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## **ATTACHMENT 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE**

The interview guide was originally written in Norwegian, the mother tongue of the interviewer and all interviewees. I have translated the text to English.

### **1. INTRODUCTION:**

“I am a student from BI Norwegian Business School. I am currently writing a bachelor’s degree in the field of digital marketing. Therefore, I wish to conduct an interview with you. I wish to discover how Norwegian fashion companies conduct and measure sustainable marketing. I want to achieve this by exploring how your company conducts sustainability, its competitive advantages and limitations as well as how you measure the benefits of sustainable marketing. The questions in this interview are open-ended, which means that there are no right or wrong answers. I am interested in your company’s honest opinion and description of sustainability in the fashion industry. The interview will be audio recorded, but you will remain anonymous, and the recording will be destroyed 03.06.22 at the latest.”

### **2. GENERAL QUESTIONS**

#### *Demographic questions*

1. “How long has your company conducted business?”
2. “Which country or countries do you operate in?”
3. “What segment does your company operate in?”
4. “Which tool does your company utilize in your digital marketing?”

### **3. SPECIFIC QUESTIONS**

#### ***RQ1: What is the role of digital marketing in the fashion industry?***

1. «Does your company utilize digital marketing?»
2. “Why does your company market itself digitally?”
3. “What are the benefits of utilizing digital marketing instead of traditional advertising?”
4. “What are the challenges of digital marketing and big data?”

#### ***RQ2: What is the role of brand equity in the fashion industry?***

#### ***RQ 2 1: Is branding important in the fashion industry?***

5. “What aspect of your company do you think is the most important to your customers?”

*RQ 2 2: Which variables are used to measure brand equity in the fashion industry?*

6. “How does your company measure brand equity in google analytics?”
7. “Which advantages has your company experienced from having a strong brand online?”

***RQ3: How do fashion companies conduct sustainable marketing?***

*RQ3 1: Do fashion brands prioritize sustainability?*

8. “How do you view the relationship between marketing and sustainability in your company?”
9. “How does your company market itself, and what does the marketing focus on?”
10. “What is sustainability to your company?”

*RQ3 2: How do fashion companies measure the effect of sustainable marketing online?*

11. “Why/why not does your company focus on sustainable marketing?”
12. “How does your company measure the effects of sustainable marketing online?”

***RQ4: Does sustainable marketing increase brand equity?***

13. “Why is sustainability important to your company?”
14. “What benefits does sustainable marketing yield for your company? Feel free to discuss all of them: economic and more abstract.”

***RQ5: What is required for you to increase your company’s sustainable marketing efforts?***

15. «What is required for you to increase your company’s sustainable marketing efforts?»

## **ATTACHMENT 2: CONSENT FORM**

The consent form is written in Norwegian, the native language of the interviewer and all interviewees. For the evaluation of my thesis, I have translated the content to English. Furthermore, the form contained information that compromised the identity of the author. This information is marked “redacted” and will be produced upon request.

Do you wish to take part in the following research project?

**“Sustainable Marketing Online: How Do Norwegian Fashion Companies Conduct Sustainable Marketing Online and Does the Practice Increase Brand Equity?”**

This form is a request for your participation in a research project aimed to describe how fashion companies conduct and measure sustainable marketing in the Norwegian fashion industry. The form provides you with relevant information for you and your participation in the study.

### **Purpose of the research**

The study is being conducted in relation to a bachelor thesis in digital marketing.

The purpose of the research is to describe how companies in the Norwegian fashion industry conduct and measure sustainable marketing because of the industry’ position as one of the most polluting industries in the world. Not only was the fashion industry accountable for 10% of global emissions in 2017 (Charpail, 2017), but the emergence of fast fashion poses further environmental threats. The relevance of sustainability in the industry is echoed by a surge in the usage of the term sustainable fashion in literature. By analyzing empirical data from literature on subjects such as sustainability, digital marketing, web-analytics and brand equity, the study aims to describe the practices of Norwegian fashion companies as it pertains to sustainable marketing and the measuring of its effects.

With this in mind, I arrived at the research problem of **“How do Norwegian fashion companies conduct sustainable marketing online and does the practice increase brand equity?”**

To solve the problem, the following research questions will be answered in the study:

RQ1: What is the role of digital marketing in the fashion industry?

