FINNISH TEXTILE & FASHION

At the head of the circular economy
At the head of the circular economy – Solutions for textile recycling

The circular economy aims to make better use of textile materials. Circular economic practices are developing at a rapid pace in the textile and fashion sector. This publication contains examples of Finnish companies in the sector who have adopted new operating methods to ensure that materials remain in circulation for as long as possible.

Anna-Kaisa Auvinen
Managing Director
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening words</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solutions for recycling</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pure Waste Textiles</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seppälä</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dafecor</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From old to new</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finlayson</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TouchPoint</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Globe Hope</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longer in use</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recci</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sasta</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marimekko</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All material in use</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lennol</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voglia</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Growth through the circular economy

In the circular economy, products and the materials they contain remain in use for as long as possible with the help of re-use, technical recycling of materials or services. Companies in the Finnish textile and clothing sector are working actively to develop cost-effective solutions for the circular economy.

In Finland, 70 million kilograms of textiles are removed from use every year, and the majority of these are currently utilised as energy. The vast majority of these could be reused as materials.

There is a will to build new business activities around the circular economy of textiles. This publication contains examples of how Finnish companies in the textile and fashion sector are exploiting the opportunities presented by the circular economy.

The circular economy is more than just recycling

In the circular economy, materials are utilised several times, which reduces raw material costs, enables entirely new earning models and saves on natural resources.

In business models that lean on the circular economy, product life cycles can be extended with the help of services, such as rental and second-hand stores. In addition, materials can be utilised to manufacture other products or fibres can be recycled to make raw materials for new products using either mechanical or chemical methods. Many companies exploit various circular economy operating models side by side.

New solutions are constantly being developed for textile recycling. Using production waste is generally easier as the material is consistent in quality and large amounts can be obtained at a time. Conversely, post-consumer textile waste may contain vastly different products, ranging from ball gowns to bedsheets and outdoor clothing – these must all be sorted before they can be utilised.

Textile waste accounts for 5–8 per cent of all municipal waste generated in Finland. There is business potential in utilising recycled textile material as recycled textiles are suitable for use as raw materials in products such as padding in the furniture industry or insulation products in the construction industry. However, the way back to new clothes is still long, as Finland does not have textile fibre production.

Speeding up solutions

Finnish companies in the textile and fashion sector can already provide numerous examples of ways to exploit the circular economy as part of business.

Several companies in the sector are also involved in joint projects featuring companies, the public sector and research institutes with the aim of promoting the development of business models for the circular economy of textiles. To ensure that innovations and partnerships can be made commercially viable, discarded textiles should be seen as valuable raw materials rather than waste.

Finnish Textile & Fashion supports its members in developing operating models for the circular economy and identifying new partnerships. Finnish companies in the textile and fashion sector have good opportunities to differentiate themselves in the international marketplace as pioneers of the circular economy. We hope that this publication will also encourage other parties to see the new opportunities for growth in the circular economy of textiles.
Solutions for recycling

Recycling means that used textiles are utilised as raw materials in new products. An established method is mechanical recycling, where the textile waste is mechanically teared into new fibres. Alongside this, chemical recycling is developing at a rapid pace. In this technique, textile fibres are separated from each other by using chemical methods. In the future, waste will be a valuable raw material for an increasing number of organisations.
Pure Waste Textiles breathes new life into textile waste

Pure Waste Textiles is a groundbreaker in the field of textile recycling. The company recycles cutting waste from the textile industry to make new materials and products. The company’s future plans include using post-consumer textile waste and combining different recycled fibres.
Pure Waste Textiles grew up around the Costo brand of headwear and accessories founded in 2006. As demand for Costo’s products grew, operating ethically and utilising textile waste rose in importance. The company’s owners began analysing opportunities for even more extensive recycling activities, which led to the establishment of Pure Waste Textiles in 2013.

Pure Waste Textiles manufactures completely recycled yarns, fabrics, clothing and accessories from the leftover material by the textile industry at its production plant in India, which is currently under construction. The company uses cutting waste from the clothing manufacturing process and leftover production from spinning mills as its raw materials. Yarn and fabric waste in different colours is sorted by colour and reprocessed into new yarn and fabric. One advantage of this recycling process is that the materials do not need to be dyed, which also saves a substantial amount of water.

