

## **Conscious Fashion Design Mini-Playbook**

**An Introduction to the Key  
Ingredients in  
the Conscious Fashion  
Design & Development Process  
for Designers and  
Entrepreneurs**



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Welcome!

## Mini- Course for Conscious Fashion Brand Foundations



🌱 Welcome to Conscious Fashion Design Mini-Playbook, with Key Ingredients in the Conscious Fashion Design & Development Process for Designers and Entrepreneurs  
I'm Britta Cabanos, Founder & CEO of Inside Fashion Design and The Conscious Fashion Design Academy.

Whether you're a fashion designer, developer, merchandiser, product manager, or creative entrepreneur, this mini-course was carefully crafted to provide you with key ingredients for building a solid foundation. If you're here, you're likely feeling the call to shift how fashion is made—and how it impacts people, the planet, and the future.

This self-paced mini-course offers a step-by-step introduction to conscious fashion development grounded in sustainability, intentional design, and circular thinking. Over five structured phases, you'll gain the foundational tools to:

- \* Clarify your brand's purpose and values
- \* Plan your first collection with strategy and soul
- \* Align your sourcing and development with sustainable principles
- \* Use creativity, tech, and AI mindfully
- \* Begin building a circular, scalable business for the long term

Even if you're not a designer, these steps can guide how you approach your role—whether you're a student, or an industry pro leading product strategy, planning assortments, working in sourcing, or starting a fashion business from scratch. The design phases inside are designed to guide you how to design, plan, and create with more clarity, intention, and responsibility.

You don't have to be perfect. You just have to begin—and this is your starting point. This course is designed for all experience levels, from beginners to seasoned professionals.

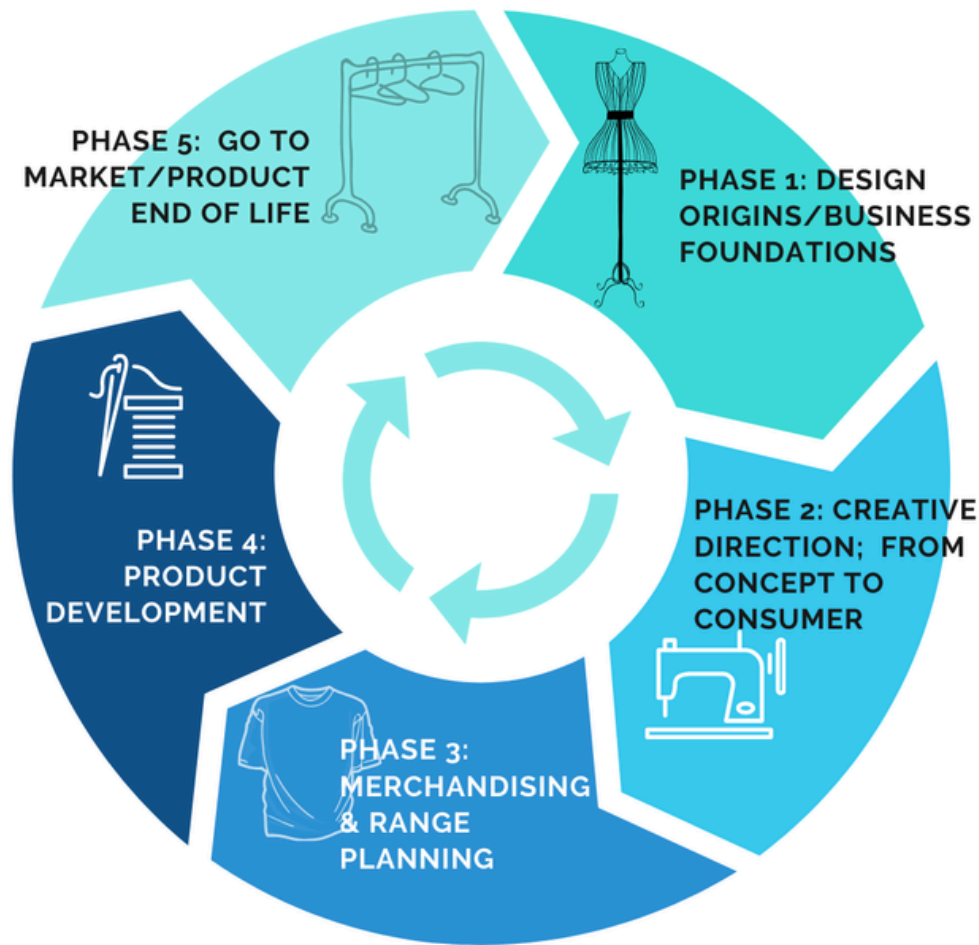
👉 Ready to dive in? Download the whole workbook, explore each phase at your own pace, and start building your conscious fashion foundation today. When you're ready to go deeper, join our full Conscious Fashion Design Academy for hands-on support, expert feedback, and live mentorship.



