Sustainability Rising

A Changed World Adjusts Priorities as Optical Ups Its Awareness of the Environment

MARGE AXELRAD / SENIOR VP, EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

Crescendo. That's how most experts are characterizing the growing support among most consumers and businesses for advancing "sustainability" commitments, systems, products, solutions and causes across a range of fields, as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. "Sustainability has become a business necessity, not just a differentiator," pointed out Forrester's Olivia Berdak, vice president, research director last August. She added, "It is no longer a question of whether it is 'necessary or not' to launch sustainable business practices, but rather how long it will take before consumers, shareholders, or governments punish businesses that don't."

Berdak is not alone. A new and extensive report from Capgemini Research shows:

- Nearly 80 percent of consumers want to be able to make a difference in saving the planet for future generations.
- 77 percent are concerned about the humane and fair treatment of workers.
- 72 percent are personally concerned about their environmental footprint.
- 66 percent choose to purchase products or services based on their "environmental friendliness."

The optical and vision care fields are no exception. A pioneering group of mostly independent frame companies ushered in products made in sustainable ways from new and recycled materials starting some 8 to 10 years ago. (*Vision Monday* highlighted many of these in our November 2020 report, Sustainability Gains Traction **https://www.visionmonday.com/business/article/sustainability-gains-traction-in-optical-industry/**.) The pandemic of 2020, with its social, health care and cultural upheaval, has amplified and sped up more change.

Eyecare professionals, even as the pandemic and office closures just got underway in March, noted the interest among their patients and customers on the topic. According to a *20/20 Magazine* Marketpulse survey of independents at the time, 19 percent of 350 ECP respondents were asked about their own priorities toward employing environmentally friendly practices to make their own location

Continued on page 46

Sustainably Stylish: Frame Companies Commit to Eco Practices

GWENDOLYN PLUMMER / ASSOCIATE EDITOR

For some consumers, large company sustainability commitments are worthwhile and important. But it's a purpose commitment. A consumer can't really see a 10 percent donation, or a tree planted—but they can see, touch, hold and wear eyewear that has been designed and created with sustainability in mind.

As sustainable and eco-friendly production moves to the forefront and becomes more popular among consumers, more and more eyewear companies are prioritizing it—big and small. From family owned independent lines to the largest producers of eyewear in the world, sustainability is the word on everyone's lips.

De Rigo REM, the Police x Lewis Hamilton collection, Style; VPLC56

Luxottica's Arnette, Style; oAN7190

Celebs Come Aboard

The most important thing about sustainable eyewear is, of course, the fact that it's kinder on our planet—but there's no denying that it's also trending. Not only do consumers feel better when they buy sustainable, but an increasing number of celebrities want to attach their names to the sustainability movement as well. Eyewear companies partnering with big names is nothing new, but more and more of these partnerships are emphasizing eco-friendly production and materials.

From **De Rigo REM**, the **Police x Lewis Hamilton collection** is created in partnership with British Formula One driver Lewis Hamilton. The entire collection makes use of bio-acetate by Mazzucchelli—this M49 cellulose acetate is a new eco-friendly thermoplastic material with components deriving from renewable natural sources such as fibers from cottonseeds and wood fibers. The material is also 100 percent biodegradable and is recyclable.

Style VPLC56, pictured here, is an on-trend hexagonal combination frame featuring the bio-acetate and a bold metal, proving that eco-friendly and fashionable go hand in hand.

Luxottica's Arnette teamed up with musician **Post Malone on a popular capsule collection** that has continued to grow—and the entire thing uses bio-acetate. The frames in the collection are made up of bio-based materials from a minimum of 50 percent to 70 percent renewable sources. Production uses optimized processes that reduce climate damaging emissions, too. Even the sun lenses are sustainable, made of a polyamide with 39 percent of base-molecules from castor oil, while still retaining all the properties of traditional lenses.

This style, oAN7190, is a bold, chunky optical frame made of the bio-acetate that shows just how versatile the material can be.

Continued on page 32

Eyewear Companies Prioritize Eco-Friendly Products

Continued from page 30

Take it Outside

Marcolin's Timberland has a special collection named **Earthkeepers** for its sustainable frames. Earthkeepers frames are designed with the environment in mind, and focus on using materials responsibly. All the frames are constructed of a minimum of 35 percent bio-based plastic material—including this style, TB1705, an easy to wear rectangular optical frame.

The Earthkeepers philosophy is particularly important to Timberland because of the brand's storied history as a pillar of outdoor wear. Inspired by the iconic Timberland boots, many of the styles in the collection emphasize comfort and functionality as well as sustainability—all aspects that make them ideal for an active, outdoor lifestyle.

Marchon's Dragon launched its **Upcycled collection** in March 2020, and the collection has continued to grow. All styles in the collection are produced through a new method which involves repurposing (or upcycling) five recycled plastic water bottles. The bottles are washed, cut into chips, pressed into pellets, and then melted down into frames, repurposing plastic pollution and, in the process, protecting the planet.

An outdoor and performance brand at heart, taking care to protect the Earth is natural for Dragon. Wilder, the style pictured here, is an everyday sun style that utilizes the Upcycled process and offers 100 percent UV protection so wearers can get out and explore the planet they're protecting.

Modo's Eco is a brand entirely dedicated to sustainable eyewear. All Eco frames are sustainable in their own way, using recycled metals, castor seed oil, and now, with the launch of the Eco Ocean collection, ocean based plastics. To create its new **Ocean collection**, Eco partnered with Waste Free Oceans, an NGO that works with local fishermen to collect used plastic from the oceans. The collected plastic is sorted, cleaned, cut, dried, and extruded into plastic granules that are then formed into frames.

Dune, shown here, a polarized sun style from the Ocean collection, is perfect for outdoor wear—and for protecting the outdoors we love so much.

Continued on page 34

Marcolin's Timberland, Style; TB1705

Marchon's Dragon, Style; Wilder

Modo's Eco Ocean collection, Style; Dune

The Rise of Locally Grown Materials for Eyewear

Continued from page 32

Locally Grown

All frames from Canadian brand **Fellow Earthlings** are hand made on Prince Edward Island in small batches. Run by husband and wife team Sydney and Christopher Seggie, Fellow Earthlings emphasizes a more intentional pace in terms of production, and takes color inspiration from the natural beauty of Prince Edward Island. Hand making frames also leads to scrap material, which the Seggies sort, process and recycle into their recycled collection, called **RE:FE**. That collection includes Mikey, the style pictured here.

