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| **How to sell retail clothing: 50+ ways to improve your retail sales tactics  - Solink** | **Clothing library consultant** |

Table of Contents

**Part A 2**

1. Executive Summary2
2. Client Overview2
3. Team and Stakeholders3
4. SWOT4
5. Competitor Analysis5
6. Documentation of work6
7. Recommendation8
8. Gantt Chart10

**Part B10**

1. Co-design incubator usage time10
2. History10
3. Future Road map10

Reference

**Part A – Client work**

**1. Executive summary**

The Clothing Library is an innovative student-led initiative at Griffith University Nathan Campus that addresses fast fashion's environmental impact and clothing inequality among students. Developed by Griffith alumni Louise Hauser and student Sophie Nakamura, the project provides free business attire to students needing appropriate clothing for their job interviews, internships, and professional roles. The initiative promotes sustainability, ethical practices, and equity by reimagining how society consumes clothing.

This report evaluates the Clothing Library's current operations, identifies strengths and weaknesses, compares competitors, and offers strong strategic recommendations. Key solutions include increasing awareness campaigns, structured volunteer recruitment, and partnership strategies to secure sustainable donations. A 12-month Gantt chart outlines the actionable implementation plan, ensuring the Clothing Library enhances its reach and creates a lasting impact.

**2. Client Overview**

The Clothing Library was created by Griffith University student **Sophie Nakamura** and alumni **Louise Hauser**. The idea came to life during design-thinking workshops, where they noticed two major problems affecting students. First, the fast fashion industry’s rapid production and consumption cycle is causing significant harm to the environment through excessive waste. Second, many financially disadvantaged students struggle to access professional clothing, which is essential for opportunities like job interviews, internships, and work placements.

The project’s mission is clear: to reimagine the way we consume clothing. By promoting a more circular and sustainable approach, the Clothing Library addresses environmental concerns while also tackling issues of equity and ethics in the fashion industry.

The initiative is guided by three main goals:

1. **Equity**: Providing students with **free, high-quality business wear** to improve their chances of professional success.
2. **Sustainability**: Reducing **textile waste** and encouraging the Griffith community to reuse clothing instead of contributing to overconsumption.
3. **Awareness**: Educating students, staff, and alumni about the negative impacts of **fast fashion** and offering ethical alternatives.

To achieve these goals, the Clothing Library operates on a **donation-based model**, relying on contributions of clothing from Griffith staff, alumni, and community organizations. These donations enable students to borrow professional attire without cost, creating a positive impact on both the environment and student success.

**3. Team and Stakeholders**

The Clothing Library is driven by a small but dedicated team, alongside a collaborative support network that keeps the project running effectively.

* **Founders**: The project is led by **Louise Hauser** and **Sophie Nakamura**. Their passion and vision form the backbone of the Clothing Library.
* **Key Stakeholders**:
* **Griffith University**: Provides institutional support, such as space and resources, to help the project operate smoothly.
* **Donors**: Griffith staff, alumni, and local community groups play a critical role by contributing professional clothing and helping sustain the Library’s inventory.
* **Students**: As the primary users of the service, students benefit directly from access to quality business wear, empowering them to pursue professional opportunities with confidence.
* **Volunteers**: Volunteers are the heart of the Clothing Library’s daily operations. They help organize clothing donations, assist students in selecting appropriate attire, and raise awareness of the service within the Griffith community. Volunteers often take on specific roles, such as:
* **Project Coordinator**: Oversees general operations and ensures everything runs smoothly.
* **Event Coordinator**: Organizes events like donation drives and pop-up clothing stores on campus.
* **Social Media Manager**: Handles promotional efforts, including campaigns on platforms like Instagram, Griffith University homepage and Facebook.

Through this collaborative network, the Clothing Library brings together students, staff, and the wider community to create meaningful change. Whether donating, volunteering, or borrowing, everyone has a role to play in supporting the project’s mission.

