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2023 APPAREL TRENDS

The apparel industry continues to evolve to find creative ways to keep up with ever-changing consumer demands. In 2023, we will see five prominent trends shaping the apparel industry. These trends center around sustainability, consumer preference, supply chain implications, and influences from technological advancements.

Below, we outline five apparel trends that companies and consumers should be aware of in 2023:



CONSCIENTIOUS CONSUMERS ARE FORCING BRANDS TO RETHINK SUSTAINABLE APPAREL



CONSUMERS CONTINUE TO DESIRE CUSTOMIZATION AND PERSONALIZATION



DEMAND TO INCREASE AS SUPPLY RECOVERS



INTERACTING IN THE METAVERSE IS NO LONGER OPTIONAL BUT REQUIRED TO STAY RELEVANT



APPAREL WILL REMAIN A VEHICLE OF EXPRESSION FOR DE+I



CONSCIENTIOUS CONSUMERS ARE FORCING BRANDS TO RETHINK SUSTAINABLE APPAREL

[Sustainability in apparel](#) continues to be an industry focus. We're seeing retailers changing their sourcing strategy, and in some cases changing their raw materials altogether. Considering the clothing and textile industry reports an [annual material loss of \\$100 billion](#) due to the underutilization of materials, the popularity of recycling and reselling of apparel continues to grow, and transparency in the supply chain has become table stakes for retailers.

One creative way to create more eco-friendly clothing is to substitute traditional fabric with bamboo fabric. Using bamboo as a sustainable material in collections is becoming more prevalent. Other ways to promote sustainability are through [secondhand shopping](#) as well as returning articles of clothing to recycle or resell at a discount. This trend is continuing to be on the rise for apparel across brands as consumers become more educated on sustainability.

As consumers also continue to expect manufacturers to deliver products at high speed, this demand puts pressure on our environment and encourages preventable waste. Traditionally, manufacturers have followed a linear take-make-waste model; however, consumers are demanding retailers maximize waste-reduction efforts at every production stage, which poses new challenges for apparel brands to protect ever-tightening margins. As such, there has been a shift to bring manufacturing onshore to have more control over distribution and ethical operations. Traditionally, offshoring manufacturing plants were a common practice to offset the cost of making goods, but consumers are voicing their disapproval of working conditions for workers overseas, and companies are making changes to address these concerns – all efforts toward a more sustainable apparel industry.

In the last 15 years, clothing production has doubled while the number of times a garment is worn before being discarded has decreased by 36%.

[SOURCE](#)



CONSUMERS CONTINUE TO DESIRE CUSTOMIZATION AND PERSONALIZATION

More than ever, retailers are incentivized to offer their customers a personalized shopping experience. Similarly, apparel brands must find creative means to offer tailored-made apparel, keeping the customer at the center of mind. With advancements in technology, it's becoming easier to have direct access to manufacturers to provide customized apparel with the specifications determined by the customer.

Market research shows that fully [customizable apparel could claim 10 to 30% of the market share](#) by 2030, and this growth will utilize consumer insight to drive inventory. Just-in-time manufacturing has become a critical capability for apparel manufacturers as personalized offerings typically involve custom fabrics. While customized apparel allows companies to purchase to order, reducing inventory holding costs and potential waste, the increased costs are often passed to the consumer.

Fully customizable apparel could claim 10 to 30 percent of the market share by 2030.

[SOURCE](#)

Companies like Nike have embraced this trend and realized profits from it. They have customizable apparel and shoes that allow customers to take creative control of the many aspects of the design. Nike continues to reap profits from diversifying its offerings and incorporating this into its multi-channel distribution. In the next 8-10 years, the industry will continue to see a rise in customized apparel, so finding ways to incorporate these capabilities into products will further differentiate brands trying to compete on personalized customer experiences.

3 DEMAND TO INCREASE AS SUPPLY RECOVERS

We saw brands struggle to accurately forecast consumer demands in 2022 because of many external factors, including the residual effects of the pandemic, the economy, and inflation rates. At the onset of the pandemic, brands were low in supply while demand was high. As the world started to reopen in 2022, we saw inventory picking up, but demand dropped as inflation and material costs increased. Now, experts predict a rise in apparel demand, expecting the global apparel supply chain market to expand at [a promising rate from 2021 to 2031](#).

This is likely to be driven by increased apparel demands from fashion industries and the rise of online retail channels. As distribution channels continue to stabilize post-pandemic, we will see increased supplies to meet the demands of consumers. The pandemic has forced brands and manufacturers to get creative and expand their distribution channels to adapt to the changes in consumer spending and shopping channels. The improvement in forecasting and [supply chain planning](#) will aid in companies being able to meet demand promptly.

The global apparel supply chain market is anticipated to expand at a promising rate from 2021 to 2031.

[SOURCE](#)



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New technologies have always allowed retailers and apparel brands to elevate the customer experience while optimizing omnichannel opportunities and enabling operational efficiencies. The [Metaverse](#) is the next tech opportunity for retailers to broaden their customer segments and attract the next generation of shoppers. After all, Gen Z consumers spend [twice as much time](#) interacting in the Metaverse than in real life.

Retailers are exploring gamified shopping experiences through platforms like Roblox, which has more than [200 million active users](#) spending more than \$1 billion on in-game currency “Robux.” This virtual and interactive gaming experience attracts 55 million users daily, many of whom are hard to reach through traditional media. Nike, American Eagle, and Vans are a few brands that have also adapted quickly to engage audiences through the Metaverse. Nike, for example, opened [Nikeland](#), an interactive space on Roblox where players can try on digital versions of sportswear gear and participate in activities like dodgeball.

Considering the increased popularity and usage of online platforms, apparel brands will need to invest in this space to stay competitive, remain relevant, and ultimately keep their customers engaged.

One-third of Gen Zers would like to see brands develop virtual stores, and 30% were receptive to brands selling skins and apparel to outfit digital avatars.

[SOURCE](#)



APPAREL WILL REMAIN A VEHICLE OF EXPRESSION FOR DE+I

Current events and social issues continue to impact the fabric of our lives. With the rise of sustainability movements and consumer consciousness, DE+I efforts have recently been spotlighted. Apparel has become an extension of oneself and a form of expression. With this, consumers are becoming more drawn to brands that take a stand and associate themselves with social causes. We are continuing to see a rise in minority-owned tags on apparel, which is one way for consumers to [identify and support causes](#) that align with their values and interests.

Social media has played a significant role in keeping society interconnected and exposing injustices worldwide. This heightened during the pandemic, as consumers were quarantined

and consumed more media and news. As the world reopens, we are still hyper-aware of issues plaguing our society, and consumers are looking for ways to support and showcase their political and social stances through their apparel.

With an increase in social awareness among consumers, companies are looking to enhance their DE+I initiatives because these consumers are now holding them accountable. Moving into 2023 and beyond, apparel brands must be mindful of this.

CONCLUSION

As we track the evolution of apparel trends, one thing is for sure: the apparel industry will continue to evolve and pursue customer-centricity. In the coming year, retail brands will continue to experiment with new channels and innovate within existing channels to provide seamless end-to-end experiences. Because of technological advancements, companies can reach their target audiences in various ways. Retail organizations also have access to data to gather relevant and timely insights about the market and the customer demographics they're targeting. Technology will continue to make new developments, and society will become more connected and interdependent with these advancements. Customers want to trust the brands they financially support and will take that extra step to ensure they align with their values. Ultimately, businesses across the retail industry will have to remain customer-centric to execute effectively and maintain pace with the unique needs of their target consumers.

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