Based in Flint, Michigan, **Genusee** turns plastic waste created as a result of the Flint Water Crisis into frames. Because the city's water remains contaminated, Flint residents have to use bottled water for most things, which creates a surplus of plastic waste. The team at Genusee repurposes this waste, upcycling about 15 plastic bottles for each purchase. With its Buy Back program that allows all customers to return their used glasses to Genusee for credit off their next pair, Genusee is also the first circular economy eyewear brand and manufacturer.

Water Warrior Green, pictured here, is part of Genusee's **collaboration with Flint-based artist Amanda Edwards**. It is made from 100 percent post-consumer recycled water bottles.

Continued on page 36

Fellow Earthlings, Style; Mikey

Genusee, Style; Water Warrior Green

Environmentally Responsible Yet Still Fashion Forward

Continued from page 34

Fashion Forward

In the fashion world, Stella McCartney is synonymous with corporate responsibility. The designer is a lifelong vegetarian and does not use any fur or leather in her clothing designs, and this sense of responsibility carries over to her eyewear as well. **Stella McCartney** eyewear, produced with Thélios, prioritizes environmental responsibility and uses sustainable materials including lenses composed of 40 percent bio-based material from castor oil and bio-acetate for the frames.

SC400081, pictured here, is proof that high fashion does not have to mean high environmental impact. These sunglasses, like the rest of the **Stella McCartney line**, have obtained the Environmental Claim Validation, or ECV, from UL, which validates their bio-based content composition.

Fashion forward men's brand **Ben Sherman** is at the forefront of sustainability with its **Eco Green collection**, produced with L'Amy America. The collection uses bio-based acetate made from renewable plant sources, and uses stainless steel that is 100 percent recyclable. All of the brand's demo lenses are biodegradable within five years, and nose pads are produced without harmful chemicals such as BPA and Phthalates.

Mill, pictured here, is a trendy men's frame all in bio-acetate.

From Safilo, iconic denim brand **Levi's** has launched its **Responsibly Made collection**, featuring sunglasses crafted with injected bio-based materials derived from sustainable castor oil. The castor oil material results in frames that are durable and lightweight, as well as environmentally responsible.

LV1009S, shown here, is a trendy sun style that underscores the brand's long-standing status as a fashion icon, and introduces modern sustainable practices into enduring style. ■

Stella McCartney,
Style; SC400081

Ben Sherman,
Style; Mill

Levi's,
Style; LV1009S

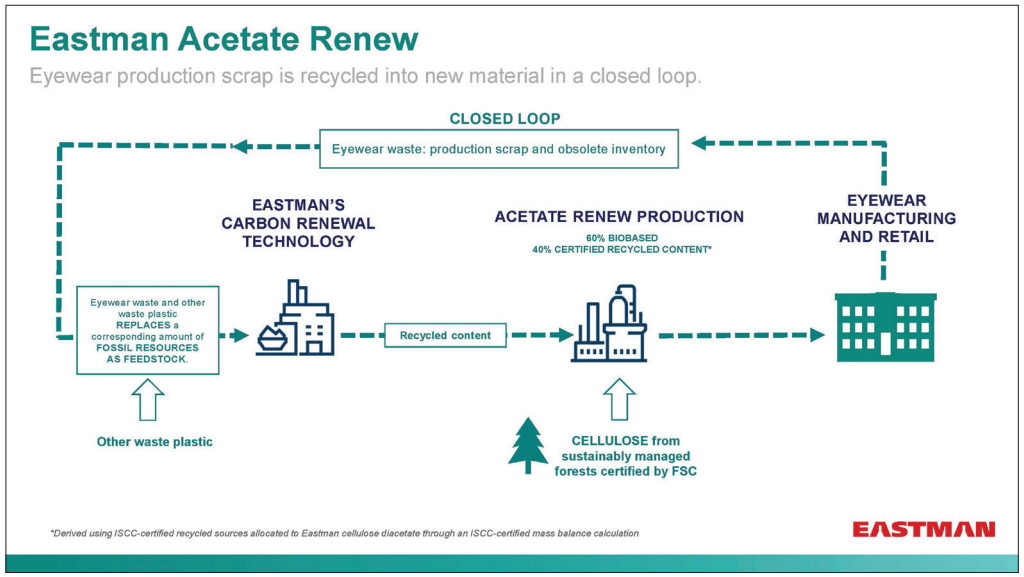
Eastman Spurs Sustainable Eyewear's Next Wave as it Expands Frame Partnerships

New Commitments to Bring Recycled Plastics into Sheet and Injected Manufacturing by Late 2021 and 2022

MARGE AXELRAD / SENIOR VP, EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

NEW YORK—Eastman (NYSE:EMN), one of the world's largest plastics producers, has been busy extending its multi-year efforts to create a more sustainable, circular approach to the system of recycling plastics into sustainable partnerships aimed at limiting the environmental impact of acetate frames and by using what they call "eco-responsible" formulas of recycled content and bio-sourced materials. In the past year, Eastman and *VM* have reported on a series of acetate producer and frame-maker partnerships that are likely to raise the visibility of sustainable eyewear by late 2021 and 2022 as new brands and collections come onstream.

Eastman announced its partnership with sheet acetate leader, Mazzucchelli 1849 just over one year ago, in February 2020, a move that promises to advance sustainability and a circular economy further in the eyewear space. Mazzucchelli will produce and sell acetate sheets made from Eastman Acetate Renew, a cellulose diacetate composed of 60 percent biobased and 40 percent certified recycled content.



In 2019, Eastman became the first company to begin commercial-scale chemical recycling for a broad set of waste plastics that would otherwise be landfilled or, worse, end up in the environment. Eastman Advanced Circular Recycling technologies process waste plastics using traditional mechanical recycling methods—including polyesters, polypropylene, polyethylene, and polystyrene—derived from a variety of sources, including single-use packaging, textiles, and carpet. These technologies provide a true circular solution of infinite recycling for materials, allowing them to be reused repeatedly. More details are posted at Eastman Eco.

EASTMAN

Made through Eastman's innovative carbon renewal technology, Acetate Renew offers virgin material performance, incorporates significant amounts of certified recycled content from eyewear production scrap, and results in a significant reduction in greenhouse gases when compared to the traditional manufacturing process, the company said.

