



INTERVIEW

Sustainability in the Textile Industry: Why Collections, Certifications and Circular Models Must Be Considered Together

A brief interview on sustainable collections, credible certifications, textile service models and the strategic role of transparency in the textile industry



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Interview with David Bacher

Junior Project Manager | DTO – B2B Research & Strategies

In this interview, David Bacher explains why sustainable textile strategies cannot end with individual collections, what role certifications play and why use-oriented circular models are becoming more strategically relevant for companies.

“Sustainability only becomes credible when materials, evidence, use and take-back systems work together.”

Question: Why is sustainability in the textile industry now more than a communications issue?

Answer: Sustainability now directly affects product development, procurement, material selection, supplier management and brand positioning. Companies can no longer simply state that a collection is more sustainable. They need to explain why it is more sustainable, which materials are used, what evidence is available and how credible the entire value chain is. Sustainability is therefore moving from an image factor to a strategic management responsibility.

Question: What role do sustainable collections play?

Answer: Sustainable collections are an important starting point, but they are not sufficient on their own. What matters is whether they result from a consistent strategy or merely highlight individual products. A collection is credible when material selection, design, durability, repairability, care, packaging, supply chain and communication work together. Otherwise, sustainability risks becoming a label rather than a robust business model.

Question: How important are certifications and standards for credibility?

Answer: Certifications can provide orientation by making requirements for materials, production conditions or supply chains more transparent. At the same time, they do not replace a company's own assessment. Companies need to understand what a certificate actually covers, which stage of the value chain is audited and where gaps remain. For customers, it is not only the label that matters, but whether the sustainability claim is understandable, verifiable and relevant to the product.

Question: What is the significance of use-oriented textile concepts such as rental, care, reuse and take-back?

Answer: These concepts show that sustainability is created not only through materials, but also through use. When textiles are professionally supplied, cleaned, maintained, repaired, reused and eventually taken back, a circular model can emerge. This can be attractive for companies because procurement, quality, hygiene, logistics and availability are treated more as a service. Clear processes, data and partnerships are nevertheless required for the model to work economically.

Question: What are the greatest challenges for companies developing sustainable textile offers?

Answer: Many companies underestimate the complexity. Sustainable materials must be available, affordable, durable and scalable. Supplier information must be verified and certifications interpreted correctly. Customer

expectations also differ substantially by target group, industry and price segment. The central challenge is therefore to connect sustainability with market potential, willingness to pay, the competitive environment and operational feasibility rather than treating it in isolation.

Question: What should companies assess before launching sustainable collections or circular models?

Answer: They should first identify which customer groups genuinely value sustainability and what they are prepared to pay for. Product promises, certifications, supply chains, service processes and competitor offers should then be reviewed systematically. The key question is whether sustainability merely differentiates the communication or creates real value: greater durability, lower risk, simpler procurement, increased transparency or a more compelling usage model.

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Interviewee



David Bacher

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David Bacher has been a Junior Project Manager at DTO since 2025. He holds a master's degree in Applied Cognitive and Media Science with a focus on business psychology and specialises in the structured analysis of complex questions. A particular focus of his work at DTO has been projects in the textile sector. His expertise includes business-psychology analysis, sustainability topics and the development of robust decision foundations for medium-sized companies.