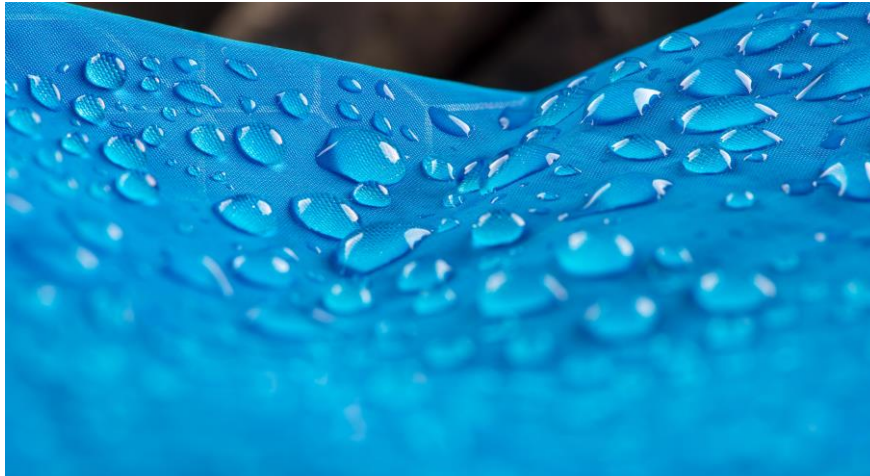


Fibre Recovery Communication



Rijkswaterstaat
Ministry of Infrastructure and the
Environment



From 2016 until 2019 nine fibre to fibre pilots have been implemented by the European Clothing Action Plan - ECAP. The fibre to fibre pilots were aiming to support the use of recycled post-consumer textile fibres.

Three workwear companies, a linen supplier and five fashion companies were involved in the ECAP pilots. They individually trialed the use of fibres from post-consumer textiles in new garments and shared the learnings from their experiences in case studies and factsheets.

Key findings

- Transparency about the production process is essential in effective and honest communication. Transparency tools (e.g. REMO and CCMS) help gain insight in the production chain and communicate about it
- Communication can be through a direct marketing approach but can also be initiated by third parties. For the latter, take into account that you cannot control what the press publishes
- Customers are not always interested in finding out about the story behind the clothes they buy. Make your message easy to access and understand
- When manufacturers use an intermediary to sell their products to the end customers, you need to think about if and how you would like to reach your end-customer.

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Communication in circular textiles

Transparency about the production process was a precondition for participating in the ECAP pilots. On the one hand to show the possible effect of using a circular approach and on the other hand to inform customers about the origin and impact of their clothing.

Transparency tools

ECAP recommended to use a method such as [REMO](#) (the Recycle Movement) to provide this transparency. REMO gives insight into a garment's past life, the percentage of recycled content and the environmental impact. This environmental impact is measured in water, CO2 and energy savings. The information derived about the garment is then communicated through the REMOkey, a QR-code that reveals the whole production chain of a piece of clothing.

Another method that can be used to provide transparency was created by the cooperation Dutch Awearness. They have a circular track and trace: [Circular Content Management System](#) (CCMS). It enables customers to see what materials have been used, by whom the garment was manufactured and the impact of the production on the environment. The tool enables the return of the product to recycle its content and therefore retain the value. This information is also retrievable through a QR-code.

In addition, pilot participant JBC created their own tool: I AM transparency. This tool enables customers to track where the clothing was produced, in what country and which factory.

Marketing

Apart from communicating about the production chain and the composition of the garment, the pilot participants found more ways to communicate about their products. One important lesson is that the customer does not want to put a lot of effort into finding out the story behind the clothing they buy. Therefore, if a company wants to tell that story it needs to be short, appealing and comprehensive.

Indirect marketing

Some companies did not launch a particular marketing strategy for their circular clothing at first.

In the example of Schijvens, HEMA, a client of Schijvens, wrote an article on their circular workwear and mentioned Schijvens as their supplier. This was picked up by the press and the story spread to the public and other companies.

This way of marketing can be very effective since it is based on people's experiences, rather than the brand itself spreading the word. Schijvens uses these kind of client stories on their website to communicate about their products.

<https://www.schijvens.nl/responsibility/projecten/>
<https://www.schijvens.nl/we-love-to-explain/ecap>

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Indirect marketing (cont.)

Another example of combined direct and indirect marketing is with Blycolin. They educate their customers, e.g. hotels, on the impact of their products. The customers then turn this information into their own personal stories which they then communicate to their customers in the hotels. Especially when Blycolin's story corresponds with the sustainable ambitions of the hotel, the stories become relevant and personal.

Direct marketing

Most pilot participants used press releases to announce their new products and innovative way of producing. Although the press can be a very powerful tool in terms of marketing and communication, there is always the risk of misinterpretation. Press-reports can sometimes either be too positive and provide false information, or they can distort the facts.

An example of what may happen if you do not develop a solid market strategy to prevent any misinterpretation is with JBC.

They experienced publication of articles featuring their circular jeans as: 'old jeans that are sold like new jeans for new prices'. This is of course a distortion of the facts and not the message JBC wanted to convey. Consequently, they formulated a marketing and communication strategy in which they laid down the story they want to tell and how they want it to be told.

Another example of direct marketing is Suit Supply's 'vellum tag'. This is a see-through label which is added to the garment behind the main label. This tag contains information about the sustainability of the company and product: e.g. their Fair Wear membership and the materials the suit is made of. However, they do not try to emphasise this 'green' component in their general communication, since it has always been part of who they are. But since sustainability is becoming more important their communication strategy is also slowly adjusting. With this tag they try to involve and educate the customer on their sustainable mission and how they be a part of this.

Havep found a very trendy way to communicate about their circular textile. They asked two influencers to show how and where their products are manufactured and recycled. This can be seen in a short and informative [vlog](#). By using this popular way of communicating, Havep's message becomes easy accessible and appealing.



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Marketing to businesses versus end-customer

It might be hard to spread the word if you are not selling to the end-customer yourself. This means that your message will need to be conveyed effectively to the intermediary, who then also needs to put effort into telling the story to the end customer. Therefore, when you don't sell to the end customer you need to decide whether or not you feel they should know about the impact of their purchase and how you can make that work.



Education

Moodstreet usually works with retailers and there is no direct contact with the end-customer. However, as a manufacturer you want consumers to be aware of the impact of the product they are buying.

Moodstreet is therefore experimenting with a new approach.

First, they inform their own employees and the retailers about their impact by simply presenting how sustainability is part of the business and what initiatives are undertaken.

The question of how to reach the end-customer was a more challenging one. They started with an A4-paper with information that could be displayed in the store. They are now extending their information supply by introducing [‘The Little Wise One’](#). This is a kind of mascot that can be attached to a product. This mascot tells the story about the product in a way that corresponds with the product's target group: children.

[View a video from Moodstreet here](#)

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The European Clothing Action Plan - ECAP is €3.6 million EU LIFE part funded project. ECAP contributes to creating a more circular approach to reduce clothing waste and water and energy use during production.

ECAP mission

Cutting the environmental impact of clothing across the supply chain. Generating value for business through collaboration, measuring and sharing best practice.

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The fact sheets were generated as a result of pilots carried out for ECAP by Rijkswaterstaat and the named organisations from 2016 to 2019.

ASOS



Blycolin

SUITSUPPLY



jbc



moodstreet