"Eastman's collaboration with Mazzucchelli demonstrates our ability to leverage groundbreaking recycling technologies that bring innovative and sustainable solutions to the industries in which we participate," said Scott Ballard, vice president and general manager for Eastman Specialty Plastics. "We're honored that our longtime partner Mazzucchelli will be the first to produce acetate sheet made from entirely sustainable acetate flake and to divert waste from landfills in the process."

Mazzucchelli is providing acetate scrap to Eastman for use in carbon renewal. Eastman will soon begin collecting and recycling scrap at scale from eyewear manufacturers for conversion into new material, creating a true closed loop for the eyewear industry. The recycled content in Eastman's Acetate Renew will be certified using the mass balance approach through International Sustainability & Carbon Certification (ISCC) audits across the value chain, the companies said.

Mazzucchelli began the ISCC process with ICIM s.p.a. Italy in preparation for commercialization. "Eastman Acetate Renew allows us to offer sustainable options to our customers," said Giovanni Orsi Mazzucchelli, president and shareholder of Mazzucchelli, a family-owned company for six generations.

"Using Acetate Renew requires no performance sacrifice, meaning we can use it in our full range of premium designs. We're pleased to have achieved this goal, which is the result of a constructive relationship, and to be the first to manufacture acetate sheet with this material and also to provide scrap for carbon renewal technology that would otherwise end up in landfills."

Carbon renewal technology is a chemical recycling process combining mixed waste plastics with heat, pressure and steam to generate syngas—carbon and hydrogen atoms—for use as building blocks

to produce a variety of circular products containing high levels of recycled content without compromising quality. Eastman produces biobased and certified recycled content using mass balance allocation.

Acetate scrap from Mazzucchelli and certified frame manufacturers will be returned to Eastman to be converted into new acetate flake using chemical recycling technology.

MARCHON
EYEWEAR | A VSP GLOBAL COMPANY

Marchon announced in October 2020 that it would be the first eyewear company to produce and sell frames using Eastman Acetate Renew. Nicola Zotta, president and CEO of Marchon Eyewear noted, "This relationship will be beneficial for us, as it will significantly reduce waste and greenhouse gas emissions, while maintaining our commitment to safety and sustainability without compromising the quality of our frames."

Thomas Burkhardt, Marchon's senior vice president of global brands, marketing and design added, "We are proud to be the first eyewear company to put the Eastman Acetate Renew into the market. We will begin this June with a launch of a luxury sunglass collection for one of our larger licensed brands, produced in our own Italian factory. From there, we will incorporate Acetate Renew into more Marchon products where we can.

"We are looking forward to using this high-quality material throughout our collections as supply becomes more widely available. We are pleased to be a part of the cycle of sustainability by channeling the scrap from our production back to Eastman to become Acetate Renew," Burkhardt said.

Just last month, Eastman, Mazzuchelli and Thélios Eyewear disclosed their partnership, which will bring the collaboration into the Thélios portfolio, anticipating that the first of those collaborations will come to the market in 2022. Carlo Roni, R&D

1849 Mazzucchelli

director of Thélios, said, "Sustainability has become a business imperative. We have chosen to team up with the best in class players—Mazzucchelli for acetate transformation and Eastman for molecular recycling—to work jointly on the development of new sustainable materials, which we hope will drive change in our industry."

THÉLIOS

Safilo Group broke the news of its own sustainability commitments earlier this month, by announcing the introduction of both Eastman Acetate Renew and Eastman Tritan Renew in its sunglass and optical products. Both products are part of a broad portfolio of sustainable resins now offered at scale by Eastman.

Safilo will debut Eastman Tritan Renew with its proprietary Polaroid brand in January 2022. The two innovative materials will be progressively rolled out across Safilo's broad brand portfolio, both for sun and optical frames, further asserting the company's business commitment to sustainability and its efforts to bring more recycled materials to the eyewear industry.

Safilo GROUP

"It is so important nowadays to act responsibly and to consider the social and environmental impacts of our business," said Angelo Trocchia, CEO of Safilo Group. "We are committed to leading the way in our approach to our products and packaging without using new resources and without compromising the quality of our frames, thereby continuing to offer the same level of impeccable quality. Our intention is to expand the use of sustainable materials as much as possible in order to progress in our sustainability journey."

Glenn Goldman, commercial director, Eastman Specialty Plastics, said "By using both Eastman Tritan Renew and Eastman Acetate Renew, Safilo can provide their consumers and their licensors with a variety of differentiated options that meet their high standards for both design and sustainability. We are proud to work with Safilo as they make these bold steps and deliver on their commitment to a more sustainable future."

Eastman Tritan Renew is a high performance copolyester made of 50 percent certified recycled content. Crystal clear, durable and BPA-free, it offers sustainability without compromise, ensuring performance and safety. Safilo will be the first eyewear player to introduce this renewable material in its product offer.

The introduction of these other recycled content materials in the optical and sun arena will also enable Eastman to further expand its footprint.

Noted Goldman, there will be other dimensions

Continued on page 50

CooperVision Partners With Plastic Bank for Plastic-Neutral Clariti Effort

MARK TOSH / SENIOR EDITOR

Plastic Bank collectors in coastal communities have recovered more than 20,187,379 kilograms of ocean-bound plastic as part of the Canadian group's sustainability program.

SAN RAMON, Calif.—Recognizing an important trend, CooperVision launched a social media contest in January as a way to encourage eyecare professionals to be more sustainable in their practices and daily lives. The company noted at the time that this social media effort—and the sustainability actions that it highlighted—would be a way for optometry practices to differentiate themselves through the implementation of sustainable practices in their own offices. As it turns out, this program was just the first step in what is turning into a big leap for CooperVision in 2021 with its recent announcement of a net plastic-neutral initiative with its clariti 1 portfolio of contact lenses.

For CooperVision and its parent CooperCompanies, sustainability and corporate social responsibility have been part of the core focus for the past several years. In 2019, the parent company announced its alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a global framework and action plan intended to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity and peace for all by 2030.

CooperVision's Melissa Kiewe, vice president, North America marketing.

The new CooperVision initiative is all about sustainability and social good, and answering patients' and doctors' requests for a more sustainable approach to contact lenses.