Recycled materials are used in Pure Waste Textiles’ own collection, which includes T-shirts, sweatshirts, hoodies and jeans. Nowadays, Costo also makes products from these materials. Pure Waste Textiles also sells yarn and fabrics to other textile companies. In addition, the company manufactures clothing for them as a sub-contractor.

Why?

Pure Waste Textiles’ owners are always aiming to do things better, in a more ethically sustainable way and as responsibly as possible from the perspective of the environment. Pure Waste Textiles sees waste as an intermediate stage in a product’s life cycle and aims to prevent valuable raw materials ending up, for example, in energy use.

“This is grounded in the recognition and knowledge that our planet cannot survive at the current rate of consumption. We want to do our bit to help as much as possible,” says Jukka Pesola, one of Pure Waste Textiles’ shareholders.

The demand for high-quality, ethical and ecological textiles is on the rise. Pure Waste Textiles strives to do everything as transparently as possible. The company has its own production plant, enabling it to retain control of the entire production chain. The raw materials used for the products are obtained from local textile companies.

Challenges

According to Jukka Pesola, the greatest challenge is developing means of collecting and sorting textile waste on an industrial scale. Textile materials can have very different properties, and different fibres require different treatments. The development of sorting techniques would enable shredding fibres mechanically and promote the development of recycling processes.

“This challenge affects us as well as other textile recycling companies. Sorting is important when recycling consumer textiles, but it is also an important factor from the perspective of the efficient processing of leftover material from the textile industry,” Pesola adds.

Future

At the moment, the majority of Pure Waste Textiles’ net sales come from producing ready-made clothing but, in the future, the company is aiming for growth in deliveries of yarn and fabric to other companies in the sector.

“We are constantly working on material research and development by means such as mixing different recycled fibres together. We have also carried out some small-scale tests using post-consumer textile waste, and we intend to continue doing this on a larger scale,” says Pesola.

Pure Waste Textiles considers the opportunities presented by the chemical recycling of fibres to be highly attractive in terms of utilising post-consumer textile waste. For this reason, the company is also actively involved in projects that bring together textile-recycling companies to develop recycling technologies and operating models to suit the circular economy.

Pure Waste Textiles Oy
Domicile: Helsinki
Founded: 2013
Net sales 2016: EUR 800,000
Main products: 100 per cent recycled threads, fabrics and ready-made clothes
Seppälä produces collection from post-consumer textile waste

Running a business based on the circular economy requires collaboration between different parties – one person's waste is another's raw material. In spring 2015, fashion chain Seppälä joined the Relooping Fashion project, which brings together different companies. Seppälä has collected old clothes from consumers and is making them into a new collection.

What?

Until now, textile recycling has been hindered by several factors, including the fact that recycling reduces the quality of fibres. The VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland has striven to address this challenge by developing a chemical recycling method for cotton. Seppälä was interested in the opportunity to participate in the project, which aims to trial this method.

As part of the project, Seppälä ran a campaign to collect used clothes in its shops in spring 2016. The collected clothes became the raw materials for new items of clothing. The process takes worn-out cotton clothing and dissolves cotton back into a fibre using a method similar to the procedure for manufacturing viscose fibres.

Seppälä aims to launch products manufactured from recycled material in its stores during 2017.

Why?

Seppälä wants to play a part in promoting Finnish textile recycling and putting discarded clothes to the best possible use.

"The consumption of fibres is increasing worldwide but resources are limited, so production of recycled fibre must increase," says Maria Hentilä, Director of Purchasing and Design at Seppälä.

Maria Hentilä believes that consumer awareness can be raised and responsible choices can be promoted by means such as making it easy to recycle worn-out textiles.

Challenges

The chemical recycling method is still in the development phase. According to Hentilä, incorporating long-term development work into Seppälä’s other activities and into the normal timetable for collection design processes has required new approaches and flexibility.