**4. SWOT analysis**

| **Strengths** | **Weaknesses** |
| --- | --- |
| - Strong support from Griffith University community.; High engagement through campus networks and active participation from students and staff. | - Limited marketing and promotional reach. |
| - Clear mission: Equity, sustainability, and ethical goals. ;Resonates with growing societal interest in sustainable practices. | - High reliance on volunteer availability.; inconsistent participation can hinder operations. |
| - High demand for professional clothing among students. | - Limited operational funding ($5,000 budget). |
| - Community-driven model. ;Encourages participation and fosters a sense of ownership among stakeholders. | - Irregular clothing donations (Unpredictable inventory.). |

| **Opportunities** | **Threats** |
| --- | --- |
| - Increasing awareness of ethical and sustainable fashion. ;Leverage current trends to appeal to students and community members. | - Competition from other charitable clothing programs.; Need to differentiate through unique offerings or targeted outreach. *Proposed solution*: Highlight the focus on professional clothing and its direct impact on employability. |
| - Collaborations with local businesses and NGOs. ;Partnerships could provide additional funding, expertise, or inventory. | - Unpredictable clothing donation inflow.; Seasonal fluctuations can disrupt availability. |
| - Use of digital platforms for outreach (social media, email). ; Expand campaigns to include testimonials from students who have benefited from the service. | - Limited long-term funding resources.(Threatens sustainability) |

**5. Competitor analysis**  
Documentation of work (use/build upon the co-design material in folders)  
Recommendations

**Competitor Comparison Table**

| **Organization**  **/Program** | **Strengths** | **Weaknesses** | **Positioning** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Clothing Library (Griffith University)** | - Provides free business attire to students, removing financial barriers.  - Emphasizes sustainability by promoting circular fashion and reducing waste.  - Operates on a donation-based model with strong community engagement. | - Limited marketing and awareness result in lower visibility.  - Reliant on volunteers, which can cause operational instability.  - Operates with a small budget ($5,000), limiting scalability. | Positioned as a free, student-centered initiative that combines sustainability with professional clothing access. |
| **Suitor** | - Offers a wide range of business and formalwear options.  - Provides easy online booking for convenience.  - Caters to both men and women with tailored style choices. | - Paid service, which may be a financial burden for some students.  - Primarily operates in urban areas, limiting accessibility for some users.  - Short rental periods may not suit all needs. | Positioned as a premium formalwear rental platform, offering tailored, accessible solutions for professionals. |
| **Salvos**  **(Salvation Army)** | - Extensive store network ensures high accessibility across locations.  - Affordable pricing makes it budget-friendly.  - Promotes sustainability through donations and recycling. | - Clothing quality and styles can be inconsistent.  - Not specifically focused on professional business attire.  - Operates as a sales model rather than a free service. | Positioned as an affordable second-hand clothing provider with a focus on general clothing and sustainability. |

**Analysis and Insights**

1. **Clothing Library** stands out by providing free business attire for students who face financial challenges, while also addressing environmental sustainability. By relying on community donations and volunteer support, it encourages circular fashion and a sense of shared responsibility within the Griffith University community.
2. **Suitor** positions itself as a premium rental platform, offering convenience and a professional image through tailored formalwear. However, the **cost of rentals** may exclude students facing financial constraints, and its urban-centric model limits accessibility for regional users.
3. **Salvos** is a well-known second-hand clothing provider that promotes sustainability through affordable options. However, it does not focus on professional attire, and quality or availability can be inconsistent, which may not meet the needs of students seeking specific business wear for interviews or internships.

**Key Differentiators of Clothing Library**

Clothing Library offers a unique value proposition compared to Suitor and Salvos:

* Completely Free Service: Unlike Suitor, there are no financial barriers, making it accessible for all students.
* Sustainability Focus: Promotes reusing donated clothing, contributing to waste reduction and addressing fast fashion issues.
* Community-Based Model: Built on the involvement of Griffith students, staff, and alumni, creating a strong sense of collective ownership and purpose.

By focusing on these strengths, the Clothing Library positions itself as more than just a service—it becomes a community-driven initiative with social and environmental impact.

**6. Documentation of Work**

The following activities and outputs represent key milestones achieved during the Clothing Library project, demonstrating a structured and thorough approach to addressing the identified challenges:

**6-1. Research and Ideation**

The project began with an in-depth analysis of the Clothing Library's challenges to develop a strong foundation for strategic recommendations.

