



JAPAN Textile Salon in NYC 2020

The Japan Textile Salon in New York showcased 16 textile companies spanning Japan, introducing some of the most authentic, culturally appreciated methods for producing textiles. Most of these companies have been creating textiles for half a century, constantly re-fining their skills and techniques to meet demands of consumers and brands looking for high-quality fabric. 469 attendees, ranging from Designers, R&D Representatives, Media, and Academia, showed up during the two-day show, with much excitement to learn about the companies and their fabric techniques. This was JETRO's second successful showcase, introducing Japanese companies to the US market.

This year, there was an additional focus on raising awareness regarding the sustainability of the Fashion industry. JETRO partnered up with [Conscious Fashion Campaign](#) (CFC), which engages in global industry events to commit to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. In particular, this initiative champions fashion as an influential sector to address the world's most pressing issues and lead a future that leaves no one behind.

What is the Sustainable Development Goal Agenda?

“On September 2015 during the UN Summit, the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals Agenda, or SDG, and fully introduced this agenda in January 2016. The SDG was built on the Millennium Development Goals, which aimed to end all forms of poverty, and the new goal is now calling for action by all coun-

tries, poor, rich and middle-income to promote prosperity while protecting the planet. For this, every country has responsibilities to achieve the [17 Sustainable Development Goals](#), which gets reviewed every year.”

According to CFC, the Fashion industry creates an impact to the global environment. With a \$2.5 Trillion industry and 75 million people employed, of which 80% is women, this industry on itself, produces 4% of world-wide waste. To achieve the 2030 SDG agenda, CFC and many other advocacy groups engage with industry players to integrate SDG into their business model and strategies through marketing and proper education all over the world. While SDG in Fashion is only a small piece of the bigger picture, the impact is there, and you can read all about the results of SDG from their annual reports like this one [here](#).

Taking into consideration of the message to improve SDGs in all industry, we wanted to share this from some of the Exhibitor’s perspective. But first, a little history lesson. Historically, Japanese culture has embedded an SDG mindset since the early days of the modern era. During the Meiji Restoration of 1868, the country created a blueprint on economic development, to which many countries still follow. Post 1945, Japan rebuilt itself as a world leader in technology and exports of products like Automobiles, consumer electronics, and many other goods and services that everyone uses today. In the 70’s and 80’s, Japan expanded their business to North and Southeast Asia, by investing in manufacturing facilities, which spurred economic growth in countries like Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia. JETRO was also very much involved in the export services during this time as well. As a leader in sustainable technology, joining other countries to end poverty, and achieve high-levels of well being and human security, you can say that Japan had already integrated SDG into their blood.

For these reasons, when we asked exhibitors like Panoco Trading and Yoshida Senko, producers of organic cotton, on what they think of the current state of SDG implementation, and their response was obvious to the historical facts, “We’ve been doing this since the inception of the company and before the idea of SDG.” We’ve asked a few more on what they are doing to improve sustainability.

Takayuki Nagao, General Manager of the Fabric Export Department for Panoco Trading, explained that their business initially started out as a trading company importing and exporting goods and services, however, they came across organic cotton 25 years ago.

“Back then, we were able to buy organic cotton at a relatively inexpensive price and sell at a high margin due to its popularity. About one year ago, we started to see the buyers becoming more conscious with where and how the organic materials were being made from. Fortunately, we praise ourselves with the quality of cotton, ensuring the best of support to the farms we partner with, and the usage of organic cleaning materials to produce the cotton. Simply said, we’ve kept this way of producing cotton and for these reasons, high-end brands are our primary clients.”

Atsuo Yoshida, President of Yoshida Senko, took a different approach to being even more sustainable and friendly to the environment.

“We produce organic cotton, biodegradable cotton, and recyclable cotton. To produce these cottons, the

process of dyeing cotton is a very hazardous to the surrounding water. To tackle this situation, we've invested in a waste water treatment plant, where the dyed water is completely filtered to its original state and returned to the river. To reduce CO2 emissions, we've also invested in the usage of natural gas."

Shimpei Ohtsuji, Representative on behalf of Hataoka & Asuwa Company.

"This company originally did not have a sustainability mindset as a textile producer, however, with time and trends leaning towards eco-sensitive products, they've developed an eco-friendly textile using triacetate, which is made of wood pulp and Recycled PET bottles. Not only that, they are monitoring the run time of their manufacturing plants based on slow seasons and high seasons"



Textile samples shown at the exhibition booth of Toban textile

Hideki Kameda Executive Director, Factory Manager of Finishing Department for Toban Textile

"We have been in business for 70 years. Throughout the years, we have kept with the tradition to maintain the beauty and essence of our town, Nishiwaki in Hyogo Prefecture, which is considered Japan's Textile region. The gentle water in the Kakogawa River makes it essential for dyeing, but to keep the purity of the local water, we invested in our own waste water treatment plant. Not only us, but all of the surrounding companies and the public realize the importance of maintaining the essence of the town

by working together to keep Nishiwaki a beautiful town surrounded by greens."

In the two-day showcase, the event featured panel sessions by key influencers, academia, and brands that have been very active in obtaining SDGs within their business channel or advocating the importance of SDG to the public. These sessions were produced by CFC and the seats were filled with attendees wanting to know more about the importance of sustainability. The overall reaction that was felt in both sessions were evident. The US still needs a lot of work in making the outreach, compared to Europe, where the presence of SDG activity is much more active. And, the initial message to the audience was that building a sustainable model can't be done in a year but working towards the goals is going to be very essential in the future and every company needs to start now.

