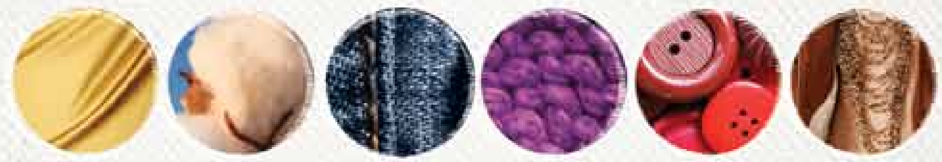
Styling Sustainability

What's en vogue when it comes to eco-fashion?

Contents



Introduction

As the title of this report suggests, understanding green apparel consumer demand, and the associated market opportunity, was the focus of the **Ryan Partnership® Chicago/Mambo Sprouts® Marketing *Styling Sustainability*** consumer apparel survey, Winter 2012. Our hypothesis for the poll was simple–more consumers would purchase eco/sustainable apparel if it were easy to find. But how many more–and would that indicate significant growth potential for apparel retailers and manufacturers? Is there greater opportunity in certain apparel segments over others? What is the best way to motivate shoppers to purchase eco/sustainable apparel? And, what are the roles of manufacturers and retailers in meeting these shoppers' needs and growing the market?

The general findings in ***Styling Sustainability*** reinforce a key conclusion forwarded in our 2011 research white paper–***One Green Score for One Earth*** (http://onegreenscore.com). Consumers want a clear and objective means of understanding the sustainability impact of their purchases (including their apparel purchases), and will vote with their wallets for those brands and retail outlets that are capable of credibly communicating on this topic.

Background & Methodology

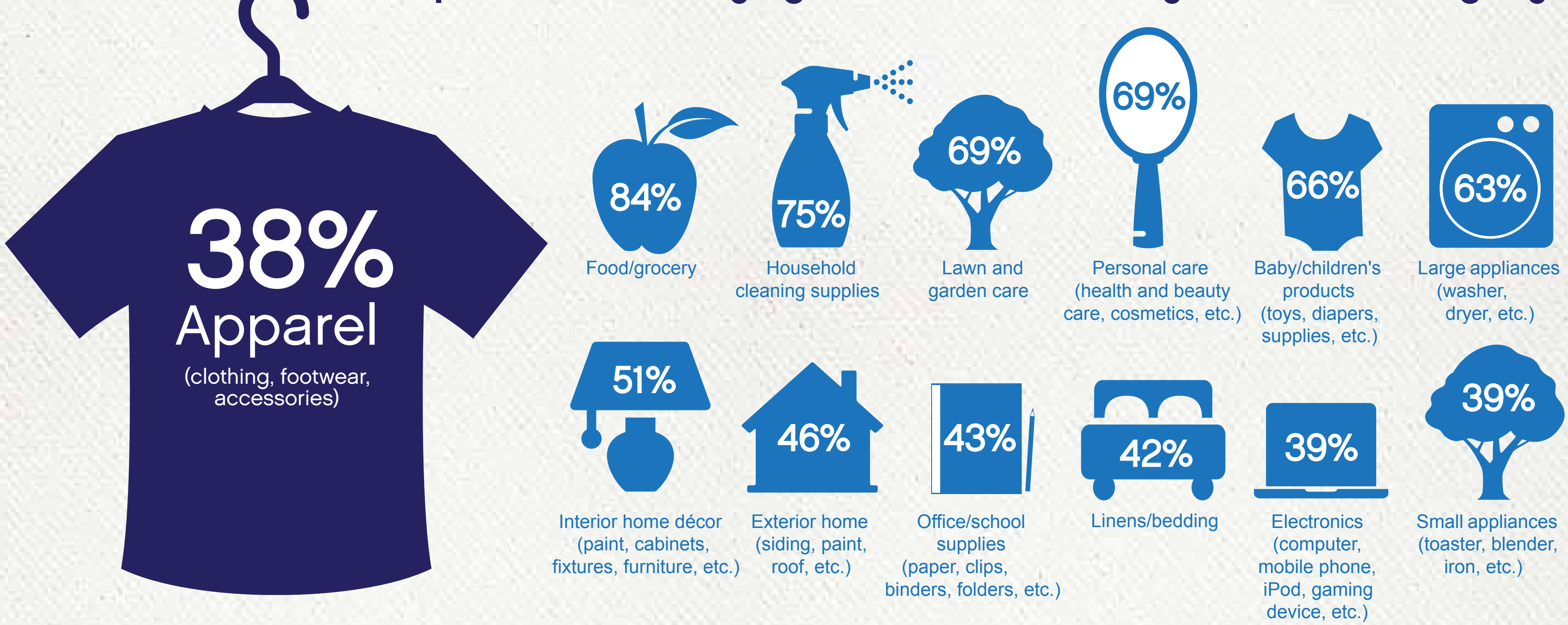
The Ryan Partnership Chicago/Mambo Sprouts Marketing *Styling Sustainability* consumer apparel survey was fielded in December 2011 among 1,000 health and eco-conscious consumers to acquire insight into clothing, footwear and accessory purchase behavior. The survey was conducted online using the MamboTrack® panel and was part of the Mambo Sprouts Marketing *Natural & Organic Consumer 2012 Outlook Study.*

