

Report on Women in small business and their impact on the environment

By

MULINDWA EDWARD
21104071

An internship report submitted to Brac Business School in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Business Administration

Brac Business School
Brac University
December 2024

© 2024, Brac University
All rights reserved.

Declaration

It is hereby declared that.

1. The internship report submitted in my original work as I am completing my degree at Brac University and is available for discretionary.
2. The report does not contain any previously published or written by any third party except where it is properly cited through full and accurate referencing because of the secondary data collection.
3. The report does not contain material that has been accepted or submitted for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all sources of help through accurate citation and referencing using APA 7 referencing style format.

Student's full names & signature

MULINDWA EDWARD

Mulindwa Edward

ID: 21104071

Supervisor's full name & signature

Riyashad Ahmed

Assistant Professor

Brac Business School, Brac University

Letter of transmittal

Supervisor – Riyashad Ahmed

Assistant Professor

Brac Business School

Brac University

Kha-224 Merul Badda, Dhaka 1212. Bangladesh

Subject: submission on the internship report on “*Women in small business and their impact on the environment; - evidence from Treehouse Brooklyn Company*”

Dear Sir,

With due respect and honor, I am submitting my internship report on women in small businesses and their impact on the environment with the case study of Treehouse Brooklyn Company NYC.

As a requirement by Brac Business School at Brac University and with full guidance from you Sir, a variety of necessary information has been included and the analysis has been done effectively in this report to make worth of it. The internship which resulted in this report embraced me with real-life experience in the business specifically running a business on a small scale and how finances are managed by these businesses. Finally, it was also a great privilege to work under your guidance as my supervisor throughout the all process. I hope this internship report meets the standard requirement of the BBA program and BUS490 followed by your evaluation standards.

Sincerely yours,

MULINDWA EDWARD

21104071

Brac Business School

Brac University

Date: 10th December 2024

Non-disclosure agreement

The non-disclosure agreement is between Treehouse Brooklyn and the undersigned student of Brac University, Mulindwa Edward.

I Mulindwa Edward hereby declare that this report does not contain any company confidential information or any misleading information that in return may harm the organization. The report will not be published on the internet by either me or the university, it will be recorded in Brac University as the completion of my internship program.

Acknowledgment

I express my sincere acknowledgment to the Almighty God who has enabled me to complete my internship at Treehouse Brooklyn NYC which is a mandatory requirement as a BBA student at Brac University as well as thank Him for making me complete my four-year journey at Brac University in Business Administration. It has been by His grace for me to reach here.

Secondly, I extend my appreciation to Tenzin Khan who has worked tooth and nail to see that my internship process goes on smoothly, in the same manner, I would like to convey my utmost gratitude to my supervisor Mr. Riyashad Ahmed and co-supervisor Mr. Saif Hussain as they have done beyond being the supervisor and also as a parent, they have guided me from the beginning of the internship journey and I have learned a lot from them through their guidance and suggestions.

I would also want to extend my gratitude to my on-site supervisor Siri Wilson the CEO of Treehouse Brooklyn company and the co-onsite supervisor Lucila Pan at BARD NYC. They have been always a guiding force for my impressive internship outcomes as they have provided me with insights even on the upcoming career paths. They have provided me with the room for full experience at the workplace and being treated beyond the intern. Whenever I could get challenged, they always came in to intervene and put me on the right track.

Last but not least, all thanks go to all my faculties who have equipped me with the theoretical knowledge starting from scratch, they have done a great job building my career as they have dedicated their time to shaping me into a business professional through classes, seminars, projects, consultations mention but a few.

Executive summary

This report was followed by fully completing the 19-week internship at Treehouse Brooklyn NYC USA. Treehouse B is a small sustainable fashion company that was established in 2006 by a woman entrepreneur. This company focuses on recycling used cotton and other materials that would have been a risk to the environment and making fashionable outfits and other products out of them. This report is intended to fully analyze the role of women in business and how they have shaped the image of the business. The study focuses on the economic, social, and environmental impact of small businesses led by women in New York and the USA at large, particularly in sustainability and Gender recognition. Combining the primary comprehension from my internship experience and the secondary data from trusted sources, the report shows how women-driven initiatives can add more value to the elimination of carbon footprint and green business practices. The study highlights how economically the company has reduced the unemployment gap, boosting innovations and economic growth. Socially, it focuses on how these women-led businesses have underlined the importance of Gender equality through empowering women as leaders as well as reorganizing their role in entrepreneurship. Environmentally, the study discusses how these small businesses specifically Treehouse have adopted sustainable business practices in their operations through using eco-friendly materials, recycling, and upcycling to reduce carbon footprint around the globe.

Though they are here for a good cause, the report also discusses the challenges faced by these environmental heroes such as limited access to funding, and a sense of recognition by the society due to their primitiveness on the Gender issues, in the same manner the report has also presented some of the recommendations to imitate these challenges which includes incentives from the government, strategic partnership. The report also discusses the company's competitive analysis in the fashion and design industry. In conclusion, the report shows that small businesses led by women not only supported the economy of the NYC state and the USA at large but also served as a catalyst for social and environmental progress. The report recommends the need for increased investment in such sustainable businesses as the report is aimed to inspire various stakeholders, policymakers, and investors to reorganize, embrace, and support the transformative potential of women entrepreneurs to push sustainable development.

Table of Contents

Executive summary.....	v
Chapter 1: an overview of the internship	8
Introduction.....	8
Student information	1
Internship overview	1
Job scope.....	2
Sending and receiving emails	2
Arranging and attending meetings	3
Analyzing the financial statement of the organization.....	3
Internship outcomes	4
Student contribution to the company.....	4
Benefits to the student.....	5
Challenges faced during the internship.....	6
Recommendations for future interns.....	7
Chapter 2: organization.....	7
Introduction.....	7
Organization Overview	8
Management practices	9
Organization leadership	9
Departments and Organization structure.....	10
Department practices	10
Human resource practices	10
Finance and Accounting practices.....	10
Sales and marketing practices	11
Operations and Production practices.....	11
Supply and chain practices.....	12
Organizational structure and organogram	12
Human resource recruitment process	13
Objective setting	13
Recruitment and selection process.....	14
The compensation system	15
The training and development initiatives.....	15

Performance appraisal system.....	16
Mission.....	17
Vision	17
Goals and objectives	17
Products provided	18
Financial performance analysis.....	20
Break-even point analysis	20
Working capital management.....	21
Sources of capital	22
Accounting practices.....	23
Compliance ongoing concern.....	23
Methods of accounting.....	24
Accounting cycle	24
Depreciation methods	24
Disclosure	24
Operations management.....	25
Industry and competitive analysis.....	25
Industry Overview	25
Five porter's model	28
Swot analysis	30
Personal observation and recommendations for Treehouse	30
Chapter 3 The Project Part	31
Introduction.....	31
Literature review.....	32
Economic contribution of women in small business.....	32
Social transformation through Genda empowerment	32
Environmental sustainability in women-led enterprises	34
Objectives of study	34
Significance of study.....	35
Limitation of study.....	37
Methodology	37
Finding and analysis	38
Economic contribution.....	38

Social contribution	41
Environmental impact	43
Challenges faced by the company.....	44
Summary and Conclusion	47
Recommendations.....	47
References.....	50
Appendix	54
Synonyms.....	59

Chapter 1: An overview of the internship

Introduction

As per Brac University policy, to complete the required credits of the BBA program, every BBA student must attend either a 19-week internship or a thesis. This is done by finding the replacements in different organizations and the supervisor is assigned and guides you through the all-internship process. I opted for the internship for this case since I was fortunate to get a replacement at Treehouse Brooklyn in NYC USA. This internship not only gave me experience in real-world business but also expanded my social network as I met different people of different diversities. During my 19-week internship, I got the opportunity to learn how small businesses operate in this fast-growing economy and how it has embraced gender equality in society, in addition, it provided me with hands-on experience since I was directly involved in the running of the business. With that exciting experience, I managed to incorporate what was taught in class with the physical and real-time activities in the business and I managed to comprehend. Before World War II, students were not required to attend internships as the jobs did not require a lot of experience, especially for the entry-level and the demand for employees was high, however during the post-world War II, there was a shift in the job market as the soldiers were re-entering the workforce, with this including the low demand for labor and the need for professionalism, candidate with the job experience were more preferred and this led to the introduction of internships in different high education institutions so that students come out with some experience.

Today it is becoming more complex to get job opportunities due to high job competition among graduates and the incumbents and without job experience it may take you out of the game in this competitive world hence standing out requires you to have business experience and it is only acquired through internship as the student. Through internships, students are taught skills in the business world and they are guided on how to discover their abilities in them. Most students lack confidence with the low self-esteem, with internships, students are helped to boost their confidence and be sharp when they are doing their jobs and this sets them ready for any coming jobs. In some cases when the organization is impressed with the performance and zeal of the internship students, these students can be retained as their employees after graduating hence it is a way of narrowing your job search.

Student information

I am Mulindwa Edward, a student at Brac University with a student ID of 21104071. I am from the BBS department, and I am pursuing a bachelor's in business administration. I have fully completed my major in finance and minor in computer information management (CIM). As required by the university after the completion of the internship, a student has to write the internship report. For my case, my report writing is on the topic of **women in small businesses and their impact on the environment** and my case study is Treehouse Brooklyn which is owned by a woman from where my internship from.

Internship overview

Internship information

Internship period: four months (from 2nd of February 2024 to 15th of May 2024)

Company Name: Treehouse Brooklyn

Address: 430 Graham Ave, Brooklyn NY 11211 USA

Department: Finance department and operations.

On-site supervisors' information

Name: Siri Wilson

Designation: owner and CEO

Name: Lucila Pan

Designation: associate director of Bard NYC

Job scope

Job responsibilities as an intern at Treehouse Brooklyn

As an intern, I was assigned different roles in the organization specifically in the finance and operation departments.

Sending and receiving emails.

On my daily routine as soon as I reach work, the first thing I had to do was to check the received emails from clients, and donors. I had to read all the emails, comprehend them, and then send the feedback as guided by my boss at work. In most cases, I used to receive emails from clients inquiring about the organization's products and how they can reach out for those products. With this, I had to politely respond to them persuasively as a way of keeping and building customer relationships. Some emails were complaint emails and some clients were facing errors with the online payment methods as they wanted to pay for the products. After consulting with the operations manager, I had to respond to those emails informing them that the errors have been cleared and I thank them for their kind cooperation in that matter. I had to send orders and follow-up emails to the suppliers requesting the delivery of the raw materials and inquiring about the available supply. Using open email, I had to send promotional emails to both clients and well-wishers about the products the organization offers and their discounted prices and handle requests for the influencers since it was a form of online advertising for the company. Some clients wanted to meet with the organization owner online and I had to set the online meeting with the Boss for

the meet-up after her approval. Internally, I had also to communicate with the team through emails updating them on the order progress, the supplier issues as well as feedback from the clients.

Arranging and attending meetings

For the smooth running of the business, our CEO and the owner of Treehouse called for daily meetings for around 10 minutes and we had to come to the meeting as a team in those meetings I was assigned to always take minutes of the meeting. I had to make sure the meeting room was well arranged and the communication tools were also working and of course, the room had to be clean. During the meetings, different teams were asked to give updates on their progress and as they were giving their progress, I wrote every detail down. Things such as client feedback, order issues for the case of operations team where I was involved too, new trends since it is a fashion store and it had to stay updated, and email responses. After the meeting, I had to print out the minutes and distribute them to the team members as well as the CEO of the organization so that they could remain. Meeting up as member teams helped us a lot to know each other and our different roles and this strengthened our coordination among us and it led to great performance.

Analyzing the financial statement of the organization

Budget planning and allocation, with a team of four in the finance department I was among them, I was responsible for the budget planning and allocation for each of the organization's departments, for cost-effectiveness, using the Excel tool I had to make sure that the budget for the departments used the funds allocated to them effectively, these funds were distributed based on the projected revenue and expenses for the organization. As a team, we had to monitor the budget to make sure that the departments stayed within budget.

Income statement and analysis, as a finance team we had to prepare the monthly income statement using Excel tool, this was possible as I managed to track all the revenue from the sale of the products at the end of the month and deduct the expenses from the revenue to get the final net income. During the profitability analysis, I had to find out how the business's profitability is and also bolding the costs that need to be cut to reduce the expenses of the organization.

In cash flow management, in the finance department, the most important thing was the cash flows as it revealed the cash inflows and cash outflows of the business daily, as for the analysis, I was given the responsibility of monitoring the cash flow inflows and outflows so that I make sure that there is the availability of cash for the outgoing expenses specifically for the working capital since the business had to pay for the payable bills for the suppliers of the materials. Because of the cash receivables and payables for the business, I had to make sure that I projected the cash needs so that the organization could be prevented from cash shortages which could disrupt the operations.

