



SUSTAINABILITY BY DESIGN

RETHINKING NEW YORK
FASHION WEEK

IMPACT REPORT

The Council of Fashion Designers of America in partnership with Boston Consulting Group

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a severe impact on the [fashion and luxury industry](#). Sales are down across the board, and companies along the entire fashion value chain have curtailed operations in response. Traditional fashion weeks, held annually or biannually in cities around the world, have been transformed or canceled outright. Those that elected to proceed have adopted various measures to protect participants and the public. Many others canceled their live shows, relying instead on digital platforms to showcase their new fashions.

If the current crisis has a silver lining, it is that it gives the fashion industry an opportunity to rethink how it conducts business. New York Fashion Week (NYFW) is a case in point: Like its fashion week counterparts in other cities around the world, NYFW has been a key component of the fashion industry's creative process—not only showing off the latest efforts of designers and brands across the fashion spectrum, but also generating much of the advertising and promotional content needed to see the industry through the ensuing six months. The live experience allows all the players in the industry—from designers and manufacturers to retailers and customers—to come together, exchange ideas, and discuss the latest trends.

But there is also a downside. Activities tied to each fashion week can release as much as 48,000 metric tons of greenhouse gases (GHGs) into the atmosphere. In the case of NYFW, up to 10,000 of the event's 25,000 or so participants fly into town, accounting for the largest portion of the GHG total; additional emissions come from the many trips that participants take from venue to venue once in New York. The manufacture of samples and other goods, as well as of sets and props used during shows, produces large amounts of waste, as do the many venues where shows are held. All of this represents a huge investment for brands and designers showing at NYFW, with budgets often running into the millions of dollars.

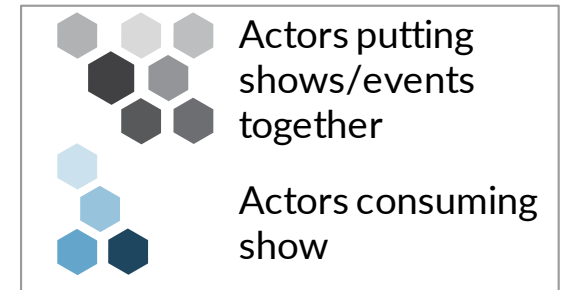
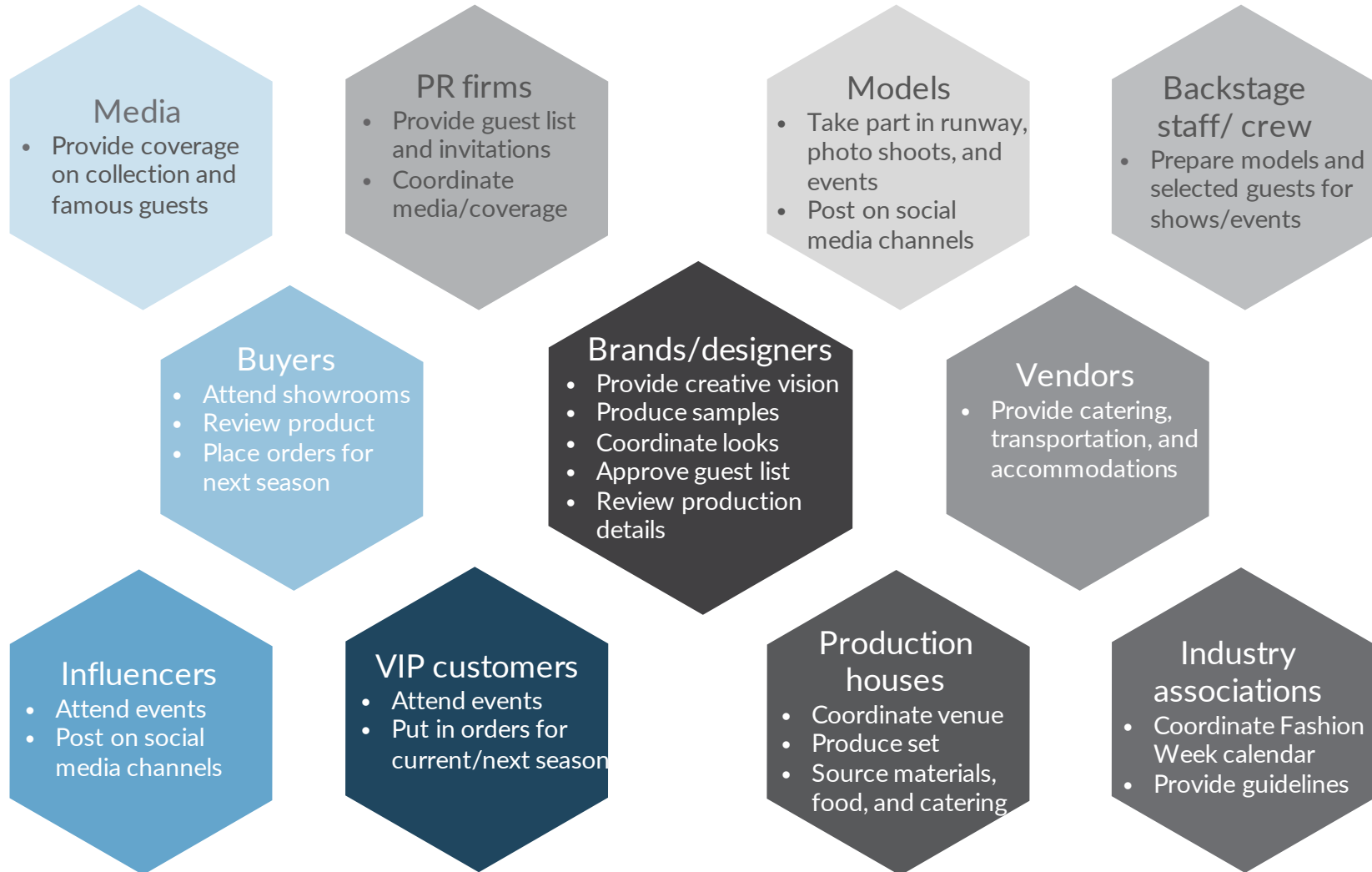
In this report, we analyze NYFW's level of sustainability, ways to improve it, and lessons that the fashion industry can learn from the effort.



