

SCAD

SAVANNAH COLLEGE OF ART & DESIGN

HERON PRESTON

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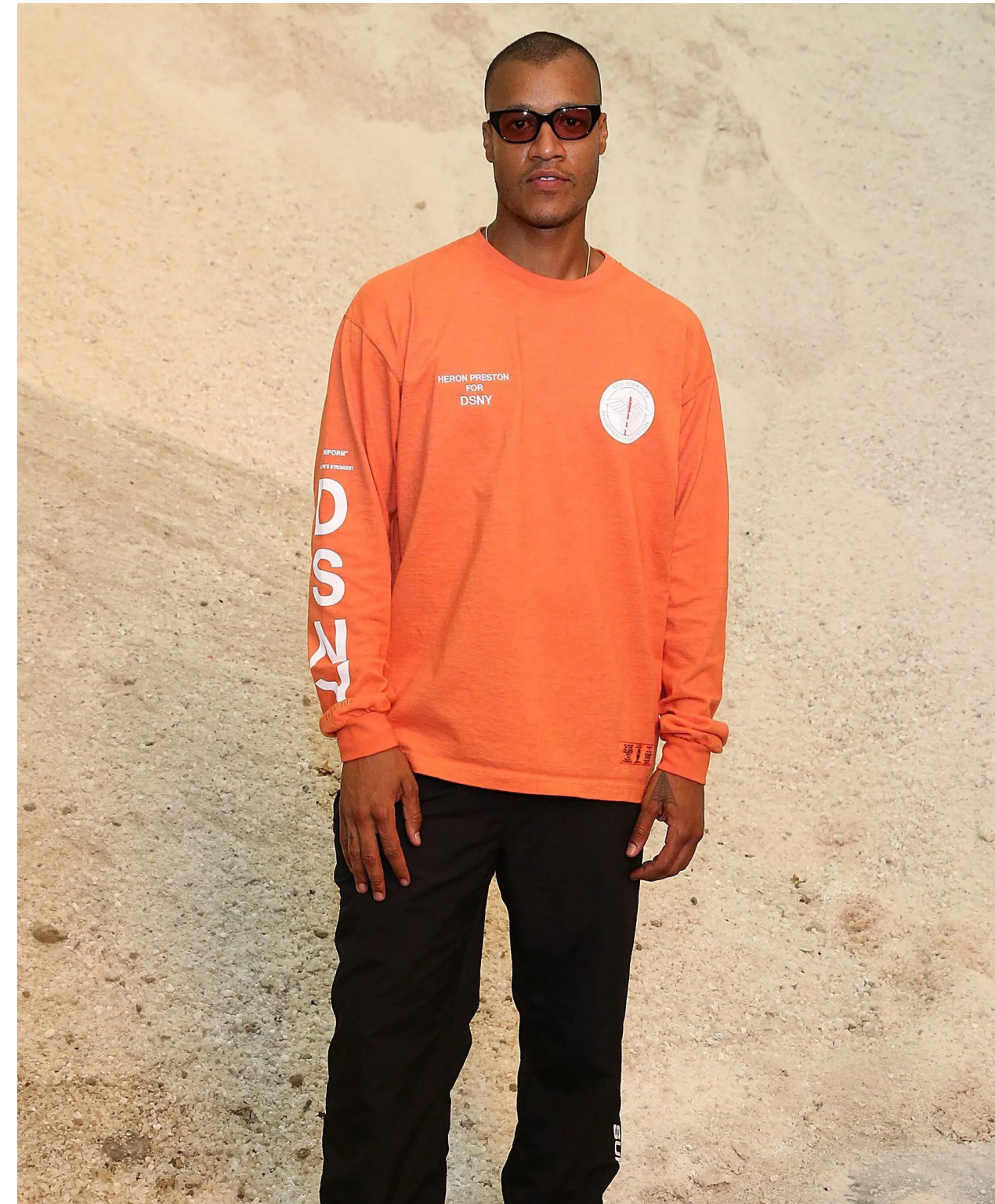
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BRAND SELECTION

Heron Preston is an artist, creative director, content creator, and DJ who has become a cultural phenomenon to the youth. He signed a deal with New Guards Group, an Italian contemporary luxury fashion production and distribution holding company, and debuted his namesake label at Paris Fashion Week in 2017.