I was also responsible for cost management and control, as a team we had to identify the high-cost materials and suppliers and give feedback suggestions to the logistic team for the negotiations with the supplies for the cost cut and better terms. Focusing on the treehouse expenses, we had to scrutinize its expenses and find a solution to reduce the costs without affecting the quality of the products and services. However, we were drafting and the final financial statements were collected and corrected by the top management hence we could not get the final reports for further analysis.

Internship outcomes

Student contribution to the company.

This internship was a great tool for the company to prosper as it benefited in the following ways, Boosted the financial performance through financial accuracy, preparing and monitoring the financial statements such as budget, income statement, and cashflows, and helped the company to make better financial decisions based on deep analysis which was lacking before. Tracking the expenses and the costs and preventing the organization from overspending and the same time improving the quality greatly positively impacted the organization for its financial health. Monitoring the budget regularly helped the organization to prevent unnecessary overspending and this reduced the risk of financial constraints. Introducing Excel to the Treehouse Brooklyn organization helped the business to organize data made it easier for the report review and reduced the risk of errors and this boosted the organization's financial forecast confidence and strategic planning and also reduced the time for the company to do all the financial activities with the interns.

Timely and clear communication boosted the customer satisfaction of the organization, through my daily reading and responding to the emails in time clients promptly and professionally, boosting the customer impression, and with this the customer base increased as the old customers were retained and attracted new customers because of the brand referrals and this led to the building of the customer loyalty to the company. Every business has pitfalls, for treehouse Brooklyn, there was a pitfall in responding to customer complaints, but with my roles every morning, addressing the complaints and collecting feedback using the emails ensured that the business understood its clients and their needs and thereby it managed to improve its offering.

As a team, the proper bookkeeping in Excel and trucking orders from the suppliers including their information helped the business to operate smoothly as accessible, well-kept book records in Excel which I developed prevented delays and some errors in the order and suppliers' communication. For the meetings we held, taking minutes and sharing them after the meetings including the action points ensured that the team members in all departments stayed on track hence making the decisions quickly and more efficiently.

Since we worked as a team, participating in the team discussion and supporting the team members revealed the innovation and building the collaborative culture in the organization, with efforts some team members from other departments were motivated to stay organized, work together, and well as fetching new ideas and this mentally prepared them to work hard for the success of the company. Upon consistently fulfilling my roles, I built trust within the team and the company at large and this made the company greatly depend on the interns as their valuable assets, reinforcing a supportive working environment.

Benefits to the student

As a finance finalist student, this internship greatly benefited me. Firstly, I was able to apply my theoretical knowledge into practice since I was working on the budgets, cashflows, and income statements (profit and loss accounts). This greatly gave me insight into the corporate finance world and gave me a practical part of it. I was also able to relate different theories and comprehend the financial ratios, and the risks with the things I studied in class, with this a big platform was laid for me to showcase my abilities and potential which I did and appreciated.

Since I was in direct contact with the clients who used to come to the company and who ordered online for the products and sent emails, this greatly helped me to expand my network. The direct contact with these clients helped me to build my communication skills as I was able to communicate with almost everyone appropriately and professionally. The internship uplifted my communication skills, not only to the clients through emails and physical contact but also to my team members. Working with a team of four in the finance department boosted my confidence and leadership skills as I was leading the budget and cash flow monitoring group for the company. My analytical skills were also brushed as I was able to analyze different financial statements.

Interning in the small company allowed me to explore different departments as we were almost working together, the low strictness on the hierarchy of the organization also made me access everyone at the company thereby managing to seek every detail regarding the operation of the small company. Being supervised by the company owner also helped me to grow and learn from her since she was free and friendly and she was also more willing to help me grow in the business world hence opening doors for my next career after graduating.

Challenges faced during the internship

As an intern, I faced the challenge of managing multiple tasks. I was handling different tasks during the day, that is to say, I was responsible for emails, data entry, assisting in the meetings, and budgeting. Without clear priorities, this made me overwhelmed and exhausted and this increased the stress and pressure to meet the deadlines. In addition, I was doing an unpaid internship, on top of being overloaded I was not paid for this internship and yet I had to eat and commute, this was a real challenge since I had to wake up with birds and walk to the company so that catch up the time and coming back, this threatened my health and my mental being. The challenge of building confidence in communication, since it was my first time working in such a position, handling different clients' and suppliers' emails was not an easy task as some clients were aggressive and not listening.

Recommendations for future interns

With future internships, I would like to recommend the company to at least pay the interns for the commuting and lunch, with this, interns will be boosted and they will be more willing to provide their best for the company, in addition, I would recommend the company to always prioritize the tasks for the interns and giving them the breathing space for their freshness.

Chapter 2: organization.

Introduction

A lot of businesses are being done in the United States by different people. With our major focus on NYC, businesses are categorized into six based on the number of employees, the revenue and income of that business, and management. Among those include sole proprietorship which is owned and operated by a single person, a small business that involves employees between 1 to 50, with revenue and income more than that of a sole proprietorship, in the next category is medium business, which is beyond small business but not yet a big company employing between 50 to 250 and medium revenue and income. Large corporations in the fourth category which operated at the national and international level, held significant revenue and provided relevant taxes to the country. In the fourth category, there is a multinational company business, that operates in different countries and holds headquarters in those countries for example Apple, coca cola companies. In the last category, we find the conglomerate companies. These companies own and operate different types of businesses mostly unrelated to each other for example Samsung, and Tata Group. After seeing the big picture of different businesses that are operated in this world, the major emphasis is on the small business. Small businesses have greatly contributed to the economic prosperity of New York as a state and the USA as a whole. Among all the businesses that are operated in NYC,

they account for 43% of all the businesses operated in New York state. Examples of small businesses in NYC include coffee shops, restaurants, bars, boutiques, jewelry businesses, and pet shops mention but a few, these small businesses have boosted the economy of NYC as well as the USA as a whole employing nearly 3.9 million people in NYC, and generating the receipts of over 950 billion dollars and generating a payroll of over 190 billion dollars annually. Treehouse Brooklyn is one of those small businesses that empower and transform the social and economic way the NYC people live. Providing recycled products after adding value to them and has positively impacted the lives of the New York people through economic, environmental, and social transformation.

Organization Overview

Treehouse Brooklyn is a small company that was established in 2006. It was founded by Siri Wilson a woman entrepreneur; she completed her degree at UC San Diego with a bachelor's of visual arts and multimedia. The idea of starting this company came at the age of 18 years as she was walking along the shores of River Trinity in California where she grew up and saw the wasted bunch of clothes carried by the river to its shores and others were flooding along with the lifeless fish, with these, she felt concerned and she got an idea of recycling those cloths using her art skills and make clothes out of them so that she can protect the aquatic life and well as leaving the river clean. From that moment, she has been growing bigger and bigger hence it was founded with a commitment to environmental consciousness and the community. It is located at 430 Graham Ave BK, NY 11211 USA. Treehouse is focused on handmade technology, eco-friendly, and sustainable fashion, and accessories. It is becoming the foremost leading company for clients who seek unique, ethically sourced, and high-quality products. The company employs 45 people and they work in different departments such as finance, manufacturing, supply and logistics department, human resources, and operations.

Table 1

Type	Private company
------	-----------------

industry	Fashion
Founded in	2006
Location	430 graham Ave bk, NY 11211 USA
Logo	
Number of employees	45

Management practices

Organization leadership

The company uses a democratic leadership style, by definition democratic leadership style is the leadership where employees at different levels are allowed to participate in the decision-making. It empowers and seeks consciousness from the employees. The team members are empowered to participate in decision-making of the organization. This type of leadership style, was indeed a fit style for the company since the company of a hybrid company that seeks to sustain the environment and the same time make a profit, allowing employees to participate in the decision-making process allows them to feel concerned and to be innovative so that new ideas can be generated to save the globe from high footprints. Siri Wilson trusts her team to generate those ideas and come up with solutions, this encourages organizational creativity among the employees, and employees discover their potential, spurring teams to work together in new ways without micromanagement. At Treehouse House there was nothing like power struggles since everyone was equal and fighting for the common good, and hence involving this leadership style helped the employees feel valued.

Working together as a team, workers get more motivated, see work as fulfilling as well, and solve problems creatively on their own.

Departments and Organization structure

Department practices

Treehouse Brooklyn is a small company with few departments, among these departments include human resources, finance, supply and chain, operations, and sales and marketing. These departments are interconnected and every one of them plays a vital role in keeping the business running smoothly as their roles are discussed below.

Human resource practices

As with any other business, Treehouse has employed 45 employees through its human resource departments, these employees are selected and employed based on their skills, especially those working in the operations and production department as they need to apply their hand skills to finish the tasks. Educated and analytical employees are also recruited to work in the finance department and sales and marketing department. These recruits go through several stages as we will discuss in the coming subchapters so that they can be fully recruited. Henceforth the major function of the human resource department is to recruit manpower for the company, motivate them and monitor their performance as well as compensate them.

Finance and Accounting practices

The finance department consists of four people, who are responsible for drafting the budget plan and following up with the actual budget, in the budget planning they consider more of the sources of funds and how those funds can be used to grow the business. They do the income statement preparations and analysis that are to say, entering the revenue, the expenses, and other income in their income statement, from here they prepare the balance sheet where they analyze the health of the business while looking at the receivables from their customers, payables from their clients, the short term debt from the bank of America they carry every five months with the interest, the fixed assets which include the furniture, the making tools, the truck, bins, and the building as well as

considering their depreciation. This financial department holds the responsibility of seeking donors who to invest in sustainable recyclable businesses like Treehouse Brooklyn and any other well-wishers and they have to monitor those funds so as they do the right thing at a time. Treehouse is in the paying tax category and it pays value-added tax (VAT), the finance department is responsible for analyzing those taxes and advising the company accordingly so as they stay within the regulations.

Sales and marketing practices

In the sales and marketing department, treehouse Brooklyn is following both traditional and digital marketing. With traditional marketing, the banner is used outside the company indicating the products offered and their theme, this department also is responsible for that role, it is responsible for displaying the products in such a way that attracts clients, and it advises the CEO to offer discounts especially seasonal and special occasions as a way of attracting more customers from the rivals. The department holds the role of a website they created already for online marketing hence this is digital marketing. The company has its website and at the same time has collaborative sites where women come together to sell what they make. The company goes for the social media and PPC marketing strategy, and their target customers are mostly women and any customer who is concerned about environmental sustainability. The sales and marketing department is responsible to monitor these websites and analyze the results of this online marketing. They use social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter (X) as their marketing channels to promote their products. They also have the role of communicating with the clients convincingly to resolve the complaints and retain them.

Operations and Production practices

This department plays a vital role in the company, in the production sector is where the products sold are produced. This department ensures that the products produced are of high quality by thoroughly monitoring every stage of production in the value addition. Before allowing the raw materials from the suppliers and the collected used cloths, this department carefully checks their quality for the case of the supplied raw materials and the case of the collected used cloths (cotton), they make it go through the cleaning process till it is worth converting into vintage materials. They

are responsible for assembling the workers according to the stage of production and the skill required in that stage and in addition, they provide training for the new employees so that they catch up with their colleagues. For the operations sector, their role is to make sure the company is well organized and it has everything it takes to work smoothly. They are rolled in monitoring the generator in case the power goes off, and reporting the fully depreciated fixed assets such as doors, bins, and machines among others. They are responsible for meeting arrangements weekly and organize the room for the meeting, ensuring the gadgets are working properly. When the company is to have workshops for the employees, the operations department is responsible for all preparations including transport, and meals. In addition, this department is also responsible for checking, writing, sending, and receiving emails to and from suppliers, donors, and any other email including us the interns.

Supply and chain practices

This department has three employees including the supply and logistics officer, the junior officer, and the negotiator. These are responsible for writing orders for the raw materials from the suppliers and sending invoices. At the time of delivery, they check for the raw materials to make sure that the right quantity, price, and quality that was on the order paper is the one that they have received. They are also responsible for conducting suppliers to inquire about the availability of some raw materials, they are also responsible for sales return on the time of delivery. Upon ordering they are expected to cut the company's costs as much as possible and they do this through negotiation with the suppliers and any well-wisher for the case of used materials, seeking cash discounts for the company from the suppliers, and securing the suppliers who provide good quality raw materials which in the end will produce high-quality products which attracts more clients. They are also responsible for the receivables and payables of the company.

Organizational structure and organogram

The company is using a democratic leadership style, a strict hierarchy is not in its plans as all the employees can interact with each other including the CEO who also comes on the ground to give a hand. The CEO was put in the first level followed by the officers in the different departments such as finance, human resources, supply and chain, operations, sales, and marketing. This leadership style was made to enable everyone in the company to interact freely and give their

opinions to the company; by doing so, the employees feel a sense of inclusion in the company as their voices are heard and sometimes, they are applied in the company. The democratic leadership style was always seen in the weekly meetings held with the CEO, in the production field, the finance department where every employee was free to give any opinion so long as it was in line with the company's goals and objectives, this made the workers to become more idea generative, innovative and personal growth. Treehouse House always collects opinions from its employees at each level so that many ideas are generated and many innovative products and ways of protecting the environment are developed. This kind of leadership leads to increased production and company growth, promoting togetherness, as well as closing the communication gap.