# Mini- Course for Conscious Fashion Brand Foundations

## The 5 Phases of Building Conscious Fashion

This workbook is a condensed version of our The Essential Conscious Fashion Designers Playbook, based on the 5 critical phases of conscious development. Here you'll begin shaping your first product or brand idea—with purpose, clarity, and strategy and gain an understanding of how involved a design and development process is, how SLOW it is, if you're doing it mindfully and consciously. This is the opposite of fast fashion- the goal is to gain insights and understanding on what it takes to create fashion for People, Planet and Profit first. Included in our own process, are Key Design Principles- we will talk about that more later.

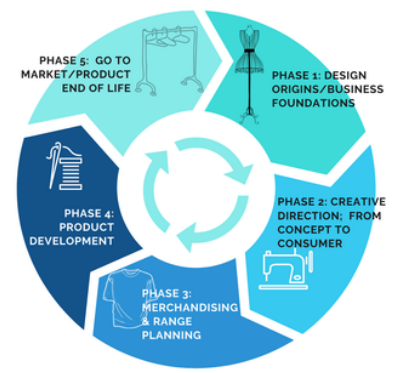


The Conscious Fashion Design and Development Model. Broken into five stages, each stage includes essential steps necessary for a designer or brand to implement to achieve a closed loop system to create “conscious” fashion.

To gain the full list of actionable steps within each stage, along with resources, check out  
The Essential Conscious Fashion Designer's Playbook:  
to Achieve Conscious Fashion

# Phase 1: Design Origins & Business Foundation

## Theme: Discovering Purpose & Planning Consciously

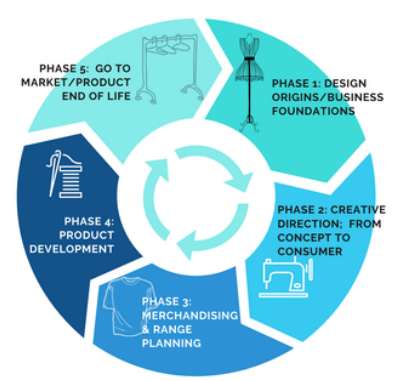


### Action Steps:

- Clarify Your Brand Purpose
  - Define your WHY:
  - Core values:
  - Write a purpose statement that aligns with sustainability.

# Phase 1: Design Origins & Business Foundation

## Theme: Discovering Purpose & Planning Consciously



### Action Steps:

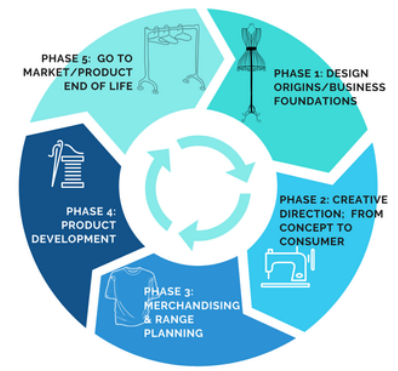
- Conduct Basic Market Research
  - list 3-5 competitors and summarize their strengths.
    - 1.
    - 2
    - 3
    - 4.
    - 5..
- What are your SWOT's? (strengths weaknesses, opportunities and threats) ,

## SWOT ANALYSIS

Strenghts	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats

# Phase 1: Design Origins & Business Foundation

## Theme: Discovering Purpose & Planning Consciously



### Action Steps:

- Identify your target customer using a simple persona worksheet.



