

Retail Sustainability Insights

2019

The retailer's role in the outdoor industry's efforts toward sustainability is crucial. Store managers and their staff need to navigate through the jungle of definitions, standards and occasional greenwashing, while at the same time answer questions from customers who are becoming more and more aware.

In collaboration with the European Outdoor Group, Suston Magazine reached out to outdoor retailers through in-depth interviews and an online survey. Over 120 respondents from 13 countries shared their sustainability insights, strengths and knowledge gaps.

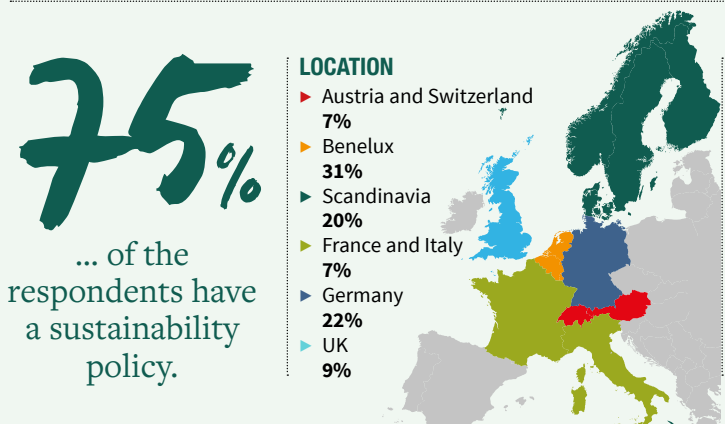
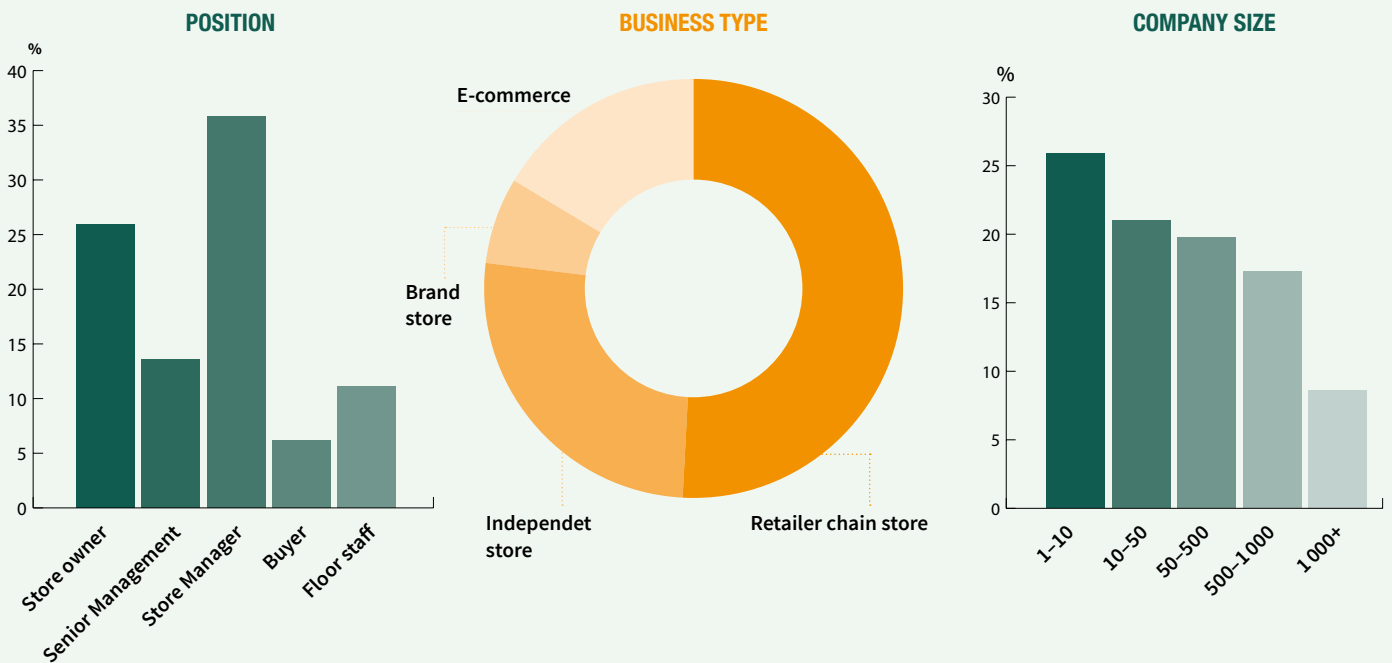