Human resource recruitment process

By definition, human resource management is organizing, coordinating, and managing employees within the company (business) to accomplish the company's objectives, goals, mission, and vision. This is done by the human resource manager to forecast the amount of manpower needed for the company to accomplish its goals and objectives. At Treehouse company, the human resource department is responsible for this role, as the company is concerned about sustainability development, it recruits sometimes environmental activists, community members, and experts from the business field and the environmental field as well as interns whose theme is on sustainability and equality. 75% of these employees are women and the rest are men. The company goes through the following process to recruit new employees.

Objective setting

When the company has a target of revenue to achieve, it tends to increase the manpower so that there is an increase in the production rate of the products. Secondly based on the employee turnover, the company prepares for the replacement for that position. During spring and summer, there are a lot of interns and hence these are considered to be more productive, the company sets its targets to meet the needs of the interns it may require to accomplish its goals and objectives. Lastly, the human resource manager determines the manpower needed for each department and makes arrangements. In forecasting the demand and supply of manpower, the company critically analyses the skills, talent, and professionalism required in each department and compares it with the available potential candidates in the market, and then the decision is taken based on the result obtained and the labor supply. In most cases, the company goes for the external source of employee

candidates rather than the internal due to the limited number of employees and already specialized skills in their department.

Recruitment and selection process.

Advertising for the job vacancies: After determining the needs of the employees, the department that needs the replacement writes an application to the HR department for the additional employee. The department in need writes down the kind of worker they are interested in based on the skills, education, experience, and themes. After the HR manager writes an advert that includes the job type, the required skills, education level, the job specification, and the job description. This advert is advertised through its social media platforms for example Facebook, Twitter, and job websites such as Linked In. The printed copy is pinned on the company building for the people passing by the company.

Receiving the applications- the HR department receives the applications from the potential candidates both physically and online. These applications include the CV, the national identification Number, the SSN card, the certificates for the education levels, and any related certificate that can support the CV. Some candidates present these application forms physically to the office and those who apply online submit them online the department receives them for screening.

Screening and shortlisting – the third step in the recruiting and selection of employees, on receiving these applications (since the company always recruits in summer, it always receives around 120 candidates and it only needs 10 of them), these applications are screened by the human resource manager with the assistance of the manager of the department that requested for the replacement. Some of them are filtered online to get the best candidates for the next stage based on experience, environmental concerns, education, and skills. At this stage, it sieves only 50 employees for the next step.

Interviewing – after selecting the best candidates for the interview, they send messages to them and call and inform them of the date for the interview, the interview panel mostly consists of the CEO, the human resource manager, and the specific department that requested the worker. In this interview, the candidates are asked about their experience through the STAR (situation, task, action, and result) method where they have to recall the scenarios and the tasks, actions, and the

result for their action, and in most cases, it focuses on the humanity and environment. In this stage around 15 candidates go for the next stage.

Background checking and taking decisions – the responsible party goes for the background check to see whether the candidate does not have a criminal record, whether the candidate does not use drugs, smoking, the perspective the community where the candidate resides has on him/her, and lastly health status. At this point, the HR department ended up with 10 employees as its target, the rest of the 5 candidates thought they would go through the interview, however, sometimes they find out that they smoke, use drugs and some are on criminal records hence against the company's policies thereby eliminating them.

Decision and job offer – after completing all the steps, the successful candidates are offered the job, the appointment letters with the necessary details such as job duties, the specifications, terms and conditions, the office of work, the salary, working hours, the fringe benefits and the starting date are written and sent to them. Two copies are printed, one sent to the successful candidate and one to the HR manager. Once the candidates accept the terms and conditions and the offer, the starting date is allocated and the notification is sent to them.

The compensation system

The company compensated its employees with digital cash and other fringe benefits, since the company believes that money notes are also hazardous to the environment, they pay their workers over digital platforms such as banks, Apple Pay, and PayPal mention but a few. They are being paid according to the minimum wage policy set in the USA. Each employee on average receives \$15 per hour and the worker paid most is paid \$20 per hour, hence the workers are paid according to their efforts and their positions. This payment comes with some fringe benefits that is to say they are being provided with lunch, cooling drinks, transport for the workers but not interns, and medical insurance.

The training and development initiatives

Today in the competitive world, training and developing your employees is one of the things the company should do for the effectiveness and efficiency of the workers for the company. Treehouse

involves training initiates starting from the recruits after receiving the offer, these new entrants are trained by the already employed and skilled workers to get used to the working environment and get familiar with the equipment of the company. The company organized and participated in the workshop concerning environmental sustainability, that is to say during my internship program we were taken for the environmental training program which was organized by the climate reality project at Javas NYC USA, this provided us with knowledge on how we can conserve the environment by getting rid of the staffs and turn them into reusable products. Such programs and workshops boost employee morale and growth in their goals.

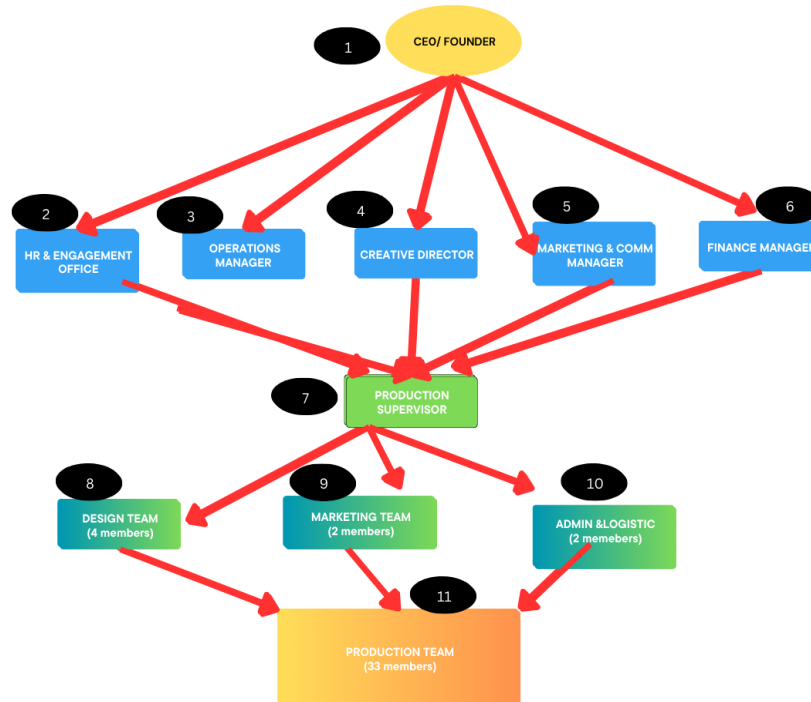
Performance appraisal system

The company every month carries out performance appraisal, since it follows the democratic leadership style, it uses the 360-degree performance appraisal approach to evaluate its workers. This is done by gathering information from the supervisor, coordinator, fellow workers and sometimes the client and the evaluation is made depending on various factors. This appraisal approach encourages togetherness and limits biases among the evaluators, it improves communication, encouraging professional growth among workers.

Figure 1

Organogram of Treehouse Brooklyn.

Organizational Chart



Mission

To craft and produce unique eco-friendly fashion pieces that inspire creativity, celebrate personal identity, and promote sustainable living.

Vision

To become a global leader sustainably, through promoting a culture of conscious consumption while minimizing our environmental impact.

Goals and objectives

Transition of 99% of upcycled materials in all product lines by 2027.

Supporting ethical production practices by ensuring all suppliers meet the labor standards by 2026.

Educate 500 communities and customers every year on the environmental impact of fashion through workshops and environmental campaigns.

Reducing waste production by 40% and integrating biodegradable materials into design by 2030.

Products provided

Treehouse Brooklyn is in the fashion industry and it offers a variety of products including environmental campaign services. The products include jewelry rings, nickels, earrings, socks, vintage clothes, and handbags. These products are in most cases modest with a timeless, feminine aesthetic that appeals to environmentally conscious customers. Some of these products have a history behind them, especially the rings. Vintage clothes and jewelry manufacturing and design respectively.

These products are made from wasted clothes and metals, these materials are obtained from waste collectors in NYC; to make it easier for the company to get the used and no longer wanted clothes, it deposited over 200 bins around NYC labeled with Treehouse Brooklyn waste cotton bin. This has made it easier to collect these materials from every neighborhood. Those bins are emptied by the truck every two days. They are then sorted and go through the manufacturing process where different designs, and styles are made and then they are put on display for sale at a low price. This low price is managed because of the low cost used to get the raw materials. With lean production, ten workers are assembled in the line each with a unique skill, and materials are distributed for the jewelry production. These products are well packaged in renewable packages and are put on display for sale.

Figure 2

Images of the products offered

Clothes

These clothes are made of second-hand clothes and most of them are vintage clothes which are made in different designs, and sizes. For example, sweaters, coats, handmade bags, and so on among others.



Jewelry

These are made from metal waste and the products are eco-friendly. These include rings, the earrings, neckless, the nose pins, and others



Other products

To enlarge its segments, it extended its product line to even herbal solutions such as natural body oil, and eyeglasses.



Financial performance analysis

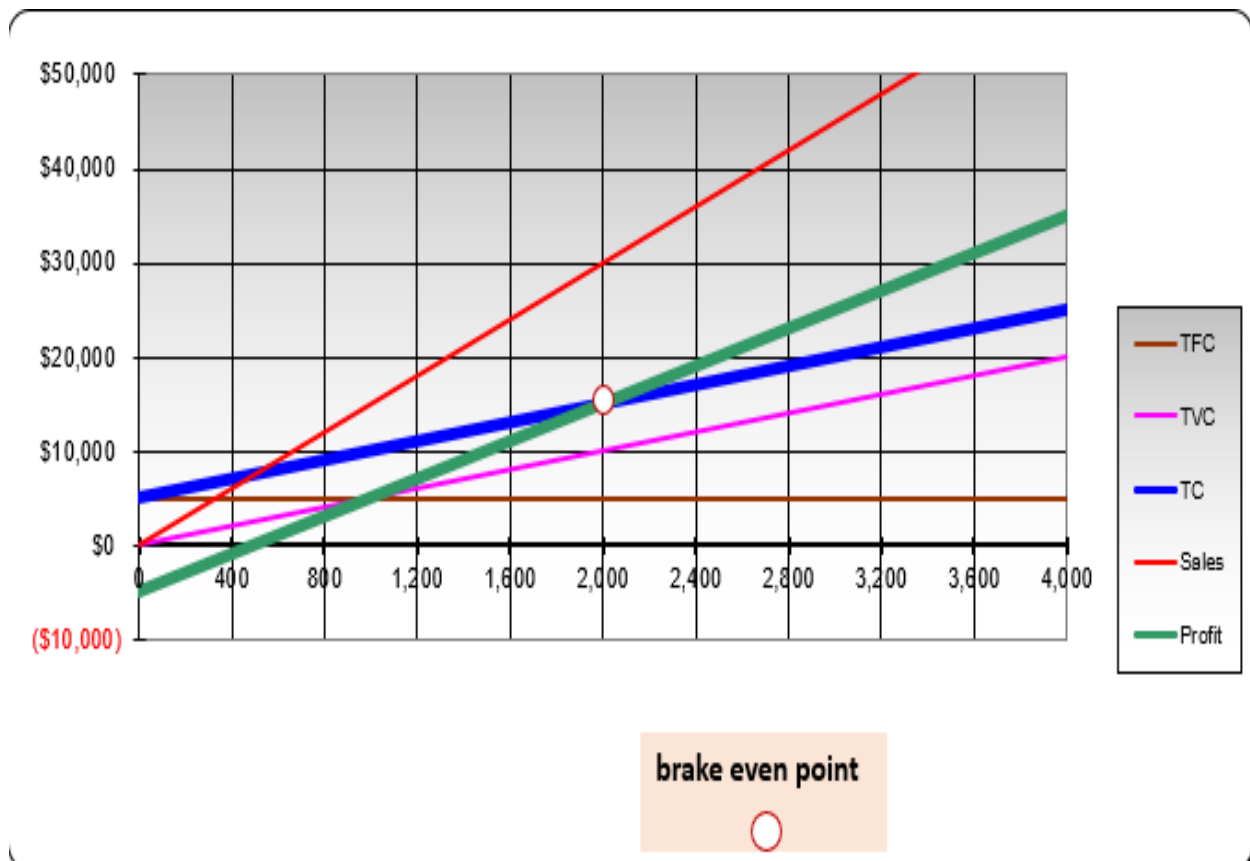
In this subtopic of the company overview, involves the financial performance analysis of the company while zooming in on different angles of its operations. Since its financial statements were restricted to the public and it is not on the listed companies, the major focus is on the non-complex financial analysis looking at its breakeven point, working capital management, and basic profit and loss of the company since it was known by the finance department workers, the working capital analysis, and the major source of capital.

