PRODUCT

SUFFICIENCY
IMPLEMENTATION
ADVICE
This report includes advice for the brand iNDiViDUALS (AMFI/HvA) to experiment with sufficiency principles in the context of their current reevaluation process. It summarizes all research findings of my graduation Thesis at Fashion & Management (AMFI) and concludes with suggestions of possible strategies that the brand could experiment with, contributing to a positive change in the industry. The research includes an overview of the fashion sector’s environmental impact and a discussion of possible solutions. Moreover, it explains why the particular reality of iNDiViDUALS provides with fertile ground for experimentation with sufficiency approaches. The analysis continues with a series of case studies of companies that are already implementing sufficiency principles and a creative session to develop other innovative solutions. Readers interested in the details of the research phase can refer to this Thesis’ Research Report.

On the basis of this research, three paths to implement sufficiency principles are advised to the brand. If these were to be implemented, iNDiViDUALS should evaluate later if the outcomes are in accordance to expectations. That is, if implementation has contributed to reduce clothing volumes over time in any way. The strategies summarized in this report aim at fueling the iNDiViDUALS’ flagship identity. If these are implemented and assessed, the brand can contribute with much needed knowledge on the efficacy and effects of sufficiency-led businesses enabling a positive and substantiated change in the industry.
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ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS AND FASHION SECTOR
The fashion industry is flourishing and, as one of the world’s largest consumer industries, it has been one of the foremost engines for global development, having generated €1.5 trillion of revenues in 2016 and expected to generate €2.1 trillion by the year 2022 (Euromonitor International, 2017). This is quite a prosperous forecast and it runs parallel to the increasing world population, which is expected to grow by 8.1 billion people in 2022 (Euromonitor International, 2017). Consequently, the increase in population will boost demand for new clothes and increase clothing value. While the current retail volume accounts for 16.3 units per capita, it is expected to grow by 18 units in 2022 (Euromonitor International, 2017). If the demand and volume of clothing increases, it naturally follows that so will the need for resources. But that brings us to the vital question.

**IS OUR FINITE PLANET CAPABLE OF SATISFYING THIS EVERGROWING DEMAND?**

The planet is already suffering from the long-term effects of human activities, but the growing rate of consumption will place an even greater burden on resources. Humanity has surpassed planetary boundaries and we are facing a high risk of destabilizing the balance of the planet (Kibbey, Carrière-Pradal, Holst, & Blaisdell, 2017). Economist Tim Jackson argues that a common response to the dilemma of growth in its current form is to apply the concept of ‘decoupling’ that is, doing more with less (Jackson, 2009). A few examples of “relative decoupling” are organic production of materials, technological innovations with a focus on sustainability, more efficient distribution and improvements in care during the usage phase such as through laundering at lower temperatures. All of these examples have a positive impact on the environmental output per unit. However, innovations and increase in efficiency do not, unfortunately, outrun growth in volume.
The organization WRAP (Waste & Resources Action Programme) has been conducting research on the impact of clothing within the UK market and its development since they started their programme in 2012. A report published in 2017 concludes that changes over the years have positively impacted the footprint per ton. However, clothing volume also increased from 950,000 tons in 2012 to 1,130,000 tons in 2016, so the overall footprint still increased. Figure 1 shows the carbon footprint (WRAP, 2017) between 2012 and 2016 and its footprint throughout different stages of the lifecycle. This graph confirms that attempts to minimize the impact per unit have been eclipsed by the exponentially increasing volumes of clothing. The WRAP report underpins that while relative decoupling is vital, it is not enough to minimize environmental impact. In order to truly reduce CO2 emissions while also ensuring a growing GDP, the consumption of resources must fall to an absolute/zero level, that is ‘absolute decoupling’. However, in a detailed analysis of this scenario, Jackson concludes that the point of “absolute decoupling” is impossible to attain. GDP and resource use are inevitably coupled (Jackson, 2009). Therefore, he argues for decreasing volume of consumption and consequently for alternative economic views to that of growth.

The conventional formula for achieving prosperity relies on the pursuit of economic growth, measured by the GDP of that specific country. It suggests that GDP and happiness are directly proportional to each other, so an increase in GDP would subsequently lead to an increase in the rate of happiness of the population as well.
This theory is supported by the assumption that happiness is linked to consumerism, and, that an increase in purchasing power (indicated by the GDP) should lead to better quality of life. However, according to Jackson and like-minded Economist Kate Raworth, this formula is insufficient because of its capitalistic biases. They argue that the traditional formula fails to measure happiness as it doesn’t take into account factors such as social equality, poverty, education, and environmental impact. While Jackson and Raworth are critical of the traditional formula, they do concede that GDP and life-satisfaction correlate, but only unto a certain level — the Sufficient Point (explained later).