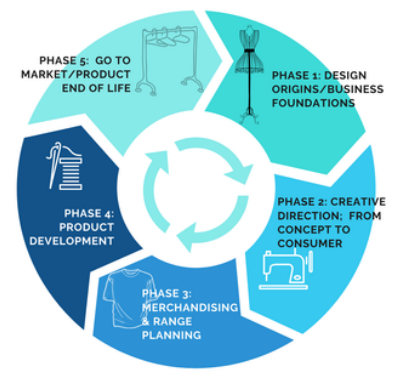
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## BRAND PERSONA

	PERSONA
Name	
Age	
Gender	
Channels you can reach him/her	
Goals/Aspiration	
Pain Points	
How does your product or service to help them solve their problems?	

# Phase 1: Design Origins & Business Foundation

## Theme: Discovering Purpose & Planning Consciously



### Action Steps:

- Vet & Document Your Fashion Idea
  - Sketch your initial concept/s.
  - Share your idea with 2-3 peers or mentors for feedback.
  - Record feedback and refine your idea.

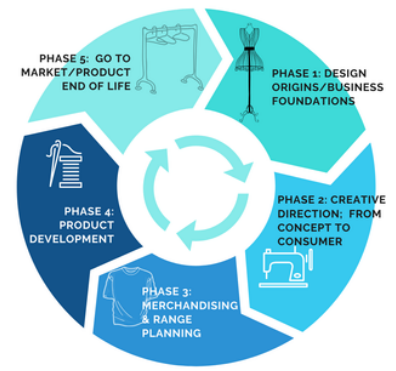
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# Phase 1: Design Origins & Business Foundation

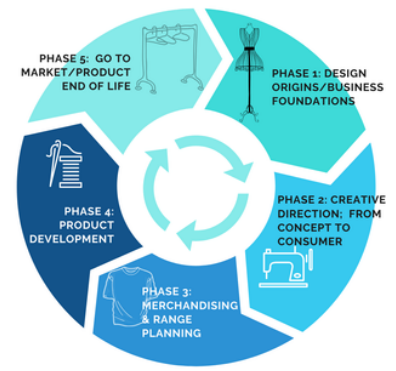
## Theme: Discovering Purpose & Planning Consciously



**Sketches**

# Phase 1: Design Origins & Business Foundation

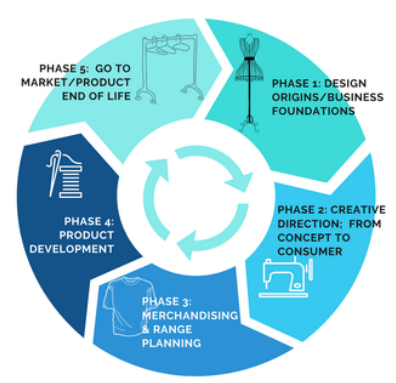
## Theme: Discovering Purpose & Planning Consciously



**Sketches**

# Phase 1: Design Origins & Business Foundation

## Theme: Discovering Purpose & Planning Consciously



### Action Steps:

- Draft a Conscious Business Plan Outline
  - Download a one-page business plan template.
  - Fill in sections for mission, values, and sustainability goals.

**Vision: What am I building?**

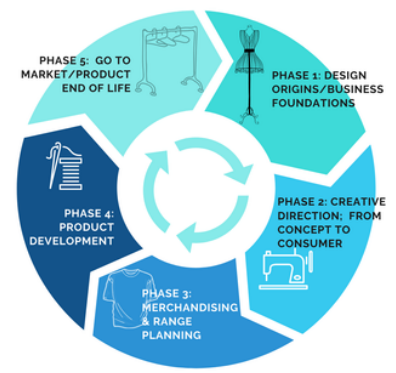
**Mission: Why does my business exist?**

**Objectives: What will I measure?**

**Strategies: How will I grow my business? What will make it successful over time?**

## Phase 1: Design Origins & Business Foundation

### Theme: Discovering Purpose & Planning Consciously



#### Action Steps:

- Map Out Your Initial Budget
  - Use a simple spreadsheet to estimate startup costs.
  - List potential funding sources (personal savings, crowdfunding, etc.).
- <https://www.rippling.com/blog/small-business-budget-template>

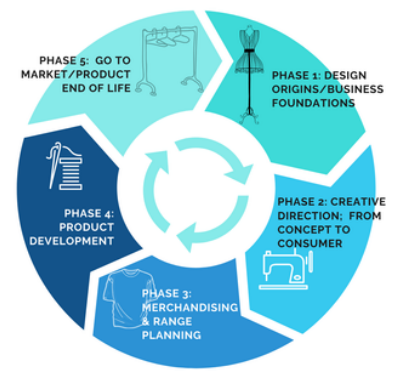
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## Phase 2: Merchandising & Range Planning

### Theme: Planning Your Product & Sourcing Responsibly

#### Action Steps:

- Plan Your First Product Range
  - List 3-5 products for your launch collection.
  - Identify which are core, seasonal, or experimental.