Break-even point analysis

By definition, the break-even point (BEP) is defined as the point in the business where the total revenue is equal to total costs, that is to say, there is no loss nor profit for the company. In this subchapter, the break-even point is considered in the financial performance analysis of Treehouse company as it is included in the business. From the year 2006 when the company was founded, it was operating at a loss since it was a new business in the industry, the founder had to spend a lot on establishing the premises of the business, and registration among others. After five years the company started working under a no-profit nor-loss situation where it had to spread the sustainability program among the New Yorkers and this cost her a lot of costs but at the same time producing good results and the people were positive to her message. With time from 2012, the customers were retained, other new customers were also coming and the fixed costs were minimal hence the company started operating under profit.

Figure 3

Break-even point graph for Treehouse Brooklyn



Working capital management.

With this area for the company overview, I analyzed the working capital management for the company. However small Treehouse Brooklyn company has taken into consideration a lot of financial analyses including working capital management. By definition, WCM is the business process that helps the company make effective use of its current assets and optimize its cash flows. It ensures the long-term financial obligations and expenses can be met, as well as contributing towards the long-term objectives of the company hence maximizing operational efficiency. With Treehouse, analyzing its working capital, it intends to have enough cash available to cover both planned and unexpected costs and at the same time make the best use of the available fund resources to promote company growth. It is through managing the accounts payable and accounts receivable, cash, and inventory that I can achieve this objective. In this working capital

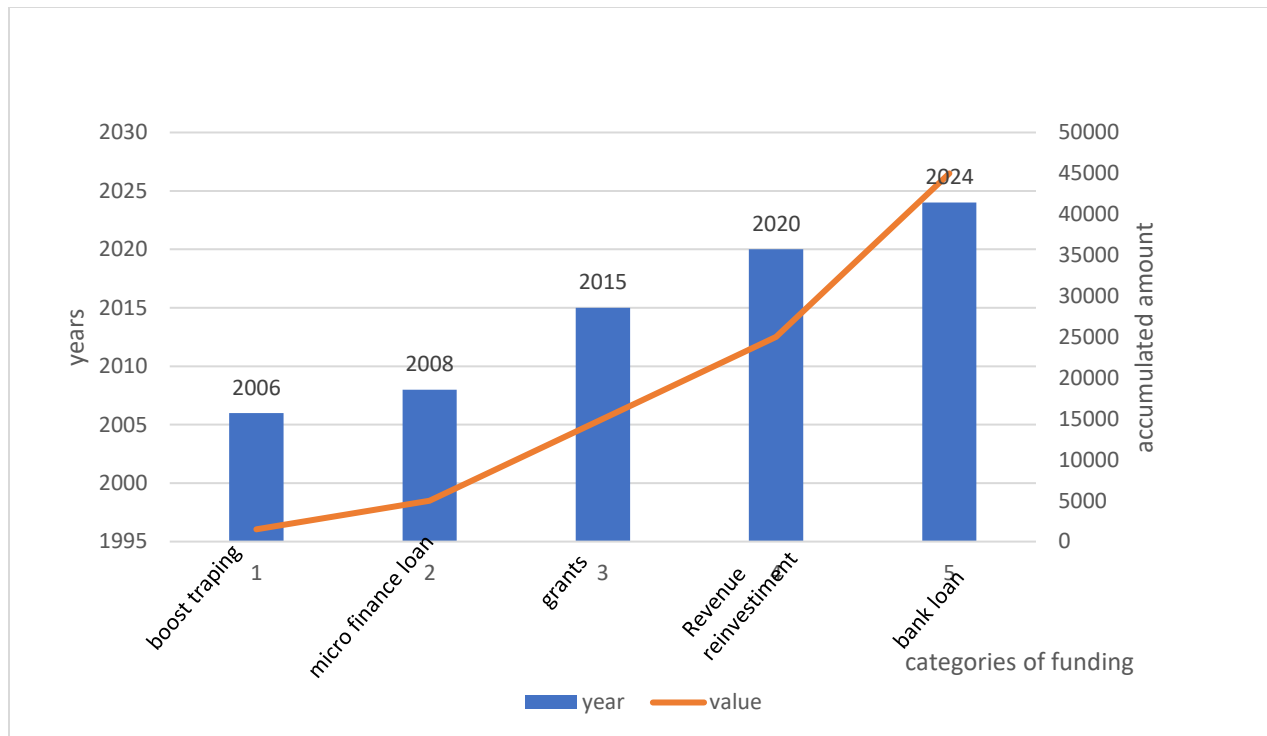
management, the company takes on average 20 days as the days payable outstanding (DPO) to pay its suppliers where it bought raw materials on credit in the accounts payable. The days inventory outstanding (DIO) for the company are 30 days, that is to say, it takes 30 days to sell all its products (inventory). It takes 15 days to collect the accounts receivables (day sales outstanding) (DSO) from its credit clients, especially those who buy in bulk at a discount. Its cash conversion cycle (CCC) is 15 days after deducting DPO from the sum of DIO and DSO.

Sources of capital

The company is more of promoting environmental sustainability, at the time of establishment, the business was funded using seed funding that is to say personal savings and funds from family and friends. As the business grew and touched many people, it started getting funded through grants and donations that is to say funds grants by the well-wishers, as the years went by, the company grew and reached the growth stage where it was most in need of funds which the donors could not provide hence it opted for the microfinance loan.

Figure 4

The company cycle funding graph from 2006 to date



Accounting practices

Compliance ongoing concern

The company complies with the ongoing concern whereby it recovers the value of its assets based on the value in the ongoing operations rather than liquidation value, and with its debt management, it records its liabilities with an assumption that the business will meet its obligations as they become due. Therefore, the ongoing concern principle ensures that the company records its assets and liabilities with the assumption of continued operation which directly influences its financial management strategies. With this, the principle also guides the company to adopt proactive measures such as diversifying the products offered and maintaining the emergency cash reserves to reduce the risk of either economic downfall or rising material costs. By respecting these practices, the company reinforces the ability to meet financial obligations and sustain their operations in the intensely competitive field as well as respecting the principles.

Methods of accounting

The company uses the cash-basis accounting principle, by definition, it is the method of accounting where transactions are recorded only when cash is exchanged. For Treehouse revenue is only recorded upon receiving the payment from the customers and expenses are only recorded when they are paid which gives transparency in the cash flow. With this method of accounting, the company can easily manage, reflect the real-time liquidity, and simplify the tax reporting when the income is received.

Accounting cycle

The accounting cycle by definition is the step by step of recording, classifying, and summarizing financial transactions to prepare financial statements. As per the rules of GAAP, Treehouse B under its finance department follows the accounting cycle, that is to say, they identify and analyze the transactions made by the business by recording all the transactions on sales and costs on materials. These records are recorded in the journal as they occur, which later are transferred into the ledger account such as a cash account, or bank account. From the ledger accounts, the trial balance is prepared to ensure debts and credits are well accurately recorded which is followed by error adjusting in the trial balance to make both sides balancing. From here financial statements are prepared starting with the income statement that shows total sales and expenses, then the balance sheet that shows the financial position of the company, and lastly cash flow statement that measures the strength and profitability of the company.

Depreciation methods

The company uses the straight-line depreciation method, by definition, it is the method of depreciation that allows equal distribution of depreciation expense each year in the useful life of the fixed asset. The company depreciates fixed assets such as trucks, cloth collection bins, furniture, and washing machines with a particular percentage for each according to the use and useful life of the asset.

Disclosure

Since the company is not listed among the public companies, it strictly limits access to financial information to the public as a way to not give the competitive companies their position. This information stays within the company and not everyone in the company has access to the final financial reports except the CEO and the finance director.

Operations management

Treehouse B in its early stages around 2006-2015 never had an operations system, but due to the high speed of technology and intense competition, the company adopted some technological operation systems for the effectiveness and efficiency of its operations which included the inventory management system, customer relationship management system, point of sale system and financial management system which explained further below.

Inventory management system, this system helps the company to monitor the orders, the deliveries, the order levels, and sales. With the help of this system, the company ensures the right amount of inventory available without under or over-stocking.

Customer relationship management system, any business customers are very important and the business has to be in a good relationship with them to retain them and attract new ones, however, some customers may have complaints that cannot be attended to in time. The customer relationship management system is put in place to resolve this issue, with this system, the company can easily interact with their clients, track sales, and provide their tests and preferences thereby matching customers' wants (design, size of the clothes) hence driving sales high and company growth.

Point of sale system, this helps the company to track sales, facilitate transactions at retail locations, track payments, and manage customer orders.

Financial management systems, include the payment systems such as PayPal, credit/debit card swipe machines, and the e-wallet system that is used by customers to pay for their products. It is also used in preparation of the financial statements, the budgeting as well as the receivable and payables.

Industry and competitive analysis

Industry Overview

Mentioning the name fashion industry, what comes to the minds of many people are stylish clothes, shoes, the jewelries, and neckless among others, yes it true because by definition according to Wikipedia, the fashion industry is the creation of clothing, footwear, accessories, cosmetics and

jewelry of the different cultural attractive and their mix match into the outfits that portray distinctive ways of dressing as the signifiers of the social status, self-expression, and group belonging. In other words, fashion is viewed as a form of storytelling through self-expression, using clothes, footwear, jewelry, and accessories. This industry was innovated in Paris, then Europe, and Italy, and in the 1860s became popular in New York in the United States of America with stores such as Bergdorf Goodman, Lord & Taylor, Tiffany & Co, and Macy. It is in New York that the world comes to discover what is in style, the arts, the food, the music, and fashion. Throughout history, New York is known for its ever-innovative entrepreneurs in fashion and design, and for almost a century, it was the nation's garment production capital. Today New York is still leading in the fashion industry with over 900 fashion companies, employing 180,000 people which is 6% of the NYC population workforce. These companies target the rich and the middle class, the youths as their target customers living in the cities and urban areas. Due to the ever-changing styles, status, economic factors, and intense competition, these businesses adopted different changing ways so as they can stay in the market share race. The high technological growth rate has just made these companies innovate beyond their capabilities to stay competitive and up-to-date. The most trending brands in NYC according to Boca Do Lobo's book are Marc Jacobs, Calvin Klein, Ralph Lauren, Coach, Oscar de Renta, and Gucci among others. Economically these companies in the industry have been affected especially during COVID-19 19 when people had less disposable income to have excess money to spend on fashion clothes and this led to a decline in growth as we will see in the graph.

The market size growth rate in the fashion and design industry has kept its flag relatively high and constant with a rate of between 2.1% and 2.9% according to Oberle.

There are major trends that have impacted the fashion and design industry, that is to say, previously the high technological change was considered as one of the major drivers of the industry where online marketing and e-commerce were put up upfront for the competing business so as they can capture more market share, however today global wide, stakeholders are more concerned about the changing climate due to the increased industrialization with less emphasis on sustainability henceforth, businesses which want to prosper has also put the sustainability factor on the table

where they operate in the eco-friendly fashion way and this has made customers concerned about the climate change to opt for such climate sustainability concerned fashion businesses. For the market segment, treehouse Brookly is targeting sustainable fashion customers. This sustainable fashion segment is growing at a fast pace since many fashion consumers are worried about tomorrow's rise in the global carbon footprint and a way of reducing and preventing it is to support businesses such as Treehouse Brooklyn which focuses on sustainability development.

Treehouse is competing with local fashion companies such as Reformation, People Tree, Amour Vert, H&M Conscious, and Levi's Ever Lane among others. It also competes with the national (online) companies that have recognized brands such as Gushi, Kelvin Ken, Versace, and CR7 companies which have a great influence on the market share of the market share in industry. Due to high capital investment in these bigger brands of over a billion dollars, these companies have exhibited their strength in producing quality and fashionable offerings such as bags, footwear, and clothes among others using the latest technology on a large scale, charging a premium price for them and this has made them control over 60% of the market share in the industry. Because of their reputation for their brand all over the world, this has attracted a large customer base as well as increased the extension of customer service.

Though these big brands have reputations, they have cared less about social concerns such as the working environment for the employees internally, the sustainability concerns, the competitive advantage of Treehouse is to focus on sustainable development as it works hard to contribute to the reduction of carbon footprint and it employees the societal people to be part of the fight hence bringing the people closer for the common good of the society and reduction of the global warming by recycling the used raw materials and using sustainable ways to reproduce them. The unique design has also put the company at the competitive edge as they use hands to model those designs and the latest technology to modify them thereby giving the customers the best out of their hands. It was founded in 2006 and as of now, it has a market share in NYC of 10% from 0.3% in 2007. The average market size of its competitors is 15%, hence it is not too far from the race.