"The commitment around sustainability for us is really recognizing opportunities that we have to make a positive impact on the environment," Melissa Kiewe, CooperVision's vice president, North America marketing, told *Vision Monday* in a recent interview. "And, quite honestly, it's just the feeling that it's the right thing to do for our customers, for their patients and for the planet. This very much aligns with the company's philosophy."

As part of its commitment to sustainability, CooperVision has partnered with the Canadian organization Plastic Bank, a group that is working to "revolutionize the world's recycling systems to create a regenerative, inclusive, and circular plastic economy." Other companies working with Plastic Bank are SC Johnson, Henkel and Marks & Spencer. Plastic Bank is committed to reducing ocean-bound plastic.

"Through this partnership, it will allow us to make the full family of clariti 1 day lenses

Continued on page 42

The CooperVision facility in Alajuela, Costa Rica, combines state-of-the-art manufacturing with sustainability measures. It's one of the main production sites for clariti 1 day lenses.

Nittany Eye Associates Brings Sustainability to the Practice Level

STATE COLLEGE, Pa.—In 2019, CooperVision executives wanted to highlight the company' progress in the area of sustainability to eyecare professionals from across the country. This led to the creation of what CooperVision called its clariti 1-day experience—a field-trip type excursion to the company's main manufacturing facility for clariti 1 day lenses in Alajuela, Costa Rica, where sustainability is the center of daily operations.

This trip, in which more than 20 ECPs participated, led to some lasting impressions. One of the doctors on the trip was Michael Cymbor, OD, FAAO, of Nittany Eye Associates https://nittanyeye.com/ in State College, Pa. Cymbor thought he was relatively eco-friendly in his daily routines, especially at home, but came away from his visit to the 100,000-square-foot contact lens manufacturing facility in Alajuela with a renewed perspective. He returned to central Pennsylvania with a raft of new ideas and topics he wanted to address with the staff at the practice's five offices.

"Growing up I was that kid who, when we were building tree houses, said 'Let's not put a nail into that tree. Let's figure out a way to rope this because I don't want to kill a tree.' So early on I had some real environmental kind of leanings. It's something that has been with me," Cymbor told *Vision Monday*. "I felt going into the [Costa Rica trip] that we were doing a pretty good job," he said. "But the clariti 1-day experience really helped me to understand that I had a big blind spot as it relates to work."

Cymbor said the clariti 1-day experience helped him to bridge that gap and helped him realize that sustainability isn't something that can be compartmentalized to the home. "This is something that I can be doing at work, and we have all of these things that I can be doing at work that I had very little idea about. But the clariti 1-day experience helped me to focus in on that," he noted.

His first step was to organize a staff meeting as a way of generating enthusiasm for introducing new sustainability-centered ideas at the office.

Michael Cymbor, OD, FAAO

Hannah Holsing, a member of the practice's sustainability team, and Rachel Loges with the various recycling bins the office provides to dispose of plastic bottles, glass and aluminum, jars and cans, paper, paperboard and cardboard.

Rachel Loges, CPO, holding up her masks from the week to be recycled in Nittany Eye's disposable mask recycling bin.

What surprised him is how receptive the 85 team members were to his ideas.

"At the next all-staff meeting, I mentioned how sustainability was really important to me, and what I didn't anticipate is the number of people—both in number and in terms of their enthusiasm—who stepped forward and said that is important and how can we all work together for the betterment of our world."

One of the first things the practices targeted was the use of plastic utensils during lunches and breaks. As a solution, Nittany Eye offered to buy back silverware from staff members who had extra pieces at home. It also asked partner companies that typically brought in lunch during their office visits to stop bringing in plastic utensils.

"We said no longer are we going to tolerate single-use plastic utensils," Cymbor said. "We're all going to use silverware and plates... and eat lunch that way."

Patients' reaction also has been positive and supportive of the sustainability mindset. Indeed, with its locations scattered around Penn State University and the State College area, Nittany Eye's patient population is made up of a large, eco-conscious demographic group.

Cymbor said "one of the biggest pushbacks" he had from patients when he suggested switching to daily disposable lenses is the increase in plastic waste that dailies generate.

"Prior to the clariti 1-day experience, I really didn't know how to answer that [objection] in a good way," he noted. But after the visit to the clariti facility in Alajuela, Cymbor said he was prepared with all kinds of information about how environmentally friendly the site is in its daily operations. "I could have the type of discussion that they could connect to," he said.

One of the more recent efforts involves working with TerraCycle and the recycling of masks that staff members—or even patients—are wearing and disposing. Nittany Eye has placed a recycling bin at the main exit door where staffers can discard their used masks at the end of the day.

He acknowledges that the Costa Rica trip has changed the way he views sustainability around the workplace. "The clariti 1-day experience lit something in me that I already had but it wasn't focused in the most positive way," he said. "Now it has become more of a part of me and it has allowed me to become who I could be from a sustainability standpoint. That's a really cool thing." ■

CooperVision Partners With Plastic Bank for Plastic-Neutral Clariti Effort

Continued from page 40

the first net plastic-neutral contact lens," Kiewe noted.

Basically how the program works is that for every box of clariti 1 day that is distributed in the U.S.—the program became live in January 2021—CooperVision is committed to the collection, processing and reuse of general plastic waste in the environment that is equal to the weight in the plastic that is contained in clariti 1 day lenses and packaging. "What that means is that it's not only the plastic in the lens itself, but it's the plastic in the blister pack, plastic in the adhesive and any plastic in the packaging laminate—even any plastic that might be in the ink printed on the boxes," Kiewe said.

One of the inspiring elements of working with Plastic Bank is that the organization is working to reduce ocean-bound plastic while also providing opportunities for social good, Kiewe said. The way the model works is that Plastic Bank enables people in developing countries who live in coastal communities to collect ocean-bound plastic and in exchange for that plastic they receive compensation for essential resources such as food and clean water.

Based on the weight of what CooperVision distributes, Plastic Bank will help the company extract an equal amount from the environment, Kiewe said.

Another unique aspect of the program is that this partnership makes it easy for doctors and their patients to be involved, and to be more sustainable in their routines. "It literally is as simple as anyone who prescribes, recommends or wears clariti 1 day is having an impact and is now part of this initiative," she said.

"For ECPs what's exciting is that this really gives them an opportunity to provide added value to their patients," she said.

The early feedback on the program has been overwhelmingly positive, she said, in part because both internal and external research have validated the key role sustainability is playing today in the minds of both patients and ECPs.

