey
Hemp is a fabric that is reinvented. It was used often in the past, but since hemp production was used to produce weed, the material disappeared for a while. However, the use of this fabric is increased over the past few years, because of the properties. Not only is it a firm fibre, but the production of hemp is actually good for the soil. New techniques create new possibilities for this material. It can replace cotton and linen very well. Hemp in a twill weave is very suitable as alternative fabric to denims (Seshata, 2013)(Hemp Traders, 2016).

Fabric #2001 – Soy Jersey
Soy fabric is commonly referred to as “vegan cashmere”, named for its softness and light weight. This is similar to cashmere. However, it is much easier to care for than the animal-based cashmere. Soy fabric is machine-washable and wrinkle resistant. Compared to regular leather, cork fabric is much lighter. At the same time, the material has many similar features compared to leather. For example, cork fabric is strong, the material does not fray and it is waterproof. If stems appear, cork can be gently washed by hand to remove them (Jelinek Cork, 2016).

Fabric #3004 – Hemp Herring Bone
Hemp is a fabric that is reinvented. It was used often in the past, but since hemp production was used to produce weed, the material disappeared for a while. However, the use of this fabric is increased over the past few years, because of the properties. Not only is it a firm fibre, but the production of hemp is actually good for the soil. New techniques create new possibilities for this material. It can replace cotton and linen very well. Hemp in a twill weave is very suitable as alternative fabric to denims (Seshata, 2013)(Hemp Traders, 2016).

Fabric #3005 – Hemp Plain Weave
Hemp is a fabric that is reinvented. It was used often in the past, but since hemp production was used to produce weed, the material disappeared for a while. However, the use of this fabric is increased over the past few years, because of the properties. Not only is it a firm fibre, but the production of hemp is actually good for the soil. New techniques create new possibilities for this material. It can replace cotton and linen very well. Hemp in a twill weave is very suitable as alternative fabric to denims (Seshata, 2013)(Hemp Traders, 2016).

Fabric #4001 – Bamboo Plain Weave
Bamboo fabric if exceptionally soft and light, which often surprises people. Because of these properties, it almost has a silky touch. The material is breathable and thermost- regulating. Further, it is also very hydrophilic. It can be used as a substitute for materials such as cotton and viscose. Bamboo fabric is a very easy to dye. The material is machine-washable, however it is recommended to wash it at a maximum of 30 degrees (Oikouta), as it may shrink otherwise (Davia Bamboekleding, 2015)(Richard, 2014).
Fabric #3006 – Hemp Jersey

Hemp is a fabric that is reinvented. It was used often in the past, but since hemp production was used to produce weed, the material disappeared for a while. However, the use of this fabric is increased over the past few years, because of the properties. Not only is it a firm fibre, but the production of hemp is actually good for the soil. New techniques create new possibilities for this material. It can replace cotton and linen very well. Hemp in a twill weave is very suitable as alternative fabric to denims (Seshate, 2013)(Hemp Traders, 2016).

Fabric #5001 – Ramie Plain Weave

Ramie is one of the strongest natural bast fibres, which leads to a strong fabric. Further properties of this fibre are a high natural lustre and brightness effect. Ramie is resistance to heat and light. Fabric made of ramie is very suitable to replace cotton and linen. The fabric can be machine-washed, however, the quality decreases when washing too often. (Kalita, B.B., et al, 2013).

Fabric #3007 – Hemp Structure

Hemp is a fabric that is reinvented. It was used often in the past, but since hemp production was used to produce weed, the material disappeared for a while. However, the use of this fabric is increased over the past few years, because of the properties. Not only is it a firm fibre, but the production of hemp is actually good for the soil. New techniques create new possibilities for this material. It can replace cotton and linen very well. Hemp in a twill weave is very suitable as alternative fabric to denims (Seshate, 2013)(Hemp Traders, 2016).

Fabric #4002 – Bamboo Plain Weave

Bamboo fabric is exceptionally soft and light, which often surprises people. Because of these properties, it almost has a silky touch. The material is breathable and thermoregulating. Further, it is also very hydrophilic. It can be used as a substitute for materials such as cotton and viscose. Bamboo fabric is a very durable material and easily to dye. The material is machine-washable, however it is recommended to wash it at a maximum of 30 degrees (Celsius), as it may shrink otherwise (DaJia Bamboekleding, 2015)(Richard, 2014).