Suston

EUROPEAN
OUTDOOR
GROUP

About the retailers

Store managers and other representatives from small, independent stores to the largest retail chains took part.



“The group of people buying sustainable goods is extremely heterogeneous! What they are asking for is mostly mainstream, driven by media. Usually customers are not familiar with the details, but are satisfied if the salesperson defines the product as sustainable. The customer relies on our advice.”

CSR Manager at retailer chain

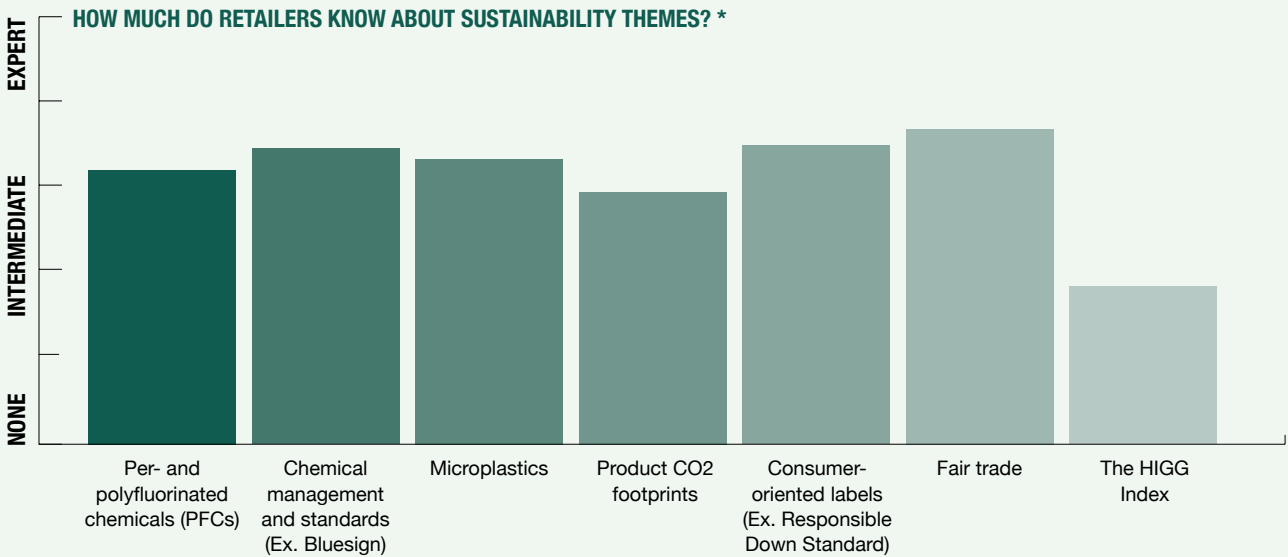
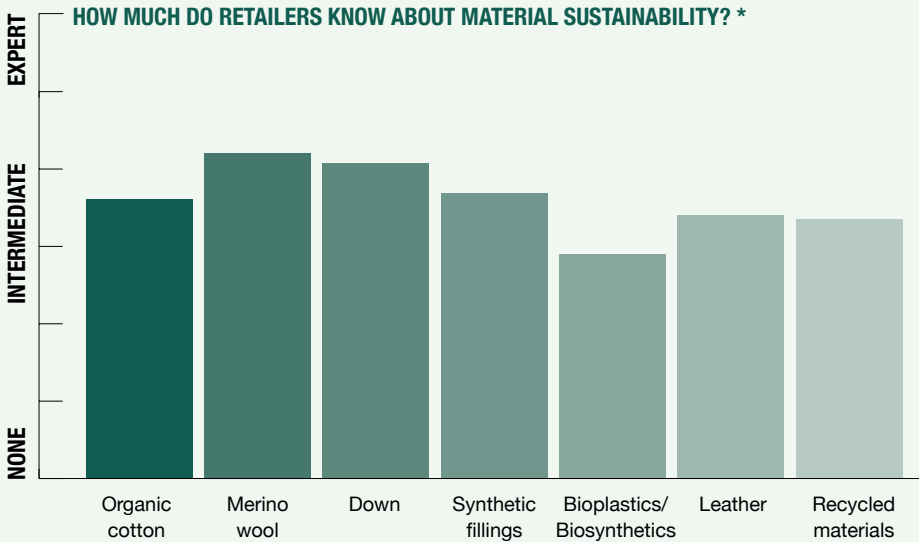
What do you know?

