

CPA ONTARIO WRITE TO IGNITE 2020

Choose a company that's inspired you based on their disruptive nature. What makes them a game changer in their industry?

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SUSTAINABLE FAST FASHION: REFORMATION

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In recent years, many retailers have shut down their doors due to their inability to compete in the changing retail industry. To some, this is known as the age of the “retail apocalypse” (Isidore and Meyersohn). This includes the high-profile bankruptcy of fast-fashion retailer Forever 21, who filed for bankruptcy protection in late 2019. New reports suggest there is a new push for transparency around the ecological footprint of companies by millennials today. Though some fast-fashion brands like H&M have started taking steps towards becoming more sustainable, new companies that have adapted to the changing industry trends such as Reformation, are in demand. Reformation, a Los Angeles-based company, is known for producing highly sought-after sustainably sourced and stylish pieces. Through creating a positive customer experience and committing to sustainability, Reformation has become an industry leader in the emerging market of sustainable fashion.

With the growth in e-commerce, the store experience has become a vital component for creating a positive brand impression on the customer. Ananda Chakravarty, an analyst at the research firm Forrester noted that “companies that capture the customer’s heart and mind are going to win” (Chaykowski). Reformation single-handedly achieves this as they use technology to provide a unique shopping experience for customers in their 14 physical stores. Shoppers have access to touchscreens throughout the store to pick items to try on, charging stations within fitting rooms, customizable lighting options and more. With their target market of millennial shoppers, they visually appeal to be “Instagrammable” with interior design and lighting that fits in perfectly with the social media era (Rudolph). Unlike many traditional brick-and-mortar stores, each physical Reformation store is curated to provide an unforgettable shopping experience for every customer.

While some companies use sustainability as a marketing ploy, sustainability is the central component of Reformation. With this being said, Reformation uses a variety of different measures to reduce its ecological footprint. From the company’s online website, one can find all the information regarding the company’s sustainable practices. Reformation ensures sustainability from all aspects, from creating packaging that composts “in your background” to offering free tours at its local factory in Los Angeles (deCarufel). Reformation also has several partnerships with businesses such as the online consignment platform, Thredup, to encourage people to donate their clothes in exchange for credit. The brand is not only working with businesses but it also collaborates with non-profit organizations like TreePeople and Planned Parenthood to give back to communities (Reformation). While some may argue that sustainability can limit a company’s operations and sales, sustainability has not limited the company from producing ‘fast’ fashion as Reformation claims to operate a design-to-rack cycle of 42 days while traditional retail companies may take up to 18 months (Chitrakorn).

In short, Reformation's pieces are not only ethically sourced, but the company additionally partners with businesses and organizations to promote sustainability in all means.

Reformation is the future of fast fashion as it continues to expand to locations worldwide. While many retailers prepared for liquidation, Reformation launched its first international location in Toronto, in early 2019. Reformation's success stems from the brand's ability to create a unique customer experience in-stores and online and adhering to their commitment to being sustainable in a variety of ways. Reformation is a game-changer in the fashion industry as they continue to create positive change in one of the world's largest polluting industries.

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