"LOCKED US INTO A CAGE OF CONSUMERISM"

The engine of growth is constructed from the profit motive of the capitalist economy (which has stimulated the production of newer, better, and cheaper products), and the complex social logic of our consumption behavior (which drives the demand for these products). The economy is dependent on these two aspects, and, according to Jackson, “these two factors combine to drive ‘the engine of growth’ on which modern economies depend an lock us into ‘iron cage’ of consumerism” (2009, p. 88). The complex social logic is mainly based on material needs. The industry was developed to cater to these materialistic needs. And to that end, it led to innovations in production processes, supply chain efficiency, radical reduction of lead-times, and even the outsourcing of production to foreign countries so as to satisfy material needs and maximize profits. In this process of growth and innovation, prosperity soon became synonymous with material wealth. However, according to Raworth, this consumption dynamic is “fundamentally flawed, because it runs counter to the living world, which thrives by continually recycling life’s building blocks” (Raworth, 2017, p. 212). Economy and Industry have turned a blind eye to this important factor and are slowly beginning to see the impact of its linear economic model which thrives on ever-increasing consumption. Innovation through different stages of the lifecycle of products — as seen in the WRAP report — are not sufficient. Therefore, a complimentary approach is necessary to effectively minimize the ecological footprint, and this is where the Sufficiency Principle comes in.
The Sufficiency Principle acknowledges humanity’s material needs and the need for growth, but only up to a certain limit. According to Raworth, “the opportunity for the 21st century is to thrive in balance and change the outlook of our economy towards a doughnut” (Raworth, 2017, p. 10). We should move towards the inner ring; the safe and just space for humanity, which is built on a social foundation wherein we all enjoy basic human rights (see Figure 6). Growth is necessary up to the level wherein nobody falls below the social foundation (centre of the doughnut). If there is a shortfall in social foundation, it could be indicative of poverty, lack of education, lack of housing, etc. If we exceed the ecological ceiling (outside the doughnut) we put additional pressure on the Earth’s resources and cause air pollution, chemical pollution, land conversion, etc.

**FIGURE 2 | THE DOUGHNUT - A TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY COMPASS**

Source: (Raworth, 2017)
Influenced by the Degrowth paradigm, the Sufficiency Principle seeks to find the level of growth in which humanity is satisfied without trespassing upon the environment’s limits. It envisions that humanity’s well-being and quality-of-life is not predicated solely upon the acquisition of products and material possessions. The Sufficiency principle believes it’s key to bring humanity towards the inner ring (see figure 2) by maintaining or reducing consumption levels and breaking humanity from its consumption addiction, so that we avoid surpassing the ecological ceiling.

"ALTERNATIVE ETHOS TO GROWTH"

Sufficiency-led strategies have been gaining widespread attention. However, the primary challenge consists in translating these principles into viable business models in order to drive substantial change in the industry. In order to implement sufficiency at a micro-level, companies need to develop an alternative ethos to growth, which seems to be at odds with current business practices wherein sales-driven growth is key to success. Its provocative and economically challenging approach of breaking our consumption and growth addiction, runs somewhat counterintuitive to the mainstream economic vision, and is thus scarcely applied. Therefore, experimentation is necessary to figure out how companies can successfully implement sufficiency principles so as to alter the currently unsustainable consumer behaviors and industry dynamics founded on resource depletion, and thus bring about a change towards economic and environmental sustainability.
CASE-STUDIES
SUFFICIENCY-LED STRATEGIES
Sufficiency driven businesses seek to moderate overall resource consumption by curbing demand through education and consumer engagement (Bocken, Bom, & Lemstra, 2017). They aim to make products that last longer and avoid built-in obsolescence in order to prolong utility and avoid premature replacement. They do that, for example, extending the lifecycle of the garment, thus delaying replacement, withal satisfying ‘needs’ rather than promoting ‘wants’, in this case ‘fast-fashion’. They are also primed to promote conscious sales and execute provocative, anti-consumerist marketing campaigns. The following case studies highlight functioning businesses that prove that sufficiency-led strategies can be economically viable and that they can also foster customer loyalty, thus increasing their market share.

LENA LIBRARY

Lena Library is a fashion library in Amsterdam where people can sign up for a subscription to rent clothes. It was founded by four young fashion professionals who were concerned about the ongoing patterns of excessive clothing consumption. The idea of the library is simple — instead of owning an enormous closet at home, you gain access to a huge stock of outfits available at Lena Library, allowing the customer to own less, but use more. The library includes pieces from young designers, a good quality vintage collection, and sustainable brands such as Filippa K.