The Canadian organization Plastic Bank enables people in developing countries who live in coastal communities to collect ocean-bound plastic and exchange it for compensation for essential resources such as food and clean water.

"We are monitoring the trends and some of the things that we've noticed is that American consumers are paying more attention to the sustainability practices of the companies that they choose to do business with," Kiewe said. "And we know it matters to ECPs as well because they are also consumers."

Indeed, a 2020 survey by the Recycling Partnership found that 70 percent of Americans say they will go out of their way to support a company that makes a strong effort to be sustainable. And 78 percent are more conscious of supporting green and sustainable companies compared with five years ago.

"That definitely says to me that sustainability is becoming a higher priority," Kiewe said. And ECPs also have expressed similar sentiments anecdotally with CooperVision representatives, she added.

CooperVision also commissioned its own survey that showed 93 percent of ECPs agree that keeping plastic out of the ocean is important to them, and 84 percent of the ECPs agree that manufacturers needs to take responsibility for the waste that they create.

"For us, we have been focused on the manufacturing side and now [with the Plastic Bank partnership] we are able to bring it up front on the distribution side, which is really exciting," Kiewe said.

Kiewe said the focus area of the program with Plastic Bank would initially be the clariti 1 day family of lenses, which is the most-prescribed CooperVision lens. Given the weight of the plastic content associated with all of the clariti 1 day products distributed in the U.S., she said CooperVision believes its commitment to being net plastic neutral "will make an immediate impact on managing ocean-bound plastic."

CooperVision expects to announce more details around this new partnership with Plastic Bank and the ways in which it will be promoted to customers and patients in the near future. Kiewe said it will "absolutely be working really closely with doctors to make sure that we can help them to strengthen that dialogue and connection with their patients. We're really excited about what's yet to come."

She added, "For us as a company, this is a very significant moment around sustainability. It's a marketing program, but it's so much more. ... And what's great about this is that it has an even more direct tie to ECPs and their patients." ■

Bausch + Lomb Traces its Commitment to Sustainability Back to 2009

BRIDGEWATER, N.J.—With corporations' commitment to sustainability growing broader on a regular basis, the origins of these efforts can get overlooked for more recent events. But at Bausch + Lomb this commitment to corporate social responsibility seems to have had a clear beginning.

"As a global company dedicated to helping people see better to live better, we take our commitment to corporate social responsibility seriously across our entire organization," Amy Butler, vice president, Global Environment, Health, Safety + Sustainability, told *Vision Monday*. "Our sustainability journey began in 2009 when our Environment, Health, Safety + Sustainability (EHS+S) team officially started providing our company the leadership and infrastructure necessary to help our sites around the world achieve a more sustainable and regenerative state, while reducing the environmental impact of our products."

Amy Butler, vice president, Global Environment, Health, Safety + Sustainability.

Bausch + Lomb executives were part of a presentation at the Guide Dog Foundation when B+L and TerraCycle presented the foundation with new training modules made from used contact lens materials collected through the ONE by ONE Recycling Program. Shown (l to r) are: Michael Waas of TerraCycle, Tania DaSilva of B+L, John Miller of the Guide Dog Foundation and Jill Saxon, OD, of B+L.

One way B+L is demonstrating this commitment is in place at its contact lens manufacturing facility in Rochester, N.Y., where it has a large solar array with a total of 3,667 solar panels. This solar array is used to generate and supply electricity to the company's facility, providing 1.12 gigawatt/hours of electricity, which reduces the company's carbon footprint by 800 tons of carbon dioxide per year, according to Butler.

She noted that the EHS+S principles are embedded in all of B+L's global operating plans, enabling widespread impact at both the corporate level and across its regional manufacturing and supply chain locations. "Each region is empowered to develop and manage customized EHS+S initiatives designed specifically to improve local operations and preserve, protect and sustain the community, the environment and natural resources so they are available for future generations," she said.

"These initiatives are based on our company's comprehensive set of environmental policies, which provide the foundation for our EHS+S global commitments," according to Butler.

"These policies include: conducting our business in a way that protects the environment and provides a safe and healthy workplace for our employees, giving purchasing preference to environmentally sustainable products and services that are comparable to their standard counterparts in quality, price and performance; designing our products and manufacturing processes to meet both customer and consumer needs for performance, quality and efficacy, as well as to meet and exceed standards for efficiency and minimization throughout the product life cycle; and optimizing the use of packaging materials to reduce waste and continually improve our processes.

"It is because of our continuous work in identifying areas in which we can make further improvements, where we have found opportunities to create unique programs like the ONE by ONE Recycling program, the first and only contact lens recycling program in the U.S., in collaboration with TerraCycle, a world leader in the collection and repurposing of hard-to-recycle post-consumer waste," she said.

This ONE by ONE program was created as a result of B+L's evaluation of the full life cycle of its contact lenses, a process that it utilizes across the B+L portfolio of products.

"Many of our contact lenses, including Biotrue ONEday daily disposables, are manufactured in facilities that have adopted zero-waste-to-landfill initiatives and have achieved diversion rates of 94 percent to 99 percent. In conducting research on what happens to contact lenses after they are worn, we learned that the end-to-end trail of contact lens packaging waste generated was enormous—estimating 3.36 billion lenses flushed per year," she said, noting that this finding is based upon research by Arizona State University.

And while disposable lenses are made of recyclable material, they cannot be recycled through standard recycling practices due to their small size (they get filtered out of the process). "We developed this program in direct response to this issue, and is one we're proud to offer all contact lens wearers in the U.S.," Butler said.

B+L's contact lens manufacturing facility in Waterford, Ireland, features a new nitrogen-generating plant that was commissioned and installed last year. With this installation, the plant reduces carbon dioxide emissions by almost 200 tons a year and eliminates 54 liquid nitrogen tanker deliveries per month.

The Bausch + Lomb "ONE by ONE" recycling program, in collaboration with TerraCycle, was the first contact lens recycling program in the U.S. TerraCycle is a world leader in the collection and repurposing of hard-to-recycle post-consumer waste.

She added, "Identifying ways to minimize our impact on the environment and protecting our employees and communities has always been one of our top priorities. However, now more than ever, we recognize the increased importance of corporate social responsibility. As we continue to improve sustainability and raise the bar on our sustainability standards, we are furthering our mission of helping people see better to live better."