Findings

A Market with Strong Growth Potential

Only four in 10 shoppers (38%) believe it is ***important*** to buy eco/sustainable apparel, whereas three in four or more claim buying eco/sustainable food/grocery and household cleaning supplies is essential (84% and 75% respectively). On the face of it, buying green appears to be relatively unimportant when shopping for apparel.

Importance of Buying Eco/Sustainable by Product Category



Base: Respondents that indicated they buy the category

Source: Ryan Partnership Chicago/Mambo Sprouts Marketing, *Styling Sustainability* consumer apparel survey, Winter 2012

However, seven in ten (69%) shoppers report that they ***consider*** eco/sustainability when buying apparel, with only three in ten claiming they rarely (23%) or don't consider (7%) this factor when making their apparel purchase decisions. Clearly, green is more important than most are able to express, with eco-features being part of the purchase criteria considered by many consumers. This apparent contradiction indicates the opportunity for the apparel industry to better respond by providing shoppers with additional and improved information, which will allow them to carry through on their intentions.

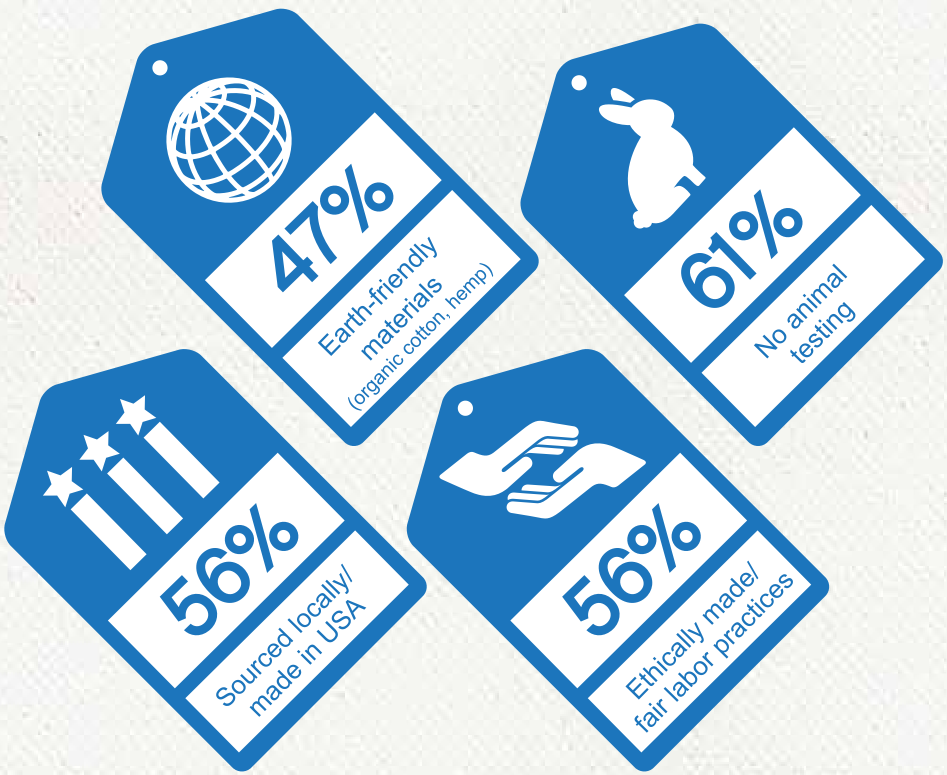
Source: Ryan Partnership Chicago/Mambo Sprouts Marketing, *Styling Sustainability* consumer apparel survey, Winter 2012

