Challenges of Implementation of SDGs in the Textile Industry

**1) What financial barriers and limitations do fashion brands encounter in their efforts to implement SDGs?**

The biggest challenge we face in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at Nishat, despite being a well-known textile company in Pakistan, is the gap between long-term sustainability and short-term financial pressures.

While SDGs require a well-structured plan for long-term benefits, the immediate effect on our industry is significant. Sustainable practices, like using eco-friendly raw materials, are much more expensive than conventional options, which puts a strain on our finances. Moreover, attracting investors to fund these sustainable initiatives is difficult, as they typically focus on short-term returns.

This lack of funding and high costs of sustainable raw materials makes it challenging to implement our SDG plan effectively in the short term, even though the long-term benefits, such as better brand reputation and compliance with future regulations, are clear.

**2) How do barriers like outsourcing materials and lack of government support impact the progress of fashion brands in implementing SDGs?**

The main issue we face when trying to implement SDGs, especially in relation to the environment, is the balance between cost and sustainability.

For example, if we find good quality materials that are affordable, they may still have negative effects on the environment, such as contributing to climate change.

In such cases, we must make tough decisions and compromise in some areas. Additionally, there are broader environmental impacts that we need to consider, but this often creates more challenges. On top of that, the government doesn't provide much support to the textile industry, as they are more focused on their own budget priorities.

So, while we try to do our part for sustainability, the lack of financial support and guidance from the government makes it even more difficult to achieve our SDG goals.

**3) Do you believe that not keeping an eye on suppliers' eco-friendliness and not rewarding green practices is a big obstacle for fashion brands to follow SDGs?**

Yes, not keeping an eye on suppliers’ eco-friendliness and not rewarding green practices can indeed be a big obstacle for fashion brands in following the SDGs. For example, switching to eco-friendly practices often requires significant investment, and many companies are reluctant to spend that extra money, even if it benefits the environment in the long run. At Nishat, we do make the effort to prioritize eco-friendly practices and ensure that we focus on sustainability both within our industry and across the country.

However, when you look at the broader industry, many companies don't place enough emphasis on these practices. This lack of attention to sustainability, both in terms of supply chain management and rewarding green initiatives, makes it harder for the entire sector to move towards the SDGs effectively.

**4) How does the risk of technology failure, coupled with a lack of technology development, affect the successful implementation of SDGs in fashion brands?**

The risk of technology failure is always a concern when trying to use new technologies, especially when working towards the SDGs.

For example, if a company tries to implement a water-saving technique or other sustainable technologies, the results can vary—sometimes they work, sometimes they don’t. Success depends on how well the technology is used and how people adjust to it. This is a real worry for us as we look at adopting new technologies.

However, any large company, before taking such steps, carefully checks how the technology works and what negative effects it might have. Before making big changes, companies need to fully understand the risks and impacts of new technologies. Even for a company like ours, we test and evaluate these solutions before making them permanent, to ensure they align with our long-term goals and don’t cause any harm. The key is to understand both the benefits and risks, and only adopt new technologies when we are sure they will have a positive impact.

**5) How does the lack of environmental training programs impact the fashion brands’ sustainability performance?**

Over the past 20 years, Pakistan's industries have grown, and many large companies have made significant profits. However, most of them have not paid enough attention to the environment. This lack of focus on sustainability can seriously affect a fashion brand's ability to perform well in the long term. While environmental awareness has become more important in the last 5 to 10 years, many companies still haven't given it enough priority.

At Nishat, we care deeply about the environment and make it a top priority. We believe that a successful business should not harm the environment. To make sure our team understands this, we offer a lot of training and awareness programs, including discussions and case studies. Our leadership team is also involved in these efforts, helping us stay focused on eco-friendly practices. Without proper training and awareness, it’s hard for any company to move towards sustainability.

That’s why we make sure our employees understand the environmental impact of their work and how they can help contribute to a greener future.

B) Benefits of Presenting Sustainability Actions in Marketing Campaigns

**1) To what extent do a fashion brand’s tangible sustainability actions contribute to its positive reputation, and does it have an impact on customers’ purchase intention?**

If we want to keep things eco-friendly, people have now become educated enough. Although this trend hasn’t fully developed in Pakistan yet, in other countries, people are aware that if a company is doing good work, even if they are investing money into good skills, people will encourage them.

In Pakistan, this trend hasn’t caught on as much yet. People here only think about themselves. Wherever they can get something good, they don’t consider how much effort the company is putting in.

**2) Do you believe that implementing sustainable marketing practices can help fashion brands to enter new markets and increase market share?**

Yes, think of marketing as the résumé of a company. The better your marketing is, the better your sales will be.