Seppälä’s collection campaign revealed that consumers cannot be obligated to sort worn-out textiles. Customers were asked to hand in cotton products but cotton accounted for a relatively small proportion of the material collected.

"In addition, recycling cotton only solves one problem. Textile products typically contain several fibre blends, so the wider challenge still needs to be addressed," says Hentilä.

Future

Based on customer feedback, Seppälä has decided to continue textile collection in its shops.

"There are not yet any ready-made models for recycling textiles but we aim to be involved in building them," Hentilä says.

Seppälä also aims to expand its range of products manufactured from recycled materials and is constantly seeking new partners for this purpose.

Seppälä Oy
Domicile: Helsinki
Founded: 1930
Net sales 2015: EUR 50.1 million
Main products: clothes and accessories for women, children and men
Dafecor recycles textiles for industrial use

Janakkala is home to Dafecor, a pioneering Finnish circular economy business. The company has succeeded in doing what many only dream of: utilising leftover materials from other companies and waste textiles from various parties to manufacture new products. It has more than 20 years of experience in the circular economy.
What?

Dafecor is one of the few companies utilising textile waste on an industrial scale in Finland. A circular economy mindset guides all of the business activity in the company, which makes products tailored to its customers’ needs.

Dafecor acts as a partner to several parties. It takes the leftover materials from textile production and waste textiles from the public sector, laundries and consumers.

Using a mechanical recycling process, the company transforms the textile materials back into fibres and uses these to manufacture new materials and products for various uses.

Dafecor’s products are mainly used in industrial maintenance to prevent or rectify environmental damage. In addition, the company manufactures insulation products for construction, as well as products suitable for the furniture industry and gardening. Typical end users include companies in the metal and paper industries.

Why?

The core of Dafecor’s business is to design and manufacture products that promote the well-being of nature, the working environment and people. When recycled materials are used to manufacture new products, more natural resources are saved and smaller amounts of textiles are burned to produce energy.

“Our operations extend the life cycles of textiles, as every kilogram of raw material that is used in Dafecor’s products has already been used at least once. In addition, manufacturing does not impact the environment as the process does not require any chemicals at all,” says Risto Saha, Managing Director.

The company is also taking social responsibility by providing work for third-sector employees in organisations and municipalities, in addition to employing its own permanent staff.

Challenges

Dafecor previously used leftover materials from textile production as its main raw material but the proportion of post-consumer textile waste has increased in recent years.

“The diversity of different fibre blends of textile represents a challenge, also in terms of sorting and pre-processing. From the point of view of further processing, sorting plays a key role, so we have built up and trained our own network of partners over the years,” says Saha.

Dafecor believes that consumers have the desire to participate in textile recycling. However, there is no uniform recycling system for discarded textiles. Dafecor reports that its partners who take receipt of discarded textiles often find dirty products in their collection containers, making it more difficult to process the textiles. An additional factor for consideration in Finland is the long transportation distances, which give rise to freight costs.

Future

Dafecor’s strengths are tailored products that are under constant development in collaboration with customers. However, more refined materials and designed products are accounting for an increasing proportion of the company’s production.

“Interest in the circular economy provides superb potential for us to grow. We have been contacted significantly more frequently over the past year. We have also recruited new employees and we are able to increase production thanks to new product innovations,” says Saha.

According to Dafecor, there have also been signals from the consumer sector pointing towards increased interest in recycled textile products manufactured in Finland. The company is addressing this demand with its Green Craft handicraft materials and courses, which have been realised in collaboration with the Finnish Crafts Organisation, Taisto ry.

Dafecor Oy
Domicile: Janakkala
Founded: 1994
Net sales 2015: approximately EUR 1 million
Main products: environmental products for preventing environmental damage in industry, insulation materials for construction, filler materials for furniture, garden capillary mats.
From old to new

Utilising discarded textile products as raw materials in new products breathes new life into the materials. Textiles are suitable for several different uses. Discarded products and leftover materials can be put to any use imaginable. Re-use adds value to material that is otherwise worthless.
Finlayson's Rag Rug Pieces campaign became an operating model

Home textile manufacturer Finlayson has revived a traditional operating model where every material is utilised as efficiently as possible. Bedclothes that would previously have been thrown away are now flourishing as rag rug pieces of various sizes. In the future, the company aims to take receipt of all home textiles and develop new purposes for which they could be utilised.
What?