Findings

Sustainability Factors as Important as "Fun" and "Fashionable"

What are the strongest decision drivers when buying apparel? It should come as no surprise that among all shoppers, comfort/fit (94%), price (92%) and durability/quality (90%) are most important. But eco/sustainable features such as no animal testing (61%), ethically made/fair labor practices (56%), sourced locally/made in the USA (56%) and earth-friendly organic materials (47%) were also cited as important factors among one in two or more shoppers. This is similar in importance to the weight shoppers give to factors such as fun to wear (58%) and fashionable (51%)–sustainability factors are clearly a close second, behind the expected top-decision drivers.

Important Factors in Choosing an Apparel Brand/Item



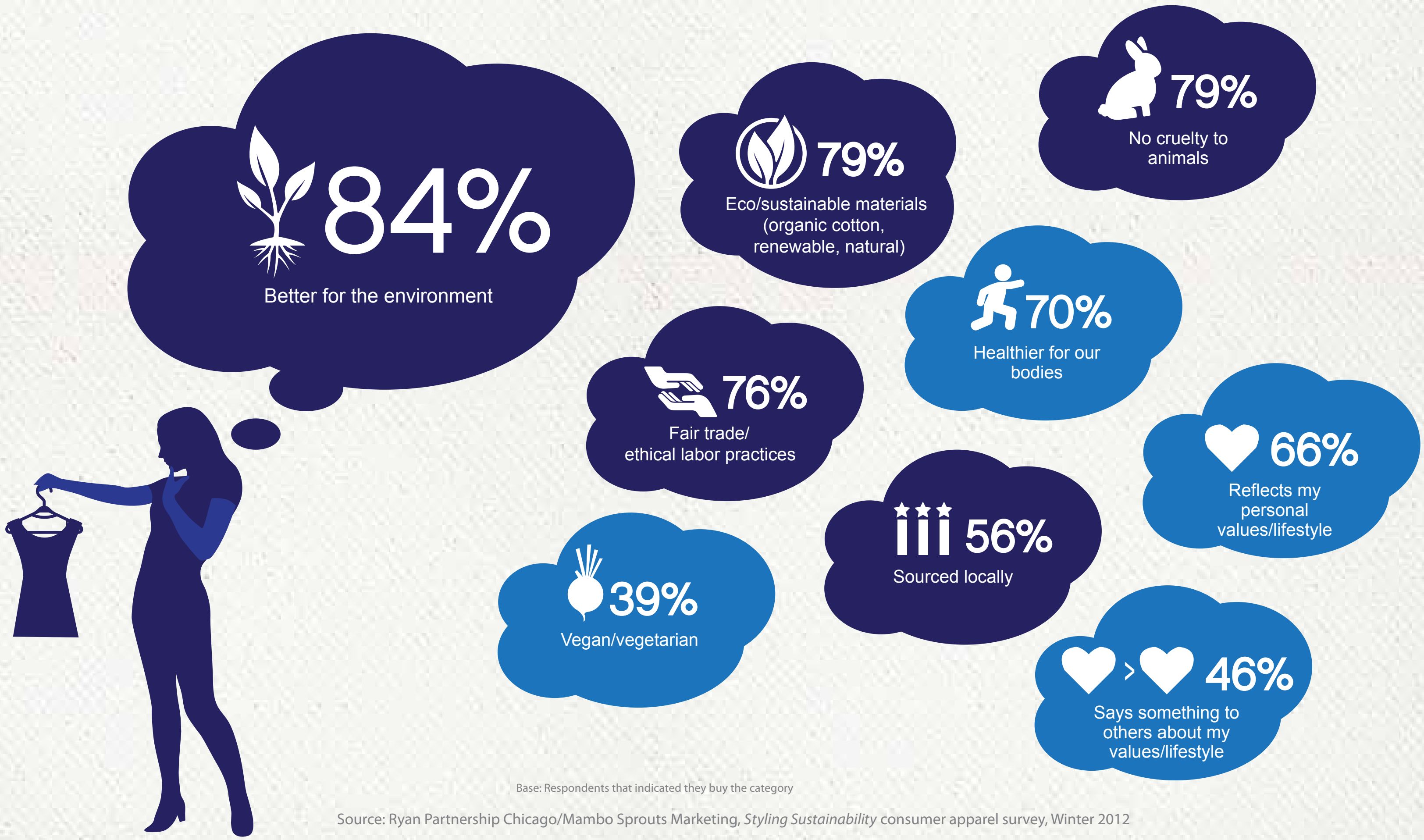
94% Comfort/fit	92% Price
90% Durability/quality	78% Available where I shop
58% Fun to wear	51% Fashion
45% 100% cotton	43% Green production
42% Brand name/reputation	32% Vintage/secondhand
31% Handmade/craft/artisan	20% % of purchase donated to a cause