MAKING NYFW SUSTAINABLE



NYFW BRINGS TOGETHER THOUSANDS OF FASHION INDUSTRY PLAYERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD





NYFW GENERATES CONSIDERABLE CREATIVE AND FINANCIAL VALUE FOR ALL PLAYERS IN THE FASHION COMMUNITY



Creative process

- Defines vision and concept for collections
- Creates freshness and energy around products and assortment
- Provides creative closure in ending a chapter before moving on to the next collection



Content generation

- Creates high-quality content for brand materials such as catalogues, marketing materials, and in-store visuals—700-800 assets for each brand¹
- Draws attention by generating an average of \$1.2 million in media value per brand¹



Live experience

- Allows buyers to see, touch, and feel the product in the showroom
- Provides opportunities for media editors to review a collection, provide perspective, and amplify reach



Sparks customer demand and deepens VIP relationships

Contributes \$600 million to local businesses and city tax income²

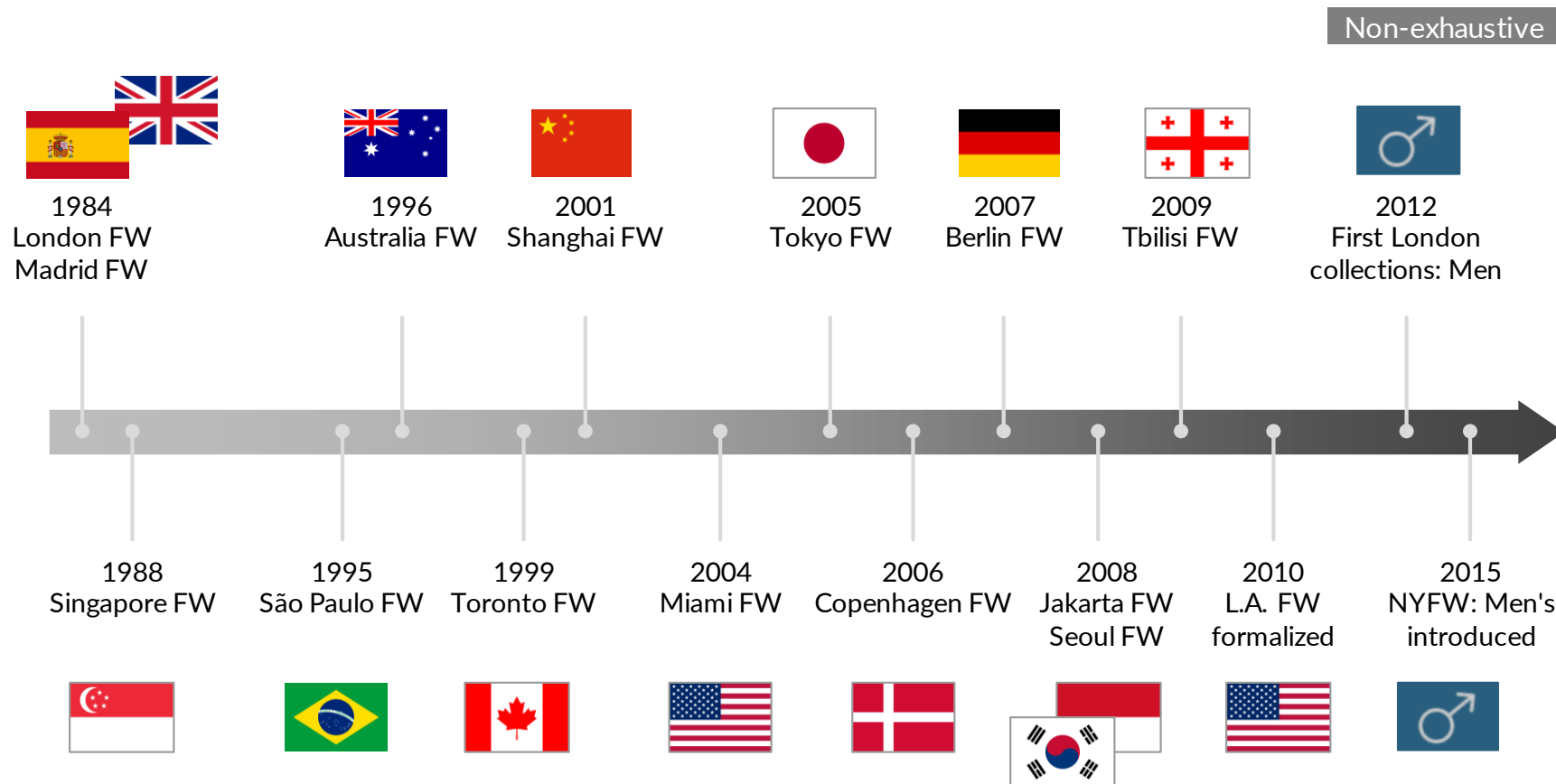
1. Data for brands surveyed 2. Based on AW 2017 figures, annualized.

Sources: The Economic Impact of the Fashion Industry (U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee), FashionUnited UK, CFDA press releases, CFDAxBCG Sustainability of NYFW survey, BCG expertise.



FUELED BY INDUSTRY AND CONSUMER DEMAND, THERE ARE NOW MORE THAN 130 FASHION WEEKS EACH YEAR AROUND THE WORLD

- Separate events for menswear/womenswear, haute couture/prêt-à-porter, bridal, and others
- Growth of shows for cruise/resort and pre-fall collections



Overexpansion of fashion weeks has exacerbated concerns about their sustainability

Major events, such as NYFW, can lead by example, inspiring and informing the rest of the industry about the importance of sustainability



NYFW'S IMPACT ON THE REST OF THE FASHION ECOSYSTEM IS FAR REACHING

DECISIONS MADE BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER THE EVENT SET THE SUSTAINABILITY TONE FOR THE ENTIRE INDUSTRY



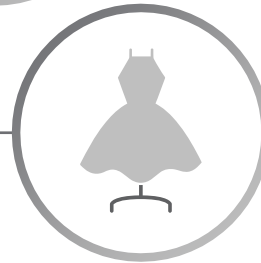
Marketing

- Such as content, messages, recycled packaging materials



Production

- Including production methods and supply chain decisions



Design

- Such as material selection and core theme of collections



Events

- Including use of recycled materials, partnerships with local vendors, and minimizing carbon footprint

Source: BCG analysis.