Finlayson has taken an active role in promoting circular economy business activities. The company began collecting home textiles in its shops and also brought recycling within reach of customers using the Finlayson online store: customers who have chosen to have their purchases sent in RePack recycling packages can return their old sheets to Finlayson in the same package. Finlayson uses the sheets it has collected to manufacture rag rugs, which have become very popular.

Collecting sheets is an ongoing activity for Finlayson but the campaigns raised awareness of the collection process and led to increased amounts of collected material. The campaign in spring 2016 alone led to the company collecting almost 20 tons of old home textiles in a short space of time. The textiles were collected and the rag rug pieces were manufactured in collaboration with VM-Carpet Oy’s subcontractors, Lappajärven värjäämö (a material-dyeing company), Viita-ahon Mattokutomo (a rug-making company) and Ismo Pajuoja (a maker of rag rugs).

Demand for rag rug pieces surpassed Finlayson’s expectations, and the first batch sold out quickly. Thanks to interconnecting pieces of different sizes, the traditional rag rug culture finds its way into new uses.

Why?

Finlayson estimates that Finns have home textiles worth EUR 250 million folded away in their closets and cabinets. The company thought that it would be wasteful for these materials to be simply thrown away. Finlayson wanted to develop a more sensible use for them.

“We believe that a circular economy culture is now beginning to arise in earnest. We would prefer to be among the first involved rather than the last,” says Jukka Kurttila, Finlayson’s CEO.

Production of rag rug pieces leads to materials being reused and new jobs being created. Finlayson also wanted to reinvigorate rag rug manufacturing on an industrial scale. The products are made in Finland from start to finish, and they create employment. The companies who acted as partners on the project have been able to take on more employees.

Challenges

During the planning phase of the project, it became apparent that companies making rag rugs would not be easy to find in Finland. “Industrial refinement of used textiles into new products had not been undertaken in Finland before, so we needed to design and create the manufacturing process from start to finish ourselves. That was rather challenging,” says Kurttila.

During the first collection campaign a further challenge proved to be sorting the collected textiles – this required manual work. Initially, sorting was carried out in Finlayson’s shops, which did not always have sufficient time and space. Sorting was subsequently transferred to Finlayson’s logistics centre for a more centralised approach. During sorting, sheets that are in poor condition are sent to Dafecor (see p. 16) for recycling and the materials that can be reused are sent onwards to the rag rug process.

Future

Rag rug pieces have established themselves in Finlayson’s product range, and the company intends to make the option to return textiles a permanent practice in its shops. More inventive new solutions are promised.

“At present, we are only able to utilise bedsheets and duvet covers, but we aim to take receipt of all home textiles and develop new purposes for which they could be utilised. We are also planning to export rag rug pieces,” Kurttila says.

Finlayson is also investigating the potential for using recycled fibres in its products. The company aims to increase the proportion of more sustainable materials in its products to 30 per cent by 2020. The company considers all recycled fibres to be more sustainable materials, in addition to organic and Fairtrade cotton.
At the head of the circular economy

Since it was founded, workwear manufacturer TouchPoint’s operations have been based on a circular economy mindset. The company’s products feature leftover and recycled materials. This is grounded in the values of the company’s founder and a desire to develop sustainable business practices in defiance of disposable culture.

What?

TouchPoint, a company that makes modern workwear and corporate gifts, uses organic, leftover and recycled materials in its products. The company aims to help its customers to realise competitive advantage through sustainability by means of product communications and stories. TouchPoint also provides consulting to its customers regarding the ethical and ecological properties of workwear.

For example, in conjunction with a project to manufacture new workwear for the personnel on board M/S Viking Grace, a ship operated by Viking Line, TouchPoint utilised old uniforms and old tablecloth and upholstery fabrics discovered in Viking Line’s leftover storage.

