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TEXTILE WASTE

The Dirty Secret the Industry Can No Longer Afford To Hide.

In recent years, textile waste's impact on the physical and social environment has been a hot button issue.

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Textile Waste is Heading Towards A Dirty Future.

The EPA has estimated textile waste generated in 2017 was 16.9 million tons, of which a majority 11.2 million tons were discarded into landfills, and only 2.6 million tons were recycled (15.2% of the waste).

Companies have to create solutions to the current broken, fast fashion supply chain that is ethical and self-sustaining.

The young Gen Z customer base isn't like their predecessors and, with the help of the Internet, are holding brands responsible for producing the products they want under ethical standards.

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Did you know?

95% of all municipal solid textile waste that ends up in landfills can be recycled.

It takes

2700

liters of water to make a **t-shirt.**

and enough to sustain one person for

3 years.

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It takes 200 tons of water to produce 1 ton of dyed fabric. Some wastewater is released back into the ecosystem if it cannot be chemically treated to be fit for consumption again.

How is Sustainability defined?

- Sustainability encompasses many different issues and, therefore, doesn't have one definitive term but can be described as "the ability to maintain ecological and ethical balance."

- Sustainability will look different for the textile industry's multiple sectors as the way they dispose of pollution and govern their supply chain will differ.

- Companies must manage their waste not only to be more efficient and turn a higher profit, but also to assure their practices in all aspects reflects a positive brand image.

Why Recycling Alone Won't Solve the Issue.

Chemically recycling textiles with poly-plastic components is expensive for most brands and still requires the after-cleaning of virgin fibers.

Mechanical recycling destroys the fibers' tensile strength to a degree wear the second product resulting from their use is of much lower quality than the original.

Many consumers don't understand textile recycling, and many of their unwanted garments would still end up in landfills.

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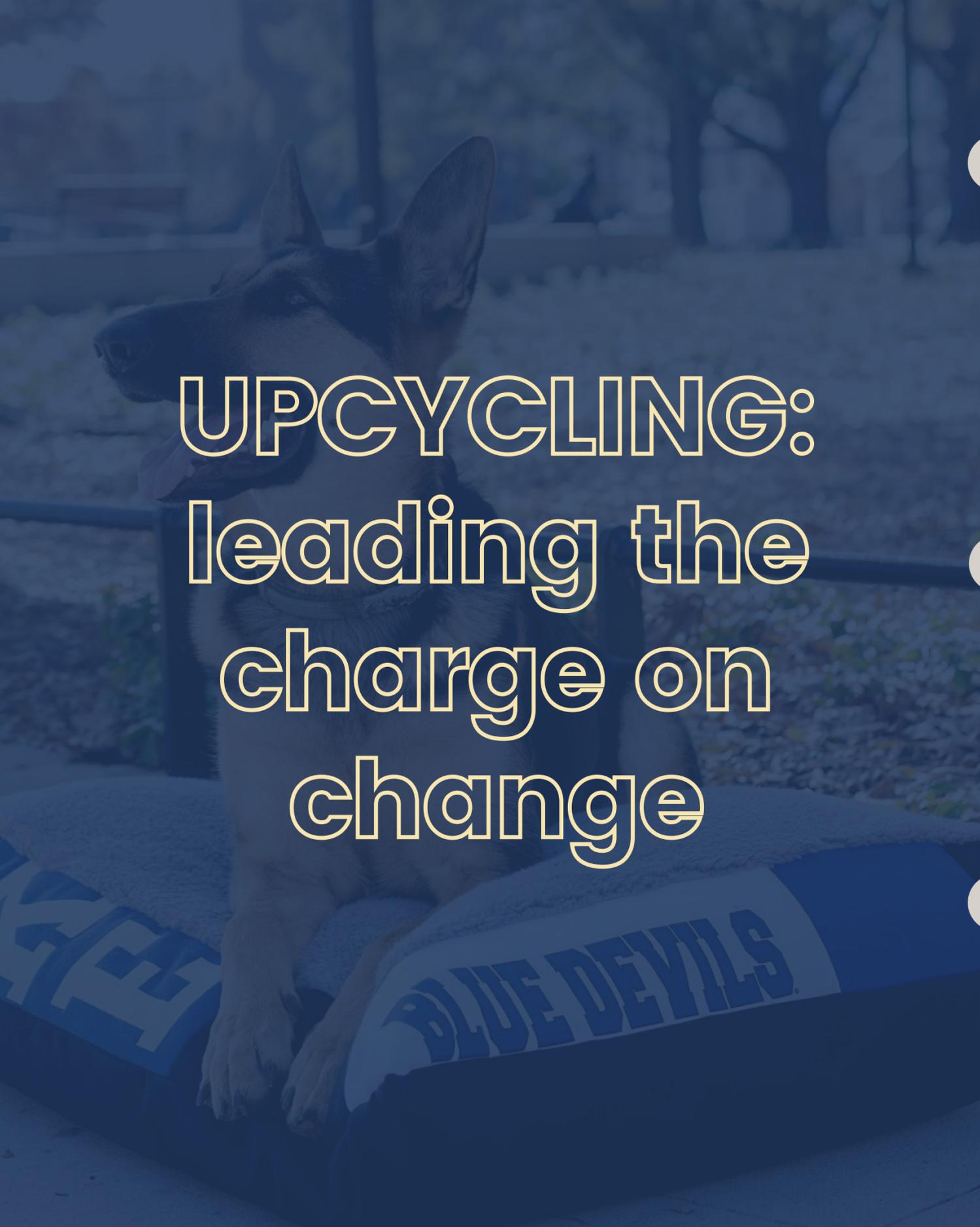
UPCYCLING: leading the charge on change