Bausch + Lomb also works to incorporate its strong stance on sustainability and the environment into marketing programs for its customers.

"A few years ago, the company's inaugural Corporate Social Responsibility report was launched," Butler said. "This report outlines the company's corporate social responsibility efforts and provides a report on our progress. This allows us to measure our growth year and after in advancing our initiatives and programs in the years ahead. We proudly share this with our customers, patients and consumers each year."

B+L also created its ONE by ONE program specifically to provide contact lens wearers and eyecare professionals (ECPs) the ability to responsibly recycle contact lenses and packaging— an option they didn't have before this program existed. In the U.S., contact lens wearers can bring lenses and packaging materials to any of the participating ECP offices where B+L has provided custom recycling bins.

Both ECPs and patients can partake in the program at no cost, as it is fully funded by Bausch + Lomb. Once the recycling bins are full, the optometry practices mail the used lenses and materials to the recycling partner, TerraCycle, for proper recycling using a free shipping label from Bausch Health.

TerraCycle then recycles the materials into post-consumer products. To date, the program has recycled nearly 30 million contact lenses and blister packs, amounting to 180,000 pounds of waste.

"Through the ONE by ONE program, we work with thousands of optometrists every day to recycle contact lenses and blister packs," Butler noted. "Allowing patients to drop their used materials off directly at ECPs' offices makes the recycling process simple and top of mind for eyecare professionals and their patients."

Looking ahead, Butler said Bausch + Lomb is working daily to find new ways to become a more environmentally sustainable company through its business practices, such as reducing consumption of fuel, energy, water, and natural resources, while minimizing generation of waste.

"Internally, we've made significant progress to reduce overall energy usage across our global manufacturing and supply chain sites and boost efficiency," she said. "We also have plans to expand upon our sustainability programs that are available for doctors and patients later this year."

She added, "Our ONE by ONE Recycling program also created the opportunity to engage with an entirely new, environmentally conscious audience who has an affinity for sustainable brands through social media. The program has also helped eliminate barriers for consumers who were previously hesitant to wear contact lenses because of the associated waste." ■

A Changed World Adjusts Priorities as Optical Ups Its Awareness of the Environment

Continued from page 28

"green," said they felt it was "very important," while 49 percent said it was "somewhat important."

Fourteen percent of the ECPS said they felt their customers/patients considered it was "very important" and another 48 percent felt it was "somewhat important." At the time, 15 percent of them said that customers requested products that were made sustainably.

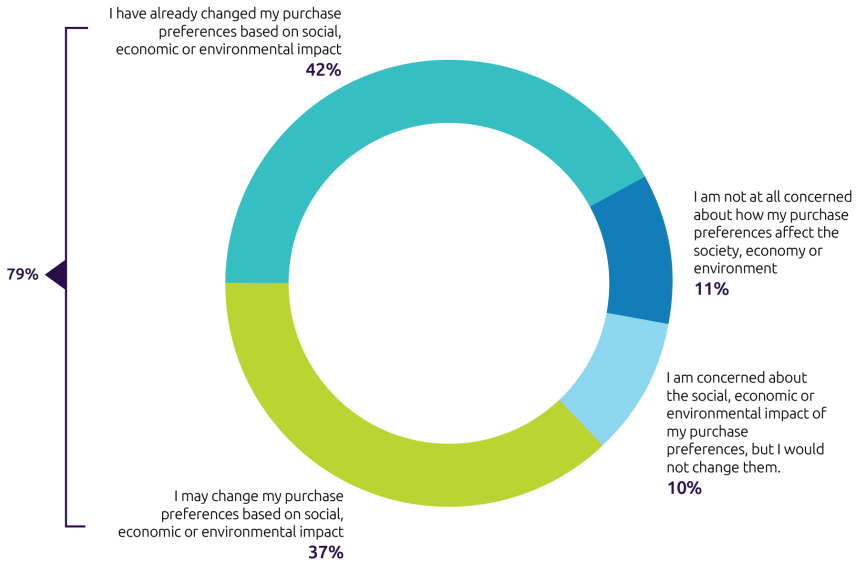
Some larger optical industry retailers are now actively also exploring their involvement in earnest. National Vision's Jared Brandman, general counsel, told *VM*, "National Vision began the process of developing a formal Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) strategy last year, and although we're still in the initial stages of formalizing our corporate responsibility commitments, we know that supply chain—including direct procurement of materials and finished products, as well as our own merchandising, product and service design and innovation—will be an ongoing focus area."

He added, "We're examining our touchpoints across our entire value chain." National Vision operates 1,200 retail stores, among them America's Best Contacts & Eyeglasses, Eyeglass World, Vision Centers inside select Walmart stores, and Vista Opticals inside select Fred Meyer stores.

National Vision's Megan Malony, senior vice president, merchandising/managed care, told *VM*, "I'm excited because in the past year, many more options are coming on the table in the space where we are, so we finally able to evaluate what's out there and what's right for us, what fits the consumers that we serve. We're believers, it's a good story and it will be expected by our customers and patients. It's the responsible way to go."

At another large ECP group, MyEyeDr., with more than 600 offices across the U.S., Christina Perraud, vice president, planning and purchasing, said, "We have seen an increasing amount of sustainable options/capsule collections with many of the brands in our portfolio. Most recently we incorporated Dragon's plant-based resin frames made from castor-beans, a much cleaner and more renewable alternative to traditionally-made plastics. We have also added Dragon's upcycled collection, where every frame is made from five recycled water bottles."

Figure 4. Consumers are changing purchase preferences based on social, economic, and environmental impact



Source: Capgemini Research Institute, Sustainability in Consumer Products and Retail Survey, March 2020, N=7,520 consumers.

She noted, "Yes, now more than ever, patients are exploring more sustainable options and want to know where and how their products are being sourced. I think this will be a trend that continues to accelerate in the near future. I believe we will continue to grow this category more and more.

"Ideally our expansion would be through additional inclusion of styles in brands already in our portfolio—a trend we have seen continue to grow at each market week (i.e. the Dragon releases mentioned below). There is a real opportunity to expand sustainable options under some of the great brand names already out there. This then allows the patient to feel like they are making a sustainable purchase without having to compromise quality or style."

