



Is your eyecare practice ready to meet the moment? An ECP's guide to climate change & consumer expectations.



Introduction:

The eyecare industry is one of the largest in the world, thus it has a huge impact on global sustainability. It is responsible for contributing to unsustainable use of plastic and other materials that cause pollution to our environment. It also serves a critical function in healthcare and in helping people to see. Eyecare is essential, but younger consumers still expect sustainable changes. In order to solve this issue, the industry has to find solutions that will improve people's eye health without damaging the environment.

This report covers:

- 1** The State of the Eyecare Industry and Sustainability Practices
- 2** Consumer Insights on Sustainability and Eyewear
- 3** Strategies for Catering to Sustainability Expectations

Part 1:

State of the Eyecare Industry and Sustainability Practices

a) IAPB's 2030 plan to reach and treat excluded communities

Sustainability is about creating systems that empower communities, economies, and the environment. The International Agency for Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) put together a future-oriented plan to address the increased risk of vision health due to climate change. The IAPB states that 1.1 Billion people currently suffer from some form of vision loss, but that the number is expected to increase to 1.8 Billion by 2050. The plan looks to implement solutions before 2030. The IAPB puts a special focus on addressing the needs of the poorest communities thus empowering them and creating sustainable solutions.

b) Improving processes and industry functions

More and more brands are taking on the role as innovators to improve processes with the goal of becoming more sustainable. Brands are reflecting what consumers want by paying more attention to the ethicality of their sourcing, manufacturing, packaging, recycling, and innovation. Consumers are more informed, and want to know more about their products these days. That's why brands like [LOOK](#) include only 100% traceable materials in their glasses. Shoppers love being able to know where their glasses came from, and the level of commitment the brands they support have to ethics and sustainability. Aside from transparency, brands are also improving packaging. Another Villa Eyewear brand, [L.G.R.](#), has eliminated all single-use plastic from its standard packaging.

Part 1:

State of the Eyecare Industry and Sustainability Practices (cont.)

c) Bringing attention to the issues

Recently, more and more vision and eyecare publications have been drawing attention to the importance of sustainability. Publications like [Optometry Today](#) and [Vision Monday](#) are writing about sustainability topics in the industry and strategies for going green. Bringing attention to the issue is key for full scale adoption.

OT
Optometry Today

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OT ▸ Industry ▸ High Street ▸ "Going clean and green is absolutely the right thing to do"

"Going clean and green is absolutely the right thing to do"

The SEE Summit on the Environment brought manufacturers and eye care professionals together to share examples and tips for how the profession can work in more sustainable ways