Fabric #5002 – Ramie Plain Weave

Ramie is one of the strongest natural bast fibres, which leads to a strong fabric. Further properties of this fibre are a high natural lustre and brightness effect. Ramie is resistance to heat and light. Fabric made of ramie is very suitable to replace cotton and linen. The fabric can be machine-washed, however, the quality decreases when washing too often. (Kalita, B.B., et al, 2013).
Communication advice

Communication is a very important part in this matter. It can be used to make people aware of your unique product, but at the same time there are a few traps considering the communication of alternative fabrics. Three points can be distinguished and are key elements in the communication around the alternative material.

1) Communicate the uniqueness of your product in any way you can.

Consumers need to know what you are selling. A new type of material can be difficult to be accepted by the market when not communicated properly. Often, it is not that consumers do not want to buy the products, but they lack important knowledge about the product. For example, for them it is important to know whether or not the material should be treated differently.

Further, you have to realise that, in general, consumers have to get used to new products. In this case they have to get used to the alternative materials that you sell as a company. It can help to show consumers that people are already wearing alternative fabrics, for example, by linking a celebrity to the products. It makes the idea of wearing alternative fabrics less weird to the consumer. Certain ideas also insure publicity for your brand, which helps you to communicate the uniqueness of your product.

A company that can be used as an example for this key element is G-star and their recycled ocean plastic jeans. People hear in any way about the unique jeans. G-star is constantly active in communicating this uniqueness to consumers.

2) Be aware of too much background information.

This point might look like a paradox compared to the previous point. However, it is important to realise that the first point is about important information that you need to give the consumers in order to make them want the products you sell. Here it is about the difference between important information and the excess background information.

Consumers decide to buy an item mostly on an autopilot. The decision-making process is quick. If you give the consumers too much information about a product, this only costs them energy, which can eventually lead to a rejection of the product. Therefore you want to give the consumer enough information to make them appreciate the product, but realise as well when crossing the line of too much information.

In fact this point shows the important difference between documentation and communication. There is a significant difference between these terms. The definition you can find on the right. As a company, you want to communicate with your consumer, but prevent documentation.

Framework documentation
The simple definition of documentation is …
... the documents, records, etc. that are used to prove something or make something official.
(Mariam-Webster dictionary)

Framework communication
The simple definition of communication is ...
... the act or process of using words, sounds, signs, or behaviours to express or exchange information to someone else.
(Mariam-Webster dictionary)
3) Communicate your unique product also in the physical store.

Communicating can also be done in the physical store. This is not to be forgotten. An easy example of communicating in the physical of your company is to make use of hang-tags and care labels. The information on those items is equally important compared to the marketing communication. Naturally, as mentioned before, consumers like to know how to treat the garment.

Previously in this report, you had the opportunity to read that alternative fabrics do not necessarily have to be treated completely different as to the fabric they replace. This is a benefit that you should display properly on the care label. Meaning, the consumer has to see quickly that the product does not, or almost not, need a different treatment.

Furthermore, the hang tag is a way to show that the product the consumer buys is an unique product and has an ecological advantage. An easy way to show this is to display the proper information on the hang tag. But as a company, it is recommended to take this even a step further. On the right (page 19), a hang tag is shown that can dissolve when putting it into water. Not only illustrates this the alternative fabrics very well, but it is also a sustainable solution for hang tags. This is only an example; similar ideas can be useful as well.

Framework water-soluble hang tag

Both the string and the hang tag are soluble in water. The hang tag is mainly made of laundry soap and laundry detergent. On the tag, there is a sign with three drops of water, indicating it is water-soluble.

Through this invention, consumers can now buy clothes and immediately wash them (or bring to the laundry), without disposing the hang tag first.

(Source: Seth, 2014)

1) Hang tag for a garment made of an alternative fabric

2) Buyer can put the hang tag in water

3) After five minutes, the hang tag dissolves in the water
Below, the key elements of this communication advice are enumerated. I recommend to make use of these key elements when selling items made of alternative fabrics. The important points are:

1) Communicate the uniqueness of your product in any way you can.
2) Be aware of too much background information.
3) Communicate your unique product also in the physical store.

I’d like to think that these three points can practically guarantee a proper communication strategy for alternative fabrics.

In case you would like to order something, read the research antecedent of this alternative fabrics strategy or have any questions, feel free to take a business card with you and contact me at any time.