Perraud said that exploring sustainability will be a priority. "It's important to continue these initiatives even outside of the frame offering. I'd like to challenge suppliers on ways to improve packaging and eliminate waste as well. Whether it be recyclable contact lens packaging, decreasing the amount of plastic/cardboard used to wrap frames, or eliminating the use of paper inserts inside frame cases—all of these things tend to be components that are tossed as soon as the frames are put on display. As an industry, I'd love to see a focus on the reduction of these single-use items."

In the frame arena, Eastman has been ramping up its partnerships. (See page 38) Eastman's Glenn Goldman, commercial director, Eastman Specialty Plastics, said, "The awareness of societal issues is greater than it has been in the past, People are recognizing the need to speed up doing things and taking steps now that they are ready to go. In our case, we can offer people solutions today and we can do this at scale. We are seeing interest among high end players as well as the mass and value sectors to take concrete steps to meet sustainability goals."

Continued on page 50

To learn more about sustainability efforts in the optical industry, read our November cover story, titled Sustainability Gains Traction in Optical Industry, by going to the Business category and clicking on Sustainability.

Sustainable Products and Processes in the Optical Lab

ANDREW KARP / GROUP EDITOR, LENSES & TECHNOLOGY

While optical labs have had to focus recently on COVID-19-related matters like implementing new safety protocols, maintaining a healthy staff and supporting a new set of customer needs, they continue to address long-term goals. One of these is increased sustainability: the need for processes that create less waste and use less energy to reduce the impact that optical manufacturing has on the environment. Equipment manufacturers continue to support lab sustainability efforts with innovative technologies that help make lab processes more environmentally friendly and more efficient.

According to Andreas Huthoefer, head of global marketing and product management at Satisloh, "The greatest sources of waste are swarf (plastic and polycarbonate waste, globally estimated at 40,000 tons per year in our industry), water (4 to 10 liters per lens) and energy (2 to 3 kWh per lens). As for pollutants, alloy blocking is likely the biggest issues in the optical industry, considering that alloy material contains toxic heavy metals such as lead and cadmium."

Like other manufacturers, Satisloh uses various tactics to reduce waste from lab processes. The company's Bazell Micro-Separating Systems create a closed-loop water cycle, filtering water and compacting swarf. Briquetters further compact the swarf, reducing waste volume by up to a 12:1 ratio.

Satisloh reduces toxic waste in the lab through its Alloy Replacement Technology (ART), which Huthoefer describes as "the only truly proven industrial alloy-free blocking solution in the market." ART also lowers water usage and reduces energy consumption by up to 50 percent because it requires only two machines for blocking and deblocking, compared to four with standard automated alloy blocking.

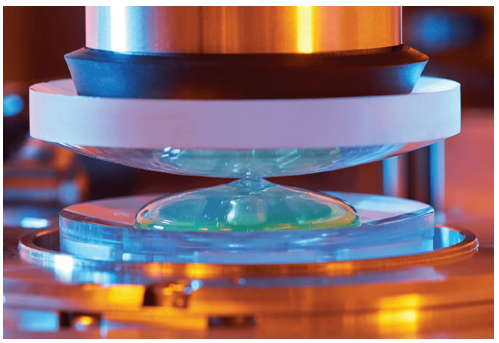
Santinelli is addressing sustainability from two different angles. "Santinelli/Nidek has adjusted the water flow usage in our edgers to lower the amount of water used while processing lenses," explained Jonathan Martin, director of technical services. "The second thing we have done is change our tank and pump offering. We now offer a large four-chambered recirculating tank and pump system that uses a hurricane filter." This system reduces solid waste and means that water changes can occur about once per week, rather than daily, according to Martin.

DAC Technologies offers the Aqua Distill water/waste recycler, which distills water for reuse, while capturing alloy in a heat-resistant liner bag in the tank. The company's ULTRA-TBW tray and block washers reduce hard and dry polish residue that could scratch lenses, while extending the life of trays and blocks to reduce landfill.

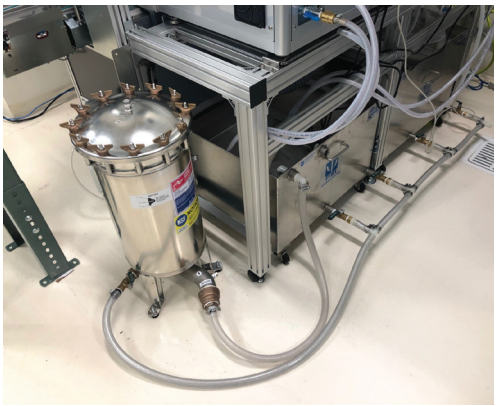
Luneau Technology USA creates a cleaner lab environment through its airMAX air purification system for edgers. This air purification filtering system eliminates foul smells and dust associated with edging high-index and polycarbonate lenses. It is compatible with virtually all wet edging systems, and each unit can be connected to up to two edgers.

In Europe, the company offers a cooling and filtration unit with their Briot and Weco edging systems. Water recirculation reduces water consumption, while a two-level filtration system reduces waste in the water that would otherwise go down the drain.

These new approaches to sustainable lens manufacturing are finding an appreciative audience in the lab community. Said Huthoefer, "We have over 160 successful ART installations worldwide that use alloy-free ART (alloy replacement technology solutions), and more than 250 million good lenses have been produced with ART. That's just one indication of how much modern labs embrace green products." ■



Satisloh reduces toxic waste in the lab through its Alloy Replacement Technology (ART).



Santinelli/Nidek has adjusted the water flow usage in their edger.

Luneau Technology USA creates a cleaner lab environment through its airMAX air purification system for edgers.

Essilor's Commitment to Sustainable Development

As a global supplier of eyewear, Essilor is committed to sustainable development throughout its vast supply chain which includes manufacturing and distribution sites and offices spread throughout the world.

"Our mission and unique principles and values are at the very heart of that commitment," an Essilor spokesperson told *VM*. "Providing everyone, everywhere, with access to quality vision care is Essilor's biggest challenge in terms of sustainable development. With that challenge comes the responsibility to ensure we pay careful consideration to our social, societal and environmental impacts on different stakeholders."

Essilor voluntarily participates in CDP, an international, independent non-profit organization that assesses companies' efforts to measure and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and water footprint. The CDP recognized the continuous progress Essilor has been making in these areas, rating Essilor with an A- for both its response to climate change and water management.