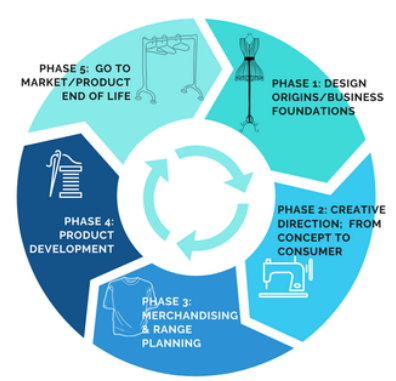


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## Phase 2: Merchandising & Range Planning

### Theme: Planning Your Product & Sourcing Responsibly



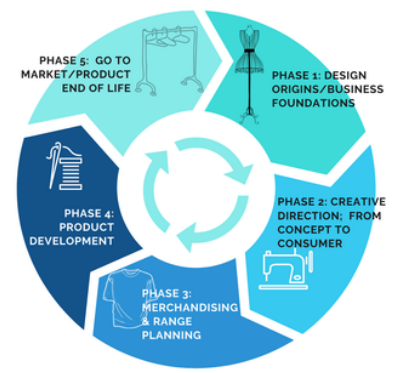
#### Action Steps:

- Structure Your Offering
  - Assign a "good, better, best" price point to each product.
  - Briefly describe what makes each tier unique.

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## Phase 2: Merchandising & Range Planning

### Theme: Planning Your Product & Sourcing Responsibly



#### Action Steps:

- Begin Sustainable Sourcing
  - Research 2-3 sustainable fabric suppliers.
  - Create a checklist for evaluating material sustainability.

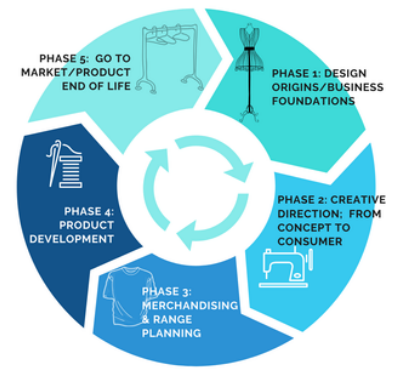
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### Theme: Planning Your Product & Sourcing Responsibly

#### Action Steps:

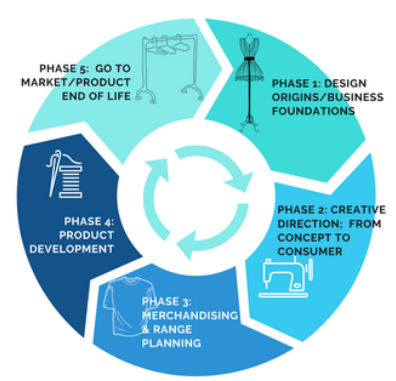
- Research Ethical Manufacturing:
  - research partners and determine best fit



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## Phase 2: Merchandising & Range Planning

### Theme: Planning Your Product & Sourcing Responsibly



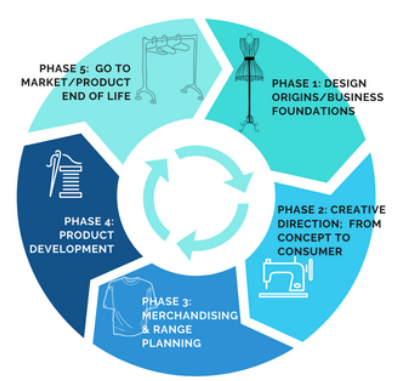
#### Action Steps:

- Set a Simple Product Development Timeline
  - Map key milestones (design, sourcing, prototyping) on a 6-18-month calendar.

