

An image from the Benetton x Depop campaign.



SUSTAINABILITY

Benetton Entering Secondhand Shopping Model

- United Colors of Benetton is reaching out to a new customer and bringing back storied designs through a new collaboration with Gen Z's favorite peer-to-peer resale marketplace Depop.

BY LUISA ZARGANI

MILAN — United Colors of Benetton is entering the secondhand shopping model, reaching out to a new customer and bringing back vintage designs through a new collaboration with peer-to-peer resale marketplace Depop.

Benetton chief executive officer Massimo Renon, however, stressed that the partnership is based on key values the Italian company and Depop share, such as diversity, inclusion and sustainability.

Renon joined Benetton last year from Marcolin, tasked with the revamp of the brand and with increasing its appeal to younger generations, without betraying what it has always stood for. "Through Oliviero Toscani's innovative ad campaigns in the '80s, we put diverse communities at the center of our communication and now

we are shifting our gaze to creativity, while still standing by our belief in inclusion and self-expression," Renon said.

Gen Z favorite Depop, which specializes in the sale of vintage products, will allow Benetton to further target sustainable fashion. Depop is hoping to reshape the way fashion is made and experienced by promoting and developing culture that centers on circularity and creativity, as well as equity and exchange. As reported, Depop released its two-year sustainability plan in January, envisioning "a new fashion system" based on commitments across governance, planet, people and platform. As with many businesses, Depop based its strategy on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Championing the longevity of the Benetton archive and the value of secondhand shopping, Depop sellers from across the U.S. and U.K. have curated a collection of rare vintage pieces, available to shop from today.

Steve Dool, global head of brand partnerships, also highlighted the common purpose and values shared with Benetton, working with "community-focused brand partners," saying the collaboration is "a natural fit." He emphasized Benetton's long-standing reputation for challenging conventions and championing inclusion,



Vintage Benetton looks for Depop from a 1988 campaign.

which is in sync with Depop. The partnership allows not only to engage with Depop's seller community "to help extend the lives of some of Benetton's most covetable garments, but we're also working in tandem with Benetton to amplify the representation and empowerment of creative self-expression that we both strive to support."

Both companies "speak up about social issues, and dismissing norms," while responding to growing interest for products from the '80s, '90s and early Aughts, Dool said.

The Benetton x Depop project provides a creative platform for members of the Depop community to stand up for their beliefs and create social change, Dool observed.

The campaign features @YouthClubStore who is committed to promoting more conscious consumption of fashion; @ArchiveSix, who speaks to her empowerment as a POC businesswoman; dancer @Ayo, on the importance of self-love and self-acceptance, and @Hadiyahh, who is passionate about the representation of real female bodies in the media.

In the U.K., the 60-piece collection ranges from men's and women's wear to accessories, comprising rugby shirts and the brand's staple color-blocked sweatshirts, to patchwork denim jackets, argyle jumpers and linen shorts.

Renon touted "the energy" channeled in this project by Depop and its community and praised the expertise of the sellers.

"They come from different backgrounds, they have an artistic bent, they take a strong stance on issues they believe in and selected the archival pieces," the executive observed. "We are very happy with their choices, these are iconic pieces from vintage markets and the sellers see their potential. They themselves are the products' ambassadors."

The U.K. collection has been sourced and selected by sellers @HMSVintage, @AreaEighteen, @Thrifty Towel, @happydais and @campervanvintage, who all specialize in secondhand and vintage apparel.

In the U.S., the archival Benetton products were sourced by 15 Depop sellers across that region including @nostalgic_threadz, @throwbacksvintage, @thegrungedoll, @mineclothingshop and @heynicholevintage.

Sellers working with vintage "knew the great opportunity offered by Benetton products," Dool said. He added that the sellers did "an amazing job" in selecting rare Benetton items, which continue to be current, "colorful and bright yet also functional for every day use and great to look at." Asked if he was surprised by any particular find, he cited jackets and pieces from Benetton's sponsorship of Formula 1 teams.

Renon underscored the potential resonance from this collaboration for Benetton in the U.S. market, which will

An image from the Benetton x Depop campaign.



help expand the brand's reach. He noted that Depop counts more than 27 million registered users in 147 countries.

The executive believes this and potentially additional partnerships will help Benetton extend its customer pool. He said that, despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic last year, he sees an uptick in the performance of the brand "through an intervention on product," and sales in May beating revenues in the same month in 2019.

The company is also investing on "an ambitious retail plan," with recent openings in cities ranging from Florence and Forte dei Marmi to Ancona and Como. Benetton already has a network of about 4,000 stores globally. Since Renon's arrival, he has been streamlining the retail chain, closing some underperforming stores, especially outside Italy. He underscored, however, that the company is planning to further develop business and is not on the retreat, on the contrary mapping out the opening of more directly operated stores. The Florence boutique makes abundant use of upcycled natural materials, from waste wood to mineral paints that can reduce pollutants in the environment, and introduced a new store concept, as reported.

Benetton and Depop have also created a video to promote the collaboration on social media, with sellers "talking about what they stand for," Dool said. "You can say something with the clothes you choose to wear."

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