

# TRANSFER

*Dissemination Workshop Report, May 2015*



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.

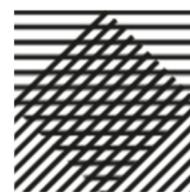
**ual:** university  
of the arts  
london  
london college  
of fashion



# TRANSFER: Dissemination Workshop

London College of Fashion

Tuesday 24th March 2015



With growing drives towards greater sustainability within the retail sector and a requirement to conform to existing and emerging legislation; retailers face the common challenge of encouraging the reduced consumption of saleable products, while remaining prosperous.

Over the past year, TRANSFER has been working with a diverse group of large and SME retailers from a number of sectors (particularly energy, water and clothing), with the aim of generating novel solutions to successfully addressing this paradox. Combining the experiences of our commercial partners with academic expertise from the University of Sheffield and the University of the Arts, London; we have investigated how these solutions (and efforts to promote sustainable consumption within retail more generally) are received and responded to by consumers.

This Dissemination Workshop (re-)introduced new and existing partners (see Table 1 for attendees) of TRANSFER to the project and the key research and public engagement activities that have taken place over the past 12 months. The aim was to both communicate the findings of the project and to offer attendees the opportunity to discuss the findings and shape the future direction of the project.

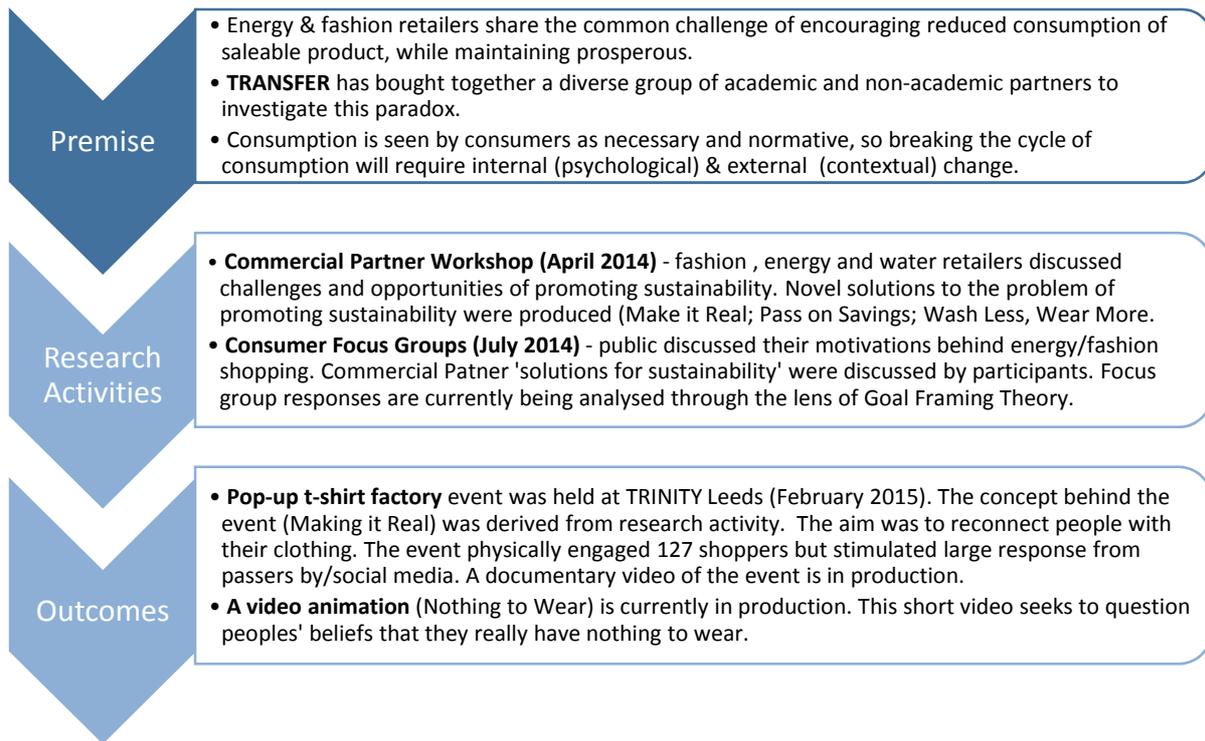
**TABLE 1.**

<b>PROJECT PARTNERS</b>	<b>ACADEMIC TEAM</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tom Jenkins <i>Corporate Responsibility Executive – E.ON</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chris Jones (PI) <i>Psychology, University of Sheffield</i></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nelson Blackley <i>Nottingham Business School</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Natalie McCreesh <i>Psychology, University of Sheffield</i></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Andrew Gilbert <i>Key Account Manager - Sustainable Textiles - WRAP</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helen Storey <i>Centre for Sustainable Fashion, London College of Fashion</i></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tom Roberts <i>ESRC - Research Portfolio Manager for Environment and Water</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alex McIntosh <i>Centre for Sustainable Fashion, London College of Fashion</i></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kim Cassidy <i>Nottingham Business School</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will Stuttard <i>Psychology, University of Sheffield</i></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emily Howells <i>EmilyandAnne Animations</i></li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hannah Gower <i>London College of Fashion</i></li> </ul>	