* Awareness: Investigated current levels of awareness about the Clothing Library among students, staff, and alumni. This included assessing the effectiveness of existing outreach efforts, such as word-of-mouth and minimal social media presence. The study assessed the effectiveness of existing outreach efforts, such as word-of-mouth and minimal social media presence, in raising awareness about programs targeting students, staff, and alumni (Gopalakrishnan et al., 2012, p. 105).
* Volunteers: Identified issues with volunteer retention and recruitment, particularly the lack of formal roles, training opportunities, and incentives. Feedback from stakeholders revealed that volunteers often require structured onboarding processes to remain engaged.
* Donations: Analyzed patterns in clothing donations, focusing on the inconsistency in donation quality and quantity. This involved identifying peak donation periods, sources of contributions (e.g., Griffith staff, alumni, and community organizations), and potential partnerships.

**6-2. Stakeholder Engagement**

Effective engagement with stakeholders was central to gathering insights and establishing partnerships for future growth.

* Griffith Staff and Alumni: Reached out to Griffith staff and alumni networks to assess their willingness to contribute to the Clothing Library, either through clothing donations or promotional support. Their role as primary contributors to the donation pool was highlighted.
* Student Guilds: Consulted with student guild representatives to explore opportunities for collaboration, such as hosting pop-up events, donation drives, or awareness campaigns at student hubs and events.
* Local Businesses and Organizations: Communicated with local businesses and sustainable fashion brands to identify opportunities for partnerships. This included discussions on securing high-quality clothing donations and raising awareness about the Clothing Library's mission.

**6-3. Benchmarking**

To understand the Clothing Library's competitive positioning and identify areas for improvement, a thorough competitor analysis was conducted:

* Direct Competitors: Service like Salvos was analyzed for strengths, weaknesses, and service models. Salvos, for example, offers low-cost second-hand clothing but lacks a focus on professional attire tailored to students' needs. Formal Ever After provides formalwear rentals but charges fees, creating a financial barrier for economically disadvantaged students.
* Indirect Competitors: Explored other sustainable fashion and community initiatives that promote ethical clothing consumption. Programs like Suitor, while premium and efficient, focus on fee-based services, which distinguishes the Clothing Library’s free, community-driven model.

The benchmarking exercise highlighted Clothing Library's unique value proposition: a free service tailored to students, built on sustainability and community involvement.

**6-4. Strategic Planning**

The insights gained from research, stakeholder engagement, and benchmarking informed the development of actionable strategies to address the Clothing Library's challenges:

* Awareness Campaigns: Designed a multi-platform promotional strategy to improve visibility:
* Social Media Campaigns: Content calendars for Instagram and Facebook featuring student success stories, volunteer highlights, and donation calls.
* On-Campus Pop-up Events: Events hosted in key student traffic areas (e.g., libraries, cafeterias) to introduce the Clothing Library’s services.
* Posters and Flyers: Designed visually engaging materials to be displayed across campuses, including donation points, student services offices, and dormitories.
* Volunteer Onboarding Plans: Developed structured volunteer roles with clear responsibilities, such as:
* Project Coordinator: Oversees operations, tracks inventory, and schedules appointments.
* Event Coordinator: Plans and executes donation drives, pop-up events, and awareness campaigns.
* Social Media Manager: Manages online engagement, campaigns, and communication.
* Introduced a formal training and onboarding process to ensure volunteers are prepared, motivated, and confident in their roles.
* Proposed incentives, such as certificates, LinkedIn endorsements, and skill-building workshops, to encourage long-term volunteer retention.
* Community Partnership Strategies: Developed outreach strategies to secure sustainable, high-quality clothing donations:
* Partner with local businesses, fashion brands, and Griffith alumni networks.
* Organize seasonal donation drives during peak times (e.g., end of term, graduation periods) to maximize contributions.
* Promote partnerships through co-branded awareness campaigns, highlighting mutual benefits (e.g., brand visibility and community goodwill).

**7. Recommendations**

To enhance the Clothing Library’s reach, efficiency, and long-term sustainability, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Increase Awareness**: Utilize Griffith’s website, student email lists, and social media platforms for promotion and increase the service awareness. Clear volunteer roles and incentives improve recruitment and retention by offering a sense of purpose and professional recognition (NMBL Strategies, 2023).

* Host pop-up stores at campus locations (e.g., libraries, cafeterias) to engage students directly.
* Develop visually engaging posters and distribute them strategically on campus.

1. **Volunteer Recruitment and Retention**:

* Define clear volunteer roles (Event Coordinator, Social Media Manager).
* Provide training and incentives (certificates, LinkedIn endorsements) to retain volunteers.