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## Phase 3: Creative Direction – From Concept to Consumer

### Theme: Building Identity & Storytelling Through Design



### Action Steps:

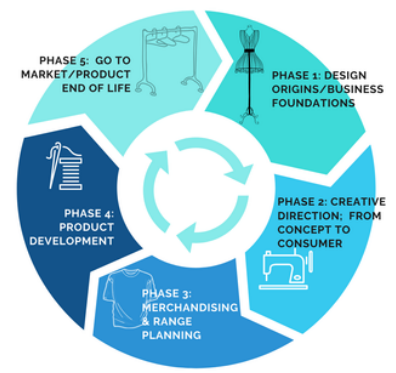
- Define Your Creative Direction
  - Fill out a creative vision board (digital or physical).
  - List 3 adjectives that describe your brand's design identity.

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## Phase 3: Creative Direction – From Concept to Consumer

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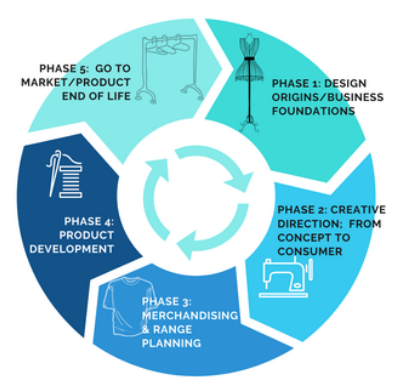
#### Action Steps:

- Explore Trend Forecasting
  - Review a 2025 trend summary.
  - Note 2-3 trends that fit your brand's ethos

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## Phase 3: Creative Direction – From Concept to Consumer

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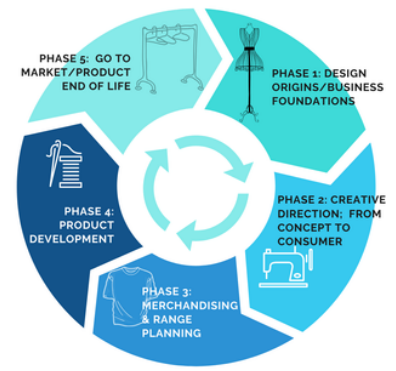
#### Action Steps:

- Set Design Requirements
  - Write 3 “must-have” criteria for all your designs (e.g., ethical materials, versatility).

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## Phase 3: Creative Direction – From Concept to Consumer

### Theme: Building Identity & Storytelling Through Design



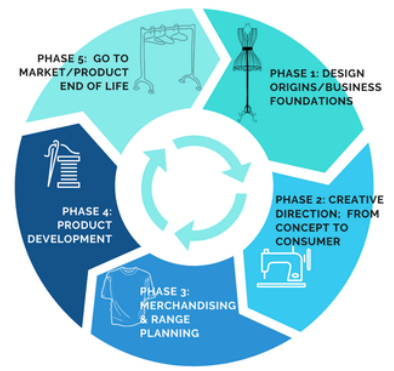
#### Action Steps:

- Build Your Designer Toolbox
  - Download a basic tech pack template and mood board template.
  - Organize your design files and resources for easy access.

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## Phase 4: Product Development

### Theme: Prototyping, Tech, and Merchandising for Success



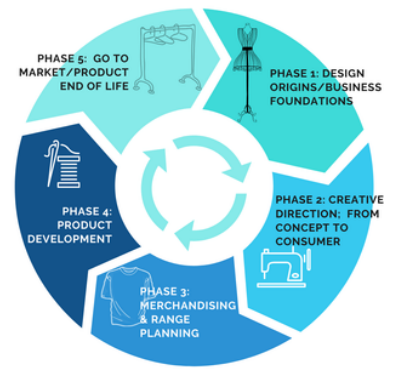
#### Action Steps:

- Prototype & Test
  - Create a basic prototype (even a rough sample).
  - Gather feedback from 2-3 people and note improvements.