“We wanted to identify new uses for materials that had been thought of as rubbish instead of simply using them as energy. At the same time, Viking Line made its values clearly visible,” says TouchPoint’s founder, Carita Peltonen.

Why?

TouchPoint’s business was born of the founder’s frustration with the disposable culture and the number of useless products in the corporate gift sector.

“I have been in the workwear and corporate gift sector since 1991. When I sold my previous company, I began wondering whether things could be done differently – more responsibly and insightfully, and by specifying the entire design process more smartly,” says Peltonen.

TouchPoint believes that corporate responsibility and profitable, successful business are mutually supportive. Work feels more meaningful when it is possible to work with customers to make a tangible difference to benefit the environment. According to the company, ecological workwear and corporate gifts also reinforce a positive brand image, tell the customer’s story and increase employees’ pride in their employer.

Challenges

TouchPoint recognised that customers sometimes have preconceptions about recycled materials. However, the company’s own passion and inventiveness has shown that sustainable development and style can fit into the same product. Product development and design take time when working with challenging materials. Leftover materials are also not always readily available in sufficient quantities.

Future

TouchPoint believes that the rapid rise in the circular economy and the use of recycled materials will support its strong growth targets. The company is looking far afield and can see export potential in products such as a completely ecological workwear collection designed for the healthcare sector.

TouchPoint makes workwear from leftover and recycled materials

Since it was founded, workwear manufacturer TouchPoint’s operations have been based on a circular economy mindset. The company’s products feature leftover and recycled materials. This is grounded in the values of the company’s founder and a desire to develop sustainable business practices in defiance of disposable culture.

TouchPoint makes workwear from leftover and recycled materials

Since it was founded, workwear manufacturer TouchPoint’s operations have been based on a circular economy mindset. The company’s products feature leftover and recycled materials. This is grounded in the values of the company’s founder and a desire to develop sustainable business practices in defiance of disposable culture.

TouchPoint makes workwear from leftover and recycled materials

Since it was founded, workwear manufacturer TouchPoint’s operations have been based on a circular economy mindset. The company’s products feature leftover and recycled materials. This is grounded in the values of the company’s founder and a desire to develop sustainable business practices in defiance of disposable culture.

TouchPoint makes workwear from leftover and recycled materials

Since it was founded, workwear manufacturer TouchPoint’s operations have been based on a circular economy mindset. The company’s products feature leftover and recycled materials. This is grounded in the values of the company’s founder and a desire to develop sustainable business practices in defiance of disposable culture.

TouchPoint makes workwear from leftover and recycled materials

Since it was founded, workwear manufacturer TouchPoint’s operations have been based on a circular economy mindset. The company’s products feature leftover and recycled materials. This is grounded in the values of the company’s founder and a desire to develop sustainable business practices in defiance of disposable culture.
At the head of the circular economy

Globe Hope

Globe Hope's business revolves around creating individual clothes, bags and accessories without increasing the amount of material in the world. The company adapts materials that are no longer needed for their previous purposes and uses them to create new products. The company strives to utilise details that reveal the material’s history and give each product a story.

What?

Globe Hope, founded in 2001, manufactures design products from recycled and leftover materials. The company strives to adhere to the principles of sustainable development; for Globe Hope, this means material-oriented design in addition to using recycled materials.

Globe Hope obtains the majority of the materials it uses from Finland. Although the materials are individual, the company aims to mass-produce products so that prices remain within the reach of consumers.

Globe Hope aims for its products to inspire consumers to take an interest in broader environmental themes and questions of global justice. Reflecting this, Globe Hope has worked with the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation and the Finnish Refugee Council on product design.

Why?

The inspiration for Globe Hope’s business arose from the frustration of the company’s founder, Seija Lukkala, with the disposal culture, where constantly increasing consumption creates ever larger amounts of waste. It was also born of a concern over the limited amounts of natural resources.

"I was thinking about what I would like to leave behind for my children. I started by considering the ethical and ecological criteria that I would like to be guided by. After that, I began thinking about which products could be made within these criteria," Lukkala says.

Globe Hope also intended to demonstrate that industrial-scale production can be carried out sustainably in a way that saves natural resources. The company is increasingly mass-producing products for other companies.