The brand specializes in ready-to-wear, shoes, sunglasses, and other accessories. During a trip to Ibiza, Preston saw the detrimental effects of pollution firsthand, which pushed him to become an advocate for sustainability and better environmental manufacturing practices. In 2016, he collaborated with the NYC Department of Sanitation to launch a collection of zero-waste clothing and accessories, with the goal of raising the environmental consciousness of the fashion industry as well as of his consumers. The realization of how much the fashion industry pollutes the environment drives Preston to learn about the different ways he can reduce waste across the life cycle of a product and make a positive change in the world.





PROJECT PROPOSAL



The focus of this project is to evaluate the effectiveness of Heron Preston's sustainable practices as a luxury fashion brand.

The goal of conducting this audit is to assess Heron Preston's position in the marketplace, pinpoint its strengths and opportunities, and provide recommendations as to how the brand can further its sustainability efforts and continue to make a positive contribution to the circular economy.

I hope to gain a more holistic understanding of the measures the brand currently takes to reduce material use, redesign materials to be less resource-intensive, and repurpose waste as a resource to manufacture new materials and products. After completing this audit, I expect to have a comprehensive awareness of how Heron Preston's brand identity is connected to its target consumers.



RESEARCH OUTLINE



I will be conducting primary and secondary research as I complete this audit on Heron Preston.

As primary research, I will conduct a survey to get a more accurate understanding of how consumers perceive the brand and whether they feel like it fulfills its mission of identifying and integrating less environmentally destructive practices in the fashion industry.

As for secondary research, I plan on gathering information from reputable sources including the brand's official website, articles, blogs, and interviews with the designer, Heron Preston.

The sources used to conduct research for this project can be found in the bibliography.



BRAND IDENTITY



MISSION

Heron Preston's mission is to design a new standard way of working for the future by identifying sustainable solutions for the fashion industry that minimize the destructive impact on the environment.



CORE VALUES

Sustainability

Heron Preston is an advocate for sustainability and better environmental manufacturing practices. The brand is committed to incorporating sustainability in all its styles and raising the environmental consciousness of the fashion industry.

Innovation

From recycling, upcycling, and repurposing material for everyday use in fashion to integrating 3D technology in its shoe designs, Heron Preston continues to exploit new design and manufacturing opportunities. The brand is keenly focused on reshaping the industry by promoting circularity and being a voice of change.

Culture

Heron Preston embodies the modernity of fashion and culture. The brand has collaborated with prominent figures and brands such as Virgil Abloh, Kanye West, Levi's, Nike, Mercedes-Benz, and NASA. Its collections authentically fuse music, art, fashion, and culture to deliver meaningful experiences that have a significant cultural impact on the world.



CORE COMPETENCIES

Strategic Collaborations

As previously mentioned, Heron Preston is no stranger to collaborating with some of the biggest names in pop culture. The brand understands that too many collaborations can hinder the identity of a brand, but also recognizes that when executed properly, collaborations can be an excellent tool to tap into new markets and opportunities while unlocking new mediums of creativity and artistry.

Innovative Design & Manufacturing Practices

Aside from being skillfully crafted in Italy with the intention of creating long-lasting pieces, Heron Preston products are produced in ways that have minimal impact on the environment while also increasing eco-consciousness among brand supporters, especially the younger generations. The brand embraces technology to develop new ways of producing sustainable fashion.



Unique Style

The brand takes an experimental approach to designing products with an aesthetic inspired by uniforms and workwear. Heron Preston's personality shines through his brand's style, making it more authentic and approachable than other luxury streetwear brands. Neon orange accents, heron birds, camouflage patterns, and СТИЛЬ (Russian for "style") are all elements that represent Heron Preston's identity and distinguish the brand from its competitors.

Economies of Scale

New Guards Group, a Milan-based holding company with a portfolio of founder-led luxury brands primarily in the streetwear category, acquired Heron Preston in 2017. Farfetch, an online luxury fashion retail platform, acquired the holding company in 2019 for \$675 million. Backed by Farfetch, New Guards Group is using its parent company's resources and e-commerce savvy to streamline its operations by building out online retail for each of its brands. Heron Preston has the competitive advantage of being financially supported by its stakeholders.