Five porter's model

Industry competition, Treehouse Brooklyn faces intense competition with other companies in the same industry such as eco-chic, information, and other eco-friendly boutique stores. Not only compete with the local small companies but also with the big branded companies namely Gushi, Kelvin Ken, and other companies that focus on the customers who are eco-friendly conscious. To differentiate itself from the forever competition, it uses zero-waste practices and builds a strong customer relationship through storytelling on social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook. This has helped the company to curve itself from that competition and attract customers who feel attached to the stories and the brand.

Threat of new entrants, today it is easier than before to enter the market due to the high growth in the technology and digital world. Many designers have graduated but have not been employed, instead, they resort to entering the market and starting their businesses, this increase in the new entrants with different unique offers has greatly affected Treehouse Brooklyn. Due to the low barrier to entry and exit, these businesses even rescue their cost of operation through online business, hence their prices, out-competing the incumbents such as Treehouse which operates in the building. To challenge this threat Treehouse has continued to embrace online marketing and paying efforts to get the brand ambassadors and influencers.

Bargaining power of suppliers

Because the US is known for its low production of raw materials for fashion such as cotton, the material materials for jewelry making hence due to the limited supply of high-quality raw materials for treehouse leaves it with no bargaining power over the suppliers. The moment these suppliers raise prices, the company cannot negotiate with them hence increasing the production costs which leads to an increase in the product prices thereby lowering sales for the company. In addition, in

the past, the company used to collect these used clothes and materials for a very low cost and sometimes for free, but since many companies demand such materials, the owners have raised the prices of each bin hence increasing the cost for the company. To overcome this challenge, treehouse goes into long-term contracts and partnerships with the suppliers which may not affect the costs in case the price increases.

Bargaining power of buyers

Treehouse Brooklyn is a sustainable fashion business that sells eco-friendly handmade products to environmentally conscious customers. These customers have the highest bargaining power as they can easily switch to brands and different stores at even a low cost and sometimes switch to second-hand clothes since it also serves the same purpose. To curve around this threat, the company has continued building a strong relationship with its clients by providing high-quality eco-friendly products at a reasonable price and building loyalty programs through discounts during festive seasons, arranging parties for their clients and keeping them as a family thereby strengthening the bond among them and the business.

The threat of substitute products

As discussed above, some businesses offer second-hand fashion products such as renewed apparel the best thrift stores in Brooklyn among others. This business also focuses on eco-friendly environment-sensitive customers. These stores provide these second-hand products at even cheaper prices because of low-value addition and this results in sharing a small customer base as some non-loyal customers may substitute the company's products with second-hand products since they serve the same purpose. To tackle this threat, the company has continued placing itself in a unique position by providing high-quality quality uniquely designed fashion products in addition, it has established the category for only non-added value second-hand clothes which it sells at a low price thereby retaining the low-cost conservative customers.

Figure 5

TREEHOUSE SWOT ANALYSIS



Personal observation and recommendations for Treehouse

During my internship period, I realized that the company lacks funding as it has a limited source of finance. Because this company is working on a small scale and its success in spectacle, the company finds it hard to get the bank loan assistance needed for the company expansion and research. This made it only depend on personal funds, some little donors, and government incentives plus the little microfinance loan which comes with high interest rates.

My recommendation to Treehouse Brooklyn company is that the company has to sustain the benefits and impacts of recycling the waste into useful fashionable products, with this, this will attract donors, well-wishers, and investors to invest in the company. In addition, I would

recommend the company to go partnership with some companies so that they share the costs and technology as a way of expanding the market share and reducing the operation costs.

Chapter 3 The Project Part

Topic: **women in small business and their impact on the environment.**

Introduction

As per Brac University policy, any BBA/BBS student has to opt for either an internship or thesis, this gives the student the practical experience of what has been studied in class (theory). For the internship option, the student must do a 90-day internship and 30 days for report writing. The student has to find a replacement in the company to be considered. Luckily enough through the OSUN student mobility program, I got the opportunity to do my internship in the United States of America in New York at Treehouse Brooklyn Owned by a woman. Throughout my internship period, I noticed all the company activities and gained experience as I could put my theory into practice. Small businesses greatly impact the local economies, social change, and environmental sustainability. Today women have entered into entrepreneurship roles bringing innovation as well as prioritizing sustainability practices. In the USA women-led small businesses are growing at a first rate more than before. As these women come into the businesses with their unique approach, they adopt practices that encourage social engagement, sustainability, and ethical sourcing. This study focuses on Treehouse House fashion and lifestyle company led by a woman which was founded on the principles of sustainability and creativity. It produces handmade eco-friendly products in fashion with ethically sourced materials and environmentally friendly technology. The company not only focuses on alternative fast fashion but also promotes sustainable consumption, engagement, and supporting local artisans. During this period, my attention was attracted to how women have changed the business sector economically, socially, and environmentally. How they can be empowered and motivated to carry on with their business. With this in mind, I decided to do research and write a report on how a woman who was anciently known to be a house manager became a business influencer and impacted the global world economically, socially, and environmentally.

Literature review

In the past years, women were not considered in the business equation as they were known to be at home managing the household. However, with time women have joined businesses around the world specifically for small businesses. In recent years, this has attracted researcher's attention. The research indicates that women entrepreneurs approach businesses with unique priorities and values such as a strong emphasis on community well-being, social responsibility, and environmental sustainability. In this study, the literature review focuses on the three major cores of the study namely Economic contribution of women in small business, social transformation through gender empowerment, and Environmental sustainability in women-led enterprises. To understand the theoretical foundation for the contribution and challenges of Treehouse as a fashionable recyclable company led by a woman, each section emphasizes the most current research.

Economic contribution of women in small business

Through innovation, job creation, and local economic development, women have played a crucial role in driving this transformation. In the report of the National Women's Business Council (NWBC), the report states that businesses owned by women in the USA generate and contribute over \$ 1.8 trillion annually to the GDP of the USA and the number grows, minimizing their significant economic footprint. Small businesses particularly in the niche market such as leveraging creativity, and fashion create competitive advantages. (*nwbc_ar_2023_final-508.Pdf*, n.d.)

Despite their contribution to the economy of the USA, these women entrepreneurs often face the barrier of access to funding, that is to say, lack of capital for growth, mentorship as well as market opportunities. The studies by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) disclosed the persistence of \$1.7 trillion agenda finance globally which unequally affects women-led enterprises. To overcome these challenges is very critical if we are to unlock the full potential of women in small businesses. (*Closing the Gender Finance Gap Through the Use of Blended Finance*, n.d.)

Social transformation through Gender empowerment

These women-led small businesses go beyond the economic contribution to society and the country at large as they also foster gender equality and community empowerment. These women

entrepreneurs put traditional norms at a challenge as they are acting as role models and creating an inclusive working environment, by successfully running the business, they challenge the gender status perimeters and set an example for the young generation. The recognition of women's role in entrepreneurship has extensive implications for social change. The reports from the **UN Women** claim that women-led business usually reinvests more than 90% of their profits in their communities to support their community initiatives such as education, health care, and overall well-being and at the same time making a big impact with the aligned values, making the world the better place to live as well as closing the gender gap. (Sniukaite & Sutton, n.d.)

Figure 6



Nevertheless, societal expectations and prejudice continue to limit the recognition of women's leadership abilities and capabilities, limited access to capital, and cultural biases. A report by the World Economic Forum (WEF) shows that women-led businesses only receive a fraction of venture funding compared to businesses led by men (*Empowering Female Founders*, 2023), this report has also been supported by a report made on the funding gap for women entrepreneurs by Harvard Business Review that says women-only receives 2.3% of the global venture funding, despite of owning 38% of the small business in the USA. (Malmström et al. 2024). Promisingly organizations such as the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO) advocate for increased visibility and support for women entrepreneurs and boost gender equality in the business. (*Using Data to Support Women Business Owners* | NAWBO National, n.d.)

Environmental sustainability in women-led enterprises

Consolidation of environmental sustainability into the business models is a defining major characteristic of women-led enterprises (small businesses) specifically in industries such as fashion. McKinsey reports that the global fashion industry was responsible for 2.1 billion metric tons of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in 2018 of which 4% was of the global total. In this scenario, women-led entrepreneurs are addressing these challenges by adopting eco-friendly business practices which include recycling and upcycling as well as using sustainable raw materials in their production. (Berg et al., 2020).

Research and studies state that women entrepreneurs are more likely than their male peers to embrace sustainable practices motivated by a combination of environmental awareness and customer demand for ethical products. Research by McKinsey & company underlines that above 70% of customers want to buy products from sustainable brands and this makes the sustainability ambitious business experience long-term profitability and customer loyalty. (Doshi & Noble, 2023)

The International Finance Corporation (IFC) (Di Miceli & Donaggio) 2018 indicates that women business leaders are more willing to consider environmental and social impact in their decision-making processes driven by their intrinsic values. Their comprehensive view often links the community's wellbeing with environmental concerns. In addition, according to a report by Deloitte, 75% of all organizations have increased their sustainable investment through investing in cheap upcycling and recycling which in return brings about cost reduction in their operations over five years due to efficient resource utilization and they benefit from government grants as well as subsidies given to promote eco-friendly initiatives (*Overcoming the Hurdles to Integrating Sustainability into Business Strategy*, 2024)

Objectives of study

1. To examine the economic contribution of women-led small businesses for both local and global economies.
2. To examine the social contribution and impact of small women-led businesses in society and as a nation.

3. To explore and examine the environmental impacts of the small women-led businesses on the threatened environment.
4. To find out and analyze the challenges faced by the small businesses led by women entrepreneurs.
5. To suggest recommendations for the challenges faced by women-led small businesses.

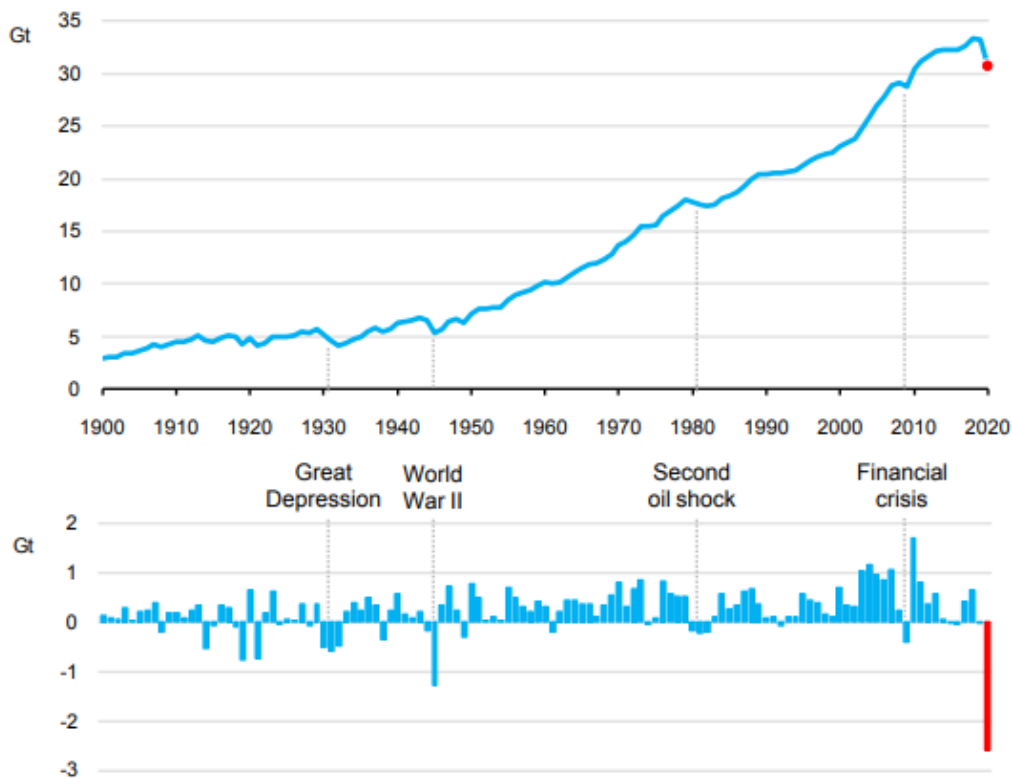
Significance of study

The scope of this study focuses on the exploration of the role of small businesses led by women in promoting environmental sustainability and social change in the fashion industry. Today there is an escalation of the global environmental challenges namely resource depletion, climate changes, and unceasing natural resource exploitation. It is very necessary to fully investigate the capabilities and potential of sustainable business models to diminish environmental harm. In this case, women-led enterprises such as Treehouse Brooklyn company extend a unique perspective through the integration of gender equality and sustainability. This study draws attention to how small businesses especially led by women can contribute not only to economic growth but also cultivate social responsibility and sustainable practices.