Lena aims to intensify the usage of one singular garment by distributing it to more than one end user. The subscription fee secures a continuous income for Lena Library and helps the brand anticipate and predict income revenues more accurately. The brand’s mix of service and products makes it both unique and successful, allowing it to tap into current industry dynamics and satisfying the ‘fast’ material needs, while also negating the possibilities of mistaken purchases. The brand grows organically. It does not aim to open thousands of Lena Libraries, but to expand their borrowing system to other industries in order to drive change.
Filippa K is a Scandinavian brand founded in 1993 by Filippa Knutsson, a pioneering entrepreneur whose motto ‘designed for ourselves and those around us’ continues to define the brand. The brand offers womenswear, menswear, shoes, accessories, and sportswear, and fuses classic craftsmanship with modern knowledge in its design and operations. Filippa K is devoted to ‘slow’ fashion and aims for the highest form of sustainability currently possible. The Front Runners is a collection that perfectly highlights Filippa’s sustainability beliefs — it’s a collection comprising state-of-the-art products that are flawless in quality and designed with durability, simplicity, and sustainability in mind. Filippa K claims that these products would remain relevant for over 10 years, and they confirm that affirmation by offering a 10 year product warranty. During the warranty period, the customer may return the products for repairs. Filippa K hopes that the 10-year warranty would help extend the utility of its products to over a decade. The Front Runner collection is also available for a short-term rent/lease, which helps avoid mistaken purchases and allows the customer to enjoy the product for a lower price. If a customer is disinterested in her purchase, Filippa initiates take-back and, if the garment quality still meets their impeccable standards, they resell it in their own stores.

The Make it Last team wearing - Filippa K Front Runners.
Source: http://filippakcircle.com
Brunello Cucinelli is a top-end luxury brand that produces every garment in and around the Umbra Region of Italy. The excellent quality, Italian craftsmanship, and exclusive distribution lays the brand’s foundation. Cucinelli is outperforming the stagnant Italian luxury market. Even though Cucinelli isn’t strictly founded on a sufficiency-led business model, it is still focused on contributing to better conditions for humanity to flourish. Brunello contributes to society by producing all of its products locally, creating dignified work in the region, and investing its earnings in the restoration of the Umbra region by, for example, running a tuition-free arts school.
Vitsoe is, unlike the other brands, not a fashion brand but a furniture company. It was founded in 1959 around the beliefs of Dieter Rams, a product designer who was fostering a sustainable ethos as far back as in 1957, encouraging designers to take responsibility for the state of the world and anticipating an emerging irreversible shortage of natural resources. Vitsoe exemplifies ‘sufficiency’ by eliminating built-in obsolescence through its design. The company purposefully avoids fashion cycles by eliminating mark-downs and sale periods. The brand also trains its sales staff to under-sell rather than over-sell. This policy constricts their growth rates but it helps negate impulsive buying and encourages conscious consumerism. Although the brand has struggled financially, it has been sustained through strong customer loyalty as more than half of their sales are made to existing customers.

606 Universal Shelving System | Designed by Dieter Rams, in 1960
Source: https://www.despoke.com
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PATAGONIA

Patagonia originally started as a mountaineering equipment company in the 1950’s. Their outdoor clothing was established in the 70’s as a profitable business-line to diversify the business. Patagonia, similar to Brunello Cucinelli, invests its income in charities aimed at preserving and fostering nature. Patagonia’s sufficiency strategy consists of encouraging consumers to think of repair or take-back before replacing a garment. The company offers free repair services in-store and runs a repair vehicle driving throughout the US in order to extend the lifespan of its products. Patagonia also accepts take-back and resells the second-hand garments in its Worn Wear store, capturing extra added value for every garment. In the spirit of prolonging the garment’s lifespan, the brand uses provocative marketing to encourage consumers to think twice before they purchase. They stimulate conscious buying and make consumers question their own consumption behaviors, in the hopes of driving change.

In the previously mentioned case studies, I have concentrated on the businesses’ sufficiency implementation. It does not concern the universal focus to increase efficiency and productivity to make the supply chain more ‘green’. There is no conclusive evidence to suggest that these brands effectively decrease consumption levels. As such, experimentation and implementation is needed, and standardizing a sufficiency-led business model helps in collecting and analyzing data that might eventually grow to drive change in the current consumer ethos.
WHY?

iNDiViDiUALS
iNDiViDUALS is a non-profit brand funded by Hogeschool van Amsterdam, and as such, is a platform perfectly suited to experiment with sufficiency-driven strategies. The educational foundation of the brand leaves it free from risks and concerns such as finding investment parties, experiencing a limited market share, or constricting its own growth. Moreover, the brand also has a certain freedom to be able to make mistakes and fail — as a part of a real-time education programme — a privilege that normal businesses do not enjoy.