Source: Ryan Partnership Chicago/Mambo Sprouts Marketing, *Styling Sustainability* consumer apparel survey, Winter 2012

Findings
Key Eco-features

For shoppers who at least sometimes consider eco/sustainability when buying apparel, eight in ten or more, identified environmental motives (84%) and green materials (79%), along with humane factors such as no cruelty to animals (79%) and fair labor practices (76%), as the key features that influence their apparel purchases. Much like food/grocery, local origins are also important in the decision-making process, with one in two (56%) consumers among this group identifying locally sourced as an important factor, when shopping for clothing, footwear and accessories.

Factors Important in Eco/Sustainable Purchase Decisions



Base: Respondents that indicated they buy the category

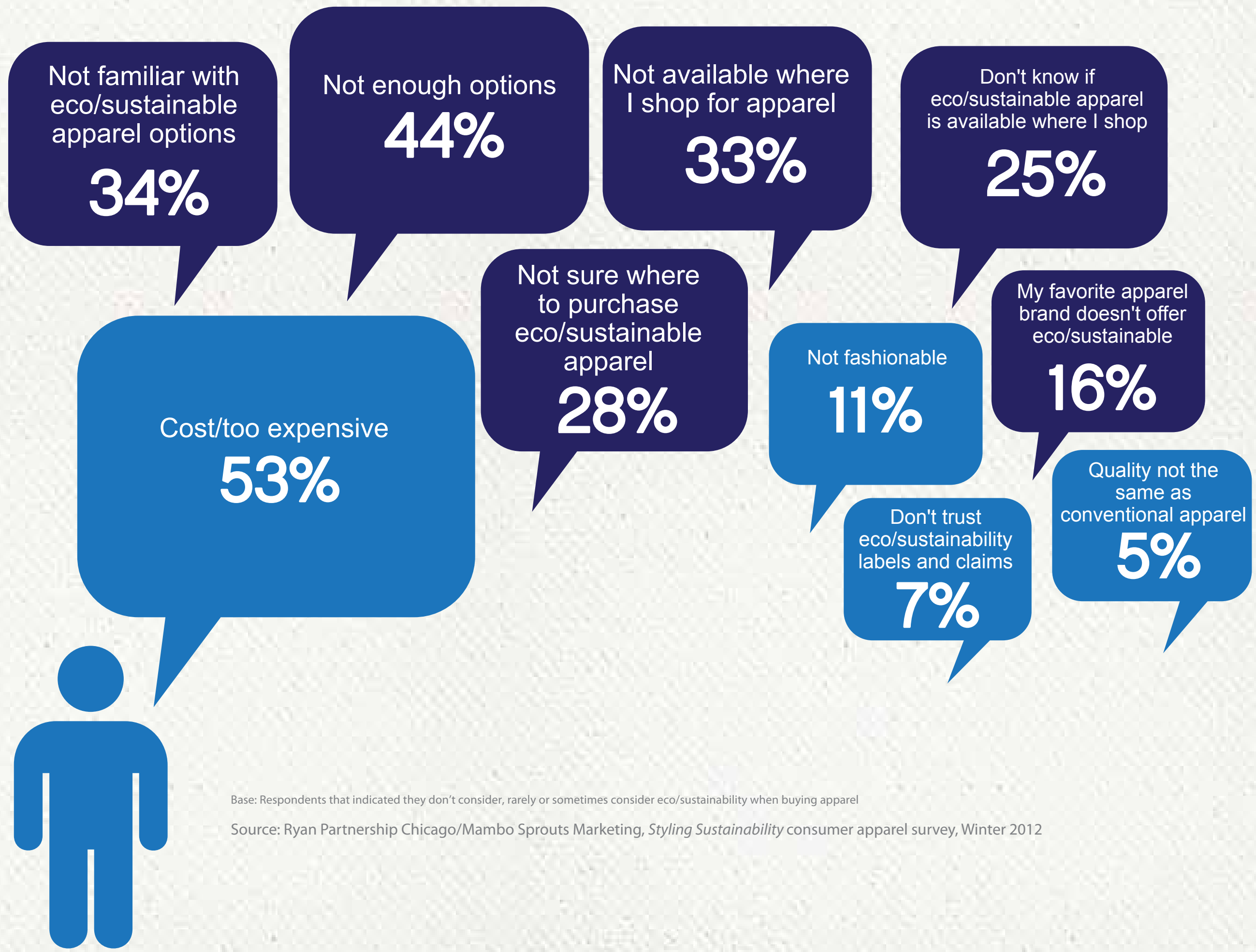
Source: Ryan Partnership Chicago/Mambo Sprouts Marketing, *Styling Sustainability* consumer apparel survey, Winter 2012

