

A guide to responsible retail.

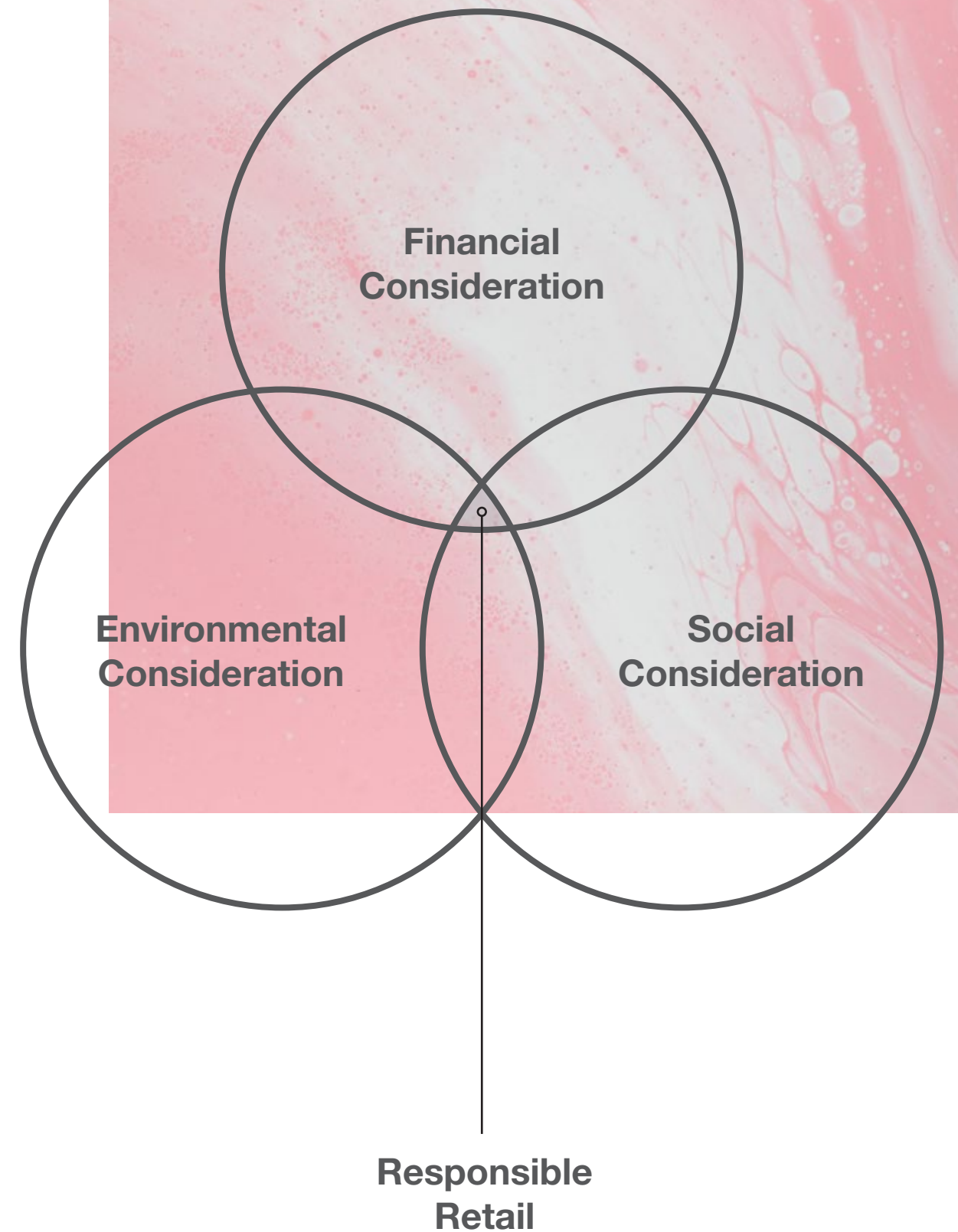
double

1. ■ What is responsible retail?

Looking forward in the retail industry, it's inevitable that sustainability will come into ever sharper focus, but what does this mean? How can we define what sustainability in retail really is?

By definition, retail is not sustainable. However, it can be responsible by factoring in its effects on people, our planet, and financial profit.

We may define responsible retail as anything that considers its social and environmental impact in balance with its financial impact - creating opportunity to sustain and regenerate across all three.



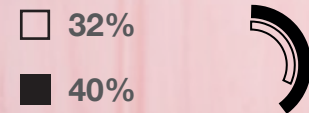
2.

Why should we be doing this?

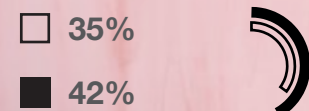
% of consumers willing to pay more for goods and services from socially responsible companies*

□ 2011 ■ 2014

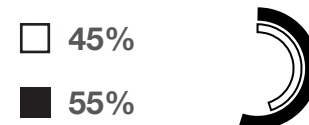
Europe



North America



Global



* based on a survey among 30,000 online consumers from 60 countries
Source: Nielsen

Following the definition of responsible retail (Theme 1), brands have the responsibility to lead by example and embrace circular design processes as part of their corporate practice.