Upcycling involves using the textiles in their present form by mending/reinforcing them for more extended wear or salvaging the material to put towards new products. By comparison, upcycling is a cleaner option of reusing textiles than traditional recycling.

With the option of upcycling, there is room for customization to individual needs and wants while retaining similar characteristics as the original product.

Upcycling would solve the constant need for new materials by giving consumers an exciting product while conserving already limited natural and human resources.

BUT IT'S MORE THAN JUST CLOTHES!

Upcycling textiles into new products open the unique opportunity to create commodities of more sentimental value and more extended wear.

Marlana Bunn
Wake Forest, NC

So why hasn't faster progress been made?

Many companies are unaware of what conditions their products are produced during off-shoring.

This lack of transparency in the supply chain isn't addressed in the mainstream media unless major tragedies occur, such as the Rana Plaza building.

Brands are held back by financial or legal barriers in practicing more sustainable policies.

Recycling a garment can use two processes.

1 Chemical recycling uses chemical solvents to break down the existing fabric and extract virgin fibers to redirect into textile production.

2 Mechanical recycling physically breaks down fibers using a shredder and is mixed with pure fibers to improve yarn strength lost in the shredding process.

New products. New mindset.

Creating products with a "Cradle to Cradle" mindset (that is, thinking of the product's life cycle before its development) helps sellers ultimately conserve their resources when in the manufacturing phase and keeps buyers from bearing the burden where textiles go at the end of their available use.

Upcycling is a practice both consumers and businesses can benefit from by meeting their needs for new, sustainable, ethically-produced products, and on the same quality tier as its prior form.

Presenting new, cost-efficient ideas to brands will spur a more massive sustainability involvement on all fronts of the industry.

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FACING THE REALITY AHEAD.

- Textile waste isn't disintegrating fast enough in the natural environment for landfills to continue being an option.

- Sustainability is a more extensive conversation the general population is now having and is likely to grow in the coming years.

- Startup brands and smaller companies solve these issues by incorporating them into their company culture and business partnerships.

- Recycling is one way of reusing textiles, but there are more feasible options such as Upcycling, which can be opted for.

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FOLLOW THE CONVERSATION

LinkedIn

Learn more about our "why" and what we're doing to help inspire change.

Facebook

Be in-the-know about all our new products and partnerships.

Instagram

Check out what our Brand Ambassadors are doing to help drive our next generation towards zero waste.

WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER!

If there is anything that 2020 has taught us, it's that at the corner of modernization and mayhem there is the opportunity to create magic. We've set up shop at this figurative intersection. By using current sustainable processes, we adopt a new approach to looking at waste.

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