The workshop principally comprised presentations from the members of the TRANSFER academic team (attached to this letter). Chris Jones introduced the project aims, objectives and activities. Natalie McCreesh outlined the focus group and workshop events in more detail. Helen Storey and Alex McIntosh discussed the public exhibition event at Leeds Trinity and Emily Howells introduced the concept behind the animation being prepared on the basis of the project's activities.

There was plenty of opportunity for discussion throughout the session and many interesting points and ideas were raised by those in attendance.

## Project TRANSFER in brief



Project TRANSFER has been successful in its aim of bringing together a diverse group of academics, commercial partners and members of the public in order to promote the exchange of knowledge & best practice on the issue of sustainable consumption. The 'Making it Real' exhibition at Trinity Leeds was a particular high point of the project. It was regarded by all involved as a really positive event and stimulated real interest among the shoppers visiting the Shopping Centre.

### Where Next for Project TRANSFER?

This Dissemination Workshop was the final official activity of the TRANSFER project; however we believe that fostering more conscientious consumption among consumers, while maintaining business prosperity, is an issue that will escalate in importance in the coming years. As such, we fully intend to continue the project and engage in further collaboration and communication with those who have participated to date. We would be happy to hear from you with any comments, ideas or thoughts that you might have about the project and opportunities for collaboration.

A renewed TRANSFER webpage will be available shortly, detailing more about the activities and outcomes of the project and how you can remain involved ([www.project-transfer.com](http://www.project-transfer.com)). This website will also host the documentary from the 'Making it Real' exhibition and the forthcoming animation ('Nothing to Wear') that will provide a unique, sharable outcome from the project. These are both expected to be available in June/July. There will also be a number of forthcoming academic publications resulting from this project.

Thank you to all that were involved, we look forward to future collaboration.

Dr Chris Jones (Lead Investigator), on behalf of Project TRANSFER


  
 university of the arts london college of fashion


  
 The University of Sheffield.

# TRANSFER

(Trading Approaches to Nurturing Sustainable consumption in Fashion and Energy Retail).

End of Project Dissemination Workshop  
London, 24.03.15




## Workshop Agenda

- 1:30 – 2:00: Registration & Refreshments
- 2:00 – 2:30: Introduction to TRANSFER
- 2:30 – 3:00: Workshop 1 Summary & Focus Group Findings
- 3:00 – 3:15: Break
- 3:15 – 4:00: Public exhibition & documentary showcase
- 4:00 – 5:00: Animation intro & "Where next for TRANSFER?"
- 5:00 – 6:00: Reception & Close



## Background

- Sustainable development (SD) requires that the needs of the present are met while not compromising the abilities of future generations to do the same (Brundland Commission, 1987).
  - Central to this is the need to encourage consumers to make 'better' choices and to live more sustainable lifestyles:
    - "[w]e need a major shift to deliver new products and services with lower environmental impacts across their lifecycle, and **new business models which meet this challenge while boosting competitiveness**. And we need to build on people's growing awareness of social and environmental concerns, and the importance of their roles as citizens and consumers."
- (Sustainable Development Strategy, 2009, p.7).

## We are...

- Chris Jones (PI)
- Natalie McCreesh
- Helen Storey
- Alex McIntosh
- Dilys Williams
- Lenny Koh
- Will Stuttard

ASOS Plc • Co-operative Energy • DEO Associates • Ecotricity • E.ON UK • Jessica Brinton (Journalist, Sunday Times) • Katherine Goodwin (Womenswear design consultant) • LUSH Cosmetics • Marion Hume (Journalist) • Marks and Spencer • Meadowhall Sheffield • MK Things Happen • National Grid Plc • Neals Yard • Retail Centric • Reve en Vert • ReWardrobe • Susie Stone Ltd • Thames Water • Trinity Leeds • United Utilities • Westfield London • WRAP

+ an array of energy and fashion-related retail businesses.

## The Paradox

- SD will present significant challenges for businesses, particularly within the retail sector, where reduced consumption of saleable goods or services may be socially and/or politically encouraged.
- For example, the environmental impacts associated with generation, distribution and use of energy has resulted in the introduction of legislation requiring energy retailers to promote energy conservation efficiency, e.g., the Energy Company Obligation (ECO, 2012-15).
- The sector has responded innovatively, and their experiences could hold real exchange value for other retail sectors, e.g., the fashion retail sector, which is facing similar pressures to promote sustainable consumption.

