

Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

Member Information

<u>Name</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Major</u>
Haotian He	2018	MBA
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Advisor(s): Paul Forster, Senior Lecturer, Environment & Sustainability (HKUST)

Topic: Using home compostable and biodegradable packaging in the apparel industry

Division: Graduate

Audience: Board of Director of North Face

Sustainable Development Goal

SDG #12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Target #12.5: By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse.

Indicator #12.5.1: National recycling rate, tons of material recycled

Executive Summary

Only 9% of plastics are recycled globally, with the rest ending up in landfills and our oceans. Single-use plastic packaging is still widespread in the apparel industry, and alternative solutions have been hard to come by. Some companies have proposed reduced plastic packaging by changing how products are folded, but more dramatic action is needed to place the industry on a sustainable path. The reuse and recycling of plastic packaging, however, largely depends on customer behavior, which lie outside of the apparel brand's direct control. In order for a company to effectively help mitigate the global plastics crisis, maintain its leadership in sustainability, and influence other industry players, our team has developed the following recommendations: 1) introduce home-compostable packaging (e.g. Mater-Bi™) to replace plastic bags in apparel line; 2) implement social media sustainability awareness campaign via apparel purchases; 3) engage with like-minded companies for industry wide adoption of Sustainable Packaging Pledge to use only recycled or compostable packaging by 2025.

The potential impact of the measures provided would result in substituting up to 5 million single-use plastic bags per annum. In addition to that, the following benefits could also be realized: 1) 360 tons reduction in annual CO2 emissions; 2) 180 tons of plastic waste annually diverted from the landfill; 3) Up to 20%+ revenue growth from advertising campaign.