



WHITE PAPER

MEETING THE MOMENT

Why fashion's long-term future relies on finding a better way to create, manufacture, market, and more – starting today.

LECTRA

Contributors



Maximilien Abadie

Chief Strategy Officer and Chief Product Officer
at **Lectra**



Caroline Damblant and Céline Yagoubi

IT Manager and IT Project Manager at **Boucheron**



Matthew Drinkwater

Head of the **Fashion Innovation Agency**
at London College Of Fashion



Ben Hanson

Editor-in-Chief of *The Interline*



Stephen Lamar

President and CEO of the **American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA)**



Shakthi Ranathunga

Chief Operating Officer at **MAS Holding**



Yann Rivoallan

President of **Fédération Française du Prêt à Porter Féminin**



Victoire Satto

Founder & CEO of sustainable fashion business
publication *The Good Goods*

Table of contents

The fashion sector is no stranger to change	04
A fundamentally different world	05
→ Disruption: scale and scope expand simultaneously	
→ Channels, consumers, and competition	
→ Supply chain consolidation and fragility	
→ The ripple effect of uncertainty and risk	
A rising bar for sustainability	07
→ Weaving together the environment and the economy	
How fashion became so fragmented	08
→ Disconnected, dispersed links in the value chain	
→ Processes and software in siloes	
The solution shift: from output to outcome	10
→ Digital transformation across fashion's core domains: create, manufacture and market better	
→ Interconnectivity beats isolated innovation	
A pioneering partner	14
→ Recontextualizing Industry 4.0	
→ Data and digital expertise	
Conclusion	16

*Click on the logo at the bottom of each page
to return to this summary.*

The fashion sector is no stranger to change



From industrialization to eCommerce, from concentrated centers of craftsmanship to globalized mass production, the industry has seen its share of major shifts.

But big transitions and hard times have also become testaments to fashion's ability to adapt and endure through invention. In the most uncertain times, apparel, footwear, accessories and luxury businesses have always been able to reforge themselves into a more streamlined form: more efficient in one area, more creative in another, more refined in yet another, and better prepared for what came next.

But the industry is facing a fundamentally different kind of pivotal moment today. Deeply-entrenched practices have fallen out of lockstep with a world that is constantly shifting, and that narrow, hyper-focused approach to evolution has started to deliver diminishing returns.

Fragmented, geographically-dispersed value chains, long timelines, and disconnected teams are clashing with conditions that favor a new cohort of digital-native, quick-to-market disruptors.

Similarly, the fashion sector has deployed new tools and defined process improvement according to strict, rigid definitions – and those inflexible systems and mindsets are now meeting an operating environment defined by a historic combination of scarcity, uncertainty, geopolitical upheaval, universal scrutiny, competition and digital disruption that collectively demand a more radical rethink.

Yann Rivoallan, President of **Fédération Française du Prêt à Porter Féminin**, and an expert on regional and global transformation, captures the scale of the challenge at hand:

"The fashion industry is at a decisive turning point where embracing digital transformation and sustainability is no longer an option but a necessity. Brands must innovate, introduce new on-demand production strategies, and integrate omnichannel and community-driven approaches to combine competitiveness, creativity, and responsibility."

→ [Read more](#)

A fundamentally different world

Disruption: scale and scope expand simultaneously

The most pronounced differences between the transformation fashion is undergoing today, and the shifts it has seen before, are scale, scope, and the simultaneous nature of the changes happening inside the industry and around the world.

Over the last few years, fashion has been reconfiguring itself internally at the same time that historic shifts are taking place all around it. Where, in the past, brands might have needed to recalibrate their routes to market, relocate their sourcing bases, rethink the way they sell their products, re-evaluate the competitive landscape, or realign their planning to meet demand, in 2025 all of those mandatory transformations (and more) are happening at once. And being able to strategize and execute across all of those domains simultaneously is what will distinguish a brand's ability to not just survive an unprecedented moment, but to **differentiate itself through digitization**.

Channels, consumers, and competition

This high watermark and short timeline for transformation is what Business of Fashion research for 2025 refers to as a “time of reckoning” – a moment towards which a set of complex changes has been building, and a point beyond which the shape of the fashion industry will look very different.

As a specific example of that reckoning in effect: while brand and retail organizations were beginning to settle on retail strategies that maximized the potential of different digital and physical channels in markets where the competitive landscape was mapped and understood (and where a hostile economic climate had perhaps taken prior competitors out of the picture), **new digital-native entrants from unexpected overseas markets stepped in and started to redefine consumer expectations for speed, price, and availability**.

As those new, digital-native competitors extended their reach further into different market segments, more fashion businesses found their models under threat. Unable to compete directly on cost or convenience, they needed to find new competitive advantages, quickly

build a more comprehensive and more granular understanding of their consumers, and generally find ways to protect or recapture markets they previously thought were secure.