SUSTAINABILITY BY THE NUMBERS

THE SHEER AMOUNT OF WASTE AND EXCESS CURRENTLY BUILT INTO THE FASHION CALENDAR LIES AT THE HEART OF THE FASHION INDUSTRY'S LACK OF SUSTAINABILITY



1.2 billion tons

Amount of greenhouse gas emissions produced by the fashion industry, about 10% of total global emissions



2,700 liters

Amount of water required to produce one cotton T-shirt



102 million tons

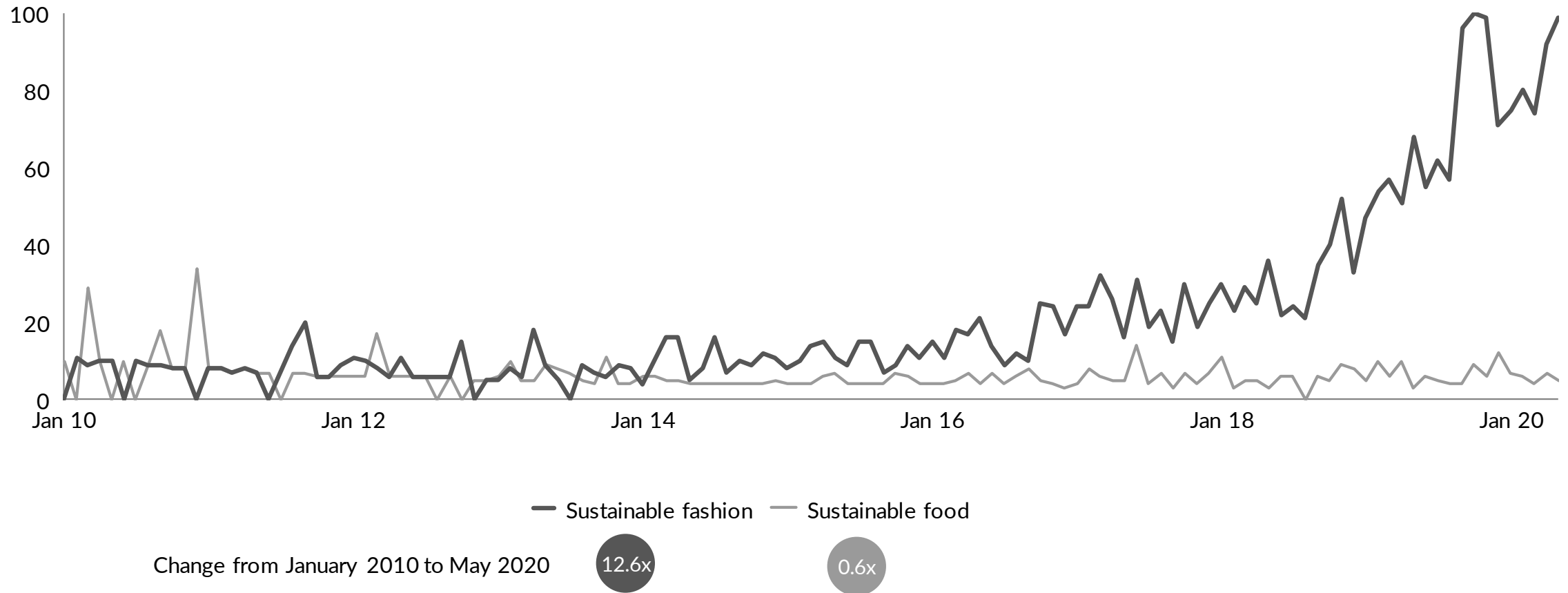
Amount of clothing consumed by 2030, a 60% increase from 2020—80% of which will end up in landfills

Sources: Pulse of the Fashion Industry report (2017–2019); Common Objective; Better Cotton Initiative; Ellen MacArthur Foundation; UNFCCC; BCG analysis.



SEARCHES RELATED TO SUSTAINABILITY IN FASHION ARE TRENDING UPWARD

Indexed popularity of Google search



Note: Numbers represent search interest relative to the highest point on the chart for the given region and time. A value of 100 is the peak popularity for the term. A value of 50 means that the term is half as popular. Likewise a score of 0 means the term was less than 1% as popular as at the peak.

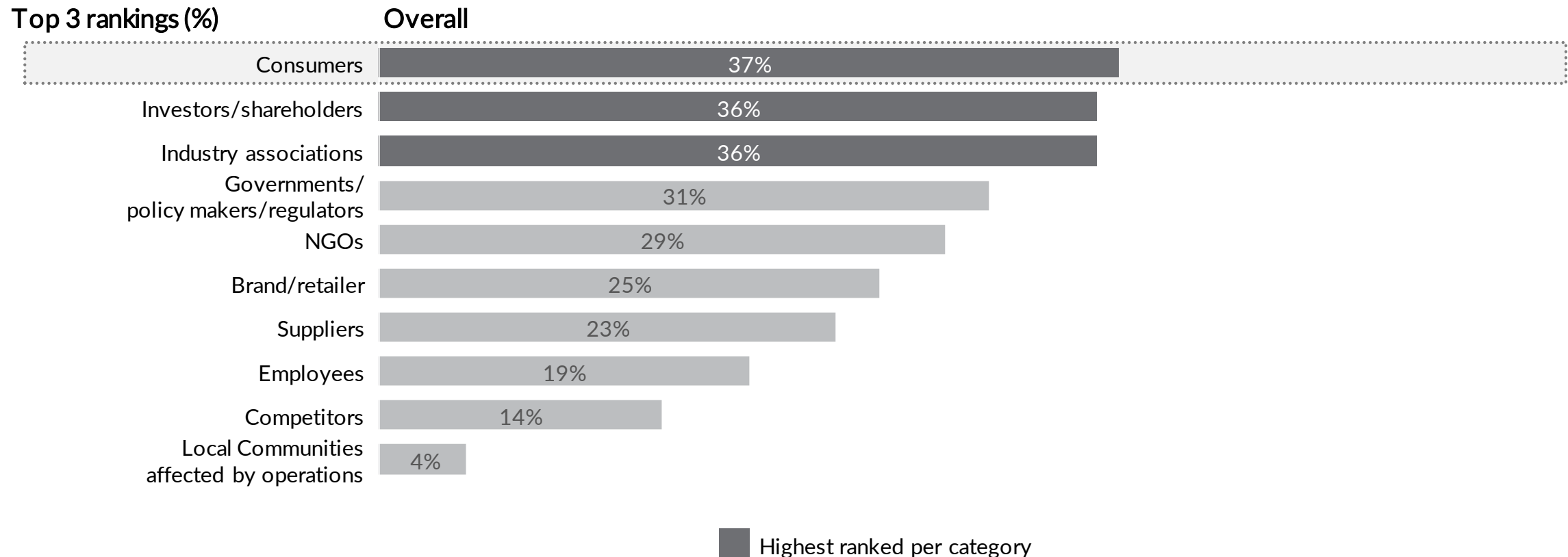
Change is calculated as the difference between the average for January–June 2010 and January–June 2020.

