

VELVET *edge*

Building Trans-Generational Fashion Brands | An Interview

Unsplash | Noah Smith



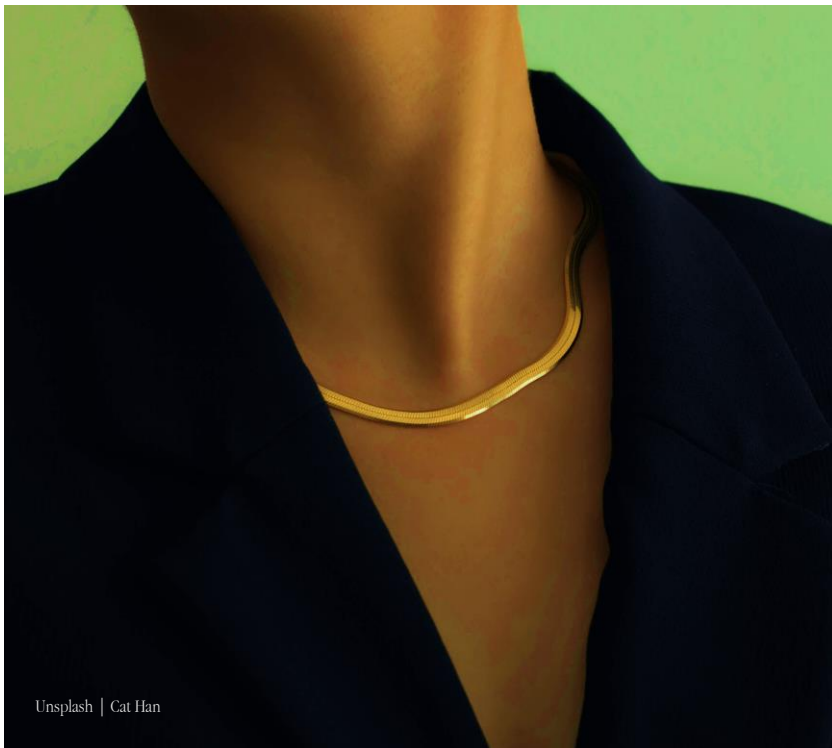
The Fashion industry demands constant innovation and creativity. However, in an age where more attention is being paid to reducing fashion consumerism, it's become more important than ever to create pieces that are sustainable, inclusive, and timeless. To help fashion brands navigate these challenges, we've gathered valuable insights from our Lead Consultant and Trans-generational Fashion Advocate-in-Chief 'Toni Philip-Aina. In our sit down with her, we explore key insights on building a transgenerational fashion brand that resonates with customers and stands the test of time.

What advice do you have for fashion brands looking to create pieces that appeal to all generations?

You know, just this past month, I was having lunch with a client and discussing the need to possess a transgenerational design approach (with her) . I shared with her Bally's ethos to create products that could be passed down to three generations. Her response was intriguing, she leaned back on the chair in the café and said "That's interesting, my Mum just passed me this lovely pair of Bally shoes, and you know, I was saying to myself, If I had a daughter (She has two boys) this was the kind of shoe I would love to pass on to her". It further entrenched what we have always believed. A trans-generational design approach begins with setting a trans-generational agenda from the very beginning of the brand's journey. That agenda then cascades down to the creation of a certain classic quality that appeals to all generations and strikes just the right balance between today's trends and the test of time. It even affects and incorporates classic elements like painstaking tailoring or signature finishes and even iconic clasps. It should seep through every season, texture and silhouette. I think the legacy brands like Dior and Chanel have mastered this to a T. And the outlook remains good for that kind of approach.



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→ **How can fashion brands ensure that their products are environmentally friendly and sustainable?**

Sustainability is a crucial issue in the industry, and it will be an uphill battle to curb consumption in a world where advertising has become almost inescapable. But if we start our design journey from nature rather than tag nature along to our collection like a trending theme, then there is hope for achieving sustainability beyond lip service and good optics. Take biodegradable fibres for example, they breathe better, spin with much less waste and decompose faster. Can we work with these fibres to make materials that consider future generations much more than non-biodegradable fibres do?

Also, can we manipulate eco friendly materials so they last longer and cause us to buy less and less? That kind of curiosity in a designer can lead to a lot of interesting world-changing concepts.

So some adventure where fashion Sustainability is concerned?

Absolutely. And commitment as well. Meaningful change can be challenging. But when truly introspective fashion leaders see a moment to effect real change, they keep on pushing.

How can fashion brands balance the desire for newness with the need for timeless pieces?

Creativity in itself is always a delicate balancing act, there is always that tension between what is new and what is lasting. Designers have to find a sweet spot that addresses both. One way to achieve this is to focus on creating versatile pieces that can be worn in a variety of settings. For example, a classic trench coat or a well-tailored blazer can be worn season after season, but can also be updated with modern accessories or styling. Another way is to focus on high-quality materials and craftsmanship. That never goes wrong because there will always be someone to appreciate it in this present time and in the future.

How can fashion brands create emotional connections with their customers over a long period of time?

Human beings crave connection. Storytelling is a powerful tool for creating those connections. When done well, you come across in a way that's relatable and memorable; Emotional connections are forged. Backed by quality and craftsmanship, those connections can lead to loyalty over a very long time. Of course, stories should lead more to the Value than to the Proposition, it should focus more on the true tale than on the quick sale. A tale that speaks to your brand's values and mission resonates much more with customers. Create a narrative around your products or brand, showing the inspiration and craftsmanship behind each piece. Also, shape your branding and messaging, using visuals and messaging that reflect the values and experiences of your target customers. All these evoke a sense of heritage and tradition. A culture that becomes a part of people's lives.