Internal Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) might have been the main motivation to trigger a change within a business in the past, however, the demand for eco-friendly products and practices by the general consumer is now the undeniable change-maker. The Business of Fashion magazine states that “Gen Z’s don’t care if something costs \$5.99 or \$30.00; it’s the founder’s values that are paramount”. Deloitte revealed that “Consumers aged 25-35 are projected to spend 150 billion US dollars on sustainable goods by 2021”.

Customers are now far more willing to openly spend on eco-friendly products, or services, from companies behaving ethically and taking steps to lower their environmental impact.

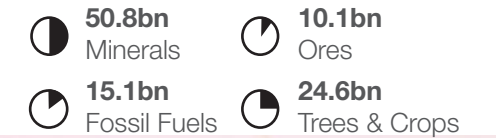
For a sustainable future, brands need to be looking beyond profit alone when considering their stakeholders. Responsibility needs to be a consistent thread throughout the business operation, affecting change beyond the product line up to areas such as supply chains, energy use and physical retail.

At Double, we ensure that our sustainable design principles are applied throughout the retail design process. By giving people, planet and profit the same weight in each project’s creative strategy, we set appropriate sustainability targets from the very beginning, whilst challenging our clients and ourselves about the future impact of our work.

We often ask - “How is this space beneficial beyond simply making a profit?”, knowing it is no longer sufficient to simply underwrite the value of a seasonal cap-ex.

The retail industry has a responsibility to measure its actions and reduce it’s negative impact for the good of the environment.

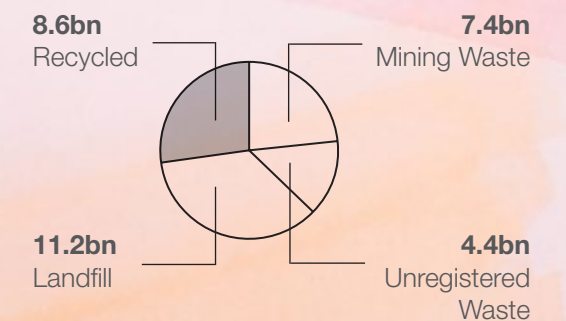
The world consumes 100.6bn tonnes of materials per year ...



Most of which is wasted...



And overall, just 8.6% is recycled...



Source: The Guardian

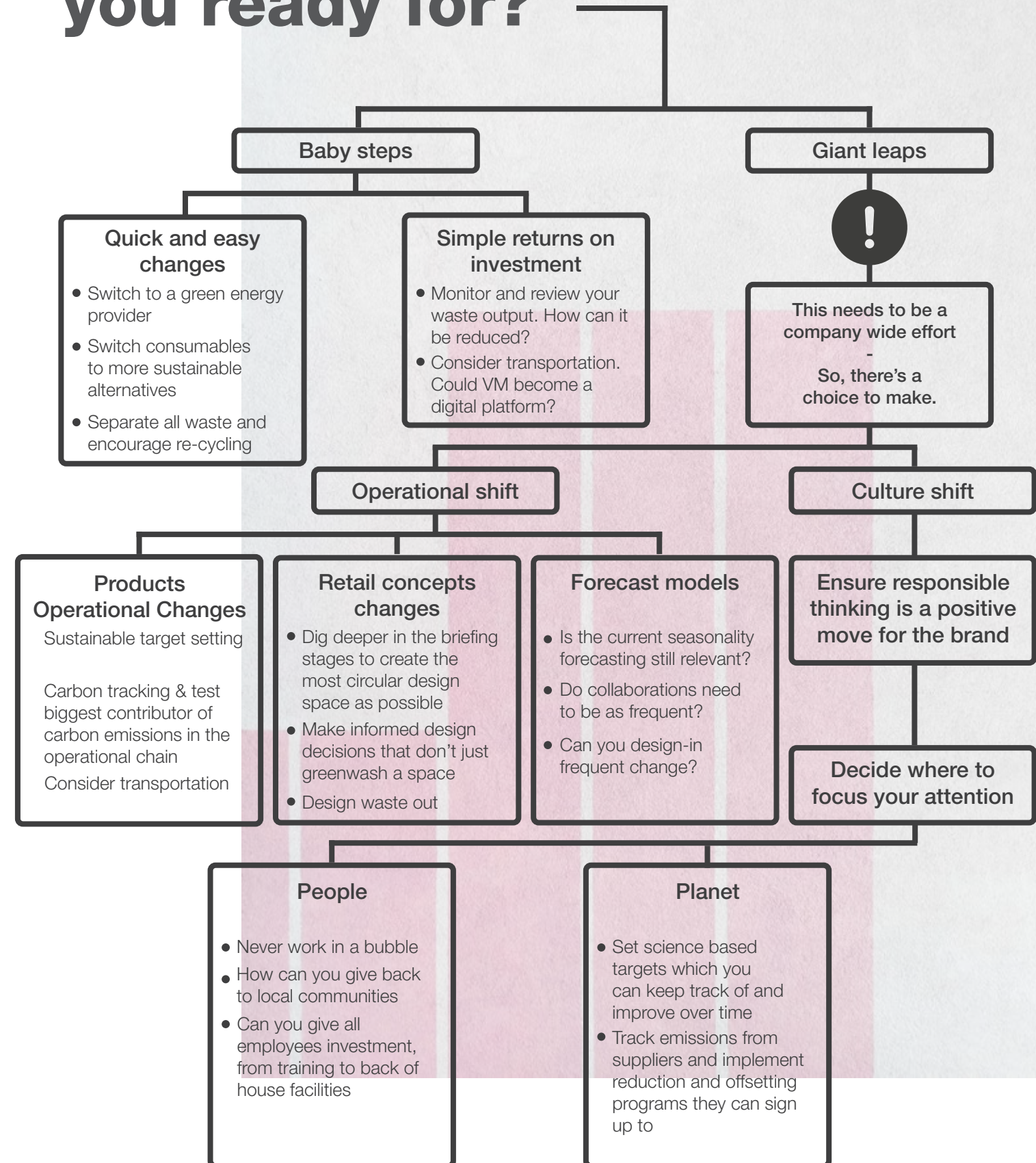
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How do you begin?