SCOPE & SIZE

Heron Preston does not manage any directly operated stores. Products are distributed directly through the brand's official website and through multi-brand retailers including Farfetch, SSENSE, Nordstrom, Saks Fifth Avenue, Selfridges, and Bloomingdale's.

The brand generated approximately \$24 million in sales in 2020. Before being acquired by Farfetch, New Guards Group reported annual revenue of \$345 million in 2019. From 2020 to 2021, Farfetch's annual revenue rose 35%, from \$1.7 billion to \$2.3 billion, driven by an increased volume in the marketplace and sales from New Guards Group brands.





PRODUCT CATEGORIES

Ready-to-wear (77.7%)

Denim, Jackets, Pants, Shirts, Shorts, Activewear, Sweatshirts & Knitwear, Swimwear, T-Shirts, Dresses, Skirts, Tops

\$165 - \$1,550

Shoes (9.3%)

Sneakers, Slides, Heels

\$210 - \$920

Accessories (13%)

Bags, Belts, Hats, Jewelry, Socks, Sunglasses

\$60 - \$710



CONSUMER ANALYSIS

VALS FRAMEWORK

Innovators (55%)

- Are always taking in information
- Are confident enough to experiment
- Make the highest number of financial transactions
- Have international exposure
- Are future-oriented
- Are self-directed consumers
- Are most receptive to new ideas and technologies
- Enjoy the challenge of problem-solving
- Have the widest variety of interests and activities

Achievers (30%)

- Believe money is the source of authority
- Are committed to family and job
- Are fully scheduled
- Are goal-oriented
- Are hardworking
- Are moderate
- Are peer conscious
- Are private
- Are professional

Experiencers (15%)

- Want everything
- Are first in and first out of trend adoption
- Go against the current mainstream
- Are up on the latest fashions
- Love physical activity (are sensation-seeking)
- See themselves as very sociable
- Believe that friends are extremely important
- Are spontaneous
- Have a heightened sense of visual stimulation



CUSTOMER SEGMENTATION

Demographics

Heron Preston's target consumers are both men and women between the ages of 18 and 41. They are well educated, with degrees from accredited universities, have high disposable income (\$125,000+ annually), and are both married and single. Most of them live in large metropolitan areas in the U.S., Europe, and Asia that have a high density of affluent consumers. Occupations range vastly and include musicians, actors, athletes, influencers, creative directors, and high-level professionals.



Psychographics

Heron Preston's target consumers are curious by nature. They enjoy traveling, aren't afraid of change, and have the confidence to try things they're not used to. They're optimistic about the future and like to plan ahead. They know what they want and don't let trends or fads influence their decisions. They're conscious consumers who value brands that positively contribute to the circular economy but are concerned that not enough is being done to reduce carbon emissions on a global scale. Activities and interests range vastly and include sports, hiking, camping, yoga, fitness training, music production, concerts, photography, drawing, design, learning new languages, cooking, home decorating, and thrift shopping.



Behavioral

Heron Preston's target consumers seek out contemporary brands that have a steady commitment to developing innovative ways of minimizing the destructive impact on the environment. They have dissonance-reducing buying behaviors, meaning there's not much of a difference to them between similar products being offered by different brands, but they conduct diligent research before making purchasing decisions. They're medium-to-heavy users of Heron Preston and wear the brand's products on a weekly basis for different occasions including work, clubbing, house parties, vacations, dinners, concerts, the beach, the park, and the mall. They have consistent purchasing patterns but like to splurge during the holiday season. Social media plays a significant role in their daily lives. These consumers are active users who enjoy staying up to date with the latest news in culture and engaging with their favorite brands online.

PERSONAS

Profile 1 – Innovator

Sean is a New York native who has an eye for design and an addiction to travel. He's an explorer at heart and loves to share new experiences with the people closest to him. In his free time, Sean enjoys reading, running, attending sporting events with his friends, and spending quality time with his wife, Lia, and dog, Apollo.