Findings

Perceived Lack of Availability a Key Barrier

While price will always be top-of-mind with shoppers, lack of availability appears to be a strong purchase barrier to eco-fashion. About one in three or more don't buy eco/sustainable apparel because they are not familiar with green options (34%), eco-selections are not available where they shop (33%), or there just aren't enough options to choose from (44%). One in four are not even sure where to purchase eco/sustainable apparel (28%).

Reasons for Not Regularly Considering Eco/Sustainability in Purchasing Apparel



Base: Respondents that indicated they don't consider, rarely or sometimes consider eco/sustainability when buying apparel

Source: Ryan Partnership Chicago/Mambo Sprouts Marketing, *Styling Sustainability* consumer apparel survey, Winter 2012

Findings

Awareness Gained Mostly In-Store

Increased awareness–building efforts by brands, and especially retailers, appear likely to pay off handsomely in sustainable apparel growth. Whether they never, rarely, sometimes or always consider eco/sustainability when purchasing apparel, shoppers become aware of green fashion choices primarily at the point-of-sale, either on apparel tags (57%) or in-store signage and information (37%). Technology, in the form of Internet search and social media, plays a less important role in providing apparel sustainability information, though we expect that role will grow in the future as technology, fashion and shopping become increasingly intertwined.

Awareness/Information on Eco/Sustainable Apparel Found

Tags/info on the apparel

57%

Signs/info in-store

37%

Store salespeople

9%

27%	Ads	22%	From the brand's website
26%	Word of mouth (friends, family)	19%	From the retailer's website
23%	Through online search	18%	Social media sites (Facebook, blogs)
22%	Online reviews/ recommendations	6%	Other

Source: Ryan Partnership Chicago/Mambo Sprouts Marketing, *Styling Sustainability* consumer apparel survey, Winter 2012

Findings

Opportunity to Increase Awareness

Eco-conscious food/grocery and household cleaning products have managed to overcome a number of these same purchase barriers (i.e. cost-value, options, availability, etc.) through strong in- and out-of-store sustainability communications and merchandising, as well as third-party certifications such as the USDA Organic seal. The majority (61%) of consumers would be interested in an apparel sustainability rating or index, as it would help their comparison shopping and provide information that could allow them to more easily and speedily find and select sustainable items. Some also thought an apparel index could assist them in determining what stores to shop and which brands to buy.

"It would be a tipping point if I were choosing between two products of similar price and quality, or might persuade me to buy the more expensive product between two similar products."

"It would be great to know more at the point of purchase about how sustainable an item is, so I can vote better informed with my dollars."

"I'd be interested in knowing that there are alternative options out there for clothing that are made with natural and/or organic fibers, the brands that carry them and where they can be purchased at low cost."