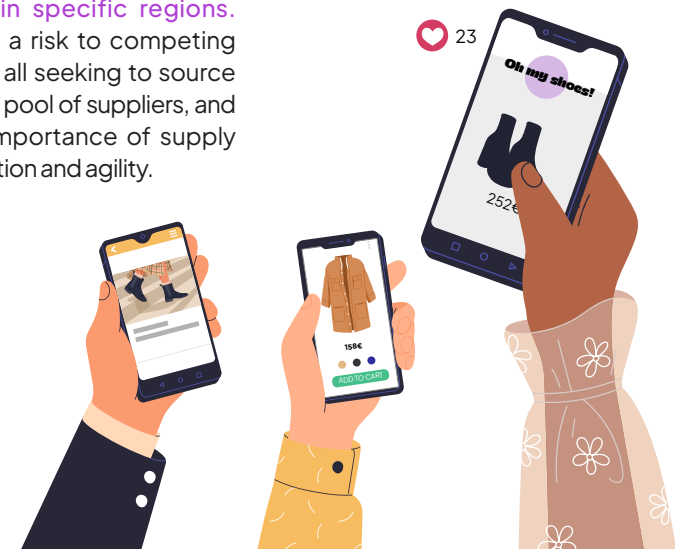
Supply chain consolidation and fragility

To meet these downstream shifts head-on, at speed, fashion organizations must now also evolve their supply chains to align with those regionalized and increasingly granular and discerning consumer expectations – not just improving the way they sense demand, but how they are set up, upstream, to respond to it.

Today, high-volume production and mass-manufacturing capabilities and capacity have become heavily concentrated in specific regions. This represents a risk to competing brands that are all seeking to source from a common pool of suppliers, and elevating the importance of supply chain diversification and agility.

Brands built on heritage and craft also now need to ensure that the specialized knowledge and traditional skills they require are safeguarded, supported, and their expertise digitized and centralized. This is something that luxury companies in particular have made a top priority when it comes to investing in technology and transformation.

“For us, each creation tells a story, supported by decades of expertise,” say **Caroline Damblant** (IT Manager) & **Cérine Yagoubi** (IT Project Manager) of high-jewelry house **Boucheron**, who have used technology from Lectra's PLM to structure, centralize, and secure their data, and to build division-specific workflows and processes for their different business units.



The ripple effect of uncertainty and risk

In order to start laying the foundations for the longer-term future today, fashion organizations must recognize that the industry's operating environment has become more complex, interconnected, fragmented, competitive, and time-critical than ever before. And companies must also rationalize the realization that this complexity and uncertainty will remain fashion's prevailing mode for the foreseeable future.

The most visible manifestation of this uncertainty in recent years has been the swift global impact of new trade and tariff policies announced by the United States on 2nd April 2025, labelled "Liberation Day" by President Donald Trump. The new tariffs demonstrated the speed and the scale of upheaval possible in globalized markets like fashion, with the announcement having a similar impact on the worldwide [Economic Policy Uncertainty Index](#) to the COVID pandemic – and with the [aftershock removing trillions in value from global stocks](#) in just a few days.

"Apparel and footwear companies are operating in a deeply uncertain economic and geopolitical environment," says **Stephen Lamar**, President and CEO of the **American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA)**.

"As the largest fashion market, globally, the United States has long been a vital outlet for both domestic and international brands and producers, but confusion currently reigns over the impacts that tariffs, other trade barriers, and regulations will have on the fortunes of not just U.S. companies and consumers, but their suppliers, partners and counterparts across the world."

With apparel, footwear, and accessories supply chains so firmly globalized, these sharp impacts have left fashion companies with few options. In lieu of being able to quickly 're-shore,' or relocate production and expertise back to domestic markets, and with consumers already sensitive to price increases, **fashion brands suddenly faced the urgent need to reduce volumes and find new ways to optimize their margins on each individual product.**

But these immediate copy strategies are likely to be just the tip of the iceberg, and a more profound shift lies underneath the new tariffs – one that creates a strong mandate for companies to proactively prepare to adapt.

"This short-term instability is also indicative of two much longer-term trends," Lamar of the AAFA adds. "First is the increasing interconnectivity of the different processes, systems, and actors that contribute to the average product journey, whether that product is sold in the U.S. or elsewhere; and second is the need for apparel and footwear organisations to make serious strategic commitments to building agility, resilience, and the capabilities to respond to complex, changing market conditions."