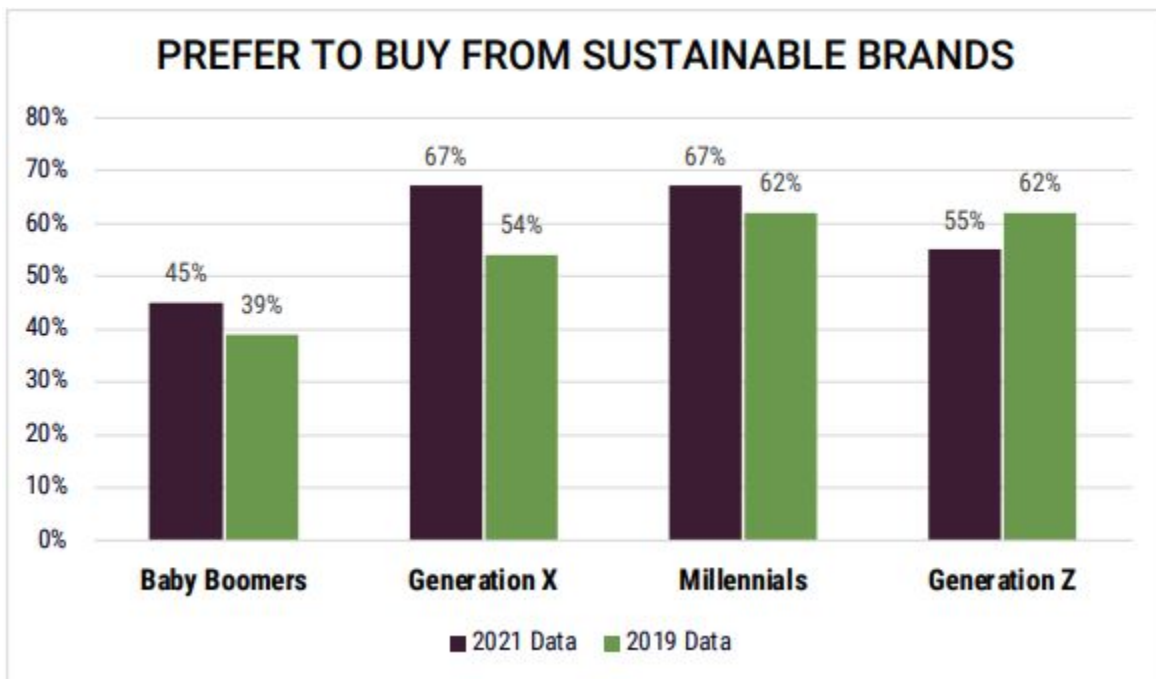


Part 2:

Consumer Insights on Sustainability and Eyewear

a) Consumers view sustainable products as higher quality

There are many reasons why consumers choose to shop for products with high standards in sustainability. One of the most obvious reasons is that they care for the environment and would like to contribute to a positive change for our climate. The less obvious, but more important reason for consumers is that they tend to view sustainably made products as better quality. Shoppers are more informed these days as they have access to all sorts of information about a company's ethos, manufacturing, and sourcing at their fingertips. They understand that companies who prioritize sustainability actively work against fast fashion. Consumers want to invest in glasses of high quality, made with sustainable and ethical practices which will last them longer than cheaply made frames.

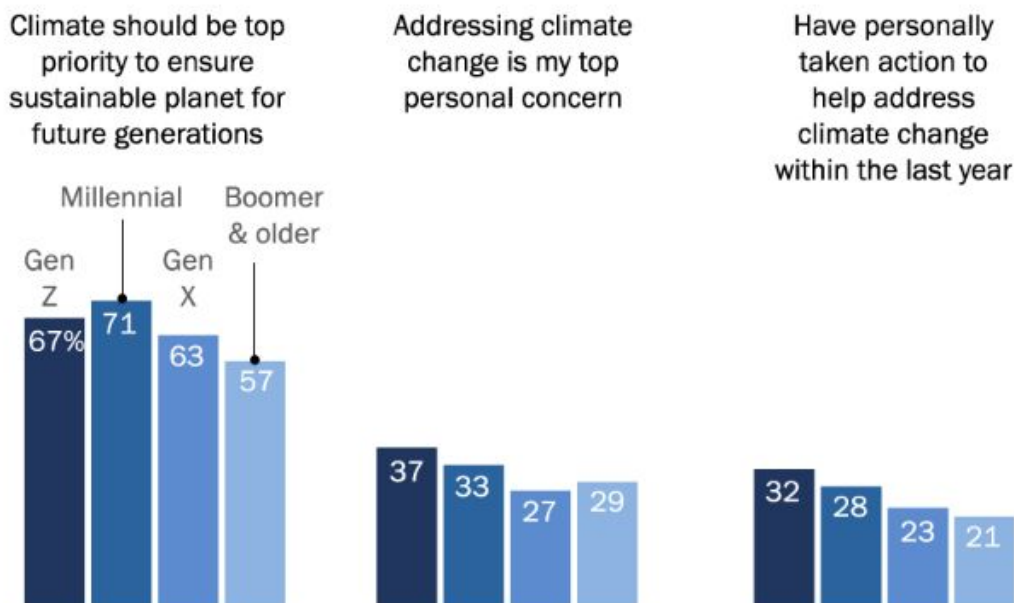


b) Younger consumers increasingly look for more sustainable products when shopping

The buying power of Gen Z is growing with each year. By 2030, their influence will surpass that of Millennials. If you want your practice to succeed well into the future it is a good idea to start capturing the hearts and minds of the young adults in your community. The only way to do that is to understand the consumer mindset of that generation. The majority of Gen Z is willing to spend at least 10% more on a product that is made sustainably. More than half of Millennials are also willing to spend more on a sustainably made product. While it is a smart business decision to look towards the future by catering to Gen Z's demands, sustainability is on the mind of everyone of every age. Regardless of generation, every consumer expects brands to become more sustainable.