For example, if a company invests in a strong marketing campaign that highlights the unique features of its product, it will attract more customers, leading to increased sales. Just like a well-crafted résumé showcases an individual's skills and accomplishments to potential employers, effective marketing showcases a company's strengths to potential buyers.

**3) Is it important for fashion brands to implement sustainable solutions to remain competitive in the international market?**

See, competition is everywhere, and experiencing highs and lows is just part of the journey. You should never compromise on your standards, even during tough times. In a market filled with both emerging and established competitors, it becomes crucial to consistently maintain high-quality practices. These practices should not only be reliable but also continuously improved and refined to keep your company strong and reputable.

This way, even when new competitors enter the market or existing ones become more aggressive, your brand's name and reputation will remain solid and well-respected.For example, if your company stands out for using sustainable practices, you should keep enhancing those efforts to ensure long-term success and recognition.

**4) Do you think working for sustainable fashion brands will increase motivation and productivity of employees?**

There is certainly motivation present, but I believe that productivity doesn’t have a direct link to it unless specific measures are taken. You see, while motivation can create a positive work environment, it won’t automatically lead to higher productivity. Until employees are rewarded for their achievements and contributions, they won’t be genuinely motivated to give their best effort.

Simply providing a good atmosphere and implementing effective practices isn’t enough on its own. Employees need to feel valued and recognized for their hard work. If they successfully apply best practices in their tasks, then it’s important to acknowledge and reward them, whether through bonuses, promotions, or even public recognition.

This kind of incentive ensures that motivation translates into sustained productivity.

**5) In your opinion, do you think sustainable marketing practices help in attracting and retaining employees?**

I don’t think that there is enough awareness or education in Pakistan for people to prioritize good practices over cost. Here, people aren’t willing to pay extra for companies that are following excellent, sustainable practices.

In other countries, this might be possible because people understand the value of supporting ethical or eco-friendly businesses, and they are prepared to invest more money for higher standards. However, in Pakistan, that kind of mindset hasn’t developed yet. People are still more focused on getting things as cheaply as possible, without considering whether the company is operating with good practices or contributing positively to society.

C) Effective Techniques of Integrating Sustainability Activities in Marketing Campaigns

**1) Do you believe that the use of ‘Recycle, Reuse, Reduce’ in the marketing campaigns of fashion brands is an effective technique?**

It is effective! However, it also depends on how much benefit the company is getting from it. At the same time, there is always an undeniable advantage for the environment.

Recycling, for instance, is highly effective and extremely important. Minimizing waste products as much as possible is always beneficial.

For companies, recycling can lead to cost savings, resource efficiency, and even a better reputation among environmentally conscious consumers.

Moreover, the positive impact on the environment includes reducing pollution, conserving natural resources, and contributing to a healthier planet. So, the effectiveness of these practices is clear both from a business perspective and for environmental well-being.

**2) Do you think increasing the research and development capacity of fashion brands will result in more effective sustainability marketing campaigns?**

In the end, the more money you invest, the more extensive your research will be, and the better your outcomes will turn out to be. Investing in thorough research is crucial because it directly impacts the quality and success of your results.

When you allocate sufficient resources, you can explore innovative ideas, test strategies more comprehensively, and refine your processes. This ultimately leads to higher efficiency, more effective solutions, and a greater return on investment.

Essentially, the better prepared and well-researched you are, the stronger and more impactful your outcomes will be. So, prioritizing quality research and development is essential for achieving long-term success.

**3) Do you think that the use of green packaging material effectively contributes to the integration of sustainability into marketing campaigns?**

This is a great step for marketing, especially in terms of promoting sustainability. For instance, where plastic bags were once widely used, now companies are shifting towards alternatives, such as biodegradable or reusable bags. This shift not only supports the environment but also acts as a strong marketing tool for the company.

By adopting eco-friendly practices, businesses can attract environmentally conscious customers who value sustainability. This aligns with the "green campaign" that many companies are adopting, showcasing their commitment to reducing waste and supporting environmental preservation, which can lead to positive brand recognition and loyalty.

**4) In your experience, please share any other sustainability marketing technique for the fashion brands**.

There are many techniques involved in this. For example, you can collaborate with different organizations and hold various meetings or gatherings, such as small shows, to engage people and raise awareness.

These events help people understand the importance of the cause. It is essential for us to work together with other organizations to spread this message. By collaborating, you can combine resources, reach a wider audience, and create more impactful campaigns.

Organizing events like shows, workshops, or public talks allows companies and organizations to directly interact with the community, engage in meaningful discussions, and promote eco-friendly practices effectively. Such initiatives also help build partnerships that strengthen the overall mission of sustainability and environmental responsibility.