Challenges

When Globe Hope was in its infancy, the greatest challenge it faced was obtaining and processing materials. Adapting the company’s own expertise and textile processes to work with recycled materials was also a learning experience. At present, Lukkala considers the greatest challenge to be the concept of the correct price.

"Consumers may have a different view on how much a certain item of clothing is supposed to cost. They do not necessarily understand the costs incurred in obtaining recycled materials and going through a production method encompassing several phases," says Lukkala.

Future

Collaboration is required to eliminate the bottlenecks in the circular economy. Globe Hope’s plans include increasing collaboration with workwear manufacturers and networking more extensively with parties in Finland and abroad.

The company also aims to increase the availability of its products and market Globe Hope designs abroad in such a way that the products could be manufactured locally using the materials and manufacturers available in each area.

Globe Hope Oy
Domicile: Nummela
Founded: 2001
Net sales 2015: EUR 800,000
Main products: textile products manufactured from recycled materials

Globe Hope is a pioneer in recycling

Globe Hope is a pioneer in recycling

Globe Hope is a pioneer in recycling
The circular economy creates new business opportunities that highlight the role of services in extending the use of textiles. For example, rental, second-hand stores, and care and repair services enable products to remain in use for as long as possible, which is essential to reducing the environmental impact over a product’s life cycle.
**Recci brings textiles forward**

Recci is a company that specialises in textile recycling and aims to be involved in building a recycling system for discarded textiles in Finland. As they circulate, the materials generate added value for companies and society as a whole. Recci takes companies' old seasonal products and consumers' discarded textiles.

**What?**

Recci collects discarded textiles to forward them for reuse rather than utilisation as energy. The company strives to promote the development of textile recycling in Finland.

Consumers can hand in old clothes and accessories to Recci. Unlike many other organisations, Recci is also grateful for broken textiles and items in poor condition. It sells the items that are in good condition. Items that are in poor condition are taken to the Netherlands, Germany and Poland, where they are further processed and used as raw material for products such as insulating products and interior materials in the automotive industry. Only a few per cent of the clothes and accessories brought to Recci's shops end up as energy.

Recci also acts as a partner to other companies in the textile sector. It takes past seasons' unsold products and offers the opportunity to set up a shop-in-shop in Recci's stores to sell sample pieces and inventory surplus.

**Why?**

Textiles have been collected in Finland for more than 30 years. However, Recci feels that textile recycling practices have developed slowly.

"We want to help textile recycling to take a leap forward. More efficient textile recycling would also create new jobs," believes Recci's Managing Director, Juha-Matti Kykkänen.

Recci is excited about the collaboration opportunities created by the circular economy. Kykkänen also wants to offer the company's expertise to people who are new to textile recycling.

**Challenges**

Juha-Matti Kykkänen says that the largest challenge for textile recycling is the lack of a comprehensive and dense collecting system.

"Recycling textiles on an industrial scale requires a critical mass. The message to consumers needs to be refined to ensure that all textiles get back into the economy," Kykkänen says.

At present, when Recci collects clothes and accessories that are in poor condition, they are sent abroad for processing because there are no organizations in Finland who use these on an industrial scale.

**Future**

Recci aims to promote the development of a cost-effective system for recycling discarded textiles in Finland. The company also hopes that the economic added value will remain in Finland.

"Collaboration between different organisations is required for this. The recycling process involves several phases that companies in different sectors could develop into businesses," says Kykkänen.

Recci is actively involved in projects that bring together different organisations with the aim of promoting textile recycling. At the same time, the company is building its own textile-collection network in Finland.

"Our first textile collection containers will appear by Rinki collection points in the first half of 2017. We aim to expand the network as rapidly as possible," Kykkänen promises.
Sasta

Sasta's outdoor products respect nature

Nature must be respected. This principle guides all of the operations of Sasta, a manufacturer of outdoor and casual clothing. The company strives to guarantee the longest possible life cycle for its products by means of material selections, production methods and repair services. Recycled materials are also used in products whenever possible.

What?