See below for more details.

PANEL DISCUSSION: Creating a Sustainability for All

Day one of the show started off with much needed topic on the sustainable development goals (SDG) that needs attention within the fashion industry across the world. Moderated by **Lucie Bringham**, Chief of Office at United Nations Office for Partnership, and joined by panelists, **Dana Davis**, Vice President of Sustainability, Product & Business Strategy at Mara Hoffman, **Megan Meiklejohn**, Sustainable Materials and Transparency Manager at Eileen Fischer, and **Tricia Carey**, Director of Global Business Development Apparel at Lenzing Fibers, the panel dived into discussion on how to transform the ecosystem surrounding the industry to advance further the knowledge of SDGs campaign, "SDGs for better fashion", which the United Nations Office for Partnership started.



From left, Dana Davis, Tricia Carey, Megan Meiklejohn and Lucie Bringham.

Bringham started off the discussion by letting the panelists speak on behalf of their respective companies on the changes they had to make to promote sustainability. At Mara Hoffman, which was founded in 2000, sustainable fashion wasn't the center of attention in the beginning. Davis spoke that Mara Hoffman herself, first had to consult with Davis on how to make changes and commit to implement better practices. Within 19 years, the company is now focused primarily on sustainable materials and its process by communicating with all their partners. Meiklejohn described that Eileen Fischer is now investing their time on regener-

ative agriculture and developing strategies on where they can create the biggest impact. Mainly, by focusing on the regenerative agriculture method, this can also impact other SDG issues like poverty and education amongst the farmers. Lenzing Fiber, a global company producing fiber for the fashion industry, came up with a solution to educate partners among their supply channel to consider becoming more sustainable. Carey mentioned that they came up with a solution based on the United Nation's 17 SDGs by creating cards to point out the important aspect of each of the 17 goals and how it all fits in the fashion industry. Not all partners can complete the 17 goals, however, each partner can help in different stages and the cards can educate them even more on where to find solutions.

The key takes on this panel was simple but challenging, which comes down to communication and transparency amongst the ecosystem. Bringham mentioned that there has been a resurgence in the usage of mobile platform in fashion industry and the impact of creating more platforms. Each panelist had similar answers, articulating the importance around new technology and accelerators focusing on the fashion industry, digital campaigns for consumers to read and understand the labels on clothes, as well as the need to create educational platforms on SDG. Finally, Bringham asked each panelist to give one word that summarizes the trend for this industry in 2020. Davis answered "Transparency", Meiklejohn said "Regenerative", and Carey's answer was "Circularity".

PANEL DISCUSSION: Investment in Sustainability

Day two of the show's panel discussion focused on the US's perspective on sustainable growth. The panel featured **Katsu Kawasaki**, a veteran in the US textile industry, founder of Katsu New York and more recently, SynZenbe, Inc., which provides the first end-to-end transactional marketplace for textile sourcing, and **Angela Kramer**, Senior Manager of 3.1. Philip Lim's Fabric Research Department, responsible for Women's, Men's and Sportswear collaboration with FILA. The panel was moderated by **Björn Bengtsson**, Chief Merchandising Officer at Untuckit, LLC and Adjunct Professor at Parsons School of Design.

Bengtsson kicked off the panel by asking a common question surrounding sustainability in Fashion "What are we doing here in the US?". Kramer mentioned that at Philip Lim, it really started from the simple things by looking at themselves inwardly and formalizing a plan for sustainability. This meant monthly meetings with all staffs and asking the question, "what part of everyone's job can we make sustainable". As a result, the group incorporated the plan better and considers the sustainability efforts to be looked at a long-term project. To this, Bengtsson couldn't agree more and stated that it is impossible for a company who didn't have a sustainable mindset to change course in one year and that it would take at least 3 years.

Another question that Bengtsson asked Kramer was based on the fashion industry causing the second most pollution globally and whether it was the manufacturers or consumers fault. Kramer answered back that its probably both, based on the fact that consumers are buying items quickly and low cost, while manufacturers are overproducing. Following that question, Bengtsson asked which area's in the industry is adhering to this issue and making change the quickest. Kramer's answer to this was that fabrics are the easiest to make changes, taking example of recycled polyester, which reduces emission compared to conventional polyester by 30%, and further down the road, companies can decide on new methods of design and innovative ways to make clothes.

Kawasaki added an interesting statistical fact by founder of Kyocera, Kazuo Inamori, who spent millions of dollars researching the results of the environmental impact one country can cause if its tradition and culture were unified globally. For instance, if the global population were following the Italian culture since the beginning of human kind, the earth would be destroyed by 1993. Others he mentioned was Japanese - 2010, Indian - 2100, and United States - 1954. He pointed out the results were primarily based on greenhouse gas emission (GHG), and the key to sustainability, even in the fashion industry is to reduce GHG emission.

The panel discussion rounded out to primarily educating both commercial and consumer mentality on sustainability. There is no perfect solution to figuring out the entirety of keeping a company's channel of networks 100% sustainable at the moment, however, we can see that there is a large community active in this mission to obtain SDG in the US.