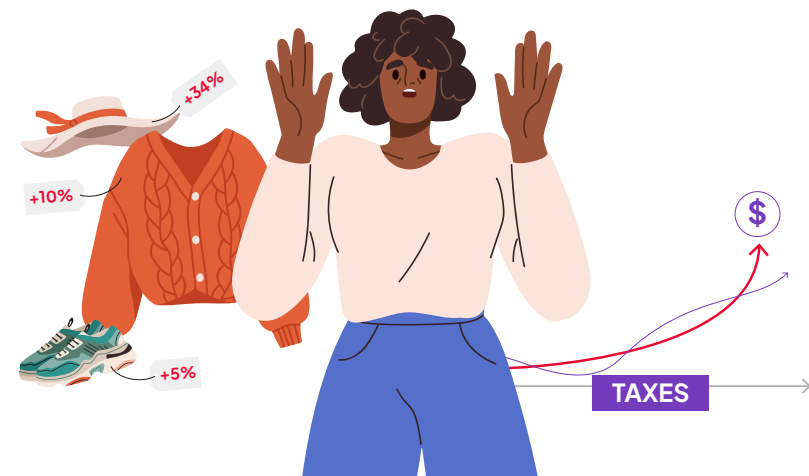
One thing is clear: irrespective of the outcome of this specific disruption, unpredictable events and new risks may continue at a regional level, but their impact will rarely end there.

And as a consequence, fashion companies now find themselves needing to not only define and adhere to a multi-year strategy with a wildly different endpoint to where they stand today, but also having to build the ability to reorient their businesses, and to reframe segments of that goal, at short notice to adapt to circumstances that can shift on extremely short timelines. Adaptability is now essential.

"Apparel and footwear companies are operating in a deeply uncertain economic and geopolitical environment."

Stephen Lamar

President and CEO of the American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA)



A rising bar for sustainability

In a compressed window of time, sustainability legislation has also shifted gears, as part of an ecosystem of rules, behaviors, and strategies designed to mitigate those impacts.

Today, compliance with a complex tapestry of shifting regional regulations is the most visible challenge.

As an example, **digital product passports (DPPs)** have become a clear target for fashion companies doing business in the European Union, with the central proposal being a digital record that will need to contain accurate, accountable information about any textile and product's provenance and impact. Brand and retail businesses have been investing towards that target for some time, in anticipation of a roll-out in early 2027.

But despite now having a measurable impact on fashion's bottom lines and its process and technology investment strategies, sustainability regulation itself is still very much in flux – and key targets are prone to changing unpredictably.

In 2025 alone, the recent “**EU Omnibus**,” which aims to simplify sustainability and traceability reporting rules for a range of different industries, has tempered and toned down some of the expected restrictions that were set to be imposed by legislations like the **Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD)** and **Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD)**. Similar changes to the scope and the shape of broader sustainability rules has also been proposed in the United States, with the government citing environmental disclosure “deregulation” as a **lever for growth**.

Even though regulation is not a one-way street, however, in the longer term, consumer markets and other stakeholders are highly likely to still hold fashion brands and their partners to high bars for ethical and environmental action.

Weaving together the environment and the economy

Taking this necessity into account, an urgent task for fashion brands on the precipice of comprehensive change is **balancing sustainability with commercial success** – moving the strategic conversation on from being a matter of legislative compliance to being a carefully-calibrated blend of ecological awareness and action, business prioritization, and economic metrics like profit margins – or “economy,” combined.

*“It's not just consumers who are driving companies to transform, and nor is it regulatory constraints, which are now starting to lose momentum” says **Victoire Satto**, Founder & CEO of sustainable fashion business publication **The Good Goods**. Employees alone, however committed, cannot overhaul an industry built on inertia and volume-driven economics. The real engine of transformation is money. Sustainability is, first and foremost, about business survival. Tomorrow's leaders are those who recognize today that transformation requires investments with both financial and non-financial returns that will ensure their robustness. Future profitability depends on breaking free from the destructive cycle of scale-driven competition, price wars, and attempts to borrow the non-creative business model employed by ultra-fast fashion.”*



This shift is already beginning to be felt today, with companies observing both a marked change in the weight of importance that shoppers place on sustainability, and a foundational shift in the impact this has on product, brand, and commercial success.

The same expectation is also clearly visible from upstream, with leading manufacturers taking early action on the understanding that sustainability and excellence exist on the same common axis.

“Sustainability, speed, and cost are often seen as conflicting priorities, but we strongly believe they can be addressed in tandem – and technology plays a central role in that,” says **Shakthi Ranathunga**, Chief Operating Officer of **MAS Holdings**, a leading apparel manufacturer in South Asia, and a long-time user of Lectra solutions.

“At MAS, we integrate technology strategically to optimize our processes and help us deliver across all three fronts without compromise,” Ranathunga continues. While the integration of technology and automation is imperative, we recognize the challenges. The industry itself is complex and relies on several layers of tacit knowledge. But we have seen how strategic tech integration, allows us to operate more efficiently, respond to market changes quickly, and reduce our environmental footprint – making us more agile, competitive, and responsible.”