From a broader viewpoint, this study subscribes to the existing body of research on the crossing of gender, entrepreneurship, and environmental sustainability. It addresses the literature gap that exists in comprehending the specific role of women-led small businesses in environmental sustainability specifically in the fashion industry. Throughout time, much has been discussed about the negative impacts of industrialization on the environment, there is an abstract on how women entrepreneurs prevent these impacts with eco-friendly business practices. Industrialization has led to a rapidly increased carbon footprint, particularly in the fashion sector which is a notable contributor to environmental degradation. (*Global Energy Review 2020*, 2020)

Figure 7

Global energy-related CO2 emissions and annual change, 1900-2020



IEA 2020. All rights reserved.

Treehouse Brooklyn company, in contradiction, challenges this trend by embracing upcycling, using sustainable materials, and promoting ethical business practices. The major core of this study is its investigation of how Treehouse Brooklyn company, a small business owned by a woman, stabilizes its economic success and environmental stewardship. The research fills the critical gap by illustrating how small non-listed businesses can act as agents of change in the industries known for their environmental impacts. The findings of this research will benefit small business owners, industrial stakeholders, policymakers as well as consumers since it provides a model for integrating sustainability in business practices specifically in the fashion industry. Focusing on Treehouse Brooklyn, the research provides a practical perception for other small businesses mostly led by women on how they can implement the sustainability-driven models while at the same time achieving economic success. This study emphasizes the importance of acknowledging women's leadership in business and its connection to environmental management, offering a pathway for others to follow. Henceforth this research study demonstrates the evolutionary power of women's

leadership in achieving environmental sustainability and pushing forward gender equality within the business ecosystem.

Limitation of study

Time constraints, with the 19 weeks of my internship at Treehouse Brooklyn provided me with little time to fully analyze. This little time restricted me from capturing the long-term impacts of sustainability practices and business strategies. This is because over time the effects of implementing sustainability practices such as customer loyalty may become more prominent. Additionally, the market or regulatory changes could adjust the business landscape, colliding with the relevance of the findings when the study period already ended.

Bias in reporting, since I was working in Treehouse Brooklyn company and I made it my case study there is a possibility of a positive bias. Focusing on only one company as my case study made me focus on successful outcomes of the sustainability and demise of the failures of the company hence creating the absurdly idealized view of its sustainability efforts. This created some skew in the findings hence preventing a detailed understanding of the barriers and limitations faced by small women-led businesses in the sustainable fashion sector.

Other limitations included scarcity of relevant articles and periodicals and the data collection was constrained due to the limited number of respondents as some people never wanted to be interviewed and some never had time for the answers.

Methodology

To make this report very effective and meet its purpose, several methods were used to collect the data needed in the report. There were two major data collection methods used namely primary and secondary methods however even other methods such as observations and internship experience were also considered.

In the primary method, primary data was collected from the clients of the company, the CEO of the company, rivals of the company that is to say reformation company, the employees, the managers, and the people living around the company as a community. This data was obtained through both physical and online oral interviews and interactions. The questionnaire was also designed to get ideas and thoughts from my colleagues and random social media personalities and the questioner can be found in the reference section.

In the secondary data collection method, the data was obtained from the company's few available reports, trusted websites, articles, newspapers, journals, blogs, and past interviews made with the company.

Finding and analysis

Economic contribution

Whenever businesses are established in society, this contributes positively to the economy in various ways. These small women-led businesses have greatly impacted the economy of NYC as well as the USA at large, Treehouse Brooklyn as one of them has greatly impacted the local economy of the society and the state at large through job creation, support for the local supply chain, and industry innovation. Though small businesses like Treehouse Brooklyn do not disclose their financial statements, their economic impact is concluded based on their operational scale and positioning with the broader industrial trends with the following economic contributions.

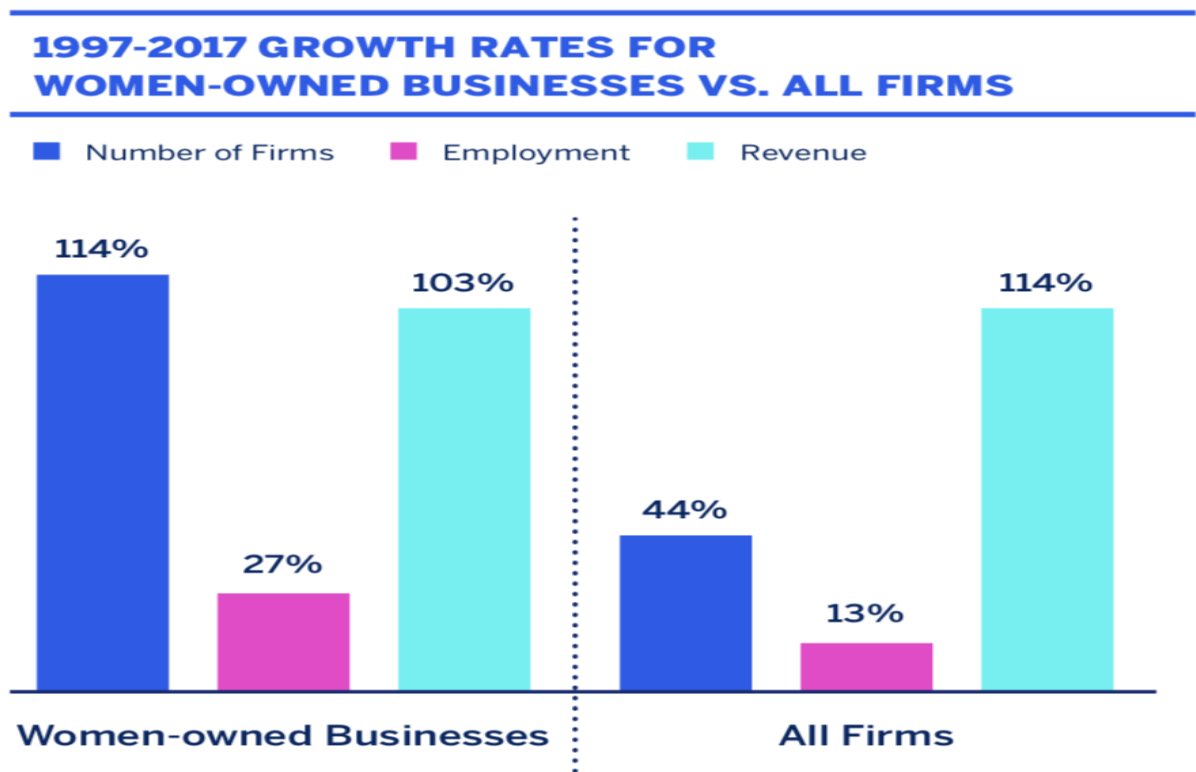
Providing employment

In the employment contribution, these small women-led businesses greatly provide employment opportunities to the community and the country at large that is to say, Treehouse has employed 45 workers, and 35 of them are centered on production skills hence converting their skills into valuable practice. As a woman-led business, Treehouse Brooklyn is practicing inclusive hiring where its employees 70% are women to emphasize female gender equality and empower women in the production process and management roles. In New York, in 2022 small businesses contributed to about 45% of NYC city employment growth as well as contributing to more than \$3.2 billion in the direct economic output of the city. Hence the majority of the small business owners in NYC are women thereby considering them to take the big portion as they focus on job creation and community empowerment. (*Mayor Adams Celebrates New All-Time High Total Jobs Record, announces \$85 Million Delivered to Small*, 2024). Almost 90% of the returns from these women-led small businesses are reinvested back in the communities that exceed the industrial average reinvesting only 30% of their return (World Bank, 2021)

Through hiring and providing jobs, Treehouse B company similar to other small businesses has contributed to the stability of the local economy and paying taxes for the community development

as well as orienting with the broader gender goals. These small businesses ensure income flow in the community and in the NYC economy as well through supporting and paying their workers. Following the state minimum wage policy, the average of \$97030 annually for the designers is \$46.65 hourly. Considering the 35 employees for the Treehouse Brooklyn company of which 32 of them are employed as designers, they are estimated to receive that amount in return for their work annually and hourly respectively hence using it back in the community for growth and improving the standards of living. (*Occupational Employment and Wages - May 2023*, n.d.)

Figure 8



Finding local supply chain engagement

The women-led small businesses have supported the local supply chain which boosts the trade and commerce in the community, city, and the country as a whole that is to say Treehouse Brooklyn company like any other small company engages with its suppliers and partners on eco-friendly and community-driven partnerships. Using the secondary data source, studies show that small businesses sourcing locally greatly benefit the business beyond the transactions. It strengthens economies, uplifts communities, and promotes environmental sustainability by reducing carbon monoxide from cars that travel long distances to collect supplies. Treehouse contributes to the job

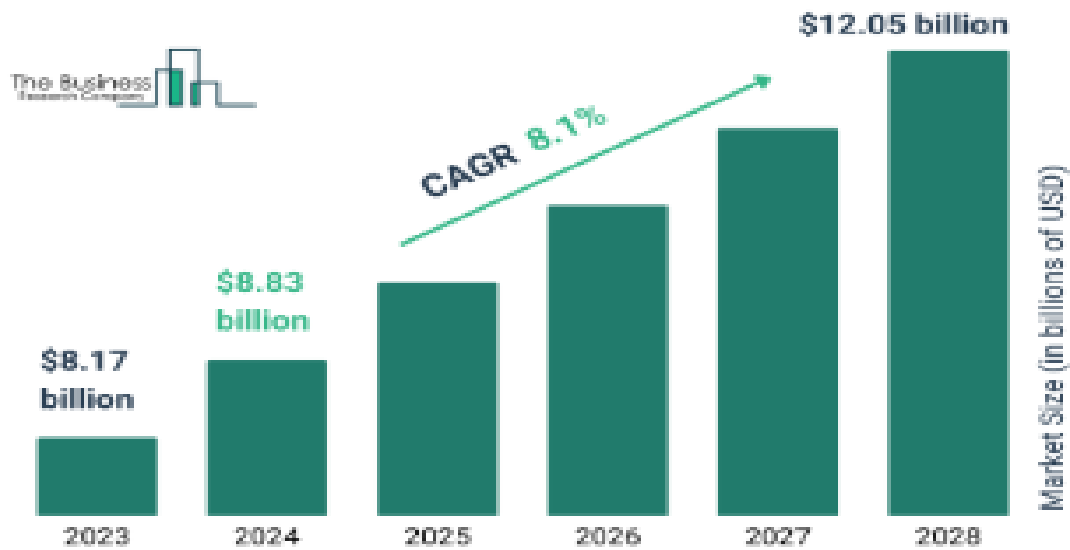
sustaining in the textile and fashion industry, artisan crafts, and logistics, and through emphasizing the green raw materials, the company centers itself as a driver of the sustainable supply chain innovation hence reducing reliance on international imports thereby magnifying NYC's creative economy. (Angel Harvest, 2024)

Market growth and industrial innovation

Research made by Business Research company states that the global ethical fashion market size reached a value of nearly \$6.4 billion in 2019 which increased the CAGR to 8.7% since 2015, and it is expected to keep its growth rate high, this is because of the awareness of the customers for using ethical sustainability for fashion of which small business such as Treehouse, reformation among others is practicing ethical fashion sustainability. Treehouse company's efforts in recycling and upcycling as well as eco-friendly designs play a part in this trend. The company operates as both an innovator and at the same time an influencer in sustainable fashion. This company's practices inspire and motivate large brands as well as fellow small businesses to acquire and embrace eco-conscious strategies creating a bubble effect, in the end, the company also benefits from the customer shift towards ethical consumption as the goal and securing the long-term feasible within the growing niche. (TBRC Business Research PVT LTD, 2020)

Ethical global fashion market size over time

Figure 9



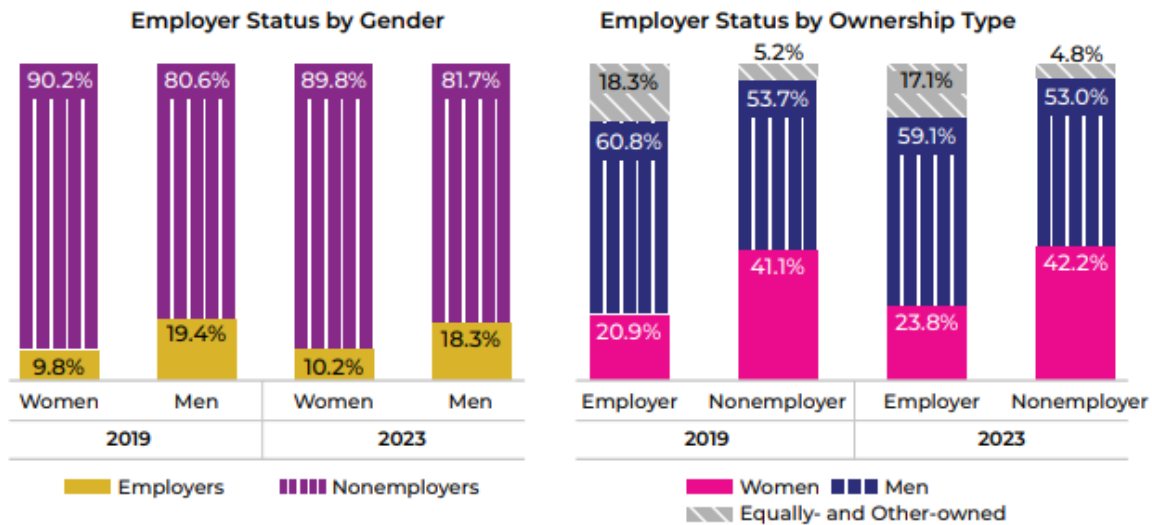
Social contribution

Gender equality

There has been an increase of 58% of the women-owned business since 2007, these businesses have greatly influenced and acted upon gender equality that is to say for example Treehouse company illustrates gender inclusivity by maintaining the workforce composed of 60% women in key positions encouraging gender equality. Using the secondary data, the national statistics show that women-led small businesses such as Treehouse in this case reduce the gender gap in pay which in the United States of America has reduced from 18% in 2017 to 14% in 2023 henceforth reflecting the efforts invested in providing equitable opportunities. In the analysis, the underscoring of women in the leadership roles at the organization has impacted a greater visibility of women in entrepreneurship. The research results reveal that companies with gender-diverse leaderships testify to an increase of 25% in their financial performance compared to those dominated by men. This incorporates the Treehouse Brooklyn company of promoting gender equality and professional growth. (Haileyesus, 2024)

Trends in the employer status by gender and ownership type

Figure 10



Community engagement and empowerment

Small enterprises such as Treehouse Brooklyn actively engage in community initiatives, supporting the neighboring recycling programs as well as providing them with sustainable fashion workshops. The reports indicate that such initiatives have supported over 200+ participants annually concentrating on youth and women's skill development and women. With the analysis, the workshops organized by the company of recycling and upcycling have created a ripple effect in the community. The analysis, revealed that 40% of these participants increased their understanding of sustainable practices hence enabling them to adopt eco-friendly methods and practices in their households and communities hence underlining the broader societal push for circular economies.