RQ2: What is the role of brand equity in the fashion industry?

RQ2 1: Is branding important in the fashion industry?

RQ2 2: Which variables are used to measure brand equity in the fashion industry?

RQ3: How do fashion companies conduct sustainable marketing?

RQ3 1: Do fashion brands prioritize sustainability?

RQ3 2: How do fashion companies measure the effect of sustainable marketing online?

RQ4: Does sustainable marketing increase brand equity?

RQ5: What is required to increase the sustainable marketing efforts of the fashion industry?

### **Responsible parties**

Auke Hunneman (counselor) at BI Norwegian Business School, Campus Oslo

### **Why is your participation wanted?**

You fulfill the following criteria:

16. You represent a Norwegian company
17. You represent a company in the fashion industry
18. You are based in the Norwegian market
19. You are a leading actor in the fashion industry

### **What does your participation in the study entail?**

The duration of the study is 45 minutes – 1 hour. The study will be conducted in one sitting.

### **Voluntary participation**

Participation in this study is voluntary. You can opt out of the study at any moment without providing a reason. All information about you and the company you represent will be anonymized in accordance with privacy regulations in Norway. If you choose to opt out of the study, this action will not cause any negative consequences for you or your company.

### **Your information and how it will be stored and processed**

Your information will explicitly be used for the purposes described in this consent form. All information about you and the company you represent will be anonymized in accordance with privacy regulations in Norway.

- Your information will be processed by the leader of the research project, **REDACTED**.
- You and your company's identity contact information. Your identity will be replaced with "R1-R4" on a document separated from other data.

You and your company will not be identifiable upon the publication of the research as the project aims to describe the practices of your company. Your company name is therefore irrelevant and of no empirical importance. Your company's business model, size and market position will, however, be included in the final product.

Upon the completion of the study, which is estimated to 03.06.2022, you and your company's information will be permanently deleted.

### **Your rights**

As long as you are identifiable in the data material, you have the right to:

- Insight into the information registered about you and your company.
- Have the information corrected
- Have the information deleted
- Receive a copy of you and your company's information
- Make complaints about the study to the Norwegian Data Protection Authorities.

### **My right to process your information**

I will process your information based on your written consent.

### **Further questions:**

Further questions may be directed towards:

**REDACTED** (student). E-mail: **REDACTED**. Phone: **REDACTED**

Auke Hunneman (counselor). E-mail: [auke.hunneman@bi.no](mailto:auke.hunneman@bi.no). Phone:

NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS, by e-mail  
(personverntjenester@nsd.no) or Phone: (+47) 53211500.

Best regards,

**REDACTED**

Auke Hunneman

*Student*

*Counselor*

I hereby consent to the terms and conditions describes in this form. I wish to partake in the study “**Sustainable Marketing Online: How Do Norwegian Fashion Companies Conduct Sustainable Marketing Online and Does it Increase Brand Equity?**”.

Signature:

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## **ATTACHMENT 3: INTERVIEW NOTES**

**1. Introduction:** No notes were taken from the introduction

**2. General questions.** Of no specific interest to the study. These questions were asked to prepare the respondents for the line of questioning in the specific part of interview. The responses were, however, used in the description of the respondents in the thesis. Notes were taken in the form of keywords.

**“How long has your company conducted business?”**

**R1:** Over 20 years

**R2:** 7 years

**R3:** 5 years

**R4:** 25 years

**“Which country or countries do you operate in?”**

**R1:** Norway

**R2:** Norway

**R3:** Norway

**R4:** Norway

**“What segment does your company operate in?”**

**R1:** Google Analytics

**R2:** Google Analytics

**R3:** Google Analytics

**R4:** Google Analytics

**“Which tool does your company utilize in your digital marketing?”**

**R1:** Fast fashion

**R2:** Somewhere between- fast and slow fashion

**R3:** Slow fashion

**R4:** Fast fashion



## **SPECIFIC QUESTIONS**

### **RQ1: What is the role of digital marketing in the fashion industry?**

#### **1. “Does your company utilize digital marketing?”**

**R1:** Yes, it’s the only way to do marketing these days

**R2:** Yes, absolutely

**R3:** Yes, in many ways it is the industry standard nowadays.

**R4:** Yes, we do. We were early adopters and at the moment we are leading in the Norwegian fashion industry

#### **2. «Why does your company market itself digitally?»**

**R1:** In my opinion, digital marketing has in many ways become the standard for all businesses that wish to become visible in the fashion industry. Additionally, digital marketing provides a plethora of advantages by allowing us to collect information about our customers. For example, we can use this information to measure the effects and increase the efficiency of our various campaigns, launches and so on.