Findings
Opportunity to Increase Awareness

Interest in an Apparel Sustainability Rating or Index

61%

Source: Ryan Partnership Chicago/Mambo Sprouts Marketing, *Styling Sustainability* consumer apparel survey, Winter 2012

Findings
Outlets Shopped

Respondents overwhelmingly reported shopping for apparel at mass merchants and department stores, with six in ten (62%) frequenting Target and over four in ten patronizing Kohl's (44%). Though, when asked via an open-ended question to name an apparel retailer they considered sustainable, fewer than one in three could do so. It's worth noting, too, that the top-named eco-fashion retailer was Whole Foods Market–a natural grocer–followed by Patagonia and secondhand merchants.

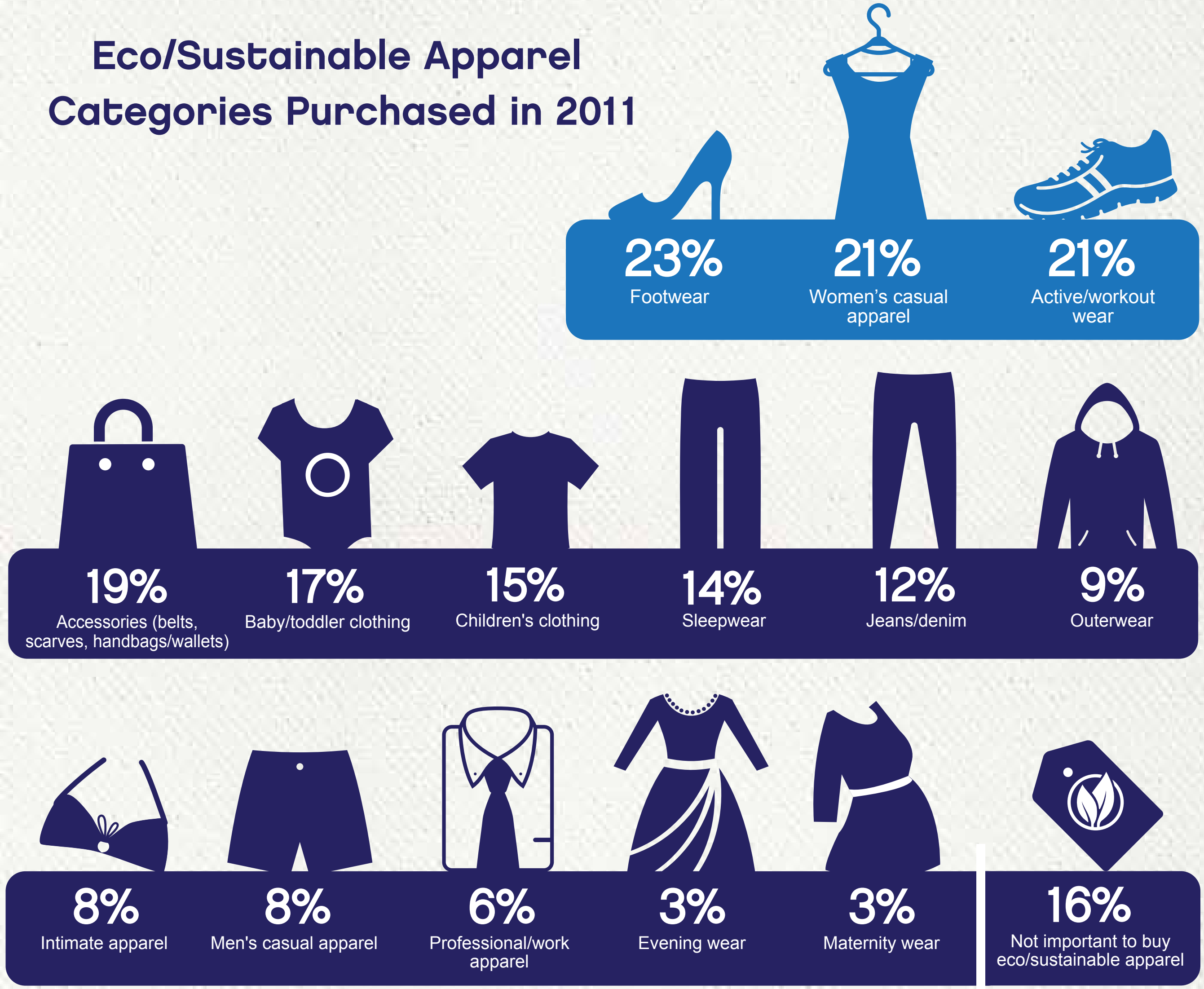
Retail Stores Regularly Shopped for Apparel in 2011