Leadership representation among women

With the CEO and the founder of Treehouse Brooklyn company being a woman, the company acts as a role model for women entrepreneurs, nationally, women-led small businesses constitute 42% of all small businesses, and yet their leadership role in the business remains as low as 30% in the industries such as the fashion industry hence the company challenges these disparities. In the analysis, the success of Treehouse Brooklyn company underlines the importance of recognizing women's contribution. The secondary data from UN women, states that women-led businesses are three times more likely to reinvest their returns in community development. The company's leadership acts as an example for others to follow hence causing societal change.

Environmental impact

Treehouse Brooklyn company, like any other sustainable small business, has been actively working on the reduction of its carbon footprint through sustainable approaches such as using locally sourced materials and upcycling. Research made by the European Union (EU) states that recycling and reusing textiles can reduce and minimize carbon emissions with an approximation of 1% of the clothing being recycled into the new fashion product. Through adopting these practices, small businesses like Treehouse Brooklyn reduce their carbon footprint compared to the traditional big fashion companies which are the major contributors of carbon emissions in the globe. Through the interview with the Treehouse CEO, it was found out that the company diverts roughly 50 tons of textile wastes annually from landfills, lakes, and river showers by upcycling materials. In the analysis, these practices not only reduce greenhouse gases but also promote the idea of the circular economy. The depletion in the transportation of the related emissions due to the sourcing of the local materials without sourcing them far away also lowers the carbon emission. This is the key area where small businesses can create a meaningful impact leading to sustainable practices in the broader industrial sector. (*Textiles Strategy - European Commission, 2024*)

Waste reduction through recycling

In the year 2027, the Global Fashion Agenda's pulse of fashion reported that 92 tons of waste was created in 2015 annually by the fashion industry and it is expected to grow to 62% between 2025 and 2030 reaching to total of 480 tons. These small sustainable businesses such as Treehouse Brooklyn company address this issue through their recycling programs. Through upcycling the disposed textiles, the company helps in alleviating wastes in the fashion industry while at the same time reducing the need for new raw materials henceforth contributing to a more sustainable production cycle. In the analysis, through reusing and repurposing these materials, these sustainable businesses help in the waste reduction in the landfills and any other associated environmental degradation caused by the production and disposal of these textile wastes. Recycling and upcycling limit the demand for the new raw materials for the company which are usually sourced through environmentally harmful stages which furthermore reduce the carbon footprint in the globe. (Roturier, 2024)

Consumer impact and awareness

Treehouse Brooklyn as a small company has taken the initiative of educating its customers and the community about sustainable consumption. In his research, Nielsen (2018) found out that 73% of consumers are willing to pay even more for eco-friendly sustainable products and services. The efforts made by the company to promote eco-conscious choices among its customers and the potential customers as well as the community members have led to a big shift in the purchasing behaviors of consumers encouraging them to opt for environmentally friendly products. A short survey was conducted by the company on the clients and the neighbors and it indicated that 60% of the respondents changed their buying behavior towards more sustainable products after being sensitized to the brand sustainability initiatives. In the analysis, this indicates that sensitizing the community not only reflects the growing awareness of the consumers and the community about the environmental impacts of their purchases but also highlights how these small businesses can drive social change by promoting sustainability. Treehouse company's commitment to sustainability and environmental education holds the potential to inspire a broader consumer movement towards ethical fashion choices hence creating a chain reaction that later contributes to environmental sustainability. (Abinisha's & Abinisha's, 2018)

Challenges faced by the company

Access to capital funding for expansion

Small businesses such as the company in the case study (Treehouse Brooklyn) start with the aim of growing with time and this requires relative support from the concerned parties where capital is needed to boost the production and operations of these small businesses. However, this is not the case for women-led businesses as most of them lack access to funding and capital compared to the small businesses led by men as they struggle to secure growth funding. This is also evidenced in the report by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) which stated that 70% of women-led small businesses and enterprises (SMEs) specifically in the growing economies lack access to sufficient funding for their growth creating a funding gap of approximately \$1.7 trillion globally. (International Finance Corporation, 2022). In this manner, factors such as gender bias, collateral securities, as well as limited financial literacy have made these women miss out on the fat funding

opportunities. These small businesses mostly miss out the investment opportunities by the investors due to their gender as most investors prefer to invest in businesses led by men. With these challenges, Treehouse Brooklyn company like any other women-led business encountered the challenge of securing capital for the expansion and implementing some advanced technologies that can boost the production and operation speed (*Closing the Funding Gap for Women Entrepreneurs*, n.d.)

Balancing business and family responsibilities

Traditionally (historically) women are known as household managers as they take care of the children and everything at home and men do the hard work to earn a living for the family. Due to the economic constraints today, it is really hard for a man to support the family alone and women have found themselves coming out to support their families financially. They do business outside the home along with taking care of the home (household manager), this puts them in the double pivot as they have to cater for the family responsibilities as well as the business. The women entrepreneurs specifically have faced this challenge since they go first and they leave late from the businesses since they are the owner hence putting a dual burden in managing the family and running the business. Using the secondary data, a 2020 McKinsey report stated that over 50% of women entrepreneurs reported experiencing their worst in balancing their work and the family (McKinsey & Company, 2022), this is because of the societal expectation for the woman to prioritize caregiving above everything and this in most cases limit them from focusing on the business growth and family conflicts. Women business owners such as Treehouse Brooklyn encounter this challenge as they are unable to dedicate reasonable time for strategic business planning as they tend to play around with two balls in one hand. (*Women in the Workplace 2021: The State of Women Hangs in the Balance*, n.d.)

Gender Bias and societal perception

Gender Bias has been and still is a great challenge to women entrepreneurs, as history states that women were molded softly in everything including mental stability, physical appearance, weak, this still exists in the societal members as they consider women to be inferior and powerless and they are dedicated to take care of the family but not business. This is evidenced in the women business leaders who face skepticism from society and the investors who consider these women to lack capabilities and responsibilities, limiting them from securing investments and partnerships. According to the World Economic Forum, women entrepreneurs are reportedly considered to be unserious by male stakeholders such as partners and shareholders. For the case study, Treehouse Brooklyn company, since it is led by a woman, faces some societal perception despite the contribution it has made to society and demonstrating the innovations that are beneficial to society, they still question their leadership skills. This puts these women in a position where they have to work even harder to prove their credibility. (*Why We Need to Invest in More Female Climate Entrepreneurs*, 2021)

Competition from large corporations

As the world is getting concerned about the future, sustainability issues are on the rise due to the increased industrialization and high technology that simplifies the production and the operational processes, the other round impacts the environment negatively. These large companies and corporations have also adopted sustainability practices that is to say still producing in large quantities due to the access to advanced technology but at the same time practicing sustainability roles. In this case, small businesses face unbreakable competition with already established companies as their leverage (competitive advantage) of sustainability is being adopted by these large corporations. Large companies due to their massive production, leverage on the economies of scale making their products wildly available and affordable. A report made by Statista 2022 found out that 80% of the small businesses in the USA consider competition from the major brands as their major barrier to growth. For Example, fast fashion Giants namely H&M and Zara a big company have introduced what it named conscious collection to appeal to eco-friendly conscious customers. Despite the affirmation of greenwashing, their extensive resources allow them to offer these products at low affordable prices backed by widespread marketing campaigns and small

businesses such as Treehouse Brooklyn, Reformation among others which genuinely adopt sustainability and face hardships in competing on prices and brand visibility.

Summary and conclusion

In summary, the creation and establishment of small businesses have greatly impacted and contributed to the economy, the social influence, and the environment. Women-led small businesses have played a key role in the economy particularly focusing on Treehouse Brooklyn company which is a sustainable fashion business. Economically it has contributed to job creation, the local and national GDP as well as promoting the standard of living among the Bronx People. Socially, it has promoted gender equality and equity through empowering women and promoting community engagement. Through its recycling and upcycling of textile wastes, it has reduced the carbon footprint around the globe. Despite the contributions these small women-led businesses made to the environment, they face unceasing challenges most of which are external such as limited access to financial resources, gender bias and societal perception, and huge competition from large corporations which also imitate ethical sustainable practices. However, besides all those challenges, these small businesses are still holding the financial lives of many people in the USA and the world at large and they are still proceeding with their theme of sustainability as a way of combating and reducing the greenhouse effect and the carbon footprint caused by the increased industrialization and unfavorable environmental technology that is destroying the globe.

Recommendations

Finalizing the analysis of small women-led businesses for both the contribution and the challenges, recommendations have been drawn to combat certain challenges and enhance women's efforts towards the green world in business.

1. Gender-specific loan products.

Limited access to funding and capital has remained one of the key barriers for small businesses specifically led by women such as Treehouse Brooklyn, hindering their growth and expansion in the operation and innovation. To address this concern, financial institutions such as banks, not banking institutions, and central banks should design gender-specific loan products with favorable terms such as extended loan payment, and low interest rates to accommodate this unique challenge that women entrepreneurs face. The governments should also establish grants and incentives to encourage private investors to

invest and support these sustainable businesses to reduce the perceived risk of lending. Furthermore, encouraging partnerships with the impact investors and crowdfunding programs can provide an alternative source of funding hence ensuring these small businesses have the financial resources and capability to scale sustainability. Case in point, the Small Business Administration (SBA) in the US could collaborate with eco-conscious venture capitalists to prioritize funding for green women-led enterprises. This recommendation, not only empowers these businesses financially but also reinforces their broader social and environmental contribution.

2. Investment in women-led small businesses by the investors.

The report recommends that investing in women-led small businesses like that of Treehouse Brooklyn company gives the promising opportunity for both financial and social returns. This is because these businesses express their resilience, innovation, and strong commitment towards sustainability hence making them very attractive to the investors seeking to position their profits with environmental purpose. Investors should prioritize investing in eco-friendly initiatives including the use of sustainable raw materials which range with the consumer's demand for ethical products. In addition, investors should provide mentorship and resources to support long-term sustainable growth, ensuring businesses continue to generate economic, social, and environmental value while achieving competitive returns.

3. Sustainable advanced technology adoption

These women-led small businesses for instance Treehouse Brooklyn Company are recommended to adopt the advanced technology to promote sustainable growth. Implementing such technologies namely AI-driven inventory management systems, blockchain for transparent supply chains as well as energy-efficient equipment can notably reduce waste and optimize resource use. For Example, 3D printing can minimize fabric waste in the fashion industry and digital tools can streamline the production process reducing the carbon footprint. This means that Treehouse Brooklyn should not only depend on the hands to craft their products but also it can use eco-friendly advanced technology to

increase its production thereby enlarging their economies of scale to be in the line of the big corporations to establish balanced competition in the market. In addition, these small businesses can use renewable energy solutions such as solar panels which not only cut the operational costs to reduce the product prices but are also friendly to the ecosystem. Through prioritizing these advanced technologies, these small businesses can align their operations with eco-friendly practices hence attracting conscious customers as well as staying competitive in the rapidly evolving market.