How fashion became so fragmented

Disconnected, dispersed links in the value chain

As fast-changing, complex, and interconnected as the world around fashion has now become, another key to understanding the industry's mandate for change lies in recognizing which elements of fashion will not change, because they are essential to the way the industry operates – and what effect these have on companies' ability to respond to evolving circumstances.

Chief among these is the sheer scale and complexity of the typical fashion value chain – something that has built up over time and then solidified, with best practices built up around it, to the extent that it has become a fundamental part of the way the industry is set up.

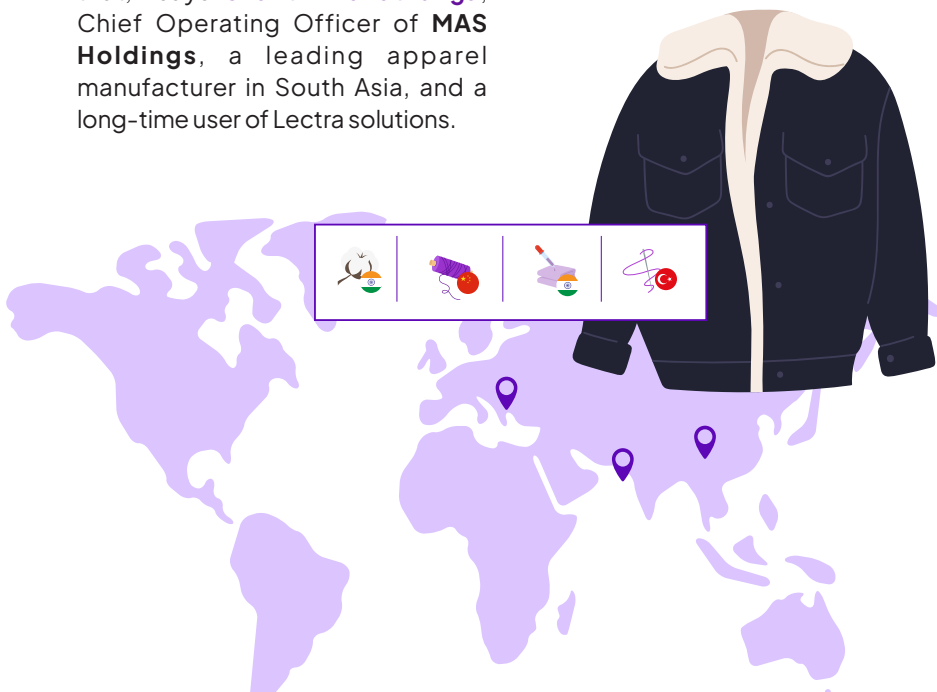
“Sustainability, speed, and cost are often seen as conflicting priorities, but we strongly believe they can be addressed in tandem – and technology plays a central role in that.”

Shakthi Ranathunga

Chief Operating Officer of
MAS Holdings

For example: the value chain for every product is fragmented, made up of many different, disconnected pieces – and globally dispersed, with concentrations in a wide range of key locations.

Each product's journey also requires input from dozens of different companies across design, production, the supply of components and trims, quality assurance, logistics, retail distribution networks and much more.



“To a large extent complexity is inevitable and inherent in fashion, and I believe it will be around forever,” says **Maximilien Abadie** Chief Strategy Officer and Chief Product Officer at **Lectra** – a key technology partner that has already accompanied the fashion industry through several transitions in its 52-year history. *“Every product that makes it to market is shaped by contributions from hundreds of different individuals – many of whom do not speak the same language or share a common understanding.”*

This complexity is also compounded by the number of different product categories that a typical fashion company addresses. Although specialization and single-category offers are still viable strategies for some organizations, many companies today will produce a much more heterogeneous product mix, covering t-shirts, denim, eyewear, jewelry, cosmetics, perfumes, footwear and potentially more. And each of those individual disciplines has its own ringfenced set of skills, data, and processes – with limited standardization between them.

Processes and software in siloes

From one perspective, that diversity is one fashion's strengths. But when it comes to the long-term transformation journey that the fashion industry is now on, this variety and spread has led to investments in software being made in narrowly-defined areas aligned with the unique tasks of particular departments, rather than across the full scope of the business.

In practical terms, connecting people, processes, and data is certainly a task for software, equipment, data, and the teams that implement, use, and champion those solutions. But up until this point, those initiatives have not typically crossed over with one another, and that data has consequently found itself residing in narrow task-specific solutions, where it is unable to contribute to more complete business transformation.

