

Defining the Problem Template

Remember to be as specific as you can be

Initial problem statement

How might we encourage consumers of retail fashion and apparel products to adopt more sustainable habits when making choices regarding the purchase and use of clothes?

Project Scope

Key project goals

The primary objective of this project is **to encourage consumers of retail fashion and apparel products to build more sustainable habits when making choices about purchasing and using clothing items**. By embedding more sustainable habits amongst fashion consumers, our goal is to mitigate environmental and social sustainability impacts that the fashion and apparel industry have exponentially contributed to due to fast-fashion trends that have disrupted the industry.

What is the change that needs to happen?

The project is focused on **exploring whether consumers can make habitual changes in their clothing purchase and usage decisions upon a behavioral intervention**. A representative but non-exhaustive set of these sustainable habit changes include:

- Reducing the frequency of purchasing new clothing items
- Increasing the re-use of already purchased or secondhand clothing items
- Increasing the recycling, repairing, or upcycling of worn clothes
- Increasing the proportion of consumer purchases, when they are made, to account for more sustainable and ethical clothing brands over fast fashion brands

While all of these sustainable habits are new behaviors we intended consumers to adopt, we hypothesize that the contemplation and internalization these practices will happen at the moment

	<p>consumers are introduced to a new clothing item, which is the entry point at which they need to make a cognitive decision about whether that item will be purchased, how it will be used, and the persons overall perception and relationship with the channel they purchase from. Awareness of items and purchase contemplation is also more feasibly measurable within the timeframe of this project. Therefore, extra care and attention will be placed on the last habit change listed for the purposes of this project as the primary behavior we plan to elicit change on.</p>
Who is the target population that needs to change?	<p>Based on our research, we are predominantly focused on frequent online shoppers who identify as women between the ages of 16–30 and who live in urban environments. This is because this demographic of people contribute to a majority of fast fashion purchases, and are most influenced by style trends in both their physical and digital environments.</p> <p>While research points to demographic variance in what attributes are more significant during purchasing decisions based on income, education, and other dimensions, our project intends to take a broad approach across this population to capture a majority of fast fashion shoppers.</p>
Who else needs to be involved?	<p>While the intended target population for this project is focused on fashion consumers, we recognize that the involvement of several other stakeholders is essential to introducing effective behavioral interventions and systems-level change. These stakeholders include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGOs focused on sustainable retail – These stakeholders play a large role in monitoring and reporting the environmental and social impacts of fashion brands and operate as influential agents for establishing accountability and credibility behind sustainable brands • Government/policymakers – These stakeholder play a significant role in introducing regulatory interventions that target fashion and apparel company operative requirements, that could trickle down to informing consumer options and decisions • Fashion and apparel companies (including their sourcing, manufacturing, and distribution partners) – These stakeholders have complete control over what products and information is shared with consumers, and have agency over upstream environmental and social impacts in their value chain.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media/trend influencers – These stakeholders influence and shape value-judgements, perceptions, and awareness around fashion and apparel items and informational trends about them.
Timeframe of your project	Based on the timeframe of the course in which this project is tied to, this project is expected to run until October 9th , the last session of the course.
What is success?	<p>To measure success for the project, we will focus on leading measurements related to our overall project goals and objectives. These measures are more immediately represented as “outputs” under our evolving hypothesized theory of change.</p> <p>Outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequency of online shopping purchases • Number of items in cart • Increased utility (e.g., partworths) for sustainability-related attributes • Self-reported perception of purchase decisions • Third party sustainability ratings of companies being shopped from <p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in GHG emissions and wastage across the entire clothing lifecycle • Reduction in the frequency and turnover of clothing production • Improved sustainability ratings across fast fashion brands <p>Impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved environmental and social outcomes mitigating adverse climate change and industrial impacts
Project exclusions	The following components sit outside of the project scope:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase clothing items will be in scope, but cosmetic and accessory items from fashion brands will be excluded • Sustainability, especially during the use phase, will primarily be focused on environmental considerations, while social considerations are deemed secondary in focus • Focus will be on firsthand purchases of clothing items rather than secondhand purchases or trades • The project will focus on consumers within the US, even if purchases are made globally
Project Governance & Management	
Project roles and responsibilities	<p>For the purposes of this project, our client is based on a hypothetical partnership between Fashion Revolution, a global NGO focused on campaigning for safe, clean, fair, and transparent fashion industry practices, as well as the owner of the Fashion Transparency Index, and Patagonia, a leading sustainable apparel brand. This partnership is informed by a mutual interest in recognizing that fast fashion trends have disrupted consumer habits in shopping more sustainably, and a committed interest in exploring whether a behavioral intervention can strengthen the work both parties have strived for to create a more sustainable fashion ecosystem.</p> <p>Below represents our project and client responsibilities:</p> <p>Client Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define the initial contexts of the problem to be address and the project parameters • Provide feedback on recommendations and research related to the behavioral intervention design • Coordinate connections with other relevant stakeholders to gain a multi-agent understanding of the problem • Private relevant data and research materials based on internal initiatives focused on sustainable consumer behaviors and brand actions

	<p>Internal Team Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct research to understand the industry landscape, current state of literature review, and potential viability of past interventions related to sustainable consumer habits • Provide reports detailing research insights and recommendations related to changing fashion consumer behaviors • Define intervention type, evidence base for the intervention, and plan for embedding the intervention in existing contexts
Internal communications	<p>Project communications will happen on a weekly basis. There are two required touchpoints for the team to align on updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday, 6:00 – 7:00pm EST • Sunday, 12:00 – 1:00pm EST <p>Any additional communications will be coordinated via SMS and email, if not during team working sessions during the course time.</p>
External communications & stakeholder communication protocols	<p>Project communications with the client will happen on a weekly basis after submission of regular reports. All other external communications is contingent on the unanimous approval and confirmation from both the external client and the internal team.</p>
Project risks	<p>The following list represents key risks and challenges related to the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeline constraint on research and intervention design may minimize the impact and successful outcomes of the behavioral change recommendations • Feasibility of implementation of the intervention may place constraints on the team's ability to test, iterate, and refine assumptions made about the effectiveness of the intervention • Recruiting constraint on acquiring research participants to give enough power to the study may lower the significance of research findings

Other information	
Data requests	Requested Data: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Existing research and analysis on consumer habits related to purchases, use of sustainability indexes, and benchmarking of sustainability practicesContact list to existing partners, customers, and stakeholders