Source: Worldwide Google Trends for Shopping Category; BCG analysis.



BRANDS AGREE THAT CONSUMER DEMAND IS DRIVING SUSTAINABILITY IN THE FASHION INDUSTRY

Q: “To whom would you attribute the major responsibility for driving the industry towards more sustainability?”¹



1. Participants were asked to choose their top 5 responsible parties; percentages show the share of top 3 rankings given; n = 91.
Source: GKA-BCG Pulse of the Fashion Industry 2017.

SUSTAINABILITY IN THE FASHION INDUSTRY IS NOT A STATIC CONCEPT



2013



2016



2019

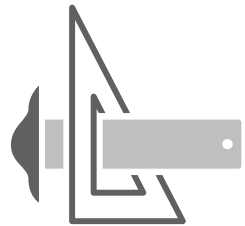
Sustainability attributes in order of importance (%) - *When ranking top 5 criteria*

[illegible]



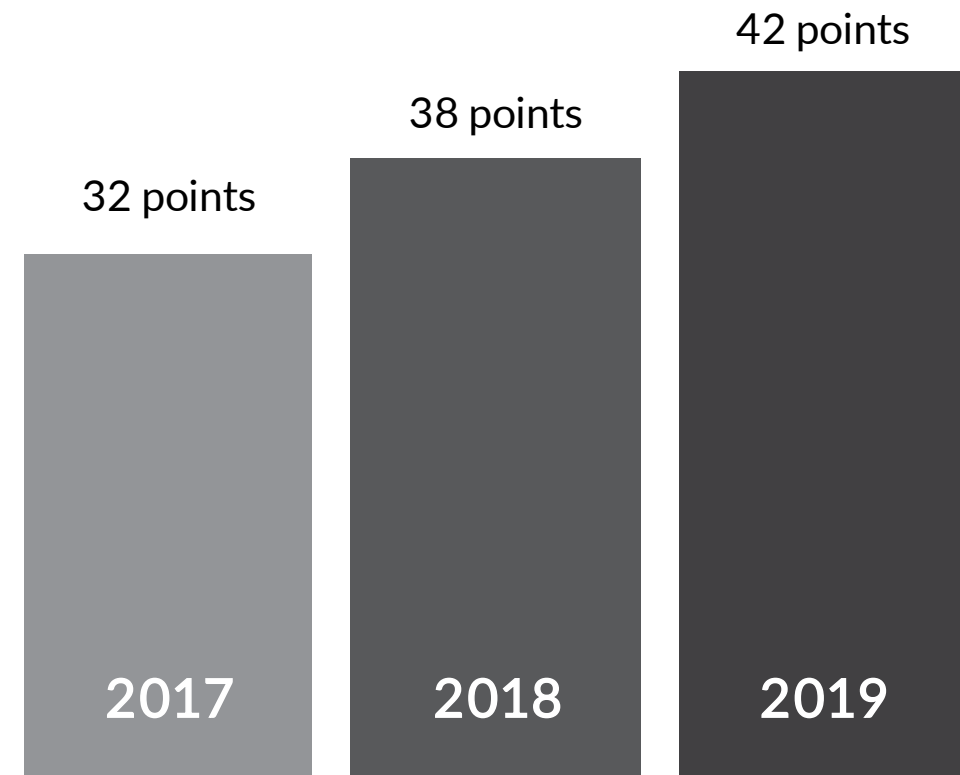
THE FASHION INDUSTRY OVERALL IS BECOMING MORE SUSTAINABLE, BUT IT HAS FAR TO GO AND THE RATE OF IMPROVEMENT HAS BEEN DECLINING

Taking the Industry's Pulse



The Pulse Score measures the environmental and social performance of the fashion and luxury industry on a scale from 0 to 100

Pulse Score (0–100)



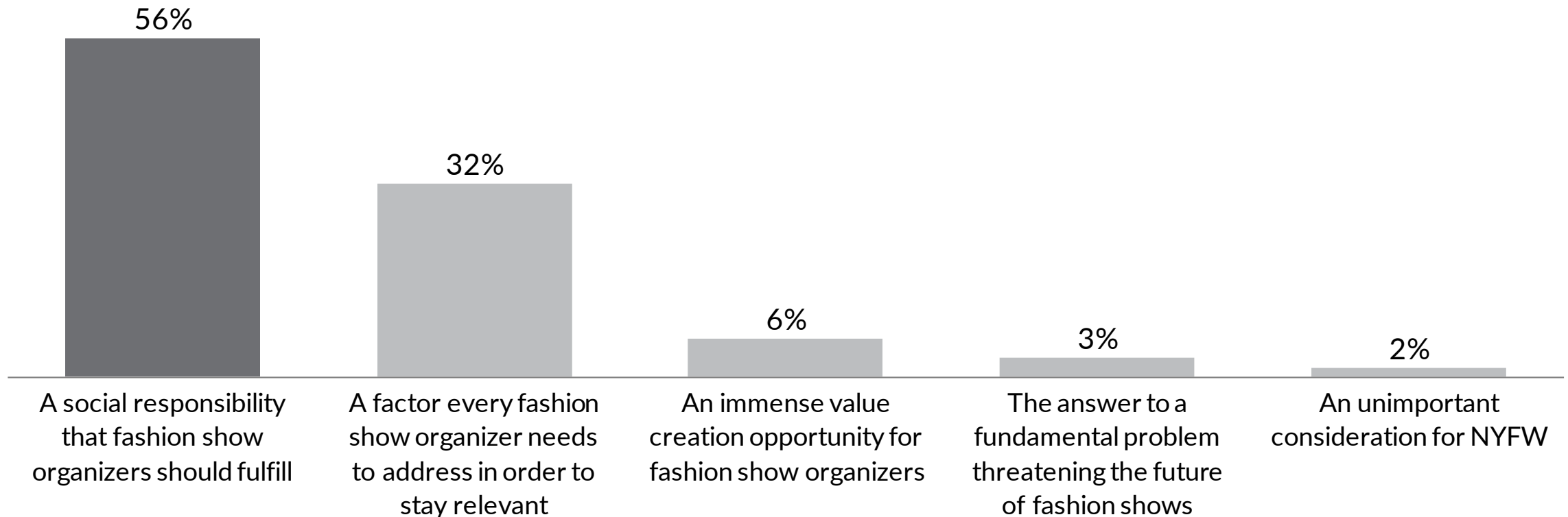
A fashion show runway scene with two models in the foreground. The model on the left is wearing a black dress with a large, intricate necklace. The model on the right is wearing a white dress with a similar necklace. The background is dark and out of focus, showing other models and audience members.