“iNDiViDUALS is a welcoming and creative playground”

Due to the changing generations of students, the brand is constantly evolving, and doing things differently each season, though this does not necessarily mean that they’re constantly doing better. iNDiViDUALS is a welcoming and creative playground wherein students may experiment, learn, fail, and learn some more. The students are open to new ideas, strategies, and systems, and they have developed a strong sustainable attitude during their career due to the circular and sustainable AMFI mentality. They’re open to innovation and are aware of how the industry’s current dynamics are failing us. Most importantly, they have experienced the traditional fashion system in previous specializations/minors, yet they aren’t yet indoctrinated by the status quo. As such, their openness, freedom, and focus on sustainability works as a catalyst towards experiencing and executing a range of sufficiency-strategies.
Durable designs and high-quality products allow sufficiency businesses to foster customer loyalty and encourage a long lifespan of garments. Therefore, iNDiViDUALS’ “Quality over Quantity” approach makes implementation of sufficiency a successful venture. Moreover, owing to the non-profit structure, iNDiViDUALS is not restrained by demands of selling high quantities of garments. As such, the brand has the capacity of wielding low production quantities, thus allowing iNDiViDUALS to cater to and promote “needs-based” purchases as opposed to “want-driven” consumerism.

iNDiViDUALS has a strong support system — a deeply connected inner-circle — which provides a stronger thrust towards change and can render sufficiency principles into a success. It comprises a set of like-minded individuals who are interested in the design aesthetic of the brand, are limited in their spending, but are proud that iNDiViDUALS is the flagship of AMFI. iNDiViDUALS aims to become a ‘blueprint’ for the industry, transforming from a brand driven by industry perspectives to a brand which has a perspective on the industry and an ability to drive change and share them in its microenvironment.
iNDiViDUALS is the ideal platform to experiment and research viable alternatives to the current system and new economic and social ways of thinking. However, finding an appropriate model to the complex dynamics in one of the most polluting industries in the world is a challenge. Therefore, I’m recommending 3 strategies to approach the issue. All of these strategies (to be explored in the following chapters) are suitable for implementation and they drive change in consumption and production, emphasizing the brand’s strengths and take factors such as, educational value in consideration. They fuel the brand’s flagship identity. Moreover, if implemented, iNDiViDUALS can contribute to the inconclusive evidence that these brands effectively decrease consumption levels, as long as it measures its effects along the way.
METHODOLOGY
In order to deliver a comprehensive advice, I have thoroughly researched existing sufficiency-led businesses — the previously mentioned case studies. From these five case studies, I have derived the components (or strategies) that drive their overall sufficiency philosophy, in relevance to a fashion brand. Most of the strategies (see Table 1) were present in more than one brand. Furthermore, in studying these strategies, I noticed that they largely fell into one of three categories that can be grouped according to the Key Sufficiency Aim.

Table 1 | Overview Cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NUMBER</th>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>KEY SUFFICIENCY AIM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Long &amp; Short-Term Rent (Lana Library)/Filippa K</td>
<td>prolong usage phase, fully diminish production volumes, distribute to multiple end-users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Collection Division (Filippa K)</td>
<td>prolong usage phase, minimize production volumes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>No Expiry Date (Vitase)</td>
<td>avoid built-in obsolescence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Reuse Services (Patagonia) (Filippa K)</td>
<td>prolong usage phase, avoid premature replacement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Stimulate Take-Back (Patagonia) (Filippa K)</td>
<td>prolong usage phase and distribute to multiple end-users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>10 year warranty (Filippa K)</td>
<td>prolong usage phase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>Educational Campaigns - High-Profile Marketing (Patagonia)</td>
<td>promoting sufficiency in surrounding environment, through brand engagement and communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Adaptable Products (Vitase)</td>
<td>prolong usage phase, avoid premature replacement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>Resell Second-Hand (Patagonia)/Filippa K (Lana Library)</td>
<td>distribute garment to multiple end-users, minimize production volumes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to complement these strategies with new (probably not yet applied) ones, I organized a brainstorming session. This was a collaborative session with actors in the fashion industry, INDIVIDUALS coaches and fashion & management students, who had been working on future business modeling in their AMFI career. The session served the purpose of developing new sufficiency strategies building from each participant’s work field and experiences. All newly established strategies (listed in table 2) are more diverse and complete in their outlook. As such, they offer a plentiful base wherein they may be combined. The strategies collection division, educational campaigns, collaborative responsibility and reselling second-hand in collection, had a full overlap with strategies retrieved from the case studies (see table 1), therefore I combined these in the following process.