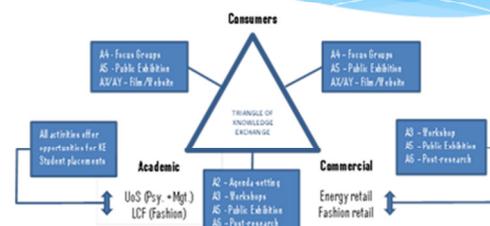
## Aims and Objectives (1)

- Energy & fashion retailers face the common challenge: encouraging reduced consumption of saleable product, while maintaining financial prosperity.
- Aims of this research are twofold:
  - to bring together representatives of the energy and fashion retail sectors, with academic experts in psychology, management and fashion, to exchange best practice around the promotion of sustainable consumption to consumers; and
  - to investigate how efforts to promote sustainable consumption within these sectors is received and responded to by consumers.
- We hope to foster a better understanding of how initiatives in both sectors can be designed to have bigger impact on the behaviour of consumers.

## Aims and Objectives (2)

- The objectives of this research are:
  - (1) to provide a two workshops for representatives from the energy and retail sectors to:
    - discuss the challenges and benefits of promoting sustainable consumption to consumers.
    - identify possible overlaps and establish best-practice in the promotion of sustainable consumption to consumers.
  - to engage with consumers via focus groups, exhibitions & other methods (e.g. films) to:
    - debate the issue sustainable consumption and investigate public perceptions of retailers' efforts to promote the issue.
    - publically disseminate the research outcomes in an engaging and interactive way.
- In fulfilling these objectives we will promote the exchange of knowledge & best practice on the issue of sustainable consumption between (and within) the academic, commercial and public sectors.

## Triangle of Knowledge Exchange



## Research Questions

- \* The central **questions** driving this project are:
  1. what can energy and fashion retailers learn from one another about how best to promote and facilitate sustainable consumption to consumers while maintaining competitiveness?
  2. what impact does the promotion of sustainable consumption in these retail sectors have on consumers' awareness, attitudes and behavioural intentions regarding the consumption of energy and fashion?
- \* **PROJECT LAUNCH:** January 2014
- \* **PROJECT END:** Yesterday

## Some initial thoughts ...



- \* A different project experience
- \* Change is afoot
- \* Is ignorance and excuse?
- \* Consumption as necessary and normative
- \* Breaking the cycle will require internal & external change (and willingness)
- \* We are at the start of the journey...

This is what we have found so far

## Project Milestones

- \* **Partner recruitment (February/March 2014)**
  - \* 17 interviews with representatives from energy, water & fashion retailers
  - \* Interviews fed into plan for Partner Workshop
- \* **Partner Workshop (April 2014)**
  - \* Workshop report produced; ideas fed into public exhibition design
- \* **Focus Groups (July 2014)**
  - \* 5x Focus groups held in Sheffield (Meadowhall) & London (Westfield)
  - \* Focus group report in preparation
- \* **Public Exhibition (February 2015)**
  - \* 2-day interactive 'Making it Real' exhibition held at Trinity Leeds.
  - \* Exhibition report produced; exhibition documentary in preparation
- \* **Dissemination Workshop (March, 2015)**
  - \* Second Partner Workshop to showcase findings of project and discuss next steps
- \* **Post-project Activity**
  - \* Full project report + 2 journal articles + conceptual film (nothing to wear?)



## Partner Workshop & Focus Groups

## Your shared challenges in promoting sustainable consumption

### Problems:

- \* **Cost** – don't want to pass on to consumer / impact profits
- \* **Communication** – lack of understanding of what sustainability is / don't like being lectured, Green-washing

### Questions:

- \* **Consumer facing** – consumer needs focused?
- \* **Character** – need vs want (energy vs fashion)
- \* **Cause** – and effect – what's in it for me?

### Needs:

- \* **Community** - lack of on the high street
- \* **Curriculum** – need for education in sustainability

## Partner Created Concepts



## Consumer Focus Groups - Fashion Shopping Perceptions

- \* Distinction between shopping for a **purpose** and as a **pass time**
- \* Shopping for a distinct item viewed as a 'need' (e.g. clothing for work, holiday, season etc.) often seen as stressful.
- \* Reasons for **stress** include time restraints (e.g. shops not being open after work hours), unable to find specific item, size issues, out of season colours.
- \* Shopping as a **pass time** (i.e. 'browsing') viewed as a pleasure. Charity and vintage shopping seen as pleasurable, malls more stressful / necessity – open late, shelter from bad weather
- \* **Price very important**
- \* Charity shopping viewed as a way to offset consumerism.