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## Phase 4: Product Development

### Theme: Prototyping, Tech, and Merchandising for Success



#### Action Steps:

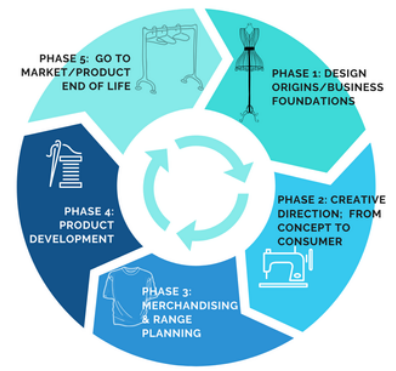
- Build a Simple Tech Pack
  - Fill in a tech pack template for one product

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## Phase 4: Product Development

### Theme: Prototyping, Tech, and Merchandising for Success



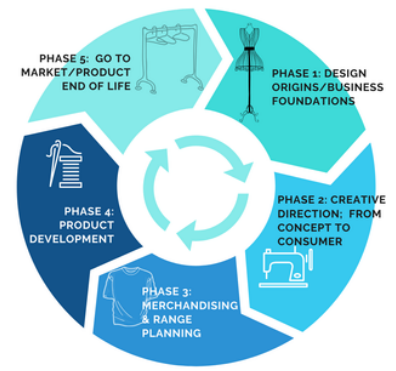
#### Action Steps:

- Explore AI Tools
  - Try a free AI tool for mood boards or color palettes. What tools are available?

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## Phase 4: Product Development

### Theme: Prototyping, Tech, and Merchandising for Success



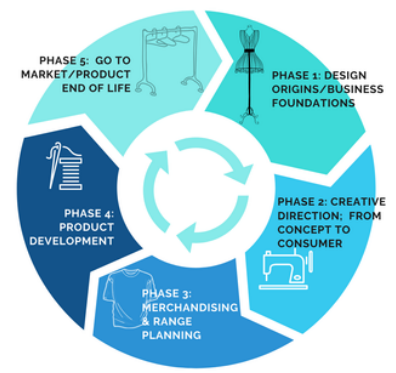
#### Action Steps:

- Plan Your Assortment
  - Use a template to map out your product assortment by category and price.

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## Phase 5: Go-To-Market & Circular Future

### Theme: Launching, Scaling, and Evolving



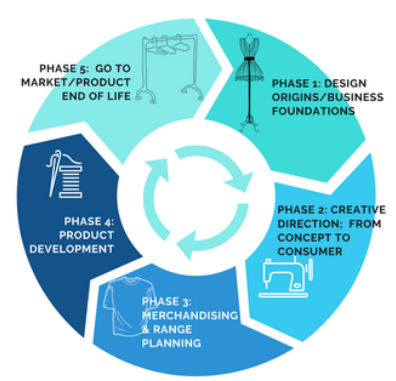
#### Action Steps:

- Outline Your Go-To-Market Plan
  - Identify your main sales channels (e.g., online, pop-up, wholesale).
  - Draft a short launch story to share on social media

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## Phase 5: Go-To-Market & Circular Future

### Theme: Launching, Scaling, and Evolving



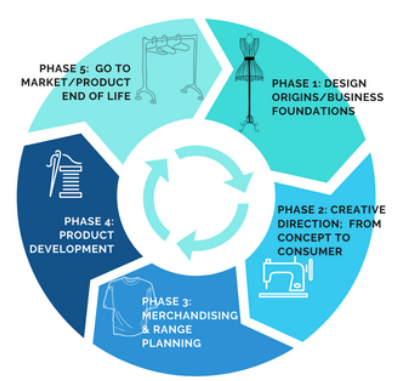
#### Action Steps:

- Plan for Circularity
  - Sketch a simple end-of-life plan for your products (recycling, resale, etc.).

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## Phase 5: Go-To-Market & Circular Future

### Theme: Launching, Scaling, and Evolving



#### Action Steps:

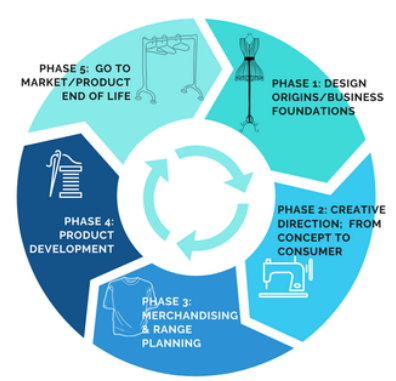
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## Phase 5: Go-To-Market & Circular Future