Sasta manufactures and markets high-quality clothing for hunting, fishing and hiking. It strives to put the old wisdom of Finnish outdoorsmen into practice in its business – the most important thing being respect for nature. As regards products, this means durability, both in terms of time and materials.

Sasta makes its products from functional and sustainable materials, some of which are manufactured from recycled raw materials or are otherwise produced as sustainably as possible from an environmental perspective. The company’s products contain materials such as recycled wool and polyester.

In addition to sustainable material choices, Sasta offers repair service for its products at the company’s own sewing shop. Sasta offers repair services to ensure that the products it manufactures stay in use as long as possible.

Why?

For Sasta, wise use of resources and operations that respect nature are obvious choices, and the company has long striven to operate accordingly.

“We want to do our bit to help more sustainable production methods to become the norm in the clothing and textile industry,” says Juha Latvala, the company’s Sales and Marketing Director.

Sasta hopes to be able to set a good example for other companies in the sector and demonstrate that responsible business activities are also financially profitable.

Challenges

Sasta believes that consumers who value good, high-quality, durable products are increasingly buying products that reflect their values. However, one challenge is felt to be reaching out to informed consumers so that they find Sasta’s products to be alternatives that reflect their values.

There are further challenges associated with the availability of recycled or organic materials.

“The process of purchasing recycled materials is somewhat more difficult because not all materials are always available,” Latvala says.

Future

Sasta has long been operating on its chosen principle of respecting nature: this is a comprehensive strategy – it is not just about individual products or collections. The values oblige Sasta to constantly develop materials and seek new, more sustainable alternatives.

“Making products durable and repairable are key factors in running a business in the circular economy. In the future, we intend to be even more active in telling consumers about the repair services we offer,” Latvala promises.

Sasta Oy
Domicile: Nurmes
Founded: 1969
Net sales 2015: EUR 2.15 million
Main products: outdoor and hunting clothes
Marimekko began working with We Started This, an online second-hand store, in 2015. The collaboration began with a pilot phase that involved collecting clothing and accessories that were rarely used by Marimekko’s personnel for sale on WST’s online store.

The first WST x Marimekko product range went on sale in November 2015, and it was very popular. Many of the products found new owners within the first week.

The successful collaboration has continued since the pilot. We Started This has arranged collection events for consumers in Marimekko’s stores. The clothing and accessories collected at the events are put back into circulation via WST.

Why?

A customer survey commissioned by Marimekko in 2015 showed that the customers expected the company to provide quality. Sustainable, timeless design is one of the most important perspectives of Marimekko’s corporate responsibility work.

"The choices made during the design process have a major effect on the environmental impact over the product’s whole lifecycle. By offering timeless and durable products, we want to play our part in promoting more sustainable consumption," says Milla Asikainen, Marimekko’s Sustainability Manager.

Marimekko’s objective is for products to remain in use as long as possible. This was also the basis for Marimekko striking up collaboration with We Started This, an online second-hand store.

Challenges

Marimekko sees the circular economy as an opportunity. Timelessness is at the core of the company’s design philosophy, but encouraging consumers to put Marimekko products back into circulation will take time.

Extending the use of products is a natural angle for Marimekko to approach the circular economy. The company is constantly analysing new alternatives for extending product life cycles.

Future

Marimekko found its collaboration with We Started This, an online second-hand store, to work well, so collaboration will continue.

"We will strive to be more active in telling our customers about the opportunities offered by WST for recycling old Marimekko products," Asikainen promises.

Extending the life cycles of products is not Marimekko’s only circular economy project. The company is engaged in a Finnish project related to development of wood cellulose-based fibre, where wood fibres obtained as a by-product from the forestry industry will be refined to create raw materials that are suitable for textile products.

Marimekko Corporation
Domicile: Helsinki
Founded: 1951
Net sales 2015: EUR 96 million
Main products: fashion, bags and accessories, as well as domestic products
All material in use

All materials are valuable. Despite careful product design in textile production, some leftover material still arises. This can be used as a material, either in the company’s own production or offered up for other parties. By utilising all materials, the amount of waste can be reduced or the use of virgin materials can be avoided.
For Lennol, the circular economy is common sense

When Lennol, a furniture and interior textile company, began operating at the end of the 1960s, avoiding waste and utilising leftover material were natural ways of working. Nowadays, applying this common sense to business is called the resource-wise circular economy.