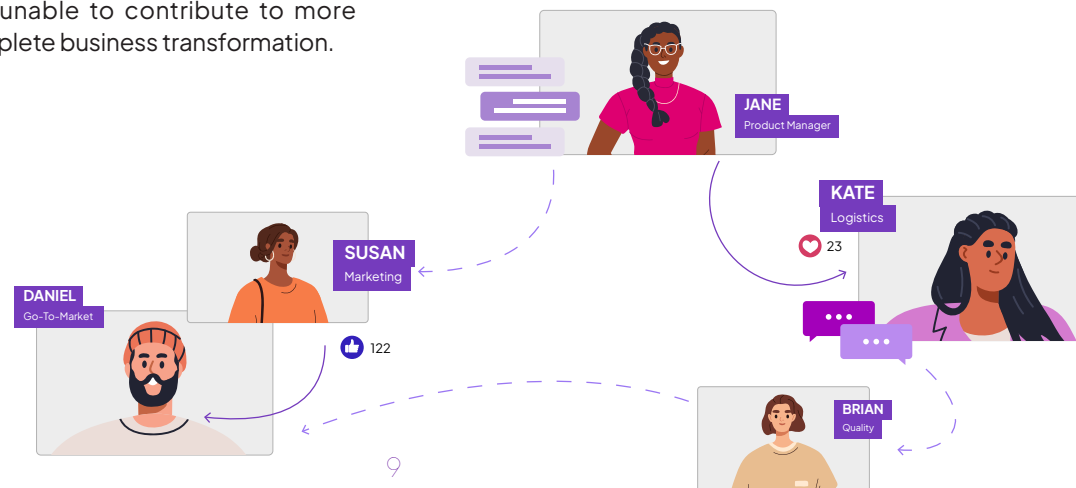
“One of the major challenges we faced was the diversity and complexity of our internal processes, particularly between the jewelry and the high jewelry businesses, which have different timeframes, requirements and volumes,” say **Caroline Damblant & Céline Yagoubi** of **Boucheron**. *“We had to find the right balance between harmonization and respect for the specific characteristics of our businesses. In terms of organization, this meant rethinking the way in which the different teams – creation, development, production, quality, marketing, etc. – interact, share information and collaborate on a daily basis. Orchestrating these often highly sequential and compartmentalized workflows required a more transverse, agile and collaborative vision, while maintaining control over confidential elements.”*

Taking this transition from isolated tasks to more complete transformation into account, just as fashion is facing a different, more comprehensive, moment when it comes to inward and outward transformation, the script for successful technology selection and adoption has also changed.

“One of the major challenges we faced was the diversity and complexity of our internal processes, particularly between the jewelry and the high jewelry businesses, which have different timeframes, requirements and volumes.”

**Caroline Damblant
and Céline Yagoubi**

IT Manager and IT Project Manager
at Boucheron



The solution shift: from output to outcome

“For several years now, technology decisions have been framed as choices about how to improve individual tasks and increase output, instead of as opportunities to positively change strategic business outcomes – and this now has to change.”

Maximilien Abadie

Chief Strategy Officer and Chief Product Officer at Lectra

For the necessary kind of technology-enabled transformation to take root, many brands will need to begin by taking a step back from a common fixation. Technology initiatives have, for a long time, been viewed through a narrow lens focused on a strict definition of success.

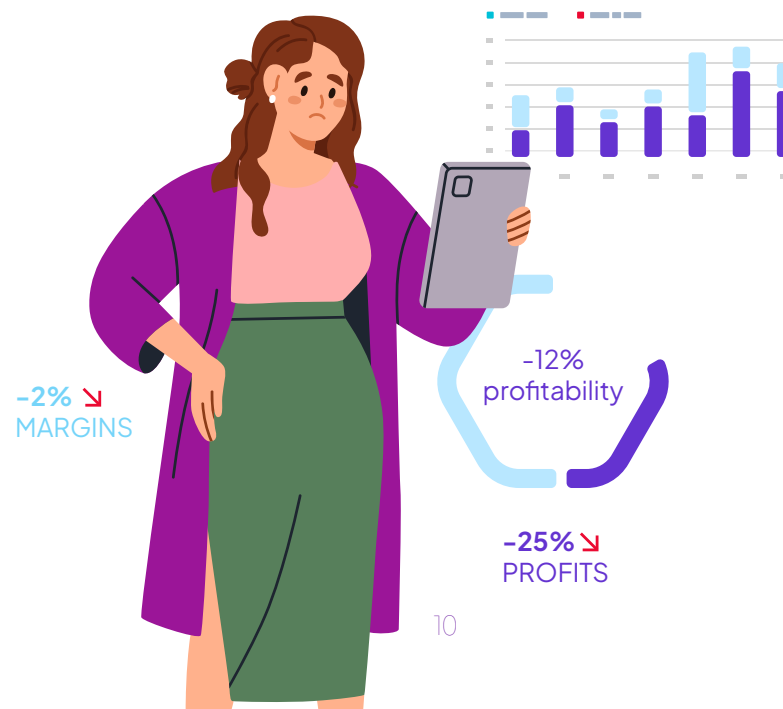
According to research released by MMGNET and The Interline at the end of 2024, **a global pool of fashion professionals ranked profitability and margin protection as their top strategic concern for 2025**. And this reflects the very particular compass that the industry as a whole has used as the primary way of orienting its business decisions and steering its technology investments.