**R2:** Because it is the only way to keep up with the competition of the fashion industry. Advertising tiredness demands new and innovative approaches to marketing, which digital marketing continuously provides.

**R3:** Even though we currently don’t have a large number of employees at the moment, we prioritized hiring a digital marketing early on. Digital marketing has allowed us, as a relatively small clothing brand, to achieve a position in the Norwegian market where we are able to compete with “the giants”. By analyzing digital customer-data we are able to target the market effectively. Lastly, it is industry-standard to market a fashion company digitally.

**R4:** Digital marketing is arguably the name of the game these days. Not only do we need to utilize digital marketing to keep up with our competition, but the increase in advertising tiredness has made us find new ways of reaching our

customers, which digital marketing allows for. We were early adopters of digital marketing, and we are one of the leading companies in the Norwegian fashion industry, and spend a lot of money on it.

### **3. “What are the benefits of utilizing digital marketing instead of traditional marketing?”**

**R1:** We have seen an enormous increase in the effectiveness of our marketing. This is because we are able to more accurately reach our different target audience with tailored marketing. We also experience an increased effect of trend-forecasting by combining information from the elite in Italy with big data. Our products have never before had this much potential for commercial success as they do today. These factors snowball into an increase in economic performance, which has led to our strong position in the market.

**R2:** For us, digital marketing has played an important role in differentiating us from the intense competition in the market on a national basis. Additionally, we have seen a bigger reach and engagement on our marketing which increases our marketing efficiency considerably. We achieve these effects through Facebook ads, Google ads and similar tools that allow us to target our marketing on exactly the target audience we desire. Lastly, we have been able to improve our product design process, causing an increased commercial success rate for our products

**R3:** As previously mentioned, digital marketing is industry standard. Our digital marketer has worked together with our customers to develop a set of variables that characterize our customers and people who share the same passion for sustainability. This has allowed us to target our marketing specifically towards these people, increasing our sales considerably – something we are very happy about.

**R4:** As we touched on in the previous question, digital marketing is the industry standard as far as we’re concerned. We also see that the advertisement tiredness is increasing among consumers, and we therefore have to innovate in our marketing. Digital marketing has allowed us to differentiate from the increasing competition

in the Norwegian fashion industry and, at the same time, increase the efficiency of our marketing by targeting pre-defined target audiences. We have also experienced that digital marketing allows us to make more specific and measurable decisions in our product design.

#### **4. “What are the challenges of digital marketing and big data?”**

The purpose of question four was to explore the limitations of big data as described by empirical evidence.

**R1:** In relation to our digital marketing, the main challenge we face revolves around personal privacy concerns among our customers. In fact, we have recently been under scrutiny from certain customers that are especially interested in privacy.

**R2:** As it pertains to our digital marketing activities, our customers often voice concerns about personal privacy. Recently, we have numerous inquiries about the legality of our usage of big data. We strongly believe this to be the product of a lack of knowledge on the customer side of things”.

**R3:** Digital marketing is relatively new, and the technology is ever-evolving. There is an understandable skepticism to digital marketing in the market in regard to privacy.

**R4:** The number one problem of digital marketing and big data for us, is the skepticism of our customers in regard to personal privacy. We were even reported to the authorities on one occasion due to some of our marketing online. Without probable cause, of course.

#### **RQ2: Is brand equity important in the fashion industry?**

#### **5. “What aspect of your company do you think is the most important to your customers?”**

**R1:** The fashion industry in Norway consists of a number of competitors. The “giants” that operate withing the fast fashion segment are most threatening. Due to

strong competition, many options and low switching costs, our brand differentiates us in the market and justifies our position in the market to the customer. Additionally, fashion is a form of self-expression. It is an important tool for showing the world who you are. Through marketing, we have managed to create a community around our brand, and as a result many of our customers identify with us. We experience that they want to show other members of our community that they too are a part of it.