NYFW'S SUSTAINABILITY MATTERS TO STAKEHOLDERS

CONCERNS ABOUT NYFW'S SUSTAINABILITY ARE GROWING AMONG STAKEHOLDERS

Q: From your perspective, what is sustainability **first and foremost** in the context of NYFW/fashion shows? *Select one.*

(% of respondents)



Note: Percentages will not add up to 100% due to rounding.
Source: CFDA x BCG Sustainability of NYFW survey.

CONSUMERS AND NYFW STAKEHOLDERS VALUE THE SAME SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICES, BUT TO VARYING DEGREES

NYFW stakeholders

who consider the practice important (%)



Consumers

who consider the practice important (%)



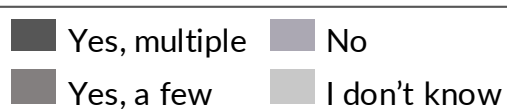
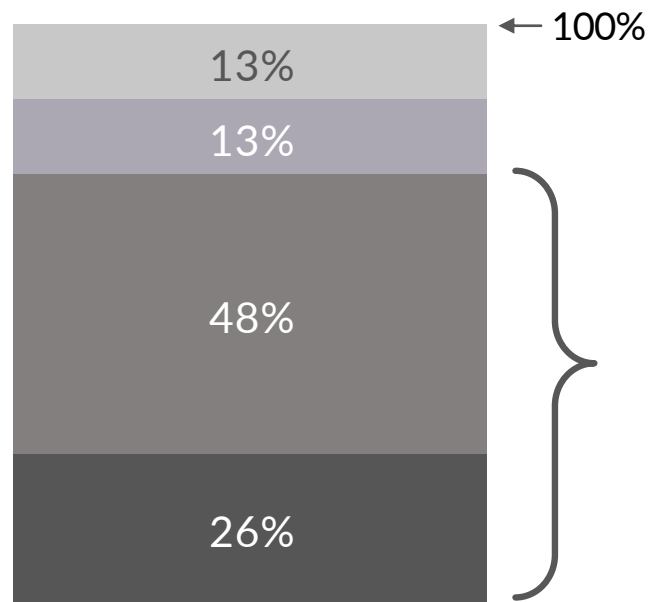
1. Practices not listed in the top 10 by both brands and consumers.

Sources: CFDAx BCG Sustainability of NYFW survey; BCG Sustainability Survey.

ALMOST THREE-QUARTERS OF NYFW STAKEHOLDERS SAY THEY HAVE ESTABLISHED SUSTAINABILITY TARGETS, PRIMARILY IN MATERIALS AND WASTE

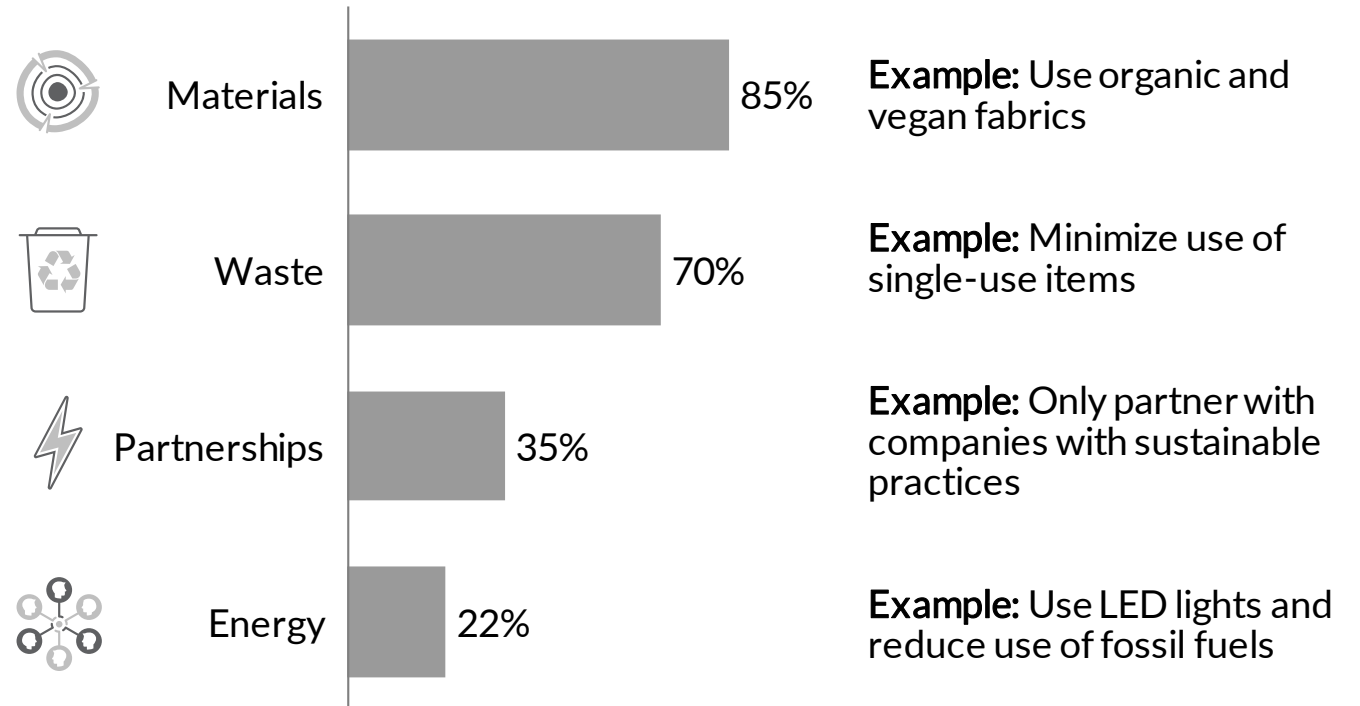
Q: Are there sustainability-related targets specific to NYFW within your organization?