4. Increase the market visibility and sensitization of their customers

In this competitive evolving market with rapid growth in technology, depending on physical selling is not enough, these small businesses are recommended to increase their market visibility and online marketing and selling to expand their reach and intensify their impact. Using and utilizing social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter mention but allows these businesses to showcase their eco-friendly products to a wide geographic area rather than concentrating on the small community hence extending the global audience, and increasing customer engagement and brand awareness. Utilizing these platforms, small businesses that focus on sustainability are suggested to collaborate with social media influencers in the sustainability and fashion area to extend their exposure. To easily be visible and approachable online, these businesses are suggested to invest in search engine optimizer (SEO) as well as paid online advertisement as this will improve the visibility on search engines such as Google, thereby attracting more traffic to the website of the company. E-commerce platforms such as Etsy, and Shopify where Treehouse company already exists also increase sales through offering a convenient and direct way for customers to purchase sustainable products online. All these recommended efforts on marketing visibility and selling both improve revenue streams and strengthen the company's commitment to environmental sustainability by reaching an audience that considers and values conscious consumption.

References

- Abdelmeguid, A., Tsironis, G., Afy-Shararah, M., Tsagarakis, K. P., & Salonitis, K. (2024). Insights into sustainability and circular economy trends in luxury fashion: A LinkedIn topic modeling study. *Cleaner and Responsible Consumption*, 15(100228), 100228. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clrc.2024.100228>
- Adams, C., Alldredge, K., Highman, L., Kohli, S., Coggins, B., & Teichner, W. (2023, July 21). *An update on US consumer sentiment: Consumer optimism rebounds—but for how long?* Mckinsey.com; McKinsey & Company. <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/consumer-packaged-goods/our-insights/the-state-of-the-us-consumer>
- Al-Saleh, H. (2023, December 28). *Empowering female founders: How we can narrow the gender gap in venture capital*. World Economic Forum. <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2023/12/how-we-can-close-the-venture-capital-gender-gap/>
- Am, J. B., Doshi, V., Noble, S., & Malik, A. (2023, February 6). *Consumers care about sustainability—and back it up with their wallets*. Mckinsey.com; McKinsey & Company. <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/consumer-packaged-goods/our-insights/consumers-care-about-sustainability-and-back-it-up-with-their-wallets>
- Berg, A., Granskog, A., Lee, L., & Magnus, K.-H. (2020, August 26). *Fashion on climate*. Mckinsey.com; McKinsey & Company. <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/fashion-on-climate>
- Buttle, R. (2023, October 30). *The economic impact of women-owned businesses*. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/rhettbuttle/2023/10/30/the-economic-impact-of-women-owned-businesses/>
- Closing the Funding Gap for Women Entrepreneurs*. (n.d.). Closing the Funding Gap for Women Entrepreneurs. Retrieved December 6, 2024, from <https://fundinggapforwomenentrepreneurs.live.ft.com/>
- Davis, N. (2020, April 7). Fast fashion speeding toward environmental disaster, report warns. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2020/apr/07/fast-fashion-speeding-toward-environmental-disaster-report-warns>

Family and Consumer Sciences. (n.d.). Nysed.gov. Retrieved December 6, 2024, from <https://www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/programs/career-technical-education/the-fashion-industry.pdf>

Fashion and the circular economy. (n.d.). Ellenmacarthurfoundation.org. Retrieved December 6, 2024, from <https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/fashion-and-the-circular-economy-deep-dive>

Fashion Industry - International Business. (n.d.). Nyc.gov. Retrieved December 6, 2024, from <https://www.nyc.gov/site/internationalbusiness/industries/fashion-industry.page>

How to build a circular economy. (n.d.). Ellenmacarthurfoundation.org. Retrieved December 6, 2024, from <https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/>

IFC. (n.d.). Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative. Retrieved December 6, 2024, from <https://we-fi.org/implementing-partners/ifc/>

Krivkovich, A., Field, E., Yee, L., McConnell, M., & Smith, H. (2024, September 17). *Women in the Workplace 2024: The 10th-anniversary report*. Mckinsey.com; McKinsey & Company. <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/women-in-the-workplace#/>

Malmström, M., Burkhard, B., Sirén, C., Shepherd, D., & Wincent, J. (2024, April 12). Research: How to close the gender gap in Startup financing. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2024/04/research-how-to-close-the-gender-gap-in-startup-financing>

McFall-Johnsen, M. (2019, October 17). *The fashion industry emits more carbon than international flights and maritime shipping combined. Here are the biggest ways it impacts the planet*. Business Insider Nederland. <https://www.businessinsider.nl/fast-fashion-environmental-impact-pollution-emissions-waste-water-2019-10?international=true&r=US>

November, 26. (n.d.). *COP29 decisions deliver gains for gender equality in climate action, but more remains to be done*. UN Women – Headquarters. Retrieved December 6, 2024, from <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/news/2024/11/cop29-decisions-deliver-gains-for-gender-equality-in-climate-action-but-more-remains-to-be-done>

Rafi, T. (2021, September 27). *Why we need to invest in more female climate entrepreneurs*. World Economic Forum. <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2021/09/why-invest-female-climate-entrepreneurs/>

Rauturier, S. (2024a, January 7). *The 59 most sustainable clothing brands from the USA*. Good On You. <https://goodonyou.eco/most-ethical-and-sustainable-clothing-brands-from-us/>

Reynolds, K. (2017, September 14). *Women in business: advantages, challenges, and opportunities*. Hult International Business School. <https://www.hult.edu/blog/women-in-business-advantages-challenges-and-opportunities/>

Taylor, H. (2023, March 8). *International Women's Day 2023: New UN research unravels challenges faced by women in an increasingly digital world*. Hive Life Magazine; Hive Life. <https://hivelife.com/women-challenges-2023/>

TBRC Business Research PVT LTD. (2020, October 28). *Sustainable fashion market analysis shows the market progress in attempt to decrease pollution in the global ethicalfashion market 2020*. TBRC Business Research PVT LTD. <https://www.globenewswire.com/news-release/2020/10/28/2116073/0/en/Sustainable-Fashion-Market-Analysis-Shows-The-Market-Progress-In-Attempt-To-Decrease-Pollution-In-The-Global-Ethicalfashion-Market-2020.html>

Textiles strategy. (n.d.). Environment. Retrieved December 6, 2024, from https://environment.ec.europa.eu/strategy/textiles-strategy_en

The power of local sourcing: Why supporting small businesses matters. (2024, November 15). Angel Harvest. <https://angelharvest.org/community-procurement/local-sourcing-small-businesses/>

The Sustainability Report. (n.d.). Thereformation.com. Retrieved December 6, 2024, from <https://www.thereformation.com/sustainability>

Women in the Workplace 2021: The state of women hangs in the balance. (n.d.). Mckinsey.com. Retrieved December 6, 2024, from <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/mckinsey-live/webinars/women-in-the-workplace-2021-the-state-of-women-hangs-in-the-balance>

(N.d.-f). Nwbc.gov. Retrieved December 6, 2024, from https://www.nwbc.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/NWBC_AR_2023_FINAL-508.pdf

(N.d.-g). Ifc.org. Retrieved December 6, 2024, from <https://www.ifc.org/content/dam/ifc/doc/2023-delta/closing-the-gender-finance-gap-through-blended-finance.pdf>

(N.d.-j). Nawbo.org. Retrieved December 6, 2024, from <https://nawbo.org/blog/challenging-gender-roles-empowering-female-business-owners>

Stone, S. J. (2023b, September 19). *Cotton's Role in Reducing Apparel Industry Carbon Emissions: Key strategies towards reaching net zero in the cotton industry*. CottonToday. https://cottontoday.cottoninc.com/cottons-role-in-reducing-apparel-industry-carbon-emissions-key-strategies-towards-reaching-net-zero-in-the-cotton-industry/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=20189590771&utm_content=152476317314&utm_term=sustainability%20fashion&utm_content=659617695969&gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAiA9bq6BhAKEiwAH6bqoFX6Ql1_7VxvWZRbgihw5UOmOQUPrBr8_9LcHXV4FZ24BOrDtkYLSBoCRxAQAvD_BwE

Haileyesus, S. (2024, April 12). *Women in Business Statistics: 50 vital stats*. Small Business Trends. <https://smallbiztrends.com/women-in-business-statistics/>

Appendix

The Impact of Women Entrepreneurs in Small Businesses

This questionnaire seeks to explore the contributions of women entrepreneurs in small businesses, with a focus on their environmental and social impact. Specifically, it aims to gather insights into how women-led businesses, like Treehouse Brooklyn, are shaping sustainable practices, promoting green initiatives, and driving social change within their communities. The responses will contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges and successes faced by women entrepreneurs in the small business sector, and how their efforts impact both the environment and society at large.

1. What is your gender?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Male
☐ Female
☐ Prefer not to say

2. What is your age group?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Under 18
☐ 18–25
☐ 26–35
☐ 36–50
☐ Over 50

3. Are you aware of any small businesses in your community led by women?

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

4. If yes, what type of products or services do these businesses offer?

5. In your opinion, how do women-led small businesses contribute to the economic growth of the community?

6. How would you rate the impact of women-led businesses on promoting gender equality in your community?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Very high
☐ High
☐ Moderate
☐ Low
☐ No impact

7. Do you believe women-led businesses are making a positive environmental impact through sustainable practices (e.g., recycling, reducing waste)?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neutral
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree

8. What challenges do you think women-led small businesses face in your community?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Limited access to funding
☐ Lack of market visibility
☐ Gender discrimination
☐ Competition from larger businesses
☐ Other (please specify)

9. What initiatives or support do you think can help women-led small businesses thrive?

10. Would you recommend others support women-led small businesses in your area?

Mark only one oval.

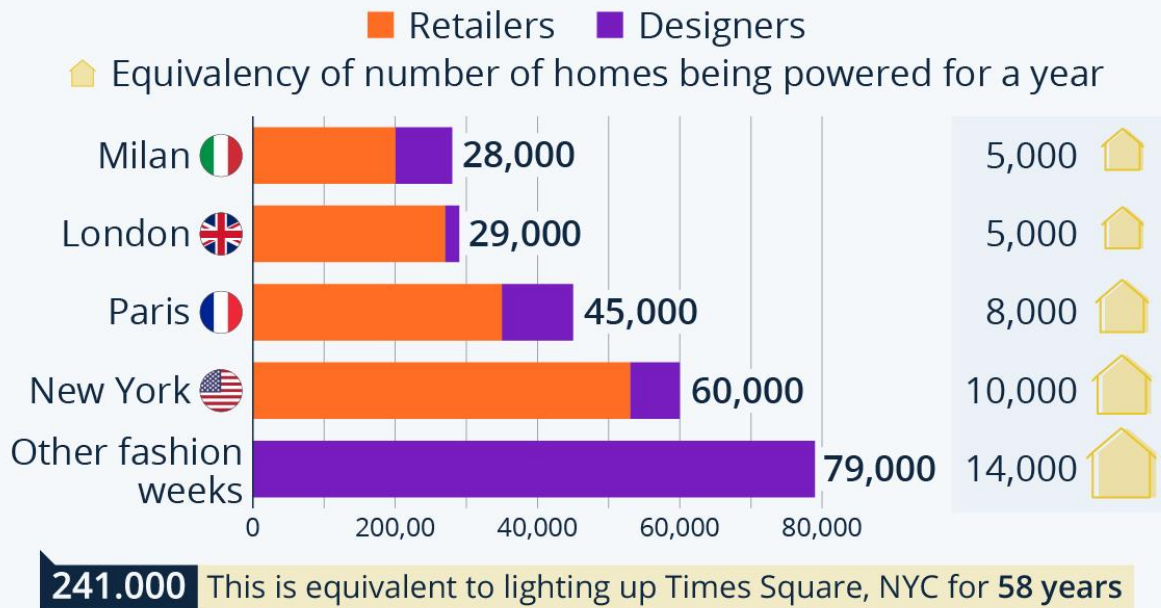
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.

Google Forms

The Hidden Carbon Footprint of the Fashion Industry

Carbon emissions from the travel associated with the ready-to-wear wholesale buying process (tCO₂e)*



* Includes travel to and from major fashion weeks by approx. 11,000 individual retail buyers and 5,096 designers over a 12-month period beginning Spring/Summer 2018.

Source: Zero to Market: Carbon Trust & ORDRE



statista

Synonyms

THB -Treehouse Brooklyn

NYC- New York

BBA- Bachelor of Business Administration

CEO – Chief Executive officer

VAT- Value-added tax

CV- curriculum vitae

SSN- Social Security Number

STAR- situation, task, action and results

BEP- Break Even Point

WCM- Working capital management

DPO- days of payment outstanding

DSO- Sales day outstanding

CCC- cash conversion cycle

GAAP- General Accepted Accounting principles

NWBC- National Women Business Council

IFC- International Finance Corporation

BLS- Bureau of Labor Statistics

SMEs- Small and Medium Enterprises

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

CIM- computer information management

CAGR- Compound Annual Growth Rate

PPC – pay per click