

WGSN's 6 key strategies for developing S/S 2020 collections

By [Maroefah Smith](#)

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Examining the world's ever-changing stance on things and its subsequent impact on fashion trends is tricky. Luckily for us, WGSN editor and trend feed curator Polly Walters flew all the way from the UK to present the company's trend forecast for spring/summer 2020 at the recent Source Africa in Cape Town.

“You need to be ready for a consumer whose emotional engagement and product positions them as a negotiator with more discerning tastes and values that they’re often not given credit for,” says Walters. To make things clear, she outlined the six key strategies and actions that buyers need to adapt to react to industry shifts and, in the process, maximise opportunities for spring/summer 2020.

Smarten up

Menswear, in particular, is seeing a sort of smartening up of streetwear as its generation starts to grow up. In fact, streetwear pioneers like Kim Jones (Dior) and Virgil Abloh (Louis Vuitton) are taking over at luxury brands and introducing this generation, who learned power dressing in the context of streetwear, to tailoring. “You need to be sure to buy into smart, minimalist casualwear and contemporary tailoring that can be styled together. Be sure to look for pieces that incorporate comfort and functional activewear elements in designer fabrication,” advises Walters.



Looks from Kim Jones's debut summer collection at Dior.

Plastic is not fantastic

Much like the plot of *Mean Girls*, the plastics are presenting a problem. While there is increased interest in plastic and its accompanying aesthetic, there's also a growing eco-conscious awareness from consumers around sustainability. In the UK and the US, recycled polyesters showed year-on-year growth of 26% and 27% respectively. “Our suggestion to you, is to develop your long-term sourcing strategy and any pieces in your assortment with an obvious plastic look should be your priority for recycled content as these will be the first pieces that your consumer will call into question,” says Walters.



Patagonia Men's Fitz Roy Horizons Responsibili-Tee - made from recycled polyester.

Resale is the new retail

The time-rich and cash-poor Gen Z shopper has started looking to resale as their main source of shopping. And brands are using this growing resale market to introduce their new drops by driving hype within these engaged communities. Walters's suggestion is to take these resale attributes and look at how they can enhance your buying strategies.

“Consider pieces that will hold their value beyond the season – items that strike the right balance between quality, long-lasting appeal and fashionability with an eye to resale or rentals. Know your data and track your product. Knowing the performance of your product beyond your own channels is key for future planning,” she says. She points to Reformation and ThredUp's recycling programme as a great example, as it not only helps with recycling and creating loyalty but also enables brands to understand the value of their product before they even design it.

Reformation x THRED UP



How it works

1. Activate your bag or print a label
Activate the bag at thredup.com/reformation or get a free shipping label to use on any box.
 2. Fill your bag
Drop in high-quality women's and kids' clothing, handbags, shoes, fashion jewelry, and accessories.
 3. Send it off
Leave your bag for your mail carrier or drop it off at any FedEx Office or USPS location.
 4. Earn credit
Once your bag is processed, you'll earn Ref shopping credit for items thredUP accepts.
- Psst! Send us your kit by April 30, 2019 to earn an extra 15% in Reformation shopping credit.

The Reformation x Thred Up recycle programme.

The sustainability conundrum

The quest for increased sustainability is presenting a bit of a conundrum. On the one hand, many government reviews are pushing for higher taxation on synthetic textiles with less than 50% recycled PET. On the other hand, micro-fibre shedding creates an issue for recycled fabrics and can vary by up to 70% to 80%, contributing to plastic pollution in the process. And while most natural fibres do biodegrade, they put pressure on water and land use.

How to solve this conundrum? Walters suggests choosing synthetic fibres with lower levels of microfibre shedding and naturals that will regenerate. In terms of application, she says: "Building sustainable capsules and options in terms of key selling windows will safeguard spend and eliminate barriers of purchase. Use your vacation and festival shops as a way to promote sustainable fashion messaging in these key selling windows."

Better basics

According to Walters, an influx of direct-to-consumer disruptors has increased competition around the core basics. Pushing you to protect, own and celebrate your hero pieces. The Marie Kondo effect has made more consumers aware of minimalism, favouring longer-life items that bring joy. "You need to begin by acknowledging the commercial core product. Functionality or innovation that drives your purchases and customer trust. Next, promote your everyday heroes' status through marketing campaigns on social media to set out your store," advises Walters.



Looks from Women's T by Alexander Wang - a collection of elevated basics and essentials.

The emergence of comfortable homewear

As more and more people do more than just *live* at home, there's been an increased demand for comfortable 'homewear'. Don't believe it? Sleep and loungewear was the top-performing category for autumn/winter 18/19. While consumers are spending an increased amount of time in their 'house clothes', they're also more willing to make an extra effort when they decide to ditch their slippers and step outside, which has seen a notable increase in party, glam and decorative styles across trade shows, catwalks and streetwear.

"Tap into premium, tactile finishes, loose silhouettes and versatile items that work just as well outdoors as they do indoors. Be aware of the impact of loungewear on denim assortment. Don't forget to target the same consumer with your partywear – a good balance of the two will serve this cohort's needs," says Walters.

ABOUT MAROEFAH SMITH

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