1. **Secure Consistent Donations**:

* Partner with local businesses, alumni, and fashion retailers for recurring donations. Partnerships with local businesses and seasonal donation drives can help secure consistent contributions to meet organizational needs (Promise Hill Project, 2023).
* Organize seasonal donation drives during peak academic periods to maximize contributions.

1. **Operational Improvements**:

* Implement a digital inventory system to streamline clothing management.
* Introduce a student feedback mechanism to ensure services align with actual needs.

1. **Consider launching Clothing Library at Gold Coast Campus**

* Provide rental services not only Nathan Campus but also GC campus to make this service wider and develop services recognition. Expanding services to additional campuses can improve accessibility and recognition, as seen in similar initiatives at the University of Arizona (Associated Students of the University of Arizona, 2023).
* Increase university’s positive reputation since other Universities don’t provide service for students

**8. Gantt chart**

A diagram with a graph

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

**Awareness Campaign - Planning & Launch (Month 1-3)**

* Plan the campaign strategies, such as social media promotions, posters, and pop-up events on campus.
* Launch the first phase of the campaign to raise awareness about the Clothing Library's mission.

**Volunteer Recruitment & Training (Month 1-12)**

* Develop roles like Project Coordinator, Event Coordinator, and Social Media Manager.
* Promote the roles through Griffith University networks and onboard volunteers.
* Provide training sessions to ensure volunteers are prepared for their responsibilities.

**Donation Drive - Partnerships & Events (Month 4-6)**

* Partner with local businesses, alumni, and community groups for clothing donations.
* Organize campus donation events to collect high-quality professional clothing.

**Operational Systems Implementation (Month 5-8)**

* Research and implement a digital inventory management system for organizing donated clothing.
* Train volunteers on how to use the system effectively and troubleshoot any issues.

**Feedback Collection & Evaluation (Month 8-11)**

* Conduct surveys or interviews with students and volunteers to gather feedback on the Clothing Library’s services.
* Evaluate successes, challenges, and areas for improvement.

**Final Report & Recommendations (Month 6-12)**

* Analyze feedback and outcomes to create a comprehensive report.
* Focus on providing actionable recommendations for the Clothing Library’s future sustainability and growth.

**Part B Self-reflection**

**1. Co-design incubator usage time**

The co-design incubator provided a special opportunity to combine my passion for hospitality with sustainability and community influence. Throughout the project, I thought and collaborated to identify and address operational issues in the clothing library, such as recruiting volunteers and managing donations:

Organize systematic roles for volunteers (e.g., event coordinators, social media managers) to ensure smooth operation.

Design a promotional campaign roadmap to raise students' awareness and apply service marketing principles often used in the hospitality industry.

This experience has helped me address the challenges of team management ability and resource limitation, skills that are essential for my carer goal hotel general manager. It has also deepened my understanding of how sustainability and equity can be operated in a service-based industry.

**2. History**

My dream of becoming a general manager of a hotel came from a lifelong passion to create a memorable guest experience. The Clothing Library project was relatable with my values in that it provides equitable access to professional attire like hospitality, which focuses on providing quality service to various customers. Prior to this project, it was mainly an in-person guest service experience, but through this incubator, I learned about strategic planning and behind-the-scenes management, including stakeholder engagement.

This project coincides with my career in volunteering in community programs and developing basic leadership and problem-solving skills. Through the clothing library, I was able to apply these abilities to larger and more systematic initiatives and build on them.

**3. Future Roadmap**

The insights I gained from this project are critical to shaping my career trajectory:

I will implement leadership and sustainability principles learned with an emphasis on eco-friendly initiatives and employee training during hospitality industry internships. I plan to further develop my project management skills as technology development by obtaining certification in areas such as Lin Management and Team Dynamics so that I can effectively supervise hotel operations in the future. My ultimate Long-term goal is to advocate for eco-friendly practices in hotel operations and incorporate sustainability into hotel management. I'm envisioning creating a program that supports the community, like a donation-based model in a clothing library.

Participating in the co-design incubator not only strengthened my goal of becoming a hotel general manager, but also equipped me with transferable skills in strategic thinking, sustainability, and team management. This experience has highlighted the importance of aligning operations with ethical and environmental goals, a philosophy I intend to instill in my future career.

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