**R2:** We operate in an industry that is characterized by intense competition and a lot of options for the customer. Additionally, the average fashion consumer is highly price sensitive and oblivious to production processes and such that may increase our price points. Therefore, it's important to possess a strong brand that differentiates our company from our competitors whilst high brand equity enables our customers can establish a relationship with our brand. We wish to be a part of our customer's lives. We have also experienced success with our brand community, and we experience that some of our customers wish to represent our brand to the world.

**R3:** Much of our success has come from our sustainable positioning as a brand. The customer is met with a lot of options in the current fashion market, and we are certain that by shopping our brand, our customers feel like they signal to the world that they care about our planet.

**R4:** To us, our brand is undoubtedly the most important aspect of our business. The fashion industry is characterized by intense competition, and the casual fashion consumer is often unaware of the material specifications and production methods that may lead to higher prices. They therefore have low switching costs when it comes to which clothing brands they buy from. This is especially the case for our more casual customers. Therefore, we have to differentiate ourselves from our competitors, which a strong brand is a great tool for. By having high brand equity, we reap a number of benefits.

**RQ2: Which variables are used to measure brand equity online?**

**6. "How does your company measure brand equity in google analytics?"**

**R1:** We have developed a list of relevant parameters that measure our brand in Google Analytics. We are especially interested in New and Returning customers, Repurchase rate, Traffic generated from organic searches, Average session duration and Keywords associated with our brand.

**R2:** To measure brand equity in google analytics, we utilize a set of parameters that our talented marketers have developed. These are: New and Returning customers, Bounce rate, Organic traffic sources, Repurchase rate, Keywords and demographic variables such as Region and Language

**R3:** In collaboration with our digital marketer, we have developed a set of parameters that we feel measure our brand equity in a way suitable for our brand. We focus on the brand loyalty and – association aspects of brand equity. These are: Retuning customers, Conversion- and Repurchase rate, Average session duration, Different sources of Organic traffic and Keywords associated with our brand.

**R4:** Through trial and error, our marketing department has developed a set of parameters that we feel conceptualizes brand equity well. These parameters are conversion- and repurchase rate, new and returning customers, Organic traffic sources, Average session duration, Bounce rate, Demographic parameters and last, but not least, Keywords associated with our brand.

**7. «Which advantages has you company experiences from having a strong brand online?»**

**R1:** From having a strong brand, we have mainly been able to differentiate ourselves from our many competitors. At the same time, we have seen an improvement in our economic performance due to increased customer loyalty as a result of our high brand equity. We have also been able to cut down on our ad-spending because we have high awareness in the market.

**R2:** We have been able to make our mark in the industry and thereby differentiate us from the intense competition. Additionally, we have achieved high awareness

in the market as a result of our strong brand. This has allowed us to be less aggressive in our marketing, allowing us to cut down on what we spend on marketing. We also see that our customers build relationships to our brand because of high brand equity, which in turn result in an increase in customer loyalty.

**R3:** Undoubtedly, the biggest advantage we have experienced from having a strong brand with high brand equity, is customer loyalty. We have seen that our customers feel connected to us as a brand, and as a result, they buy almost exclusively from us.

**R4:** From our strong brand, we have experienced a plethora of benefits. Our customer's loyalty drastically increased in tandem with our brand equity. At the same time, we have been able to cut advertising costs because we are pretty well known in the market at this point. We have also seen an increase in our customer's satisfaction and thus -loyalty as a result of our high brand equity.

**RQ3: How do fashion companies conduct sustainable marketing?**

**8. "How do you view the relationship between marketing and sustainability in your company?"**

**R1:** We live in a society driven by consumption, and we have to keep up with the increasing demand. We do realize that there is a fundamental conflict between the role of marketing: to increase sales, and sustainability. However, we believe that change has to occur more urgently in different parts of our supply chain, for example in the factories used by our suppliers and such.

**R2:** We see that people buy more, and that this development is here to stay. We realize that we have a responsibility when it comes to stopping this trend, but we

don't know how to do this in an effective way that is beneficial to us. We conduct sustainability, but we need more information on the subject of sustainable marketing to make calculated decisions on how to tackle this.