Table 2 | Overview Brainstorm

In order to complement these strategies with new (probably not yet applied) ones, I organized a brainstorming session. This was a collaborative session with actors in the fashion industry, INDIVIDUALS coaches and fashion & management students, who had been working on future business modeling in their AMFI career. The session served the purpose of developing new sufficiency strategies building from each participant’s work field and experiences. All newly established strategies (listed in table 2) are more diverse and complete in their outlook. As such, they offer a plentiful base wherein they may be combined. The strategies collection division, educational campaigns, collaborative responsibility and reselling second-hand in collection, had a full overlap with strategies retrieved from the case studies (see table 1), therefore I combined these in the following process.

Table 2 | Overview Brainstorm
As previously explained, the brand presents perfect conditions to experiment with sufficiency. Yet, there are certain characteristics within individuals that pose a threat to the implementation of sufficiency-led strategies.

The following are some of the potential threats of implementation:

1. The students aim to develop in a specific job-role, as professionals, after their AMFI career. Therefore, the students need to experience a full production cycle and collection grid in order to develop themselves in all the associated tasks and thus comply to job-roles that are derived from a growth-led business.

2. The brand should maintain its current position in order to not confuse its customer base. If products intended for a luxury premium market are combined with those intended for other demographics, it confuses the customer base and threatens to destabilize the brand’s core personality.

3. The constantly changing generations makes it difficult for individuals to maintain a consistent look and feel due to the continual renewal of product offer. If a strategy would stretch the collection renewal over a longer period, it would contribute to enhancing the aesthetic consistency of the collection.

In order to verify if each strategy complies to these characteristics, I’ve used a performance measurement tool, which ranks each strategy from 1 to 5 stars. It helps to verify if the particular strategy is relevant to individuals and help visualizing how certain strategies could possibly complement each other in order to become more feasible, natural, and impactful.
In order to verify if each strategy complies to these characteristics, I’ve used a performance measurement tool, which ranks each strategy from 1 to 5 stars. It helps to verify if the particular strategy is relevant to iNDiViDUALS and help visualizing how certain strategies could possibly complement each other in order to become more feasible, natural, and impactful. The measurement tool consists of three areas for ranking. The first component measures the sufficiency impact, which can either be lengthening the product lifespan, distributing a garment to more than one end user, etc. All of these factors contribute to moderating resource consumption, yet their impact can be felt in different ways. The second ranking measures the feasibility and to what extent the brand needs to make adjustments to productively and effectively facilitate the strategy. The third component measures the educational value and to what extent the strategy is able to comply to a full production cycle.

Table 2 | Overview Combinations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NR.</th>
<th>NAME STRATEGY</th>
<th>INCLUDING STRATEGIES</th>
<th>KEY SUFFICIENCY AIM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Product Perseverance</td>
<td>Collection Division (Filippa K) 10 year warranty (Filippa K) No Expiry Date (Vitsoe) Repair Services (Patagonia) Reuse Deadstock Reuse Textile Production Leftovers Educational Campaigns - High Profile Marketing (Patagonia)</td>
<td>prolong usage phase through non-seasonal products and repair, consistent price, assuring 10 year long lifetime, eliminate raw material use for unique pieces, strong multilayered product innovation, stimulate conscious buying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Customer Involvement</td>
<td>Co-Creation</td>
<td>Collaborative Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Communal Ownership</td>
<td>Design Pieces - Not Looks</td>
<td>avoid misbuying, distribute singular garment to multiple end-users by temporary possession of item, lengthen usage phase by elevated quality, minimize resource depletion stimulate conscious consumption</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please bear in mind that following scenarios should not be seen as a strict universal set of combinations for all businesses. These 3 bundles are specifically focused on implementation for iNDiViDUALS. If appropriate, they can be taken apart and reconstructed otherwise.
SUGGESTED STRATEGIES
PRODUCT PERSEVERANCE

This path combines seven different strategies so that iNDiViDUALS, centres all its operations onto lengthening the lifespan of garments, while maintaining the appeal of a highly experimental brand. As such, Product Perseverance is the most relevant strategy for iNDiViDUALS to adopt.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUFFICIENCY IMPACT</th>
<th>FEASIBILITY</th>
<th>EDUCATIONAL VALUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>★★★★☆</td>
<td>★★★☆☆</td>
<td>★★★★☆</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This strategy lends two completely different design and production processes that can provide students with a stronger and more holistic understanding of the industry. The strategy works on the basis of a downsized sales collection grid comprising an essential set of garments that can run through the course of each season.

The collection is technically complex in execution, to challenge the students to sharpen their specialized skill sets.

