



# WHO MADE MY CLOTHES?

How Ingredient Branding can help conscious consumers to know more about the clothes they buy and make better purchase decisions.

## Whitepaper

July, 2016

Ljubljana, Slovenia

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## ABSTRACT

Fashion Revolution, a UK based non-profit Community Interest Company has recently gained momentum with their movement *Who made my clothes* and its *Fashion Revolution* movement. Their aim is to bring the fashion value chain together to raise awareness of the true cost of fashion, show the world that change is possible, and celebrate all those involved in creating a more sustainable future. But long before that, various companies, agencies and non-profit organizations have launched labels, initiatives or products that enable consumers to buy fair fashion and textile products. Be it **fair** to nature, resources, people, society or environment. At least as much as possible in a world, where textile waste is still the second largest contributor to global waste.

## INTRODUCTION

Consumers question the source of their clothing more and more. They want answers to questions like: From which source is the fabric? Under which conditions was the garment made? All in all, who made my clothes and how? Ingredient Brands can help to answer these questions up front and lead consumers to better purchase decisions. Ingredient Brands, especially in the areas of services and quality labels, evolved greatly in the past and provide an excellent tool to support the selection process of the consumers.

## ESTABLISHED INGREDIENT BRANDS AND NEWCOMERS IN FASHION

There are a number of well-established Ingredient Brands in the fashion and garments industry helping consumers to make better decisions. Some of them like those shown in Exhibit 1 are recognized standards or indicating a certain responsibility in the way a product was made or the suppliers or workers were treated. Consumers have started to learn specific brand promises and they start to know what performance and responsibility to expect from each particular label.



*Logos of established Ingredient Brands  
Exhibit 1*

On the material and product side we see as well a very dynamic development over the past decade. The ECONYL<sup>®</sup> brand for example stands for regenerated nylon where in an innovative process polyamide waste from discarded fish nets is eliminated, thousands of barrels of crude oil are saved, tons of CO2 emissions are avoided and a staggering amount of processing energy is saved. Being around since 2013, the product is getting more and more featured as an Ingredient Brand, even in most prominent brands such as ADIDAS<sup>®</sup> Swimwear or Levi's<sup>®</sup> Jeans.



*Co-Branding ECONYL<sup>®</sup>*  
*Exhibit 2*

The owners of the recycled Polyester brand BIONIC<sup>®</sup> brand supported the foundation of the Parley for the Oceans movement and their cooperation with A-brands such as ADIDAS<sup>®</sup> and G-Star Raw<sup>®</sup> created huge public interest. These products shown in Exhibit 3 do not only good to the environment, but achieve -on top of the huge gain on brand image- a significant price premium and high sell-out rates for the host brand. So they meet the triple bottom-line philosophy to be socially, environmentally and financially attractive.



*Co-Branding BIONIC®  
Exhibit 3*



## WELL-KNOWN INGREDIENT BRANDS CONVEY TRUST

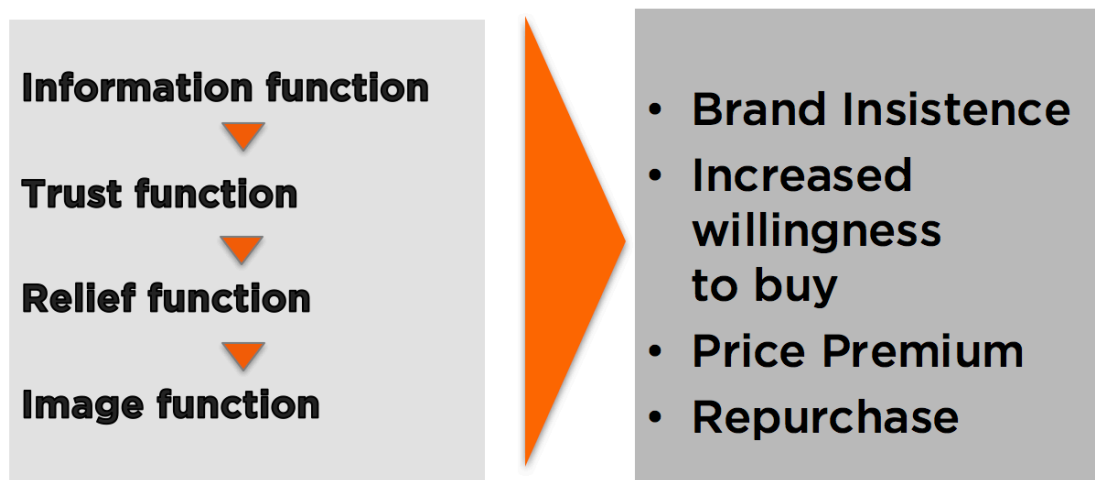
From our experience working with Ingredient Brands for more than 15 years, we know that consumers trust Ingredient Brands in many cases as a seal of quality and trust. This has been proven for example by our 2014 representative consumer study, which included 1.800 consumers in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. While a vast majority of consumers associated a well-known Ingredient Brand with long-standing benefits such as higher quality (91%) and technological innovation (90%), **49%** of all participants already considered **Ingredient Brands representing a business standard, a sustainable or ethical production, a certification or a secure transaction** as important for them, while **93%** of them considered such labels as more or equally important for them in the future. So. No doubt that consumers are actively willing to look out for Labels and Quality Seals through which they can get confirmation and trust for making a good purchase.