Source: Ryan Partnership Chicago/Mambo Sprouts Marketing, *Styling Sustainability* consumer apparel survey, Winter 2012

Findings
Categories Purchased

Eco/sustainable food purchasing often begins with basic items (i.e. dairy/milk, produce, baby food). Green apparel has gateway segments as well (i.e. sneakers, t-shirts, yoga clothes), and these entry categories led consumer purchasing in 2011, with one in five respondents having bought eco/sustainable footwear (23%), women's casual apparel (21%) and active/workout wear (21%). This is also most likely due to broader awareness and/or availability of eco-options (i.e. organic cotton/bamboo/recycled materials) in these categories, as a number of manufacturers, and some retailers, have made relatively concerted efforts to promote their green apparel lines that fall within these segments (i.e. Timberland, Nike, REI).

Eco/Sustainable Apparel Categories Purchased in 2011

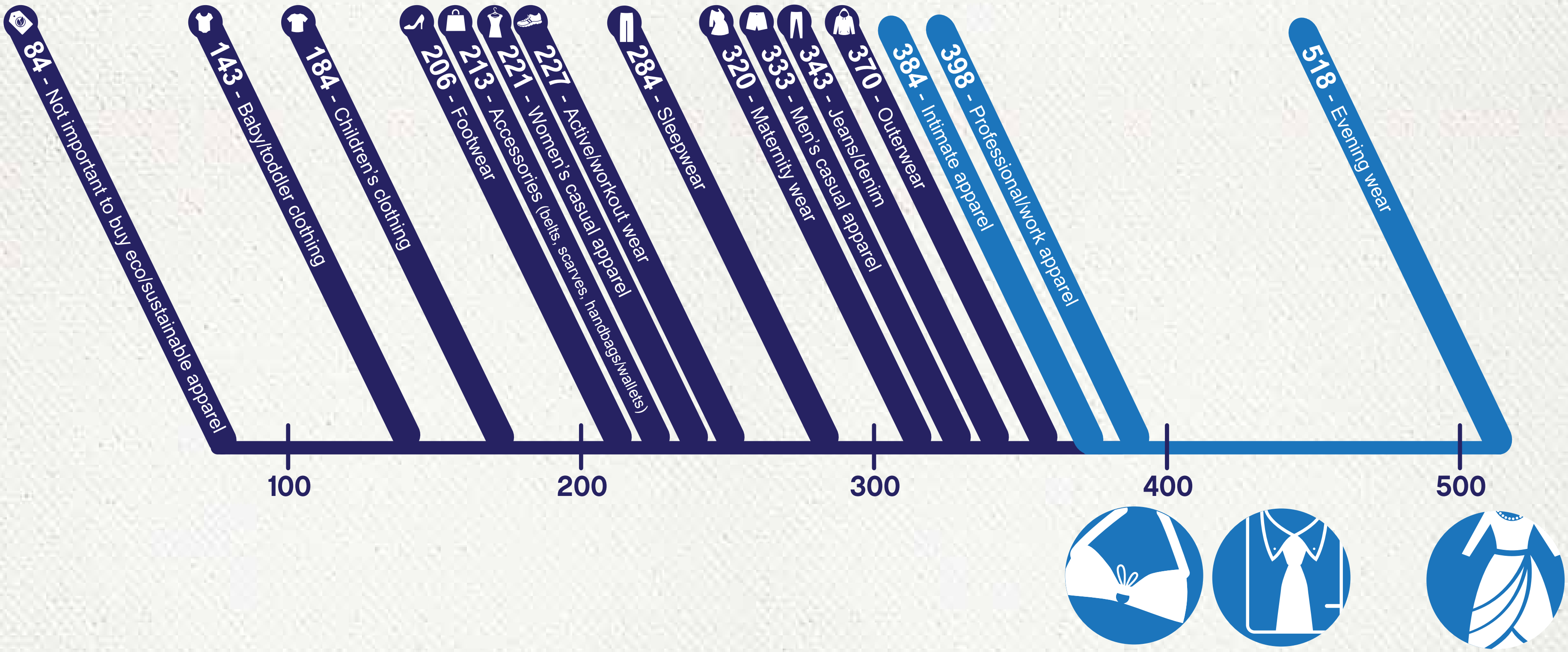


Source: Ryan Partnership Chicago/Mambo Sprouts Marketing, *Styling Sustainability* consumer apparel survey, Winter 2012

