

Over three-quarters of UK fashion shoppers switch, avoid or boycott brands because of their environmental policies, says Kantar

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- Younger fashion buyers more likely to switch or boycott brands

- Over 70% of consumers agree the response from businesses to the environmental damage being caused to our planet is 'too little, too late'

New consumer research published today by Kantar (<https://www.kantar.com>), the world's leading data, insights and consulting firm, reveals that over three-quarters (76%) of UK fashion shoppers have, in the last 12 months, switched, avoided or boycotted buying certain fashion labels, or would consider doing so in the future, based on brands' environmental policies.

Kantar questioned over 1,200 UK consumers between the ages of 16 and 65+ about their concern over a range of environmental issues, their purchasing decisions based on a brand's sustainability credentials, environmental responsibility and whether, as a consumer, they had ever decided to boycott buying a product or switch to another brand based on its environmental reputation.

Brand loyalty is lowest among the youngest age group of 16-24 year-olds with 83% saying they have switched or might do so, with more males (22%) switching or boycotting brands than females (16%).

Responses differ considerably among generations too, with over a third (35%) of Millennials saying they have avoided buying, or decided to choose a different brand over the last 12 months, compared to only 8% of Baby Boomers. However almost half (49%) of this generation of 55-65+ year-olds indicated that while they hadn't switched or boycotted brands in the last year because of their environmental credentials, they might consider doing so in the future – the highest among all age groups.

Harsh working conditions, environmental pollution and the overuse of packaging are some of the issues consumers think carefully about before purchasing clothes.

Much more work needs to be done by the fashion industry when it comes to publicising the positive work it is doing to address the environmental problems resulting from the throw-away, 'fast fashion' culture we live in today, say 72% of consumers. This sentiment is high across all regions (>69%) with more shoppers in Greater London (76%) agreeing. Only 13% consider this issue unimportant.

Mark Chamberlain, managing director of Brand, Kantar UK said: "Responsible living is being driven by cross-generational groups of 'woke' consumers that look towards inspiring brand heroes as change leaders. Governments and organisations are being forced to listen and respond to consumers' demands for greater transparency as businesses strive to become more purposeful."

Almost 90% of respondents surveyed agree that brands need to take more responsibility for the waste they produce and the impact it has on our environment. This sentiment was high across all age groups (>82%) but highest among those aged 65 and over (92%).

Three-quarters of shoppers agree that, due to inaction from many of the world's governments, they want brands to act as forces for positive change in our society. However, when questioned about their response, over 70% of all consumers agreed that efforts by businesses to protect the environment are 'too little, too late', with younger generations of Millennials agreeing most with this statement (78%).

Environmental concerns:

Consumers ranked global warming as their number one environmental concern (25%), followed by the overuse of plastic and other forms of packaging (18%) and then deforestation and the loss of biodiversity (14%). They appeared less concerned about the depletion of the ozone layer (4%), extraction of fossil fuels from the earth and natural resource depletion (5%), overfishing of our seas (6%) and household/industrial waste (8%).

These and many other of today's environmental issues are caused, in part, by a lack of responsibility taken by some of the world's leading brands, say 83% of consumers; a sentiment expressed most among 25-34-year-olds (88%).

Chamberlain added: "The rise in responsibility and conscious consumerism is being influenced by a top-down approach as the consumer voice grows and pushes forward environmental and social agendas.

"Consumers now expect the fashion industry to be driven by some direction other than simply making a profit. These values are fast becoming key assets in helping boost brand value whilst projecting a positive corporate image, and by doing so businesses can demonstrate a clear sense of purpose. This is what consumers are now looking for in today's brands, and this preference will only intensify as the next generation comes of age. Purpose-led fashion brands enjoy stronger growth and a deeper connection with consumers."

UK-based Finisterre, a B Corp certified clothing line, is an example of a fashion brand that can earn greater trust from consumers due to its genuine commitment to becoming more transparent and respect for the environment. The most-loved brands will be those that attempt to achieve a zero-carbon footprint by re-thinking operations and finding solutions that are fully sustainable both for the environment and the business bottom line.

Other key trends:

- Plastic problem - Over half (53%) of consumers rank the overuse of plastic and other types of packaging as one of their top three environmental concerns. More women than men are concerned about it (58% v 49%), with 45-64 year-olds expressing most concern across all age groups (60%).

- Buying decisions – 82% of 25-34 year-olds say they sometimes or always check a brand's commitment towards sustainability, the environment and saving the planet before making a purchase.

- Taking responsibility – Almost 90% of consumers agree that brands need to take more responsibility for the waste their products create and the impact it has on the environment, with 50% 'strongly

agreeing'. This sentiment is strong across all age groups (>82%) and is highest among the 65+ cohort (92%).

- Younger generations – Those most concerned with the issue of global warming are 16-24 year-olds, the youngest age group overall, with 65% ranking it as one of their top three concerns; of those, over one-third said it was their number one concern.

- Boycotting brands - 77% of consumers said they had boycotted buying certain products, had switched brands in the last 12 months or were thinking of doing so because of a brand's environmental policies.

About Kantar (<https://www.kantar.com>)

Kantar is the world's leading data, insights and consulting company. We understand more about how people think, feel, shop, share, vote and view than anyone else. Combining our expertise in human understanding with advanced technologies, Kantar's 30,000 people help the world's leading organisations succeed and grow.

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