

UpCycle

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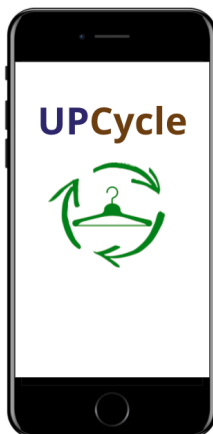
Abstract– This paper aims to inform and explain the adverse effects of the clothing industry through their unethical fabric sourcing and manufacturing. Moreover, I will introduce UpCycle, my prototype app that can provide a solution and be a beacon of hope for our environment by collaborating with both the consumers and companies.

Keywords– recycle, fast fashion, sustainability, social network, climate change, upcycle, resources

I. Introduction

UpCycle is an app whose primary objective is to solve the unethical fabric sourcing in the fast fashion industry and help promote sustainability. UpCycle will bridge the gap between the company that wants to make real change and people who don't know where to start. UpCycle is an app that promotes sustainability in fashion. It acts as the middleman, helping consumers find the best way to clear out their closet through our brand partners. Instead of throwing away outdated pieces, users can UpCycle with our app, creating an ethical source for companies trying to become environmentally friendly.

Overall, the app is not only a means of recycling clothes. It includes a social component in which you can share with friends



and family your progression and truly convey the impact you are contributing to the planet.

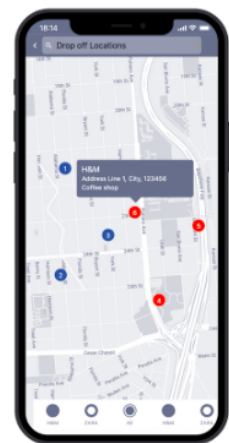
II. Research

The fashion industry is the second-largest polluter in the world. This generations' fast fashion trends severely damage the environment and the resources we depend on. For instance, "20% of industrial water pollution comes from textile treatment and dyeing" and "190,000 tons of microplastic textile fibers end up in the oceans every year," killing countless fish species. Moreover, there is an avid problem as only around "15% of our clothing is recycled or donated." However, UpCycle will serve as a solution by partnering with brands and shoppers to create an ethical and sustainable system for fabric sourcing. [1]

III. How does it work?

UpCycle is a mobile app that, once downloaded, you are able to find brand partner retail store locations willing to take in your clothes. The first step is to find a spot near you.

After you choose the drop-off site you will bring in your recycled pieces to, it is time to head out. Once you arrive you will show the



Find a spot

cashier the QR code that is located in the app and receive a receipt once they scan it.

Through this, you are actively earning points. Once enough points are acquired, you are eligible for cashback rewards or coupons.



Earn money

IV. Why are brands willing to help?

As companies embrace social media and garner a massive following and loyal customer base, they need to present themselves as a significant establishment. Therefore, brand image is vital as it ties into brand equity. Overall, this need to maintain a positive image is an incentive for brands to join the UpCycle network. The latest generations of consumers want brands to stand for a cause. Sustainability is a cause that is now at the forefront because of worsening climate change and global warming. In fact, sustainability has become a key purchasing driver among young buyers. According to Nielson, "73% of millennials are willing to pay more for sustainable brands." [2] [3]



Moreover, "58% are more likely to buy from a company known for being environmentally friendly." Lastly, "53% are willing to buy a product from a company known for its commitment to the community." Overall, customers want to see companies they support as assets to the plant and community rather than an opposing adverse force. To remain trustworthy, companies actively look for initiatives and organizations to support and receive recognition, something that UpCycle does to our brand partners through our highly respected badges for contribution.

V. Social Network

UpCycle's main purpose is to help fight against the fast fashion industry. As we move into the digital age, virtually showcasing how we enact change is essential. For that reason, there is a social element within the app.

We want people to track their eco-footprint and share it with friends and family. This creates a community of like-minded individuals actively working to combat climate change. By sharing progress updates, we can also create a competitive environment where users will see who can reach milestones first and obtain those lucrative discounts. The goal is to normalize upcycling and provide a fun twist to activism. We aim to make the act of repurposing old clothing the new trend among younger generations.



Share with friends

VI. Precedent

What truly makes this app unique compared to other recycling organizations is that UpCycle focuses on the consumer and company working together. Although our application serves as the middleman, we want the user to directly work with the brands that are accepting fabrics. This emphasizes that both parties are equally supporting one another in their pursuit of change.

VII. Feedback

After showcasing the app to college students who are part of our key demographic, the concept received excellent reviews. One student stated, "I wish this app existed so I can actually receive money for my clothing. It's sad to admit that I throw out so much clothing every year." Furthermore, the great reception did not stop there. Many were excited about UpCycle's impact on the environment as the fear of global warming is a hot-button issue following the 26th annual Climate Change Conference in Glasgow.

People went as far as to state that this app can even become a more extensive social network than just people who are actively upcycling clothing. It can eventually be something that can connect others with environmentally friendly ideas not just related to clothing.

VIII. Conclusion

The key to creating an extraordinary app is to have a purpose-driven idea that can be presented aesthetically and efficiently. I can undoubtedly say that UpCycle's mission is to provide a sustainable solution for those who want to throw out clothing and upkeep their closet. The system we hope to create is impactful not only to our current generation, but for generations to come. Our app prototype

includes incentives that both consumers and companies can benefit from.

Moreover, this app also has a deeper social incentive in which people can actively engage with one another and form their very own communities rooted in change. UpCycle will act as the middleman and embrace all who are trying to make a change and get cashback and lucrative rewards in the process.

IX. References

1. Sustain Your Style, "Fashion's Environmental Impact," Mathilde Charpail, 2017
2. Forbes, "The Big Issues Facing Fashion in 2019," 2019
3. Nielsen, "The Sustainability Imperative," 2015