An over-indexing of profit and loss – especially the margin a brand makes on each individual product sold – has led to an under-indexing of other key variables that affect the balance sheet and the availability of essential resources.

This unbalance proved to be behind several high-profile pandemic-era casualties, with companies focusing exclusively on profit margins, and failing to generate the cash reserves, skills, and resources needed to invest in transformation at the speed and scale that was then demanded of them.

“For several years now, technology decisions have been framed as choices about how to improve individual tasks and increase output, instead of as opportunities to positively change strategic business outcomes – and this now has to change.” **Maximilien Abadie** of Lectra explains.

And these considerations are becoming more mission-critical as huge disruptions like the introduction of tariffs by the United States continue to threaten profitability and margins on a compressed timeline. When it comes to improving per-product profitability quickly, for example, there is as much to be gained in the cutting room and in production as there is through better planning, design, and product development. Material utilization can be improved in cutting, brands can conduct competitive analysis in real-time, product development tasks can be automated, and the different stakeholders that make up the value chain can begin to collaborate based on a single, accurate, centralized set of data.



Indeed, this philosophy has already been put into practice by leading manufacturers, who see technology as a way to execute on a business strategy that is built for long-stability in a world of near-term uncertainty.

"We take a technology-last approach – investing in innovation not for the sake of digitalization but to solve real business challenges and create long-term value," explains **Shakthi Ranathunga**, Chief Operating Officer of **MAS Holdings**. *"For us, it is not about adopting the latest digital 'trends' or applications. We are more focused on futureproofing ourselves as an enterprise. This means adapting tech solutions and embedding digital capabilities that enhance resilience, optimize planning, and drive innovation."*

"As these technologies mature, they hold the potential to drive more sustainable practices, enhance supply chain resilience, and create immersive consumer experiences that are both personalized and scalable."

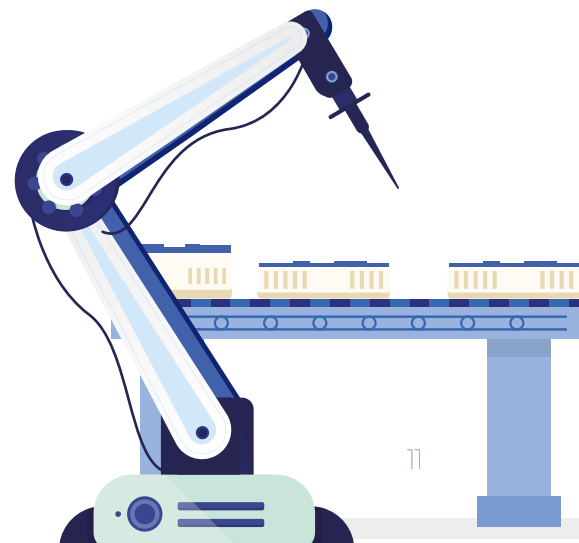
"The convergence of AI, digital twins, and advanced manufacturing is not just reshaping how we design and produce fashion but redefining the entire value chain," says **Matthew Drinkwater**, Head of the **Fashion Innovation Agency** at London College Of Fashion. *"As these technologies mature, they hold the potential to drive more sustainable practices, enhance supply chain resilience, and create immersive consumer experiences that are both personalized and scalable."*

As potent as this vision is, it is also indicative of another challenge: faced with the vast scope of technology, and with the realization of the scale of strategic business transformation that it can directly support, fashion companies could see the sheer surface area of challenge and possibility as being too vast to tackle.

"The convergence of AI, digital twins, and advanced manufacturing is not just reshaping how we design and produce fashion but redefining the entire value chain."

Matthew Drinkwater

Head of the Fashion Innovation Agency at London College Of Fashion



Digital transformation across fashion's core domains: create, manufacture, and market better

Based on its teams' extensive first-hand experience of the fashion market, Lectra has built a broad portfolio of solutions that still cater to specific processes but also, taken together, make up the entire scope of transformation across the extended value chain.

Under the first of these umbrellas, **"Create,"** critical capabilities that correspond exactly to the needs of design and development teams, as well as enhancing the way those teams' workflows ladder up to more intelligent decision-making.



This includes integrated solutions for translating creative ideas into compelling commercial products, through streamlined creative design, sample management, and 3D prototyping and visualization. The same suite of tools also covers technical pattern development in both 2D and 3D, and intelligent systems for minimizing fabric consumption and improving profitability per product from the outset.

Once a product has been designed, it – and the data that defines it – then enters the **"Manufacture"** phase, where equipment from across Lectra's stable of cutting connected room and manufacturing solutions combines with **Valia Fashion** the new intelligent cloud-based solution.