We asked respondents to rate their knowledge of commonly discussed sustainability themes and materials.



KEY FINDING HIGG NEEDS TO COMMUNICATE

The Higg Brand & Retail Module is often regarded as the industry tool that will make comparable, transparent and fact based sustainable choices possible - but nine out of ten respondents know "little" to "nothing" about it.



KEY FINDINGS

THE LARGEST ARE LAGGING

While 70% of small to medium retailers include sustainability in their staff training and 76% have a sustainability policy, the largest retailers respond with just 11% and 55% respectively.

GAP BETWEEN FLOOR AND TOP

Compared to top management, staff is three times more likely to say consumer's ask often about sustainability.

11%

... of the largest retailers train staff in sustainability.

“People are still not enough aware of all the harm that the industry is doing. They think everything is within safe regulations, but forget that 90% is produced in the Far East, where there are (almost) no regulations at all ...”

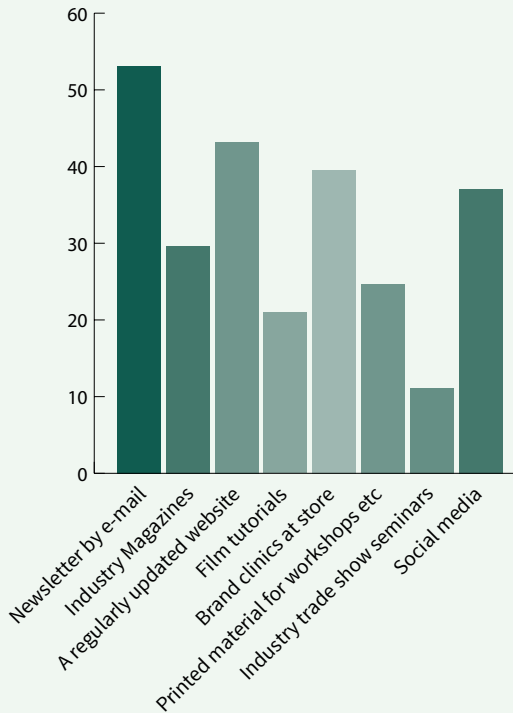
Store owner, Belgium

About the brands

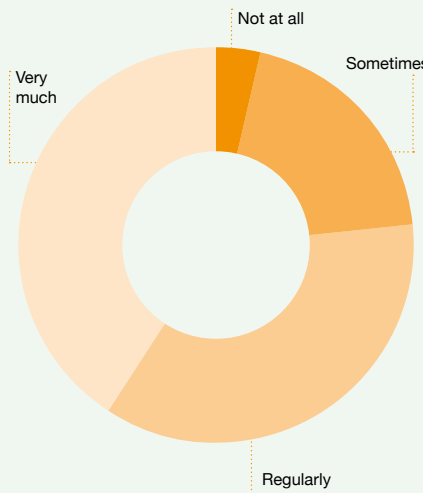
Retailers are the link between the consumer and the brand – we asked the respondents to weigh in on brand sustainability.