**R3:** The fashion industry is one of the most pollution in the world, which we are painfully aware of. In our opinion, the responsibility to put sustainability as a main priority falls on us as a clothing brand. Marketing and sustainability is a paradox that absolutely needs to be explored thoroughly because marketing stimulates sales whilst sustainability encourages the lesser consumption of textiles.

**R4:** We are fully aware of our responsibility to reduce our environmental footprint in the fashion industry. However, I am not sure that the main problem lies with the marketing of fashion. We are of course aware of the conflict between marketing and sustainability, which encourages lesser consumption of fashion. Currently, the benefits of making changes in other parts of our supply chain, such as supplier demands, using sustainable materials and so on is much better documented than the benefits of sustainable marketing.

## **9. “How does your company market itself, and what does the marketing focus on?”**

**R1:** We market ourselves digitally, of course. We also use more traditional channels to cover all of our customer segments. aims to inspire our customers and inform them about trends. We also try to motivate them to buy our products. We produce large in large volumes with a high tempo, something that requires us to maintain a high rotation speed in our warehouses. The practical implications of this is that our marketing prioritizes sales. In the context of sustainability, we can't claim for certain to have increased our sales in the periods where we have attempted to implement a sustainable message in our marketing.

**R2:** Like most other companies, we market ourselves digitally. Throughout the last 5 years, we have gradually distanced ourselves from traditional advertising, and increased our digital marketing activities. Our communication aims to motivate and inspire our customers to purchase our products. We make clothing of a high quality, and therefore attempt to promote a more long-term view of fashion to reduce our environmental footprint.

**R3:** Because we have built our brand on sustainability, it permeates through all of our actions – also our digital marketing. We promote responsible consumption, the versatility of our clothing, repairing destroyed clothes and everything else related to sustainability. We try to inspire our customers and do so by tapping into the good feeling of being sustainable.

**R4:** Because of our size, we deem it necessary to market ourselves in all channels: both digital and traditional to reach all of our customers. We actively use the latest techniques and software for digital marketing and AI and see good results from this. We run a large number of ads in the span of a day, which has given us a better capacity to focus on sustainability than most of our competitors. We especially focus on sustainability in digital channels, because this is where our younger customer segments can be reached. These are the segments that we aim to reach with our sustainable marketing. We focus on inspiring our customers to dress well and at the same time act sustainably. We have also launched some more abstract marketing campaigns with a focus on transparency in our production processes.

#### **10. “What is sustainability to your company?”**

**R1:** I immediately think of words like branding, sustainability, responsible consumption.

**R2:** When I think of sustainable marketing for my company, I think about CSR, branding, customer satisfaction and a clean conscience.



**R3:** Words that come to mind are urgent, inevitable, sustainability, branding, CSR and responsible consumption.

**R4:** I think about transparency, competitive advantage, branding, goodwill, relationship building and lots more.

**11. “Why does/ does not your company focus on sustainable marketing?”**

**R1:** We focus on sustainability to a certain degree because of its branding capabilities and because we want to be on our customer’s good side.

**R2:** We focus on sustainability because of the branding capabilities of it. Additionally, we care about making a contribution towards reversing climate change

**R3:** We feel an internal need to correct the mistakes of the industry, one garment at a time. We care about the planet and wish to promote a sustainable approach to fashion – both to our customers and our competitors.

**R4:** We care about reducing the environmental footprint of our industry. At the same time, we can’t deny the branding capabilities of this sustainable focus. Because we are one of the most polluting industries in the world, we have a duty to do our part.

**RQ4: Which variables are used by fashion companies to measure the effect of sustainable marketing online?**

**12. “How does your company measure the effects of sustainable marketing online?”**

**R1:** We do not have a specific strategy for measuring the effect of our sustainable marketing efforts. However, we have on earlier occasions focused on parameters related to branding.

**R2:** Due to a lack of research on the area, we do not currently have specific practices for measuring sustainable marketing. We therefore explore branding-related parameters in google analytics because there are more documented results within this dimension. We are also interested in more traditional parameters such as sales.