Of all participants considered Ingredient Brands representing a **business standard, a sustainable or ethical production, a certification or a secure transaction** as **more or equally important** for them in the future.

*Next Generation Ingredient Branding Study  
Exhibit 4*

Ingredient Brands need to fulfill various functions in order to be accepted by consumers. The functions are interdependent of each other, but they build-up, starting from the information function towards building trust over time and finally providing the relief and image function.



*Functions of an Ingredient Brand*  
*Exhibit 5*

Once the Ingredient Brand fulfills this set of functions, consumers demonstrate an increased willingness to buy and a higher consent to pay a price premium. Brand Loyalty will be created leading to more frequent repurchase activities.



## FUTURE CHALLENGES FOR INGREDIENTS INDICATING FAIR FASHION

First, there is no gold-standard available today. Typical for an early market phase, the market is highly fragmented and each of the many labels or standards, cover only a segment of the demands for fair fashion. Some labels are focused on the materiality, others on the production methodology or resource consumption. Some focus on labor regulations, work safety or fair salaries and trading. **One of the most important questions therefore is: Which and how many labels will make the cut?** Consumers are only willing to learn what really matters to them and all available labels are competing with each other for consumer attention. Each of them has to go through a brand-building process that makes them relevant to the respective target audience, so that they will start to actively look for the label.

Second is the access to the consumer. The large retail brands H&M, Zara, Uniqlo, Benetton and others control the access to the consumer. Many of them are trying to establish their own sustainability solutions, such as Swedish giant H&M with their **Conscious Collection**. As Karl-Johan Persson, CEO of H&M states: “We have set ourselves the challenge of ultimately making fashion sustainable and sustainability fashionable.”



Their commitments are high:

- Provide fashion for conscious customers
- Choose and reward responsible partners
- Be ethical
- Be climate smart
- Reduce, reuse, recycle
- Use natural resources responsibly
- Strengthen communities



*H&M Conscious Collection  
Exhibit 6*

Other brands such as Patagonia are trying to be as transparent as possible by communicating and displaying actively the environmental footprint of each of their products. “At Patagonia, the Footprint Chronicles<sup>®</sup> examines Patagonia’s life and habits as a company. The goal is to use transparency about our supply chain to help us reduce their adverse social and environmental impacts”.



Exhibit 7

While Patagonia® has gained an enormous reputation in the Outdoor Industry with their decades long commitment, we at BRAIND® see it in general rather difficult to establish a self-branded inherent sustainability story. From our experience consumers expect such labels to be neutral, to be available through many different brands and in many different products. Only then, consumers trust the quality seal as an authority to provide the information and trust function, which again are the prerequisite to the relief and image function leading to a higher willingness to buy and a price premium.

## CONCLUSION

More and more consumers want to know who made their clothes and how. No question. But only once clearly defined and more holistic and independent standards replace the current scattered landscape of subordinated labels and activities, the breakthrough in the demand chain will happen. Yarn producers, fabric producers, dyeing companies, logistic & standard producers, garment manufacturers and retailers are fighting for the attention of the consumer and are not necessarily working together. In the slipstream of that, uneducated or uninterested consumers are still buying millions of T-Shirts at low-cost retailers for a handful of euros or dollars.

New standards need harmonization, broad acceptance and co-operation in the value chain. Only after we went from VHS, Beta and Video 2000 to one single standard for video recording and only after the GSM<sup>®</sup> standard succeeded T-DMA and C-DMA as the global standard for mobile telephony, the growth of that respective industry really took off. So, it is maybe time to consolidate the individual and stand-alone activities in the textile industry to come to a more holistic solution helping the consumer to buy Fair Fashion.

**FURTHER INFORMATION:**

For further information on our viewpoints on who made my clothes or any other topic related to Ingredient Branding or Branding, please contact us by mail at **[tomasv@braind.co](mailto:tomasv@braind.co)**

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