



Komorebi.

Komorebi (Japanese) — the interplay of light and leaves when sunlight shines through trees.

What fashion companies actually hire for — read through their own job advertisements. A study of sustainable, transformative mindsets in the industry that says it wants both.

YASMIN BARAKAT · FEBRUARY 2020 · GRADE 1.3 / A · SUMMARY BY THE AUTHOR, 2026

THE QUESTION

How far are sustainable, transformative mindsets — and the competencies behind them — already part of how leading fashion companies hire for their own sustainable and digital transformation? And where are the blind spots?

Sustainable transformation starts with people. Circular models, transparent supply chains and green claims are all executed by humans — so who a company hires, and what mindset it hires for, quietly decides whether its sustainability agenda is real. The most honest public record of what a company truly values is its job advertisements.

THE METHOD — READING THE INDUSTRY THROUGH ITS OWN JOB ADS

1 EXTRACT

Competencies pulled from real job advertisements of roughly sixty companies — sustainable pioneers, global leaders, GCC retail, digital natives, celebrated transformers.

2 MAP

Each stated competency placed in a matrix against UNESCO's eight key competencies for sustainability — the skills transformation actually requires.

3 READ THE TONE

Every ad also read for tone of voice: does it sound like a culture, or like a template? A job post is corporate culture in miniature.

THE RESULT — THE SAME PATTERN IN EVERY SINGLE GROUP

106

KEYWORDS FOR COLLABORATION

the number-one category in all five company groups

≤ 2

MENTIONS OF CRITICAL THINKING

at most, in any group — the lowest signal nearly everywhere

1

COMPANY WITH ANTICIPATORY SIGNAL

Patagonia — alone in the entire sample

0

SUSTAINABILITY ROLES ASKING FOR FORESIGHT

in any company analysed



Fashion hires for the competencies of **coordination** — collaboration, communication, interpersonal skill — and not for the competencies of **transformation**: anticipatory thinking, critical thinking, creativity, self-awareness, intercultural competency. The industry is recruiting people to run the existing machine smoothly, at the precise moment its own strategy says the machine must be rebuilt.

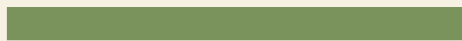


What sixty companies asked for.

One reading of the whole sample. Annotations are the findings; bar lengths are illustrative.

Collaboration

COORDINATION



106 keyword mentions — number one in all five company groups

Self-awareness

COORDINATION



reliably second — but phrased as 'passion', not reflection

Intercultural competency

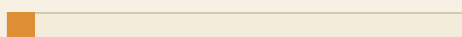
TRANSFORMATION



barely mentioned — in the most global industry on earth

Creativity & storytelling

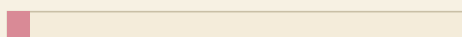
TRANSFORMATION



named by two companies — both digital natives

Critical thinking

TRANSFORMATION



never more than two mentions in any group

Anticipatory thinking

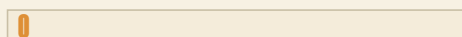
TRANSFORMATION



one company — Patagonia

Foresight, in sustainability roles

TRANSFORMATION



zero roles asked for it — the roles created to build the future

WHAT THE GAPS COST

- Nobody is hired to question the norms the transformation is supposed to replace — programmes get executed, not examined.
- The roles created to carry companies into a different future don't require the ability to think about the future.
- In the industry whose product is creativity, the people hired to transform it aren't asked to be creative.
- 'Passion' stands in for self-awareness — but transformation starts within people, and passion is not reflection.
- Supply chains span continents; the teams running them are never asked to work across cultures.

FROM FINDINGS TO PRACTICE

Rewrite the ask. A job post is often a candidate's first encounter with the company. Written authentically — naming foresight, critical thinking, creativity and self-knowledge — it attracts the mindsets a transformation actually needs. Written as a keyword list, it repels them.

Grow what you couldn't hire. Develop existing leadership through strategic foresight (scenario work, futures thinking) and expressive-arts methods — building the self-awareness, empathy and communication that sustainable change runs on.



Go deeper: The Komorebi Playbook — the operational toolkit built on these findings — is free at yasminbarakat.de. The complete 195-page study is available on request.

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