Sean doesn't mind spending the extra money on quality products. He makes a conscious effort to purchase organic, sustainable products as often as he can. He regularly adds new styles to his wardrobe, purchasing products from Heron Preston on a monthly basis. He is extremely fascinated by products that are technologically innovative.

Name: Sean Marquis

Age: 38

Gender: Male

Location: New York, New York

Education Level: MFA from New York University

Occupation: Creative Director

Income: \$250,000/yr

Marital Status: Married



PERSONAS

Profile 2 – Achiever

Natasha was born in Moscow but grew up in London. She's an ambitious go-getter who works hard for what she wants but knows how to separate work from her personal life. She's also a fashion enthusiast who enjoys spending her free time at art galleries, fashion shows, and charity events. She was recently married to her husband, Noah, and wants to start a family.

Natasha has a strong sense of style and seeks out products that fit her aesthetic. She's conscious of sustainability and believes it's important, but it's not her main priority when making purchasing decisions. She favors luxury brands that are admired by her peers and buys Heron Preston products on a bi-monthly basis.

Name: Natasha Petrov

Age: 32

Gender: Female

Location: Paris, France

Education Level: BA from Central Saint Martins

Occupation: Fashion Buyer

Income: \$145,000/yr

Marital Status: Married



PERSONAS

Profile 3 – **Experiencer**

Jacob is a young and enthusiastic California native who seeks variety and excitement and isn't afraid to take risks. He's socially active and has a lot of friends who share his interests. When he's not creating content for his social media channels, he enjoys weightlifting, playing soccer and basketball, skateboarding, hiking, surfing, attending concerts and festivals, and the beach.

Jacob stays up to date with the latest trends in fashion and strives to purchase products that make him feel "cool." He impulsively spends a lot of his income on fashion, entertainment, and socializing. He's always open to trying new products, so brand loyalty shifts frequently. He supports sustainability, but only when it's convenient for him. He buys Heron Preston products a few times a year, usually during the holidays and for special occasions.

Name: Jacob Owens

Age: 25

Gender: Male

Location: Los Angeles, California

Education Level: BBA from UC Berkeley

Occupation: Content Creator

Income: \$120,000/yr

Marital Status: Single





KEY CONSUMER INSIGHTS

To gain a better understanding of Heron Preston's brand awareness and positioning, a nine-question survey was conducted in which 47 respondents participated. Of these respondents, 97.9% were within Heron Preston's target age range of 18-41 years old (62.5% Gen Z, 35.4% Millennials). To my surprise, 75% of all respondents weren't even familiar with the brand. However, all respondents who were familiar with Heron Preston stated that they would purchase products from the brand even though only 25% of them owned a Heron Preston product. The attributes most associated with the brand by the familiar respondents were streetwear, hype, urban, and luxury. Only 6.3% of all respondents considered Heron Preston to be a sustainable brand. Most of them (85.4%) were unaware of whether the brand is fulfilling its mission of identifying and integrating less environmentally destructive practices in the fashion industry.



KEY FACTORS

After analyzing Heron Preston's customer segments, quality, technology, and recognition have been identified as the unifying key factors among all the segments that are most relevant to the brand's target consumers.

Quality

Heron Preston's target consumers are both affluent and stylish, so they favor products that are excellently designed and crafted.

Technology

Heron Preston's target consumers are digital natives who embrace technological innovations and the possibilities they offer.

Recognition

Heron Preston's target consumers desire products from brands that act as a status symbol amongst their peers.



CURRENT PERFORMANCE

SUSTAINABILITY

For the Spring/Summer 2022 season, Heron Preston continued to reflect on its business practices in an ever-changing fashion climate that's increasingly aware of its environmental impact. The brand rolled out a new in-house system with three tiers for classifying the materials used in its products according to their impact on our ecosystems.

Standard

Less than 50% sustainable and due to be phased out of use altogether

Preferred

50% or more by weight certified sustainable

eX-Ray

Garments and objects whose materials are "nearly" 100% sustainable, with everything tracked across the supply chain from the origin of raw material to shipping and manufacturing to social and environmental conditions



"Sustainability has turned into a trend. It can feel fake and today, 'sustaining' is no longer enough, a more honest term would be 'less environmentally destructive.' I believe and have always believed that taking responsibility for actions which affect our world, should genuinely matter."