What?

Lennol, which manufactures interior textiles and fillings for the furniture industry, has made products from recycled materials throughout all of its 50 years in business. This approach used to be called common sense. Every possible raw material was used and waste was avoided.

When Lennol designs products, the company considers whether the leftover waste from the manufacturing process could be used in other products. The company has also developed cushions manufactured from recycled material where the raw material is made from plastic bottles.

"In addition to the cushions, our extensive product range includes duvets, pillows, mattresses and acoustic panels that contain recycled materials," says Lennol’s Managing Director, Pirjo Pystykoski-Sopanen.

Why?

Ever since the company was founded, Lennol’s approach has been to take account of recycling and environmental criteria in every phase of production. In the 1960s, Lennol processed leftover from textile production by processing fabric patches in a tearing machine and carding the materials to create padding for the furniture and duvet industries.

"This enabled leftover material to be used efficiently. Now this business, which is based on traditional methods, is undergoing a renaissance in Finland and in many other countries," Pystykoski-Sopanen says.

The "less waste" mindset is a key element of Lennol’s operations, including in the product design phase. The company’s experience has shown that material utilisation is more efficient like this than if it starts out with pieces of fabric.

Challenges

The contraction of the textile and furniture industry has reduced the supply of leftover materials in Finland. To address the demand for its products, Lennol buys recycled fibres from other countries, but it hopes to find suitable material suppliers closer in the future.

Obtaining fabrics manufactured from recycled materials has also proven challenging for Lennol. The offering remains still quite limited.

Future

Lennol intends to focus its strategy on operating in accordance with the circular economy and using recycled materials. Its objective is to increase the use of recycled materials in its products and communicate more actively on these.

"In autumn 2017, we will launch a range of interior textiles manufactured from 75 per cent recycled cotton. We also intend to recycle materials more efficiently," Pirjo Pystykoski-Sopanen promises.
Voglia makes high-quality clothing and accessories for Nordic women. Products are designed, modelled and cut at the factory in Lammi, which also handles product distribution and warehousing.

The designs strive to avoid creating waste material by taking into consideration the width of the fabric when the pattern models are created. Despite this, cutting waste inevitably arises. Voglia uses leftover material to manufacture products for sale and for use as advertising and corporate gifts. The company also donates material to schools and daycare centres for use as handicraft and decorative supplies.

Students who work at Voglia on internships are set the challenge of coming up with their own products made from leftover materials. Interns have created a range of products, including aprons, book covers, makeup cases and bags.

Why?

Voglia can see that corporate responsibility is gaining in importance in the textile and clothing sector. Companies must pay attention to their own operating methods to survive in the competitive marketplace.

"We have noticed that awareness has also risen among customers. Before long, an ecological mindset will begin to manifest itself in the form of purchasing decisions," says Kristiina Virtanen, Voglia’s Product Development and Quality Manager.

Voglia also sees the careful utilisation of materials as a question of costs. All of the materials that are acquired are valuable and natural resources have been expended to make them, so the company is responsible for utilising them as efficiently as possible.

Challenges

Leftover inevitably arises when clothes are manufactured. Above all else, Voglia is thinking about how to reduce the amount of leftover material or to eliminate it entirely. It is not worth manufacturing “extra products” in greater quantities than the expected customer demand.

Voglia uses a lot of blended materials in its products. Currently, there is no efficient method to recycle these materials. Blended materials that cannot be utilised are sent for use as energy. A current area for development is to identify a suitable partner that offers further processing.

Future

The 3D pattern modelling used by Voglia enables products to be tailor-made with the correct measurements. This is one way of avoiding making unnecessary goods and managing material purchases.

"We have been planning to utilise digital customer data more effectively. By studying customer behaviour, we could obtain more precise data on customers’ purchasing habits. This would enable us to target our marketing and manufacture products specifically designed for customers," says Virtanen.
At the head of the circular economy