Once those products have been designed and produced, the next associated challenge is to position, promote and sell them as effectively as possible, and they enter the “**Market**” phase.

Here, Lectra's centralized marketplace management platform **Neteven** provides visibility across the full range of online channels, aiding brands in successfully identifying opportunities in both domestic and global markets, and developing and executing omnichannel sales strategies.

MARKET

Today, leading retailers like Printemps Group already use Neteven to accelerate the digital strategies of several eCommerce brands – increasing the visibility of those brands' products, and achieving growth in overall sales.

As well as managing multiple channels, the “Market” portfolio also includes **intelligence platform Retviews**, which surfaces insights from public data captured and analyzed from across more than 5,000 competitor websites worldwide – giving fashion brands new visibility of local and international opportunities, new tools to compare themselves with their competition, and heightened awareness of how to bring the right products to market at the right time.

To manage the impact of the brands and quantify the outcomes of strategic marketing decisions, the cloud-based Brand Performance platform **Launchmetrics** provides a data-backed and quantifiable way of measuring brand impact that leading brands such as Jacquemus have already deployed to track its effectiveness across fashion shows, events, campaigns and collaborations.

Interconnectivity beats isolated innovation

While these three pillars capture essential components of the fashion value chain, the key unlock for Lectra and its customers has come from the realization that all of these different elements must flow into one another, rather than operating in isolation.

In practice, this means that data created during one stage of the product journey is seamlessly made available to the next step and every subsequent step. Rather than being a series of siloes and discrete solutions, the Create, Manufacture, and Market stages are identifiable arts of a cohesive whole that covers the entire lifecycle – with common processes, workflows, and data that flows from one domain to the next.

“With the challenges faced by fashion players today, it simply will not work for a brand to focus only on improving the way they create products without also elevating the way they manufacture those products and the way they market them.” explains **Maximilien Abadie** of Lectra. “*These elements all need to be approached as a whole, with a central point of business-wide collaboration that bridges and connects them all, so that the decisions being made in creation, manufacturing, and marketing support the ultimate outcomes of the company.*”

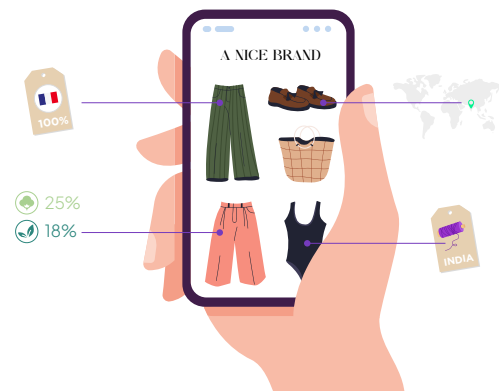
This same shift also makes it possible for new solutions to exist that can transcend those different domains and provide value throughout the extended ecosystem. The TextileGenesis platform, which can provide full visibility and accountability across the extended lifecycle, as well as the essential building blocks for traceability and regulatory compliance, is an example of how interconnectivity between domains, applications, and data can fuel a fundamentally different way of working.

The same philosophy of connectivity and collaboration is also the driving forces behind Lectra's **Kubix Link** solution, which is designed to serve as the center of a fully connected, collaborative ecosystem: a single hub that brings together planning, creation, streamlined manufacturing, marketing, and control and visibility of the extended supply chain. And these capabilities can extend not only to in-house teams, but also to the global network of suppliers, subcontractors, and stakeholders that make up the garment production process – most of whom are accustomed to not being able to share live data, or being able to collaborate directly.

This model of data centralization and collaboration has been the advertised benefit of Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) tools for some time, but just like other solutions these have typically fallen back into being deployed for a small set of specific tasks and workflows, rather than fulfilling the vision for more complete transformation. But companies like Boucheron have found success by putting this new approach into practice.

"The added value of PLM also lies in the implementation of a clear, collaborative and customizable workflow, which guides each stage of the process: from the creation of the design to the validation of prototypes, via the selection of materials, the management of nomenclatures and costs, right up to the launch of production," explain **Caroline Damblant & Céline Yagoubi** of **Boucheron**. *"This cross-functional visibility is invaluable: it facilitates collaboration between our design, development and production teams, while guaranteeing consistency at every stage."*

A broader framework of opportunity and decision-making when it comes to technology investment also aligns with how fashion figures like **Victoire Satto** of **The Good Goods** see the evolution of the fashion business model and factors that will determine how capable brand and retail companies are of not only visualizing, but executing, a different kind of success.



"The key to prosperity is going to be embracing a precision economy: better products, manufactured on demand, saving resources, optimizing the value chain with surgical efficiency, and having production driven by quality data, leveraged by all stakeholders," she explains. And as befits the scale of that transformation, those visionaries are now using entirely different sets of criteria to select their technology partners.

"The key to prosperity is going to be embracing a precision economy: better products, manufactured on demand, saving resources, optimizing the value chain with surgical efficiency, and having production driven by quality data, leveraged by all stakeholders."