Each succeeding generation will be tasked with working on the continual development of the same set of products so as to ensure consistency in brand outlook, making it more appealing for third parties to purchase. The succeeding generations will continue the work of their predecessors, motivated to make enhancements to the process and the end-result, without drastically altering the aesthetic. **This will ensure continuity in the process of product innovation and eliminate the old dynamic of “product renewal.”**

Filippa K’ non seasonal product range | Front Runners
Source: https://www.filippa-k.com
The non-seasonal collection will cater to pragmatic purchase motivations such as comfort, fit, and convenience. **This will challenge students to think on product designs that would remain current for the next decade even within the constantly changing fashion industry.**

In order for iNDiViDUALS to uphold its elevated quality and durable designs, the brand also offers a 10-year warranty. This warranty provides reassurance that the product will still remain current and of decent quality for the next 10 years. Not only does this enhance the lifespan of the product, it also helps generate customer loyalty. Nevertheless, iNDiViDUALS acknowledges that product quality is to degenerate over time. If that happens within the warranty period, the brand offers free repairs. The free repair services are provided in-house in the sewing room/atelier.

iNDiViDUALS also organizes one repair class for its customers every season. This class stimulates DIY repairs, helps customers get involved with the brand and externalizes the education process of the students.

![Student working in the sewing room | AMFI](https://www.amfi.nl)

The sales collection is one that doesn’t change in its outlook, and as such, all products are non-seasonal and do not expire. Furthermore, the products do not enjoy sales or markdown periods, and as such the **students are challenged every season to ideate economical means of production** so that iNDiViDUALS can invest all its reclaimed costs into the product and indirectly in its customers, allowing iNDiViDUALS to offer products for a fair and consistent retail price.
In order to affirm and retain iNDiViDUALS’ highly experimental and creative brand identity, the brand continues its seasonal offer in the Unique Pieces collection. It maintains its current setup and showcases the brand at its steepest tangible level, and furthermore, it helps iNDiViDUALS establish a collection which is unique each season, which is not inspired by current fashion cycles or trends, but rather from tapping into the current cultural zeitgeist.

The Unique Pieces are primed to cater to customer expressing purchase motivations such as a need for innovative and trendy designs. The collection complements and revitalizes the non-seasonal collection.

In order to minimize environmental impact and avoid resource depletion, iNDiViDUALS utilizes a different source of raw materials for development and production.

iNDiViDUALS uses Deadstock Garments from other fashion brands struggling to sell out their stock. In contrast to second-hand stores, these brands have a high availability of the same items, making it easier for students to create a range of items in the same style and size.
iNDiViDUALS also sources Textile Production Leftovers from suppliers and manufacturers. iNDiViDUALS also collaborates with reverseresources.net, a platform that connects iNDiViDUALS with manufacturers who are open to selling their leftovers. ReverseResources functions as a ‘middleman’ and makes the sale of these materials easier and more convenient. The leftover materials can be purchased at a lower price, and that helps lower the cost of production and retail price.

DOODLAGE

India based fashion brand that sources fabrics which are left unused by other retailers post-cutting. It’s like pieces of a puzzle, these bits and pieces come together, each with its own story.

Since the students are dependent on the availability of associated brands and suppliers’ stock, the process of developing the collection becomes even more challenging.
All of these operations need to be communicated to the brand’s environment and customers. The branders in iNDiViDUALS are, therefore, responsible for provoking and defying the mainstream, thus challenging the status quo and embarking on a disruptive creative process that’s all too necessary in the early stages of becoming conscious of our consumer behavior and its aftermath.

iNDiViDUALS also focuses on under-selling the products, informing the customer that additional products will be added at a later stage due to the non-expiring setup of the collection. As such, iNDiViDUALS curtails impulsive purchases and unnecessary consumerism.
iNDiViDUALS will cut off the Unique Pieces collection and work with a downsized sales collection grid consisting of 5-7 garments. The grid consists of garments that are technically challenging and are open for selection by each generation. **The downsizing frees up space and time for students to develop themselves more holistically** in terms of quality, material use, and design, allowing the collection to be elevated to a high standard.

Each generation would set a bundle of specific customization options for its customers. These options can vary from material alternatives, changes in construction, fit, addition of prints, appliques, etc. The specifically selected set would set the parameters within which the customers may customize the item derived from the seasonal concept. The customization helps iNDiViDUALS to differentiate products from its competitors.
By deriving the garment designs, textiles, trimmings, and customization options from the current Zeitgeist, iNDiViDUALS can maintain a highly experimental creative line that affirms and retains its brand identity. Furthermore, while the students are allowed and encouraged to experiment, they can only do so within the concept of their specifically selected bundle set, which helps the brand retain a sense of coherence and present a unified front as opposed to conform into a creative confusion which would possibly destabilize the iNDiViDUALS’ identity.

iNDiViDUALS would also eliminate the format of the catwalk show and present itself as a trade event whereby the customers can explore — along with the students — all the options for customization available to them. During the trade event, iNDiViDUALS will present tangible prototypes with different combinations of materials, colors, and finishing that would be pre-suggested by the students on their salability and outlook. This would allow the customers to see the actual fit, feel the materials, and to indicate how the materials would go together and how it would come together in reality. This compliments the 3D software and adds an extra layer to the creative process.