Findings
Category Growth Potential

Green fashion categories presenting high potential growth this year (2012 purchase intent vs. 2011 purchase) include professional/work attire (index of 398), intimate apparel (384), outerwear (370), jeans/denim (343), men's casual apparel (333), maternity wear (320) and sleepwear (284) by a factor of three or more. Evening wear surprisingly represents the greatest growth opportunity of all eco-apparel categories with an index of 518. This can most likely be attributed to consumers wishing to make a statement with a special garment and/or the wearer's willingness to invest in a showcase piece.

Eco/Sustainable Apparel Category Growth Potential



Source: Ryan Partnership Chicago/Mambo Sprouts Marketing, *Styling Sustainability* consumer apparel survey, Winter 2012

Conclusions

While currently not a strong determining factor in apparel buying decisions, the sustainable attributes of clothing, footwear and accessories are at least on the radar of most shoppers, which indicates significant growth potential for the eco-fashion industry.

A number of obstacles will have to be overcome, however, before green apparel will be in as high demand as organic milk. Manufacturers will need to both innovate high-quality, stylish green apparel options and more clearly and transparently communicate the sustainable features of their lines, directly on the label/packaging, as most consumers will not seek out this information at this point. Additional merchandising by retailers will be particularly effective in driving awareness and, so, purchase of green apparel, since shoppers report that this type of information is even less available than the information provided by manufacturers. Higher-impact signage, electronic in-store communication, and even store-within-a-store concepts can be expected to pay high dividends for those retailers who employ them to draw shopper attention to the range of green apparel options available.

Shoppers also told us that a rating system or index could aid in alleviating the eco-apparel information void. No industry standard exists at this time, however, nor is one anticipated in the coming months. Therefore, until that time, making eco-apparel as easy to find as possible is what will drive industry growth. This will require a collaborative effort on the part of both retailers and manufacturers, as current consumer perception is that green apparel options are very limited and extremely difficult to find.

Report Authors

Ryan Partnership Chicago

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Ryan Partnership Chicago is a leading expert in promotion, shopper and digital marketing campaigns for emerging and established consumer brands. The company's creative professionals combine sound, strategic research and business acumen to create meaningful IDEAS that motivate purchase and loyalty among its clients' products, services and customers. Ryan's unparalleled expertise originates from its extensive, proprietary research that yields some of the industry's deepest insights into consumers, categories, retailers, and shopper behavior. This knowledge is leveraged to consistently drive competitive market positioning and ROI.

The agency is a creative powerhouse, recently tripling in size with its breakthrough ideas and campaigns for clients such as Wm. Wrigley Jr. Company, GlaxoSmithKline, Energizer Personal Care, World Vision, Chaco and Bel Brands USA. Ryan Partnership Chicago is a part of Ryan Partnership, the largest independent marketing services company in North America and a subsidiary of D.L. Ryan Companies, LLC. For a complete listing of services, please visit **www.ryanpartnershipchicago.com.**

Mambo Sprouts Marketing

Live Healthy. Live Green. Live Well.

Mambo Sprouts Marketing, headquartered in Collingswood, New Jersey, develops and executes online, retail and direct mail promotions, and market research programs targeted at health, natural and organic products consumers. In existence since 1996, the company was created when its founders recognized the lack of educational materials and discounts available to health and natural products consumers. It has since grown into a full-scale marketing agency with programs that benefit health and eco consumers, manufacturers and retailers. Leading the health and wellness marketplace through its MamboTrack research data trends and insights, Mambo Sprouts Marketing is a respected resource throughout the LOHAS (Lifestyles of Health & Sustainability) industry. For more information, please visit **www.mambosprouts.com.**

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