Victoire Satto

Founder & CEO of sustainable fashion business publication **The Good Goods**

A pioneering partner

For more than 50 years, Lectra has accompanied the fashion industry on its transformational journey as a key technology partner across a broad spectrum of software, equipment, and services. Today, the company is deeply embedded into the fashion and luxury industries – so much so that more than **one third of the world's wardrobe** is designed by brands with Lectra software, and **more than 21,000 of the planet's top manufacturers and suppliers** use its equipment to transform and optimize their operations, giving Lectra unmatched reach and insight across the value chain.

Recontextualizing Industry 4.0

Lectra also became known as one of the first companies in to embrace the idea of "Industry 4.0", with a combination of different technology enablers that would transform the different processes that make up the value chain. Lectra also became known as one of the first companies in fashion (as well as in its furniture and automotive verticals) to embrace the idea of "Industry 4.0," with senior

leadership identifying a combination of different technology enablers and market trajectories that they believed would soon combine to not just connect manufacturing, but transform the different processes that make up the value chain along all of the axes that comprise the company's extended offer today.

With the benefit of hindsight, the impact of those enablers – the Internet of Things (IoT), cloud computing, big data, and AI – are obvious, since the world has advanced to meet them head-on, and industry readiness to adopt them has improved. And for early adopters like Lectra, who saw these shifts coming, that headstart on deploying new technology and new mindsets has allowed them to gather, analyze, and create valuable insights from a significant amount of fashion-specific data, and from how that data travels between different stages of the extended product journey.

Time has proven this to be a prescient approach. Despite not being prepared for them earlier, the majority of fashion brands run on one or more of those constituent parts – and just as AI has reached an inflection point where its capabilities map to vital industry challenges, most fashion businesses today cannot conceive of a world without the cloud.

Data and digital expertise

“Technology is now rightly seen as an essential lever that the industry needs to pull, today, in order to be prepared for the future.”

Ben Hanson

Editor-in-Chief of *The Interline*

This heightened awareness of the possibilities of technology and the importance of the data they create has also led to a strategic shift in the framing of what constitutes success in digital transformation and technology initiatives.

*“One of the most significant contributions [technology has made] has also been the centralization of product data,” say **Caroline Damblant & Céline Yagoubi** of **Boucheron**. “Where information used to be dispersed between different tools, files or teams, we now have a single, reliable repository that is accessible in real time. This facilitates collaboration, secures exchanges, and aligns all players around common data.”*

Industry analysts have also observed this same reprioritization and reframing, as fashion brands have changed not just their attitude to technology adoption, but the matrix they use to determine the value of investing in new solutions at a time when capital and operational expenditure is under scrutiny.

*“Fashion companies are now judging technology not just as a way to become better at specific activities and narrow tasks, and instead they are measuring a return in their overall agility, their ability to make rapid decisions when unforeseen circumstances occur, their desirability as a brand, and their quantifiable advances in sustainability,” says **Ben Hanson**, Editor-in-Chief of *The Interline*.*

“Success in fashion has always come from combining creativity and craft with the cutting edge of technology – but the urgency and the potential positive impact of blending the two are both higher than ever,” he adds. “Now, with the amount and the speed of transformation happening within fashion and across the world around it, investing in any solution, or an integrated set of solutions, means taking a step on a different route

to success – one that's defined by the ability to adapt and advance. Technology is now rightly seen as an essential lever that the industry needs to pull, today, in order to be prepared for the future.”

*“Our driving goal is to help the winners of tomorrow to navigate an unpredictable world towards a long-term horizon that may look different, day by day, but that is defined by clear challenges – creating, making, and marketing better products – that we have the comprehensive suite of solutions to help solve for the long run.” **Maximilien Abadie** of **Lectra** explains.*

30%
of the world's wardrobe
is designed by brands with
Lectra software





Conclusion

Across the different dimensions of disruption taking place in the world, and taking account of the inherent attributes of the industry itself, fashion is facing a decisive moment. For brands, retailers, and their partners, the timeline for building the requisite agility, resilience, and connectivity could be long, but those transformations must start today – and they must be anchored in the right approach to technology and the right partnership strategy.

“A critical part of [all] this is integrating end-to-end supply chain solutions that allow for real-time insights and responsiveness—keeping pace with shifting consumer demand, retail cycles, and sustainability goals,” says Shakthi Ranathunga of MAS Holdings. “These insights feed directly into innovation and product development, helping us bring better solutions to market, faster. While the industry has made progress, true industrialization of innovation requires scalability.”

The challenge and the opportunity are clear: for companies to maintain their relevance, identify and refine their unique value proposition, architect new business models and prepare for the future, they must invest in ways to create, manufacture, and market better today. This is the way fashion will meet its latest and most transformative moment.