Gen Z, Millennials more active than older generations addressing climate change on- and offline

% of U.S. adults who say ...



Part 3:

Strategies for Catering to Sustainability Expectations

There are so many ways for your practice to adopt more sustainable practices. The best way to think about sustainability is to look at it as a journey, not a destination. There are always more ways to go green. It is an ongoing process.

What to offer in your practice: Eyewear made with sustainable materials, processes, and plans for the future

Aside from being good for the planet, consumers look for and value sustainability and a commitment to betterment for humanity from the industries they support. It is important for your practice to understand how to cater to the new consumer mindset, especially when it comes to younger generations who value sustainability and ethics even more than older generations. The youth demand that the eyewear industry does its part in going green and contributing to widespread access to eyecare in the face of climate change.



What to look for in sustainable materials

One of the top things consumers look for when evaluating the sustainability of a brand is the materials used in a product. Your practice can look for materials like titanium, which Blackfin uses heavily in all of their products and has quickly become the industry's expert craftsman of the material. Titanium is easily recycled, ethically sourced, and durable enough that it doesn't require as many replacements as cheaper and more wasteful materials. If you prefer the look and feel of acetate, there are brands that offer products made of recycled or eco-friendly made materials that resemble acetate, such as [UNIQUEDESIGNMILANO \(UDM\)](#). Whatever your preference, there are options to be more sustainable for every style and aesthetic.

What to look for in sustainable processes

The first thing consumers look at when evaluating the level of commitment a brand has to sustainability is the materials, but the second thing they look at is what processes the brand uses. That means where the glasses are produced. Places like Blackfin's The Black Shelter are huge selling points for environmentally-minded consumers. It also means packaging, so finding brands that limit plastic, like L.G.R. are also strong factors for sustainability.

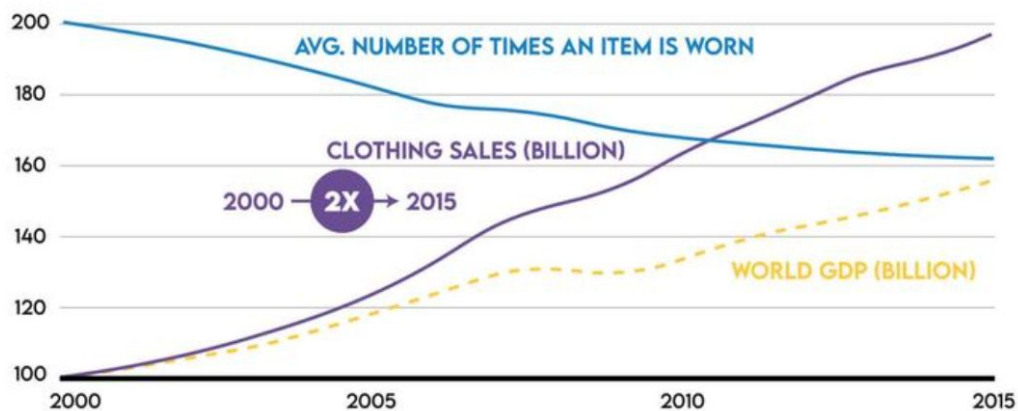


Avoiding “fast fashion” eyewear brands

We discard 92 million tons of clothes-related waste each year. Fast fashion contributes to more CO2 in the atmosphere than aviation and maritime transportation combined. One of the easiest ways for your practice to become more sustainable and meet the needs of consumer demand is to stop carrying fast fashion eyewear brands. Fast fashion is defined as “inexpensive clothing/accessories produced rapidly by mass-market retailers in response to the latest trends.” These products are usually created by copying high-end designs and producing them as cheaply as possible to meet demand when it is highest.

Fast fashion is dangerous and unsustainable for many reasons including detrimental effects on the environment and people. Since these products are made as cheaply as possible, with mainly profit in mind, the workers creating them are often severely underpaid and work in unsafe conditions. They are also made with extremely cheap, and sometimes even toxic, materials. This leads to the product breaking more quickly and requiring the purchase of more, creating a cycle of unsustainability. There is no sustainable innovation when it comes to sourcing, manufacturing, or packaging.