CLO3D - Revolutionizes the design process with true-to-life 3D garment simulation. Faster, increased accuracy and expanded design capabilities.
Source: https://www.clo3d.com/
The students develop all styles and customization options in CLO3D software — allowing customers to see a visual representation of the complete garments after the alterations without depleting any resources. After customizing the garment, the customer can switch to a virtual fitting room, which would allow them to see the garment in real-time on their body. If the customer is satisfied with the make and quality of the garment, they can order the garment and make the payment at the allocated desk.

Using the latest AR (augmented reality) technology, virtually try on a variety of outfits through FXMirror
Source: http://www.fxmirror.net/

The use of the 3D technology requires designers and managers to develop a unique skill set, adding yet another complimentary layer to the educational process. Furthermore, the growing attention to 3D and augmented reality allows iNDiViDUALS to prepare its students for the future of fashion.
Once the product is ordered, it is produced on-demand. Since the production is ordered in singular quantities, it needs to be produced at local operating manufacturers. Not only does iNDiViDUALS focus on working with local companies so as to support its immediate surroundings, but it also seeks out socially-focused companies so as to create social value throughout its processes.

Through production-on-demand, iNDiViDUALS fully omits material loss, avoids stock creation, and promotes “needs-based” purchases as opposed to “want-driven” consumerism. However, a drawback to the process of production-on-demand is that the students do not get to experience the complete production cycle as the production of single quantities is seen as sample production. Nevertheless, focusing on the development of the 3D skill set proves to be sufficient substitute.
In order for this strategy to succeed, branders within iNDiViDUALS are tasked with coming up with creative means of communicating iNDiViDUALS’ “sufficiency” belief and the personal service it delivers. This also highlights the sense of individual creativity that is embedded into the very fabric of the customization process, thus ensuring that “iNDiViDUAL” truly lives up to its name. As far as branding is concerned, students are challenged to go against the mainstream standards in brand communication and foster a deeply personal connection with its core target group by sharing personal stories adjusted towards encouraging conscientious and thoughtful consumption.

AirBnB simply provides a platform for customers to promote and book properties, meals, and more. AirBnB is not in possession of products therefore, instead of telling the company’s story, it gets its customers to tell their stories. This is so important to Airbnb that they have a whole section dedicated to “Stories from the Airbnb Community” on their website.

Source: https://www.airbnb.com/community-stories

iNDiViDUALS needs to find a means of suppressing high production costs in order to deliver premium retail price. I personally believe that engaging the inner-circle — both students and teachers — in the creation process can contribute to the success of the strategy. Awareness of the current failures in the industry, a feeling of connectedness to iNDiViDUALS, and a combined understanding of the need for sustainable alternatives — these are the core belief systems that helps encapsulate them within the brand family evermore.
COMMUNAL OWNERSHIP

This path has been constructed in combination with six different strategies with the intent of enabling iNDiViDUALS to center all of its operations to lengthening the durability and utility of its products through elevated quality and by distributing it to multiple end users. The production & design process allows iNDiViDUALS to retain its identity as a highly experimental, but one that is more accessible due to a lower entry-price when renting or reselling. As such, Communal Ownership is the most radical strategy for iNDiViDUALS to adopt.

⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐ SUFFICIENCY IMPACT
⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐ FEASIBILITY
⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐ EDUCATIONAL VALUE

iNDiViDUALS creates a limited set of products every season that serve as the current sales collection. However, these products are also carried over every season in a slightly altered state so as to render them unique and original while still abiding by iNDiViDUALS’ signature aesthetic. The Unique Pieces collection is also continued — reduced in scale and upcycled from second-hand garments — originating either from their own stock or sourced from second-hand stores and collecting companies. These collections are primed to highlight iNDiViDUALS’ experimental and creative streak.