As well as a sustainable creative strategy for design, responsible retail can go beyond physical spaces and touch every corner of a business' operations.

Change can become part of a company wide strategy that everyone can be a part of.

How much change are you ready for?



4. How can we track progress?

Sometimes it's difficult to know if what you're doing is working. It's important to remember that what's needed is not just a handful of companies practising responsible retail perfectly, but millions of companies doing it imperfectly. Taking action somewhere within the retail lifecycle is progress, and tracking it is the only way to improve it over time.



1. Raw material extraction, Transport.

Measure your materials' embodied carbon (what is the impact of producing these materials?)

Measure the transportation of materials (how far do they travel before being processed?)

2. Manufacturing & Construction.

Audit manufacturers (does this cover workers' rights and environmental impact?)

Optimise production and construction (reduce processes and reduce waste to help reduce costs)

Measure how far products travel from factory to shop (can this be minimised?)

3. Training, operation, energy use, social impact, waste

Monitor your stores' energy, water and waste (tracking can help set reduction targets)

Are staff facilities considered? (Does everyone have the ability to influence change?)

What is the positive impact to the local community? (Can you adapt the space beyond selling products?)

4. Refurbishment, repair, replacement, maintenance

Can everything in your physical fit-out be refurbished or repaired before it gets replaced?

Has maintenance been designed in from the start?

What can be done to prolong the lifespan of the space?

5. Donation, deconstruction, processing, disposal.

Can items be donated to others?

Are materials designed to separate to aid recycling?

What percentage of materials are readily recycled?

Who is responsible for processing waste?

6. Fully circular lifecycle.

Can items be rented to enable full control over their repair and end of life?

Can materials retain value to ensure they stay in the economy? (i.e brass is infinitely recyclable therefore holds its value).

5 ■ Debunking the opposition.

1.
It's a lot of effort for an unknown impact.

Yes it does present itself like a huge amount of effort; however it is important to remember this is a *collective* effort. It's equally important to set measurable goals to be able to report on the impact, especially negative ones, to be able to work on reducing them. Reporting makes clear, statistical proof of the impact you're making.

2.
Is sustainability just a trend?

Sustainability does look like a buzz word seen on 1 out of 3 articles related to Fashion. But don't be fooled into seeing this as just today's trend. Research and forecasting indicate that sustainability will follow the traditional innovations adoption pattern to become normalised in our culture very soon.

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3.
My product is sustainable, isn't that enough?

It's increasingly obvious that sustainable design principles have been applied to the products and services of many major brands as consumer understanding and demand has increased, which is a great thing, and long may it continue.

Whilst brands have been quick to adopt a "greener" product line up, the same attention is yet to be brought to the retail environments in which they are sold. It's important to take note of this because whilst the average customer won't think twice about it, the regular updates and re-designs create a very significant pattern of waste.

Being able to talk about a more responsible approach to retailing will enhance the sustainable credentials of any brand and give far greater validity to a lot of the sustainability statements that form part of today's marketing efforts.

4.
Will it cost more?

Yes it could if not done properly. Simply designing in the same way but swapping out materials for more environmentally friendly options could cost more. However, if responsible design is integrated right from the start of a project, other factors such as efficient use of materials, fixture adaptability, modularity and prolonged use would make it much better value.

5.
Would sustainability effect my brand experience negatively?

This shouldn't be so. In many cases, sustainable design can be indistinguishable from the standard linear design pattern that has been used to date, one of the main differences being the sourcing, preparation or planning for future use, of the materials used.

Unless indicated to the customer, there shouldn't be any reason that sustainable principles would be noticeable in any way, and there's no reason that their experience will be affected in any negative way.

In fact, it is more likely that when communicated effectively, a good sustainable design strategy can lead to a more positive customer experience, with greater engagement and longevity.

**Join us in working
in a different and
more responsible
way, continually
reducing the impact
of our design and
build projects.**

Get in touch:

Email: ollie@doubleretail.com

Call: +44 1173 706 600

Visit: www.doubleretail.com

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