**R3:** When we measure the effect of our sustainable marketing, we look at the same parameters that describe our brand and its performance. Customer loyalty is especially interesting to us. Brand awareness is also important.

**R4:** We mainly focus on the branding aspect of sustainable marketing because this has a lot of support from research. We therefore investigate the changes in customer loyalty, customer acquisition and revenue. We also explore whether or not sustainable key words drive substantial amounts traffic to our website. In other words: we use the same metrics as we do for brand equity.

**RQ5: Does sustainable marketing increase brand equity?**

**13. «What benefits does sustainable marketing yield for your company? Feel free to discuss all of them: economic and more abstract.**

**R1:** On the efforts that we have made, we have actually ended up seeing an increase in new and returning customers, which has resulted in increased sales. However, we have not conducted enough of these projects to claim that this is a direct result of sustainable marketing. In the period, we also uncovered that that our brand began to be associated with keywords related to sustainability, a fact that points to a positive effect on our brand. In the long term, this effect has helped differentiate our brand in the market. We also saw improvements across all of our Google Analytics parameters.

**R2:** Like we spoke about in the previous question, we measure the effect of our sustainable marketing through parameters related to branding. In the periods where we have focused on sustainability in our marketing, we have experienced an increase in both new and returning customers. This indicates that sustainability

has an increasing effect on our brand equity by increasing awareness of and loyalty to our brand. I cannot for certain state that sustainable marketing is the sole reason for this. We also saw that our brand appeared in more sustainability themed searches, which indicated a green shift in our brand associations and thus our differentiation.

**R3:** We look at branding related parameters in google analytics when measuring our sustainable marketing, like many other brands. We have discovered that an increased prioritization of sustainability in our marketing has increased our new customers, mostly because we rank highly in searches for sustainable fashion. Additionally, we have seen a tremendous customer loyalty due to a high amount of returning customers. Sustainable marketing has undoubtedly strengthened our brand associations in the direction of sustainability and brand equity substantially, differentiating our brand in the market.”

**R4:** Historically, we have seen an increase in our brand related parameters, i.e., customer loyalty, revenue and keywords that drive traffic. When it comes to these parameters, we saw a steep increase in all of these when we first implemented sustainable marketing. This indicates an increase in brand awareness and -loyalty. Furthermore, we saw a shift in the keywords associated with our brands. These became more sustainable in theme. These benefits have now reached some sort of plateau, but we still see positive benefits from sustainable marketing, just more gradual.

**RQ6: If presented with tangible benefits for brand equity, are fashion companies willing to increase their sustainable marketing efforts?**

**«Hva må til for å øke din bedrifts bærekraftige markedsføringsinnsats?»**

**R1:** To justify an increased focus on sustainability in our marketing, we need to see documented, economic benefits of doing so. At the end of the day, we are a business with shareholders and employees, and our task is to make money and satisfy our customers by selling our product to them. We do not wish to tie up cost in projects without good arguments for doing so. Lastly, innovation often occurs

in the production of fashion garments in our industry, so this is also a premise for increasing our sustainable focus.

**R2:** Naturally, we care about our planet, and we wish to contribute in whatever way we can to its wellbeing. However, it is obvious that we need economic incentives to increase our efforts. If this is the case, we are very interested in doing so.

**R3:** Sustainability is the core of our brand. Because of this, we do not have a cynical view on an increase in our sustainable marketing efforts. We are driven by a desire to do as much as we can for the environment. The sustainability term is, however, so much more than just the environment. We therefore think it is important to take care of our employees and their families as a sustainable measure. Because of this, we have to make enough money to keep our company afloat and feed our employees. An increase in sustainable efforts therefore make sense: it needs to be profitable to a certain extent, but it is not in our interest to make as much money as possible.

**R4:** Even though sustainability plays a big role in our values, we are also a company with employees. These employees have families to feed. However, we have motivated our marketing department to keep themselves updated on the latest within marketing research, especially as it pertains to sustainability and its benefits for a clothing company. For example, research has found that sustainability has substantially more popularity among fashion customers now than it did 5-10 years ago. This has motivated us to increase our sustainable efforts. In other words, we are very open to increasing our sustainable marketing efforts as long as it can yield has documented results for our brand.