Photo credits: Hans van de Woerd for IKcircuLEER.nl

Source: MEASURING THE DUTCH CLOTHING MOUNTAIN

Sympathy’s staff training volunteers to identify rewearable and non-rewearable garments.
Source: MEASURING THE DUTCH CLOTHING MOUNTAIN
Hunting for second-hand products is a highly educational and enlightening process for the students. It helps them experience and get acquainted with the severity of the current consumption ethos of the clothing industry, it challenges them to work from 3D to 2D, and it provides them with a holistic understanding of the garment in terms of its material, construction, and outlook over time, thus challenging them to design within limitations and broaden their perspectives. As such, it diversifies the production and design process, adding yet another layer to the educational value of the brand.

The reduced collection grid consists of only 4 items. The construction of these selected items is open to interpretation and students are free to determine to what end they’d like to utilize it. The only condition is that the construction must be technically challenging so that the students develop a keen insight on construction and production. The reduction of the collection grid provides students with more space and time to develop themselves in the specifics of the particular item’s material, outlook, and construction. It is an intensive approach, as opposed to an extensive one, which fits in well with the brand's educational clout. Furthermore, asking the students to work intensively on a smaller set of products also works well with the brand’s current market size, elevates the quality of the finished products, and helps avoid inventory stockpiling.
The elevated quality of the products further enables them to be worn several times, thus enjoying a longer life-cycle. As such, customers have the opportunity to rent the products either long-term or short-term, or to purchase it, or return it later if they lose interest in the product. Customers who choose to rent the product pay a certain percentage of the retail price, which is determined by the product and the length of the rental period. The rental allows the pieces to be obtained at a lower price because iNDiViDUALS can, over time, capture the value of the item. The lower entry price is beneficial to the inner-circle and it renders them into strong contributors to the strategy’s success.

Furthermore, iNDiViDUALS also offers its customers the opportunity to return a purchased product — should they lose interest in it over time. As such, iNDiViDUALS can ensure the longevity of a product through its complementary resell service. iNDiViDUALS actively encourages its customers to return products — as opposed to simply disposing of them — by offering a cost-free long-term rental for any item available. The customer also has the option of retaining the rental-credit and redeeming it during the following seasons. The returned products can be inducted into the rental inventory or for second-hand purchase. Therefore, iNDiViDUALS can offer a wide product variety for rent or sale.
Once the products are returned — either after a purchase or at the end of a rental period — the students thoroughly inspect, recondition, and repair them to prepare them for a new rental period or sale. The repair and reconditioning helps the students develop a keen knowledge of the quality and construction performance of the product over time. The information gathered is then mapped out and handed over to the succeeding generations, empowering them to take the information into account, thus facilitating a constant elevation in quality from generation-to-generation.

One of the primary risks of the strategy is that it could lead to an accumulation of inventory. As such, iNDiViDUALS can collaborate with Lena Library, or other similar libraries across the country, to expand their rental model and reach a broader support base. Another means of avoiding inventory stockpiling is to upcycle the stock into a new Unique Pieces collection so as to imbue the dead-stock with new purpose.

Lena Library’s Store
Source: http://www.lena-library.com/
The branders can focus on the development of an online renting catalogue, which can, in turn, be shared over multiple online platforms, thus increasing customer engagement. Furthermore, an online “iNDiViDUALS’ Library” can also be established wherein they can share personal stories of individuals who have won and rented garments or other similar stories. This can help develop a personal connection with the brand, thus fostering a strong customer community.

The branders are challenged, through strong marketing and brand communication, to emphasize iNDiViDUALS’ elevated quality and its rental and resale components. Their aim is to de-stigmatize the purchase of second-hand products, drive popularity, and engage with the customers by displaying/showcasing current problems with the fashion industry and promote conscientious consumerism.
I have been able to deliver a set of promising, diverse, and potentially-working strategies. The strategies selected are the most ‘natural’ combinations because of my previous experience working at iNDiViDUALS. The combinations aim for sufficiency in different forms because I aimed at having a diverse, yet comprehensive, offer for iNDiViDUALS. Each strategy has its own intentions for iNDiViDUALS and focuses on different sorts of sufficiency principles. I recommend iNDiViDUALS to implement one of the proposed strategies and thereafter measure the outcomes in order to see if they are in accordance with described expectations as highlighted in each strategy.

The implementation of the strategies would refuel iNDiViDUALS’ flagship identity and align it with the overall sustainable beliefs which drives Amsterdam Fashion Institute and all its educational programmes. Moreover, it would contribute to develop knowledge on sufficiency and its implementation, and its impact could potentially reverberate through the entire fashion sector. The proposed strategies should not be seen as a strict universal set of combinations for iNDiViDUALS. Each strategy can be taken apart and re-combined. If interested, please read the accompanying Research Report which elaborates on every strategy in order to construct new combinations.

Additionally, I have contributed to a positive base for iNDiViDUALS to further explore these emerging business strategies and measuring their future effects across multiple channels in order to fuel change within the industry.
REFERENCES


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