– Heron Preston

ETHICAL LEADERSHIP

Heron Preston has never claimed to be 100% sustainable and understands that there's progress to be made before the brand can say that every single garment it creates is environmentally conscious. However, collaborations with Kanye West and Virgil Abloh have positioned the brand to make an impact by being one of the most recognizable names in streetwear driving the ethical fashion movement.

In 2018, Heron Preston completed an apprenticeship with Eileen Fisher and immediately discovered that they shared a commitment to producing sustainable fashion. He learned more about up-cycling, circular design, supply chain innovation, and how to apply general environmental consciousness to his operation. This experience reinforced his willingness to go the extra mile to learn from sustainability thought leaders and not just pop culture icons.



CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR)

Heron Preston has been invested in the environmental impact of its business practices since 2016, when the brand collaborated with the New York City Department of Sanitation to rework uniforms in support of the agency's zero-waste initiative. Heron Preston's first collection, "For You, The World," represented the beginning of a long-term investigation of sustainable production practices.

The designer consciously identifies new sustainable materials and believes the best approach to materials is recycling. He looks at organic materials as the next best option. Then, it's about figuring out how these materials can be applied across the brand's collections and identifying supportive suppliers and vendors.



Through collaborations Heron Preston has done, the brand has attracted a wider audience, extending its cultural boundaries beyond fashion and into workwear. The brands these consumers wear are actual uniforms, so they need to be certified to perform on a job site when it comes to workers' safety. One of Heron Preston's goals is to design more OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) certified pieces in his collections, geared around authentic ideas of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) fashion.

In 2020, Heron Preston was among the designers who contributed designs to the "Our Lives in T-Shirts" charity project in Miami, Florida in support of underprivileged neighborhoods. T-shirt sales supported the Village (Free)dge, an organization which aims to provide food and other necessities to underprivileged people in Miami.

As for the brand's audience, Heron Preston has been working on special projects with the vision of scaling and integrating them into his future collections. The latest concept is sustainable 3-D printing for footwear. The idea is that consumers don't have to own multiple pairs of shoes and when they're done with the shoe, it can be sent back, and the material can be broken down to print an entirely new shoe. A lot of concepts are in very early stages, with new materials and new technology. Heron Preston is building relationships with "solution providers" and inviting them into fashion to achieve a much bigger impact and attract a wider audience because that's what matters, attracting young people and educating them about sustainability in creative ways.





RECOMMENDATIONS





TRANSPARENCY

While Heron Preston is deemed a devoted practitioner of sustainable practices in the fashion industry, I believe the brand can take a more straightforward and inclusive approach to communicating its message and sharing the impact its decisions have on human rights and the environment. Heron Preston should disclose vital information about its value chains such as manufacturing facilities, purchasing practices, living wages, gender and racial equity, overproduction, water usage, circularity, and carbon emissions directly on its website. The brand should also share information about its policies, commitments, and processes on human rights and environmental topics along with the results, outcomes, and impacts of its efforts. By normalizing the concept of transparency, Heron Preston can help transform the fashion industry by raising public awareness and educating people about the social and environmental challenges facing the global industry.



SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

Heron Preston should create a public roadmap that outlines the brand's long-term goals and identifies the strategies used to achieve them. Environmental and social responsibility programs can be built to share how materials and products are made, what's being done to ensure that products are safely, fairly, and legally produced under humane working conditions, and what's being done to ensure the responsible, ethical, and ongoing success of the business.



B-CORP CERTIFICATION

To solidify its position as one of the most recognizable names in streetwear driving the ethical fashion movement, Heron Preston should become B-Corp certified. This certification would provide Heron Preston with the accreditation to be identified as a brand that maintains high standards of verified performance, accountability, and transparency, and is truly invested in its mission to upholding social and environmental business practices in the fashion industry.

CONCLUSION



After extensively researching the effectiveness of Heron Preston's sustainable practices as a luxury fashion brand, it's clear that the brand is innovatively identifying and integrating less environmentally destructive practices in the fashion industry. However, there's significant room for growth. Heron Preston has the potential to become one of the most influential driving forces in the industry, but to do so, the brand must fully commit to creating an atmosphere that's 100% transparent and authentic in nature.



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