## Consumer Focus Groups - Energy Shopping Perceptions

- \* Viewed as **complicated & time consuming**, people want simplicity & ease.
- \* Lack of knowledge with regards to different energy companies & tariffs.
- \* **Low price is the main priority.**
- \* Not classed as shopping or fun.
- \* **No trust** for energy companies.
- \* Lack of understanding of metrics used (what is a Watt?)
- \* Taboo to discuss bills with friends.
- \* Small group enjoyed using **online comparison sites** to find cheapest deal ("getting one over on the energy companies").

## Similarities & Differences

### Notable Similarities

- \* **Stressful** - both types of shopping can be necessity focused
- \* **Price** was seen as central to decision making in both contexts
- \* **Bargain hunting** was a common method of counteracting that stress (bargains seen as 'getting one over' on energy/fashion retailers)
- \* **Choice and competition** offered by both sectors – too much choice and competition seen as confusing by shoppers

### Notable Differences

- \* **Little pleasure** in energy shopping compared with fashion shopping
- \* **Lack of physical presence** on the High Street seen as problematic for energy companies - creating a lack of trust with energy companies.

## Consumer Response to Partner Concepts

- \* **"Don't have a barcode, have people"** – Rather than investing money in gimmicks invest it in people. Educate and train customer service staff to better inform and communicate key messages to shoppers.
- \* **Suggested wash frequency on labels** – giving people an idea of how often an item can be worn before it is washed to cut down on laundering / preserve life cycle of garment.
- \* **Human nature** – we are conditioned to ask 'what's in it for us' and respond to monetary reward. Receiving a gift voucher in exchange for recycling clothes therefore is appealing.

Making it Real



## Analysing the Focus Groups

### \* Goal Framing Theory (Lindenberg, 2006)

- \* Acknowledges different behaviours have different motivations.
- \* Focal goals frame/guide thought and action.

### \* 3 x goal types

1. Hedonic = feel better right now
2. Gain = guard or better one's resource (e.g. save money/make money)
3. Normative = act appropriately (what is considered 'normative')

### \* All goals active but one is strongest (i.e., focal)

- \* If other goals are compatible focal goal strengthens
- \* If other goals are non-compatible focal goal weakens/changes.



## How GFT relates to shopping

### Energy shopping

- \* **Hedonic goal** = energy shopping is boring and difficult
- \* **Gain goal** = I want to get the cheapest deal, why should I have to pay more for something which is my right
- \* **Normative goal** = growing awareness that saving energy / opting for greener tariffs is a good thing to do

Goals **not necessarily aligned**, people might have a willingness to change to green tariff if the price is right and process is easy.

## Lover or Hater?

### Shopping lover...

- \* **Hedonic goal** = shopping is fun
- \* **Gain goal** = I want to get the best deal
- \* **Normative goal** = shopping for deals is what people do

The **goals align** 'I like to shop, shopping is cheap, other people shop' – results in continued consumption unless the cycle can be broken by making shopping less fun, more expensive or changing the norm (?)

## Lover or Hater?

### Shopping loather...

- \* **Hedonic goal** = shopping is not fun
- \* **Gain goal** = I want to get the best deal as quick as possible
- \* **Normative goal** = shopping for deals is what people do

Here the **goals align**, they don't like to shop and simply want to get what they need in the shortest time possible, ideally for as cheap as possible – this is what others do. Breaking the cycle is difficult.

## Solutions?

### 1. Change the world

- \* Structural interventions to make environmentally preferable choices more likely to register with the motivation of shoppers (e.g. make green clothes fun, more available and cheaper).
- \* Change 'society' to fit existing goals & habits.

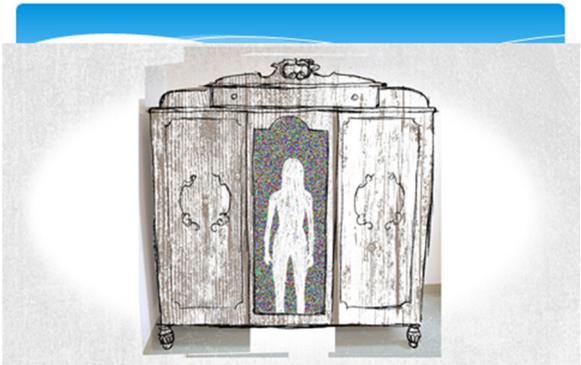
### 2. Change the person

- \* Psychological efforts to make people more aware of what choices are environmentally preferable.
- \* Change people's goals & habits to be more sustainable.
- \* Reconnecting people with their clothing could be a first step.

## Selection Survey

ARE YOU  
FASHION  
CONSCIOUS  
OR FASHION  
COMPULSIVE?





The end?  
Where next for Project  
TRANSFER?