(% of respondents)



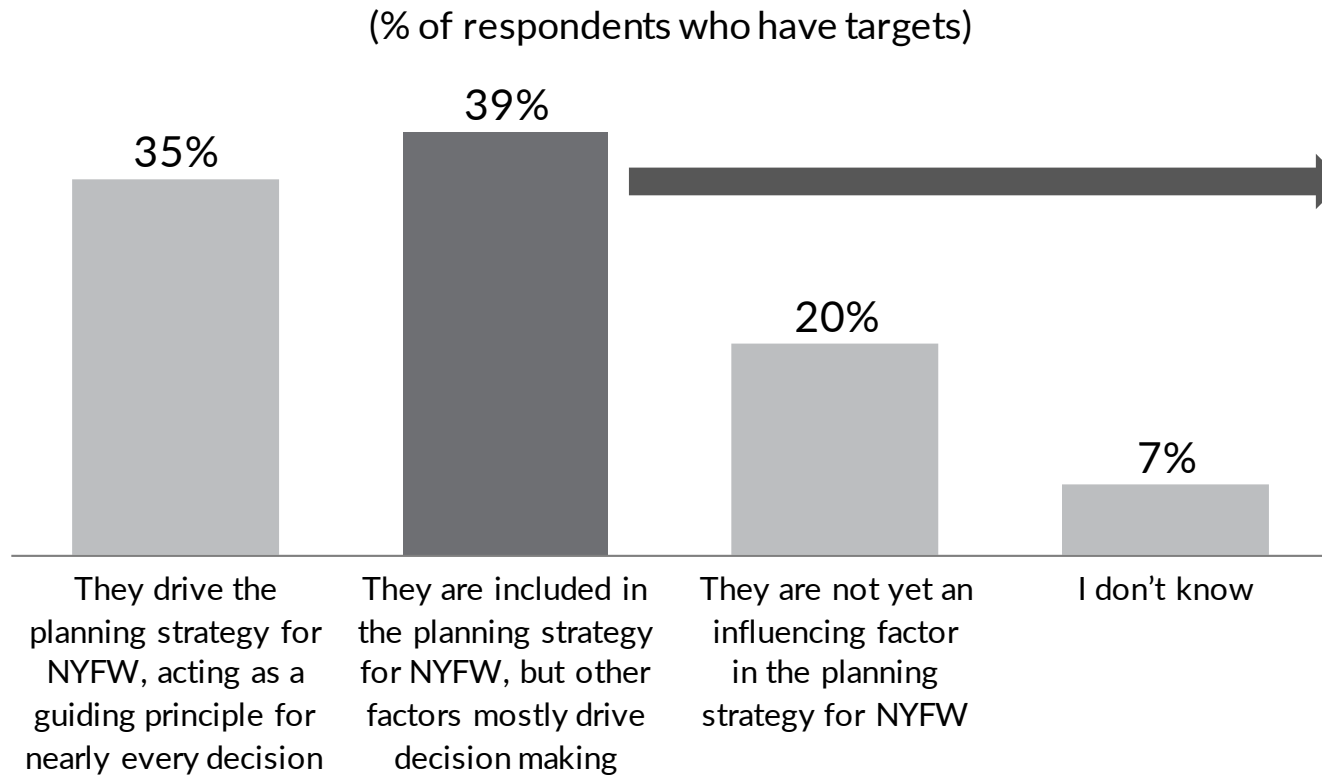
Q: For which of the following sustainability dimensions are targets defined, specific to NYFW?

(% of respondents who have targets)



ALMOST 40% OF RESPONDENTS WITH NYFW SUSTAINABILITY TARGETS VIEW THEM ONLY AS A CONSIDERATION, NOT AS A GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Q: What role do these sustainability-related targets play in your organization's overall strategy when planning for NYFW?



Other factors that drive decision making



Creative direction



Budget constraints



Venue/location limitations



Timing constraints



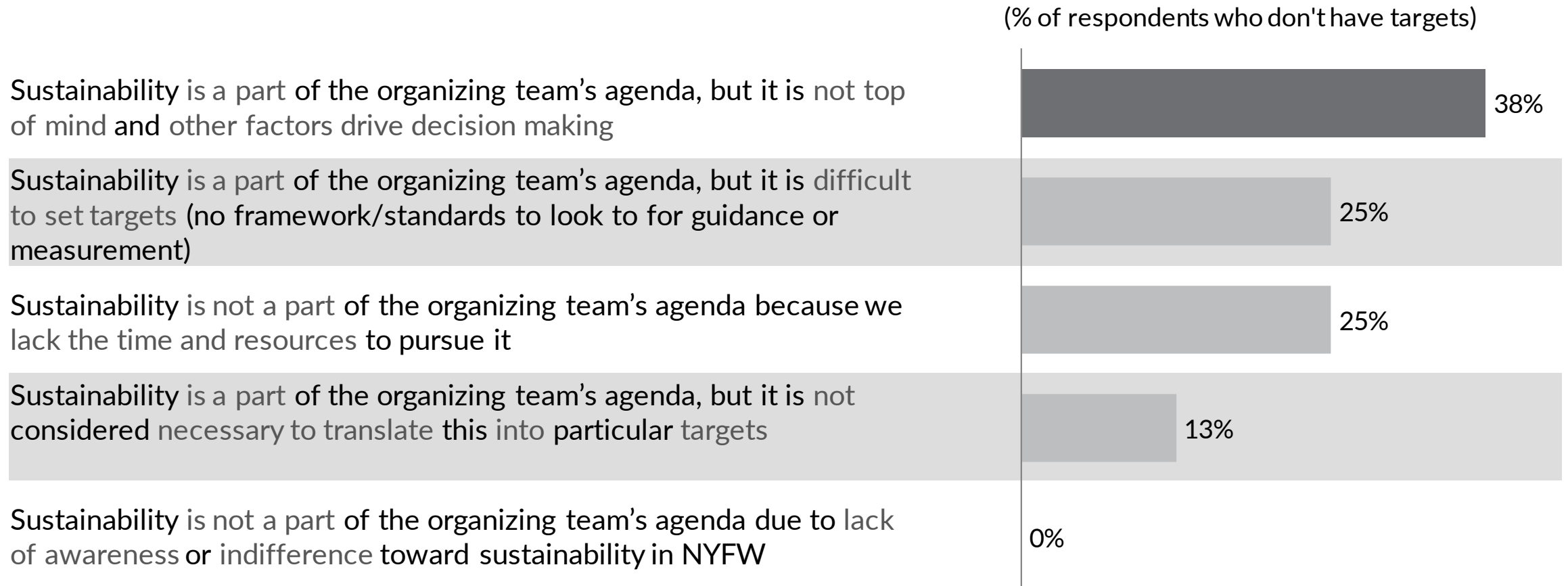
Resource availability

Note: Percentages will not add up to 100% due to rounding.
Source: CFDA x BCG Sustainability of NYFW survey.

