



Is Green the New Black; The Case For Organic Cotton Apparel

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THE PROBLEM

During the Summer of 2015, I worked as an intern at a local Fayetteville, Arkansas business called Good Things Boutique, a small shop which carried a wide range of organic cotton apparel from women's, men's, and children's wholesale brands.

Through my internship, I heard that these organic cotton garments are better for the consumer than typical items, but I quickly found through buying from wholesale manufacturers and interacting with customers that there was little information provided brands that the shop carries about the certification processes for these items and what kind of criteria goes in to certifying them organic. I wanted to develop a greater understanding of why organic cotton is better for the customers than non-organic cotton apparel.

THE PROJECT

I researched organic cotton apparel with regards to consumer health and wellness as well as a focus on the idea of sustainability throughout the cotton's life cycle. I drew examples of the phases of the life cycle of organic cotton apparel through my experience working at the boutique, as well as what I have learned in my apparel merchandising and product development degree program, with support from supplementary sources. I also studied why consumers are drawing toward organic and eco-friendly apparel. In addition to the research pertaining to organic cotton apparel.

THE GUIDE

I compiled my research into an informative guide to help employees and buyers at Good Things Eco-Boutique understand organic cotton apparel, in order to better communicate with customers about organic cotton and increase the shops profit.



SUSTAINABILITY

This project is deeply rooted in sustainability. When looking at the requirements from the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) for certified organic cotton, there are sustainable environmental and social practices that are being applied, such as the prohibition of GMOS, the prohibition of heavy metal chemicals, and that working conditions are safe and hygienic for the field and factory workers. This project also outlines the life-cycle assessment of organic cotton apparel from its concept stage to its waste management stage.

THE OUTCOME

Through this project, I was able to have a greater understanding of organic cotton apparel that I can directly apply to my work at Good Things Boutique. The organic cotton apparel guide will help new associates and buyers understand the benefits of organic cotton and will be able to communicate about it, as well as make smart choices when buying from wholesale manufacturers.

Through my work on this project I have bridged the gap between my field of apparel merchandising and product development and sustainability in a practical and hands-on way.