

## **Recommendations for Improvement: Enhancing Rewilder's Environmental Brand Sales and Shaping Brand Image**

Rewilder, known for its unique commitment to upcycling, challenges conventional recycling norms. This proposal outlines strategies to strengthen Rewilder's market position by emphasizing cost control, conveying product value, quantifying environmental impact, and enhancing brand identity.

Consumer attitudes toward recycled products are generally positive (Lévy-Mangin, 2020), driven by perceptions of product safety, favorable image (Luu & Baker, 2021; Queiroz et al., 2021), attractiveness (Testa et al., 2021), eco-friendliness packaging (Testa et al., 2021), the presence of eco-labels on product labels (Wang et al., 2022), and their own belief (Testa et al., 2022). However, despite this positive attitude, consumers often refrain from purchasing recycled items because they are of lower quality than new conventional products. This reduced perceived quality, defined as the judgment of product quality relative to non-recycled alternatives, is consistently observed in studies (Kuah & Wang, 2020) and leads to diminished purchase intentions (Queiroz et al., 2021). Moreover, despite the substantial 69% of consumers expressing a willingness to pay more for sustainable products, a willingness to pay 5% more is the top selection, as 58% of consumers cite price as the most critical factor when deciding on sustainable purchases. This proposal focuses on enhancing the positive perception of these factors and mitigating the associated risks.

Addressing the issue of price sensitivity for recycled products calls for a strategic approach where we emphasize the value proposition to help consumers recognize the worth of their purchases. Achieving this begins with precisely assessing the cost structure associated with upcycled items. First and foremost is the raw materials and labor cost required to transform discarded items into usable goods. As mentioned in the case, although the raw material is inexpensive, the labor cost to manufacture the Comeback Tee is high, reducing the profit margin. Upcycling often entails significant manual labor and creative ingenuity to repurpose materials that would otherwise end up in landfills. Consequently, the production costs can be relatively high compared to conventional manufacturing processes.

It is crucial for Rewilder to meticulously track the cost at each stage of production and transparently communicate pricing details to consumers. Rewilder can provide comprehensive information about the costs associated with every step of their production process. For instance, they could create informative infographics on their website, breaking down the production costs for each product. By presenting these steps in meticulous detail, customers can gain a clear understanding of the costs involved in the entire process. Furthermore, it is worth noting that each tee design developed by Rewilder is distinct and limited in quantity, which affects the cost structure. As mentioned, the production costs tend to decrease as the quantity produced increases. Therefore, scaling up production can reduce product costs, potentially incentivizing customers to be more willing to pay for these eco-friendly items.

To quantify the environmental value of Rewilder's products, this proposal recommends Rewilder implement a Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) system. While Rewilder outlines differences in its upcycling product manufacturing process compared to traditional methods on its website, it has yet to quantify the environmental benefits of its eco-friendly production (Torres, 2023). This proposal advises Rewilder to collaborate with scientists, environmental experts, or carbon footprint analysts to quantify metrics such as reduced carbon emissions, waste reduction, and resource savings during product manufacturing. Adopting an LCA system enables companies to optimize production processes and attract eco-conscious consumers and investors, gaining a significant advantage in sustainable operations and market competition.

Simultaneously, companies can convey a sustainable brand image to consumers by introducing third-party-certified carbon rating systems, such as ISO 14001 and carbon neutral certifications. These

certifications demonstrate Rewilder's environmental commitment and offer third-party validation. ISO 14001, an internationally recognized environmental management system (EMS) standard, provides a comprehensive framework for sustainable development goals. According to the ISO website, it helps the company to demonstrate compliance with government environmental regulations. It is also a marketing tool to enhance reputation and stakeholder trust, attracting more investor interest. Rewilder will also gain a competitive edge, as a McKinsey study shows that sustainable companies are worth 47 percent more than others, with a return on assets exceeding 34 percent (Steinberg, 2014). Effective waste and energy cost control and efficiency gains will further decrease product prices, increasing consumers' purchase power.

Before establishing a sustainable brand image, building a distinctive and easily identifiable brand identity is a vital factor in ensuring the success of the Rewilder. Drawing inspiration from Freitag, a renowned Swiss fashion brand celebrated for its upcycled bags featuring vibrant, one-of-a-kind designs crafted from repurposed truck tarps and seatbelts (Freitag, 2023), Rewilder can take cues from their strategy. Freitag put its brand name on each bag. Freitag's bags stand out in a sea of others due to their use of distinctive materials, such as truck tarps, and their application of a vibrant contrast color style (Freitag, 2023). This unique combination sets their bags apart and makes them easily recognizable. The Rewilder used trash tees, so in terms of material use, there is nothing unique about Comeback Tee. Therefore, Rewilder should focus on the tee's design, adding elements that best convey its sustainable value and never appear in other brands.

Furthermore, in the case study review, Rewilder mentioned that "each tee design that is developed is unique and a limited edition, further increasing its value to the customer." This proposal acknowledges that limited edition tees' exclusivity appeals to customers who want something unique and not widely available. While exclusivity is a critical factor in the appeal of limited editions, it is equally essential for the brand to generate awareness and excitement around these special releases. This proposal thinks that artistic collaborations are effective marketing strategies. For example, Freitag held a "FREITAG Ad Absurdum" exhibition at the Mudac, working with twin-brother artists Frank and Patrik Riklin (Freitag, 2023). This exhibition conveyed its brand history, sustainable values, and several activities, such as SWAP, repair services, and rent services (Freitag, 2023). Rewilder could draw inspiration from Freitag's case and consider organizing similar events or exhibitions that align with its brand values and sustainability initiatives. Such events could serve as engaging platforms to convey Rewilder's unique brand history, commitment to upcycling, and ethical production practices.

Furthermore, Rewilder could enhance brand visibility and emphasize its values through competition. This contest would empower customers and participants to showcase their creativity by upcycling their existing clothing using Rewilder's provided DIY kits. Participants could then share photographs of their creations on Rewilder's official website. Rewilder could incentivize and reward the top ten most innovative entries while curating a portfolio website to exhibit participants' works, spotlighting their creative expressions and reinforcing the brand's ethos.

In conclusion, this proposal recommends Rewilder to accurately measure production steps to deduct production cost and convey the monetary value of goods to consumers, convey the environmental value of goods by quantifying the carbon footprint of products and adding carbon rating systems, and attract consumers by improving product design which drives inspiration from successful environmentally friendly brands. This proposal addresses consumer attitudes toward recycled products and their price sensitivity while proposing actionable recommendations to enhance the brand's appeal and competitiveness in the sustainable market.

## Citation

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