ACTORS WITHOUT SPECIFIC SUSTAINABILITY TARGETS ATTRIBUTE THEIR ABSENCE TO SEVERAL FACTORS

THE NO. 1 FACTOR: SUSTAINABILITY ISN'T "TOP OF MIND"

Q: What is the reason for the **absence of sustainability-related targets** for NYFW in your organization?



Note: Percentages will not add up to 100% due to rounding.
Source: CFDA x BCG Sustainability of NYFW survey.



ASSESSING NYFW'S SUSTAINABILITY PERFORMANCE TODAY

WE EXAMINED SIX KEY IMPACT AREAS ACROSS FOUR SUSTAINABILITY DIMENSIONS

Sustainability dimensions



Energy

e.g., renewable energy, biofuels, LED/low lighting



Materials

e.g., nontoxic, organic, locally sourced, manufacturer's certifications



Waste

e.g., recycling, composting, reuse, reduction of plastic



Partnerships¹

e.g., vendor partnerships, community partnerships, sponsorships

NYFW impact areas



Content²

Photos, videos, and other assets generated both for and from NYFW



Samples

The physical garment pieces created for the NYFW show/presentation



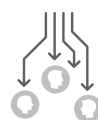
Production

Set building, creation of décor and props, and other logistics related to putting on shows and events during NYFW



Venue

The physical location(s) of the shows and events during NYFW



Public relations

Marketing and promotion of NYFW runway shows and events, such as invitations, parties, and dinner events



Transportation/logistics³

Transportation and logistics of guests, teams, and models during NYFW for shows and events

1. Community and external partnerships. 2. Includes content generation and distribution. 3. Specific to guest transportation.

Source: BCG analysis.

THE SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT SCORE



53

Source: BCG analysis.

We used the framework described in the previous page to measure NYFW's current level of sustainability across all six impact areas. The results will serve as a baseline for future assessments of the show's progress.

The Sustainability Impact Score shows the average percentage of survey respondents who said they had taken various sustainability measures within each of the six impact areas. This indicates the degree of sustainability in each area and provides a broader score for NYFW's sustainability as a whole.

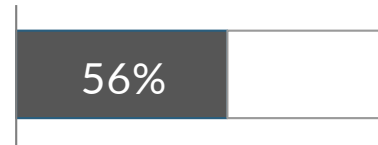
NYFW SCORES 53 OUT OF 100 ON SUSTAINABILITY OVERALL, BUT THE SCORES FOR THE INDIVIDUAL IMPACT AREAS VARY CONSIDERABLY

53

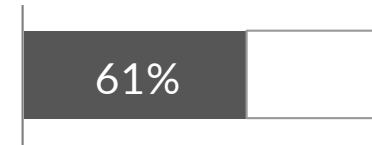
Source: CFDA x BCG Sustainability of NYFW survey.



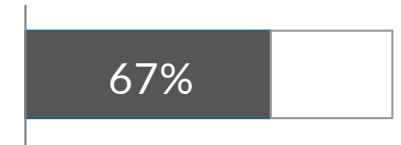
Content



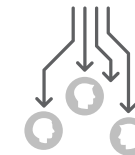
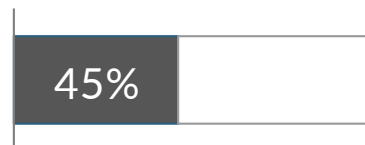
Samples



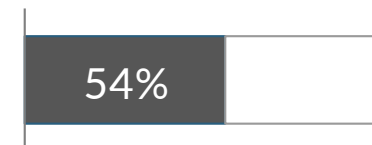
Production



Venue







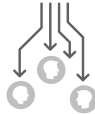





Public relations



Transportation/
logistics



EACH IMPACT AREA OFFERS SEVERAL POSSIBILITIES FOR IMPROVING SUSTAINABILITY

		NYFW impact areas					
							
		Content ¹	Samples	Production	Venue	Public relations	Transportation/ logistics ²
Sustainability dimensions	 Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital livestream/showrooms Moved from runway to presentations Selective use of photography/video 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renewable energy when producing NY-based production (CFDA FMI) Fewer rush orders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LED lighting on set Renewable/low-carbon generator Local equipment, lighting, set 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships with other brands to reduce distance between shows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced events outside show 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rideshare/carpool Electronic car fleets from partners Public transport options
	 Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recycled paper in brochures, look books 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nontoxic materials Manufacturers' material choice, certifications, labor conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compostable and recyclable materials Restaurant/caterer selection (organic, local) 	N/A		
	 Waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reuse of content/assets Digital look books for buyers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single-use garment bags/hangers Reuse of samples post-show Less packaging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reuse of décor, props, sets (vs. single use) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water-filling stations (vs. plastic bottles) Recycle bins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital invitations (vs. paper) Recyclable or no gift bags 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No plastic water bottles in car services
	 Partnerships³	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships with local artists and photographers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Donation of unused materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships with collectors of show waste 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Green" building and facilities (LEED, BREEAM, etc.) Shared use of venue (e.g., show and party) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organized events increasing awareness of sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of carbon-emission offsetting agencies Hotels with sustainable practices

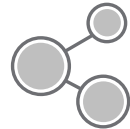
1. Includes content generation and distribution. 2. Specific to guest transportation. 3. Community and external partnerships.
Source: BCG analysis.

CONTENT

Photography, literature, and other materials created for the show and used afterward



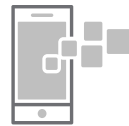
The vast majority of stakeholders are leveraging NYFW content to market their brands elsewhere, minimizing the number of shoots needed in the future.