### Theme: Launching, Scaling, and Evolving



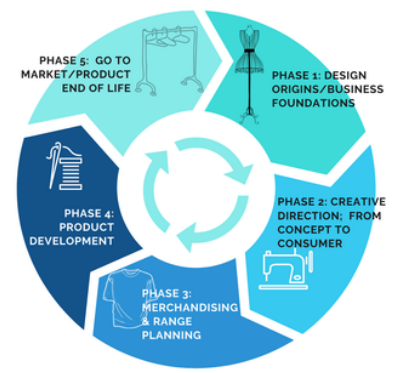
#### Action Steps:

- Reflect & Evolve
  - After a mock launch, gather feedback from your audience.
  - Write down 2 lessons learned and one improvement for next time.

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## Phase 5: Go-To-Market & Circular Future

### Theme: Launching, Scaling, and Evolving



### Action Steps:

- Create an Authentic Marketing Message
  - Draft a short brand message focusing on integrity and transparency.
  - List 1-2 ways you'll avoid greenwashing in your communications.

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## Leading Brands and Initiatives:



- Patagonia: Known for its Worn Wear program, Patagonia encourages customers to repair, reuse, and recycle garments. The brand also uses recycled materials and offers a trade-in program for used clothing, extending product life and reducing waste<sup>[1][2]</sup>.
- Eileen Fisher: Operates a take-back program where customers can return old clothes for resale or recycling. The brand focuses on organic materials and fair labor practices<sup>[2]</sup>.
- Stella McCartney: Pioneers in sustainable fashion, Stella McCartney uses recycled and organic materials and designs for longevity and recyclability<sup>[2]</sup>.
- Levi's: Through Levi's SecondHand, customers can buy and sell pre-owned Levi's clothing. The brand also partners with thredUP to expand secondhand options<sup>[2]</sup>.
- Nike and Adidas: Both have launched circular design initiatives-Nike with a circular design guide for products and Adidas with its Loop program, which recycles used products into new ones<sup>[2]</sup>.
- MUD Jeans: Offers a leasing program, take-back scheme, and jeans made from 100% post-consumer recycled cotton. Customers can return any brand's jeans for recycling, and the company promotes repair services<sup>[3][4]</sup>.
- RE/DONE: Upcycles vintage Levi's denim and other materials, turning post-consumer waste into new luxury garments. Over half of their sales come from upcycled and recycled clothing<sup>[3][5]</sup>.
- Thousand Fell: Focuses on shoes, offering refurbishment and recycling services for returned footwear, and accepts items from other brands<sup>[3]</sup>.
- Tentree: Partners with Supercircle to enable customers to return clothes (any brand) for resale or recycling, ensuring nothing goes to landfill<sup>[3]</sup>.
- Hylo Athletics: Accepts returned shoes for recycling and offers care and repair services, supporting a closed-loop system for athletic footwear<sup>[3]</sup>.

## Recommended Reading



- **Overdressed: The Shockingly High Cost of Cheap Fashion** by Elizabeth L. Cline. Explores the impact of fast fashion and is considered a foundational text in sustainable fashion.
- **The Conscious Closet: The Revolutionary Guide to Looking Good While Doing Good** by Elizabeth L. Cline. Practical guide to building a sustainable wardrobe.
- **Fashionopolis: The Price of Fast Fashion and the Future of Clothes** by Dana Thomas. Investigates the industry's problems and highlights innovators working toward sustainability.
- **To Die For: Is Fashion Wearing Out the World?** by Lucy Siegle. Examines the ethical and environmental consequences of fast fashion.
- **Sustainable Fashion and Textiles: Design Journeys** by Kate Fletcher. A comprehensive, visionary look at sustainable fashion, praised for its depth and analysis.
- **Slow Fashion: Aesthetics Meets Ethics** by Safia Minney. Showcases the slow fashion movement and its benefits.
- **Circular Design for Fashion** by Ellen MacArthur Foundation. Practical insights, case studies, and contributions from over 80 industry leaders.
- **Circular Fashion: Making the Fashion Industry Sustainable** by Peggy Blum (Laurence King Publishing). Holistic guide with case studies and business solutions for circularity.
- **ReFashioned: Cutting-Edge Clothing from Upcycled Materials** by Sass Brown. Showcases innovative designers and upcycling in fashion.
- **Fashion Fibers: Designing for Sustainability** by Annie Gullingsrud. Foundational resource on sustainable materials and circular design principles.
- **Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things** by William McDonough & Michael Braungart. Influential book on circular and sustainable design, not limited to fashion but widely referenced in the field.
- **How To Break Up With Fast Fashion** by Lauren Bravo. A witty, practical guide to changing your shopping habits, embracing repair and recycling, and falling back in love with your wardrobe without environmental guilt.