GROWTH OF CLOTHING SALES AND DECLINE IN CLOTHING UTILISATION SINCE 2000



SOURCE: ELLEN MACARTHUR FOUNDATION
GRAPHIC BY: CRYSTAL FANG

What processes you can adopt in your practice

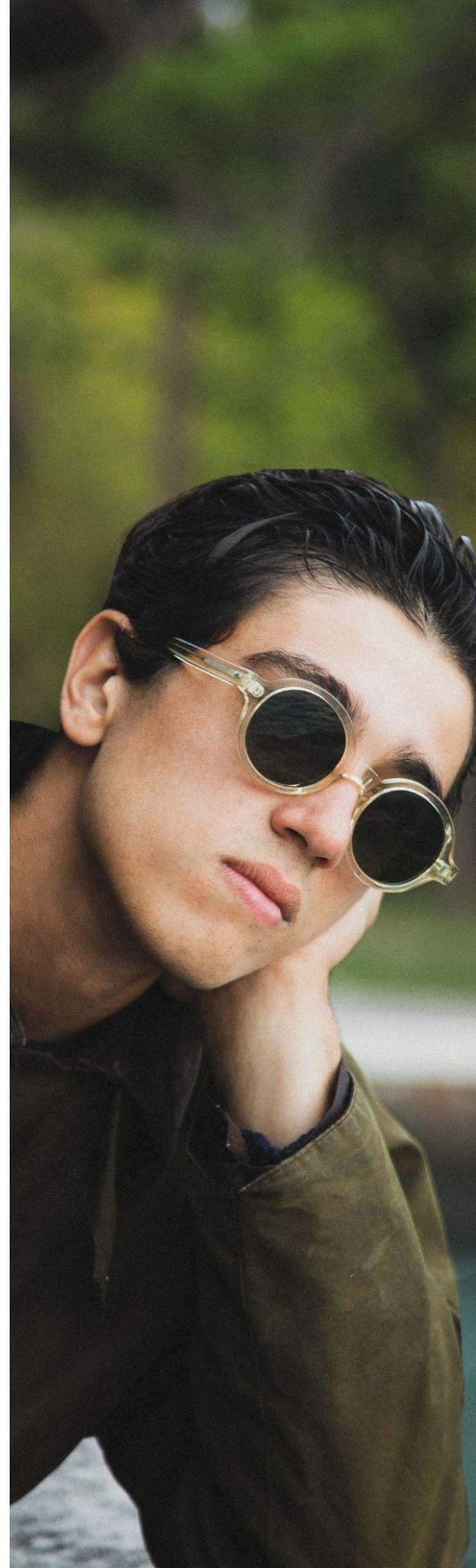
Aside from carrying sustainable brands, there are other strategies your practice can adopt to become more environmentally-friendly. If you don't already, you can start recycling. If you already recycle, you can start composting. If you already compost, you can work towards eliminating waste in other ways such as packaging and office materials. You can also consider your digital footprint, and work towards minimizing that. Sustainability is not about reaching a destination, but taking little steps each day to bring your practice closer to being sustainable.

How to make an impact beyond the four walls of your practice

Sustainability is about a lot more than just planting trees and recycling. It's about serving the communities you are connected to with better practices regarding people, planet, and profit. How can your practice show up for your community? Possibilities are endless for ways to make an impact, but here are just a few suggestions:

- Donate glasses to underserved communities
- Take a day for your whole practice to volunteer in your community
- Educate yourself and your clients on sustainable practices and eyewear options

There are these and so many other ways that you can adopt a community-based sustainable mindset within your practice. Bring your whole team together to work towards the goal of better serving your people and planet.





Taking steps towards sustainability can lead to a brighter tomorrow.

Implement these insights in your practice today!

If you found this helpful, the Villa Eyewear team would be happy to discuss more strategies that can help elevate your business and *set yourself apart!*

Other Resources you'll love!

- [Villa Eyewear's Monthly Newsletter](#)
Stay up-to-date with product updates, announcements, and latest news from Villa Eyewear. Also access trend forecasts, and tips for success in the eyewear industry.
- [The Blog Built for ECPs](#)
Built for ECPs, this blog provides insight into critical trend forecasts and ways to boost revenue, improve customer service and other tips for success.