4 out of 5!
 With our magazine, website, newsletter and social media, Suston covers 4 out of 5 most preferred ways of getting information.

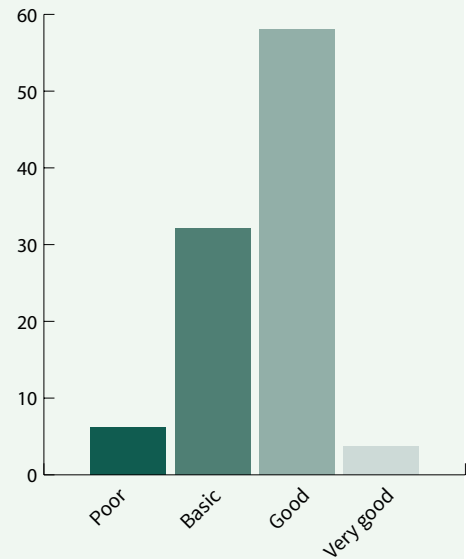
WHAT ARE YOUR PREFERRED WAYS OF GETTING SUSTAINABILITY INFORMATION?



DOES A BRAND'S SUSTAINABILITY PROFILE INFLUENCE YOUR BUYING DECISIONS?



HOW WOULD YOU RATE BRANDS' SUSTAINABILITY COMMUNICATION?



KEY FINDINGS

DEMAND FOR COMPARABLE FACTS

Many respondents request comparable facts and one in three rate brand sustainability communication as basic.

E-COMMERCE LESS MOTIVATED

Compared to physical retailers, e-commerce retailers are 30% less likely to have a sustainability policy. Also, they are 57% more likely to respond that a brand's sustainability profile influences their buying decisions "sometimes" or "not at all".