Essilor has also been selected by the Dow Jones Sustainability Index among the world's best performing companies in terms of sustainable development for three consecutive years. Furthermore, Essilor was named among the world's 100 most innovative companies for eight consecutive years by *Forbes Magazine*. (The Forbes' Most Innovative Companies ranking was discontinued in 2019.)

"Whether it is ensuring the well-being and development of our employees, innovating to reduce our environmental footprint or engaging in dialogue with our many stakeholders to uphold ethical business dealings, we fundamentally seek to support the long-term sustainable growth that enables us to fulfill our mission," the Essilor spokesperson said. ■

Hoya Undertakes a Broad Range of Environmental Preservation Efforts

The Hoya Group actively engages in environmental preservation efforts as part of its corporate social responsibility in order to pass on to future generations a global environment in better shape than today, according to a company spokesperson. In the U.S. for example, Hoya's Ramsey, Minnesota facility uses 100 percent renewable energy certificate from Connexus energy that supports their solar farm and local honeybees.

Internationally, the Hoya Group has been structuring a globally-operated management system based on ISO (International Organization for Standardization) 14001 and ISO45001 with the purpose of promoting the environmental protection activities by the employees and ensuring the safety and health of the employees. As of February 2020, the certification is being applied to 53 sites in 19 countries.

Reducing CO2 Emissions

The Hoya Group is globally operating its environmental protection activities, in which attempts are being made to reduce CO2 emissions by paying special attention to its energy usage. It sets a group-wide reduction target for CO2 emissions and is directing its environmental protection activities toward accomplishing it.

Additionally, the Group has been practicing various environmental burden reduction activities under its Environmental Philosophy and Fundamental Environmental Policies. These include:

- Soil pollution control measures, underground water pollution
- Control measures, hazardous substance leak control measures
- Proper disposal of industrial waste
- Reduction of water consumption
- Energy saving and power saving activities

Hoya has also undertaken efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions at overseas offices using Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM). JCM means contributing to global warming countermeasures through dissemination of excellent low-carbon technologies to developing countries, and at the same time appropriately evaluating the contribution to Japan's emission reduction.

Hoya established an international consortium with Hoya Lens Vietnam Ltd. (HOLV), a subsidiary in Vietnam in August 2016, and introduced energy-saving equipment utilizing subsidies from JCM equipment subsidized business system by April 2018. The Group began initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Vietnam starting in June 2018.

For additional information about Hoya's environmental programs, visit https://www.hoya.co.jp/english/csr/environment.html. ■

Eastman Spurs Sustainable Eyewear's Next Wave

Continued from page 39

to Eastman's eyewear category efforts going forward. "For example, demo lenses are also a pain point for the industry," he told *VM*. "We're working on some solutions in this arena. And we are also working in the sun lens category to see what our support can be for that sector of the industry as well." Goldman anticipates a continued series of announcements from the company in the coming months.

On the corporate side, Eastman's own commitment to its sustainability programs and initiatives across industries is a major priority. In late January of this year, Eastman board chair and CEO Mark Costa and Tennessee Governor Bill Lee announced the company's plans to build one of the world's largest plastic-to-plastic molecular recycling facilities at its site in Kingsport, Tenn. This world-scale facility will convert polyester waste that often ends up in landfills and waterways into durable products, creating an optimized circular economy.

Over the next two years, the company will invest approximately $250 million in the facility, which will support Eastman's commitment to addressing the global waste crisis and to mitigating challenges created by climate change, while also creating value for its stakeholders.

Utilizing the company's polyester renewal technology, the new facility will use over 100,000 metric tons of plastic waste that cannot be recycled by current mechanical methods to produce premium, high-quality specialty plastics made with recycled content. This process of using plastic waste as the main feedstock is a true material-to-material solution and will not only reduce the company's use of fossil feedstocks, but will reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 20 percent to 30 percent relative to fossil feedstocks.

"With the growing demand for products made with recycled content and the urgent need to address the global plastic waste crisis, now is the time for Eastman to take this step," Costa noted. Eastman was one of the pioneers in developing methanolysis technology at commercial scale and has more than three decades of expertise in this innovative recycling process. More on the company's circular economy strategy is posted at eastman.com/buildingbetter. ■

A Changed World Adjusts Priorities as Optical Ups Its Awareness of the Environment

Continued from page 46

An independent and growing number of eyewear companies are among the ever increasing roster who are upping their commitments.

L'Amy America, is one. The company started with its Ben Sherman collection as a brand embracing sustainability throughout. This year, the company will introduce even more from their portfolio into the sustainability realm. Said Stephen Rappoport, president of L'Amy America, "We're developing products with a coherent earth friendly narrative across all our brands for 2021 where our first foray into sustainability was in our fashion division with the launch of our British heritage brand Ben Sherman.

"Having a sustainability story is becoming more and more important not only to our retail partners but to the end consumer where interest and demand is increasing, especially among millennials. Next, we're taking this narrative to our new Nicole Miller Resort collection with the launch of our planet friendly sunglass collection followed by Ann Taylor ophthalmic and finishing the year with Sperry."

De Rigo, internationally and in North America, is another player which is augmenting its sustainability commitments. Alessandro Baronti, who heads De Rigo U.S., said, "De Rigo has embarked upon a pathway to sustainable development, with the aim of making environmental responsibility an ever more integral part of our business model.

"All of our packaging is made from recyclable, compostable or, in any case, reusable materials and is produced by FSC-certified (Forest Stewardship Council) suppliers that use raw materials from sustainably-managed forests. As of 2019, we have been working alongside Save the Planet Onlus to safeguard the environment in the fight against climate change, pledging to offset our Co2 emissions," Baronti said.

He added, "We are committed to developing eyewear that is progressively more sustainable. Our collections are increasingly featuring the use of eco-friendly biodegradable and recyclable bio-acetates.

"Many of our brands now include collections or styles that are eco-friendly (with a focus to continue increasing the number of eco styles in the future). These include Police x Lewis Hamilton, where the full collection is eco-friendly, Chopard's new capsule collection, Carolina Herrera New York with several new eco-friendly styles, Tumi—which is launching in May/June—and others to come."

At Modo, a pioneer in the space via its Eco collection and initiatives, Rebecca Giefer, CEO of Modo Americas, reported the company is augmenting that with the debut this year of the new Eco Ocean series, employing recycled and repurposed ocean plastics into a product collection in cooperation with Waste Free Oceans. As Giefer stated, "Companies need to stand for something. Companies need to make a difference." ■