## Key Circular Design Practices:

- Design for Longevity: Creating garments that last longer, reducing the need for frequent replacements<sup>[6][7]</sup>.
- Use of Sustainable Materials: Incorporating recycled, organic, or biodegradable fabrics<sup>[4][6]</sup>.
- Take-Back and Recycling Programs: Encouraging customers to return old garments for resale, upcycling, or recycling<sup>[2][4]</sup>.
- Repair Services: Offering repair options to extend the life of clothing<sup>[2][4]</sup>.
- Rental and Leasing Models: Keeping garments in use for longer through rental or leasing schemes<sup>[4]</sup>.

These brands and practices illustrate how circular design is being successfully implemented across the fashion industry to reduce waste, extend product life, and promote sustainability.

Sources:

- <https://sustainabilitymag.com/top10/top-10-brands-embracing-the-circular-economy-in-2023>
- <https://www.getwalletmax.com/post/circular-fashion-how-brands-are-reducing-waste-and-saving-the-planet>
- <https://pomp.store/blogs/journal/best-circular-fashion-brands>
- <https://www.projectcece.com/blog/712/best-circular-fashion-brands/>
- <https://www.considerbeyond.com/lets-consider-beyond/5-fashion-brands-that-contribute-to-a-circular-economy>
- <https://www.reconomy.com/2024/09/03/the-state-of-the-circular-economy-in-the-fashion-industry/>
- <https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/topics/fashion/overview>



## Self- Reflection and Notes:

- Where am I starting from?
- Where do I want to get to?



# Brand Purpose Worksheet



Unlock your brand's "why" with this step-by-step worksheet. Print it out or fill it in digitally to clarify your mission and set a purposeful direction for your brand.

## 1. Identify Your Core Values

What matters most to you as a founder and as a brand? List 3–5 values that feel non-negotiable.

Value 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Value 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Value 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Value 4: \_\_\_\_\_

Value 5: \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Define the Change You Want to See

What positive impact do you want your brand to have on the world or your industry? (Examples: reduce waste, empower artisans, promote inclusivity, etc.)

The change I want to see: \_\_\_\_\_

Who benefits from this change? \_\_\_\_\_

Why is this important to me? \_\_\_\_\_

## 3. Understand Your Audience

Who are you serving? What do they care about?

My ideal customer is: \_\_\_\_\_

Their core values are: \_\_\_\_\_

How does my purpose connect with their needs or dreams? \_\_\_\_\_

## 4. Draft Your Purpose Statement

Combine your values, the change you want to create, and your audience into a clear, one-sentence purpose statement.

My brand exists to \_\_\_\_\_

For (audience) \_\_\_\_\_

By (how you'll do it) \_\_\_\_\_

### Example:

My brand exists to empower women (audience) by creating ethically-made, size-inclusive fashion (how) that celebrates diversity and supports fair labor (values/change).

## The Essential Fashion Designers Playbook



The \*Designer's Playbook\* is your essential guide to building a brand and launching a design business with clarity, creativity, and purpose. Developed exclusively for our readers, this toolkit is packed with step-by-step roadmaps, design and development tools, professional templates, and branding insights—everything you need to create, run, and grow a successful design brand. This go-to resource is designed to support you at every stage, from concept development to product launch, providing you with the insider knowledge and structure necessary to bring your vision to life. Consider it your personalized playbook for making strategic, impactful moves in the fashion industry.



# Thank You!

Living Your Best Life  
**ifd**



IFD is here for you to provide opportunities to Learn, Grow & Connect within the Fashion Industry. IFD provides resources to achieve results & transformation in your design career journey and having some fun along the way!

Share your design learnings, your brand, favorite resources & experiences.  
I'd love to share your insights!  
reach us at [\*\*design@insidefashiondesign.net\*\*](mailto:design@insidefashiondesign.net)

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