79%

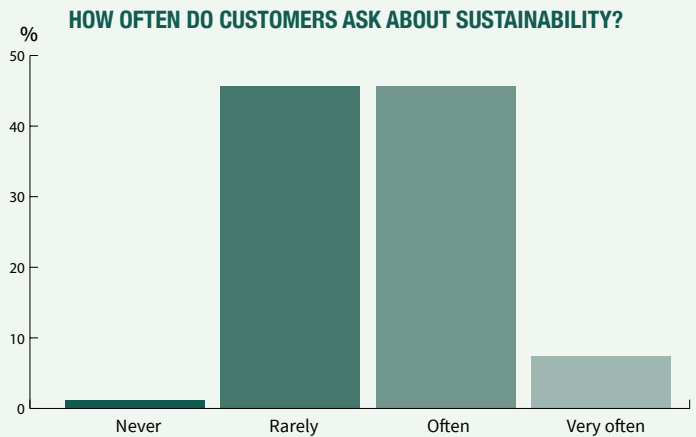
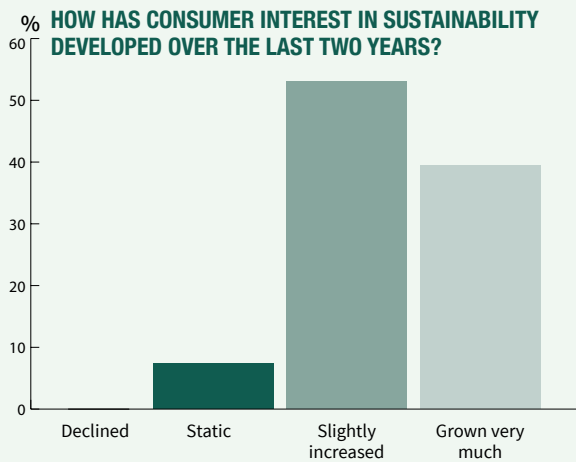
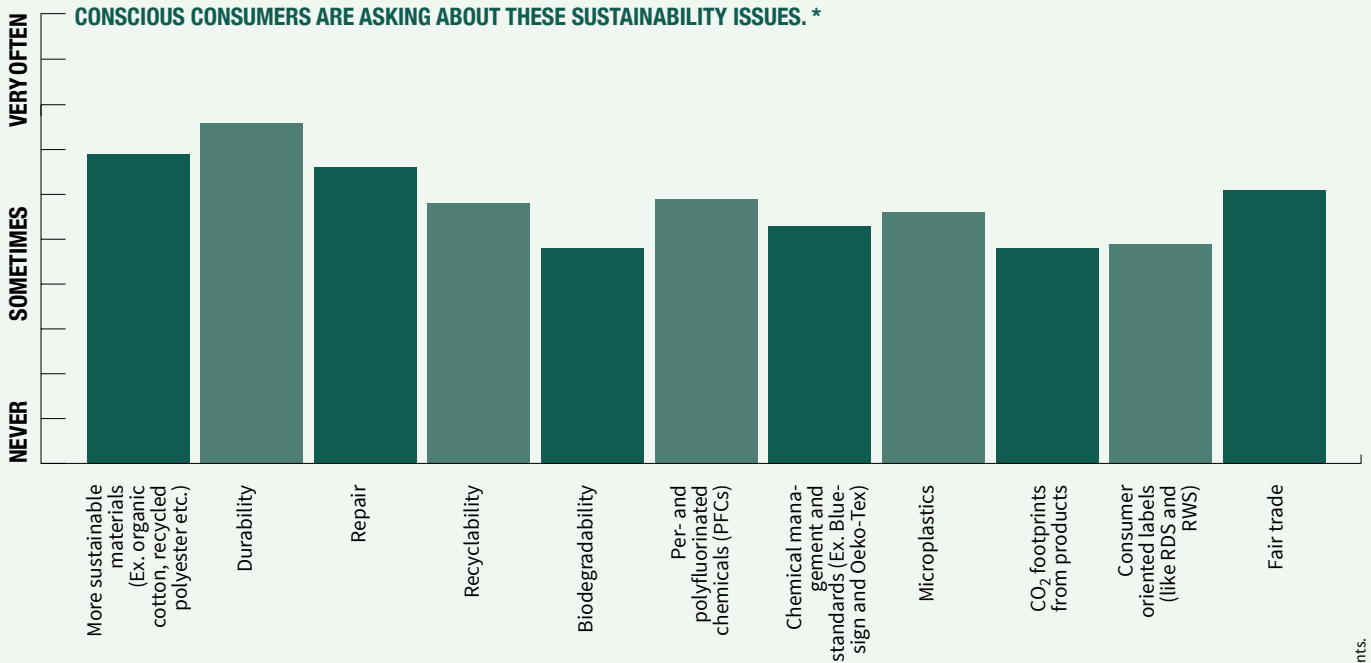
Say brand sustainability influences buying choices.

“Its hard to compare the information on the original websites, almost every brand seems to be responsible in terms of sustainability, but to see the facts is another matter.”

Store Manager, Switzerland

About the consumers

Ultimately, it's the consumer that will have the last say on how far the industry goes in terms of sustainability – what are retailers hearing from them?



* Graph data represents aggregate average result of all respondents.

KEY FINDINGS

REACTIVE RATHER THAN PROACTIVE

Retailer competence is relatively harmonized with consumer interest in most cases – for better and for worse – with both scoring low on CO2 footprints, for example. When new questions arise, the answers might be lagging.

LARGE INCREASE OF INTEREST

An overwhelming majority (94%) claim consumer demand for sustainable products has grown in the last two years.

72%

Believe that customers are willing to pay more for “green” products.

“Industry has to lead the way and educate the consumers.”

Floor staff, UK