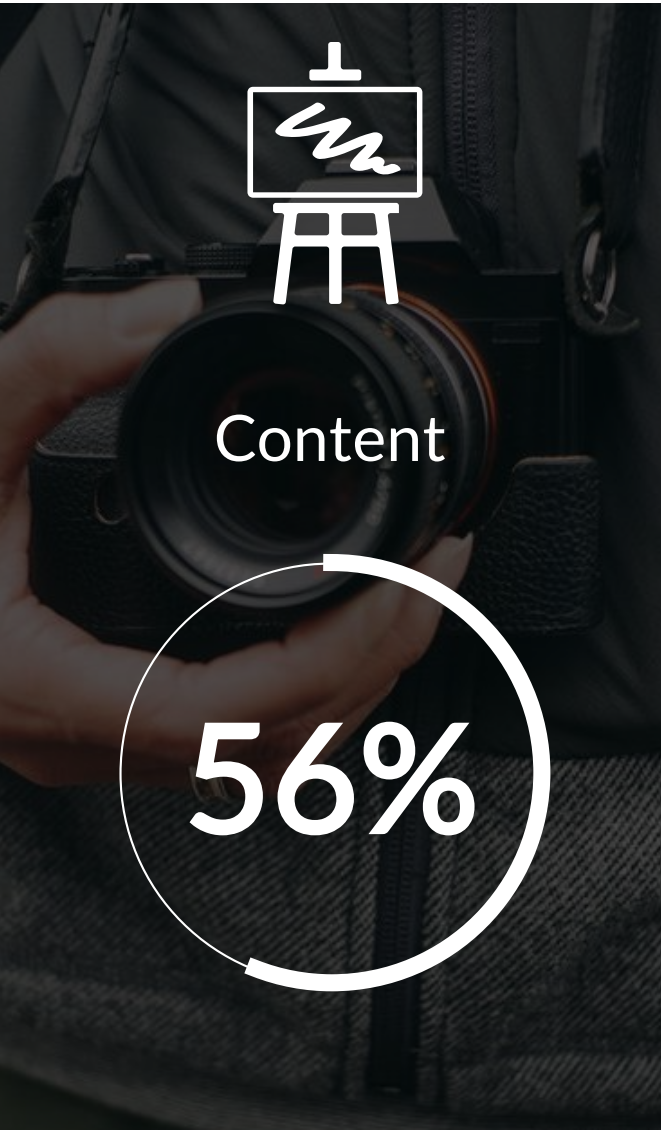
Almost all stakeholders are partnering with local photographers and artists to minimize travel-related carbon emissions.



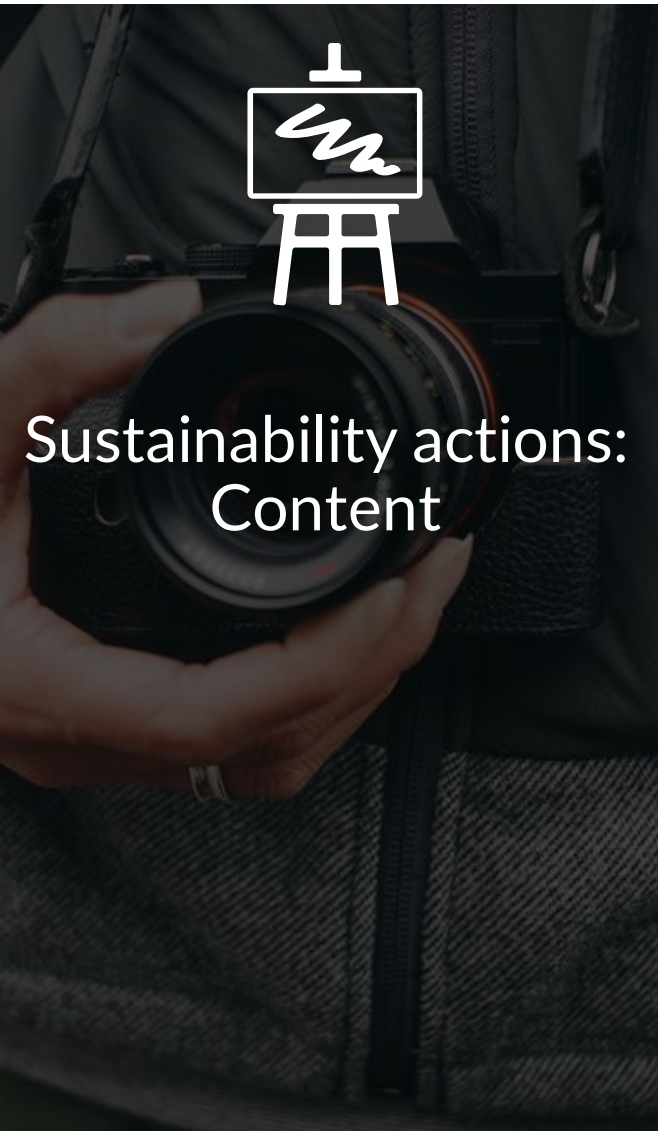
The greatest opportunity for future NYFWs lies in partnerships among stakeholders to create content that promotes sustainability.






Stakeholders can also consider leveraging digital and other alternative formats during their NYFW shows to reduce physical waste.



CONTENT



Sustainability actions: Content

Sustainability dimension	Action	Weight of impact ¹	% yes from survey
 Waste	Consider alternative formats during NYFW (for shows and events)	High	61%
	Opt for a digital presentation/livestream of the runway show with reduced audience	High	25%
	Offer digital look books (for buyers/partners) in place of physical look books	Moderate	87%
	Generate content/assets from NYFW to use for other brand marketing purposes	Moderate	91%
	Livestream the runway show (for clienteling/other marketing purposes)	Moderate	61%
 Energy	Partner with local artists and photographers	Low	94%
 Partnerships	Partner with other organizations to generate content promoting/increasing awareness of sustainability	Low	50%

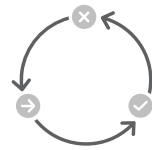
1. Based on assigned size and extent of impact.
Source: CFDA x BCG Sustainability of NYFW survey.

SAMPLES

The physical garments shown during NYFW



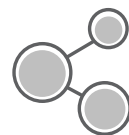
Many current NYFW participants are small brands that already employ sustainable practices in their design rooms and material sourcing, which explains in part why this impact area scores relatively well.



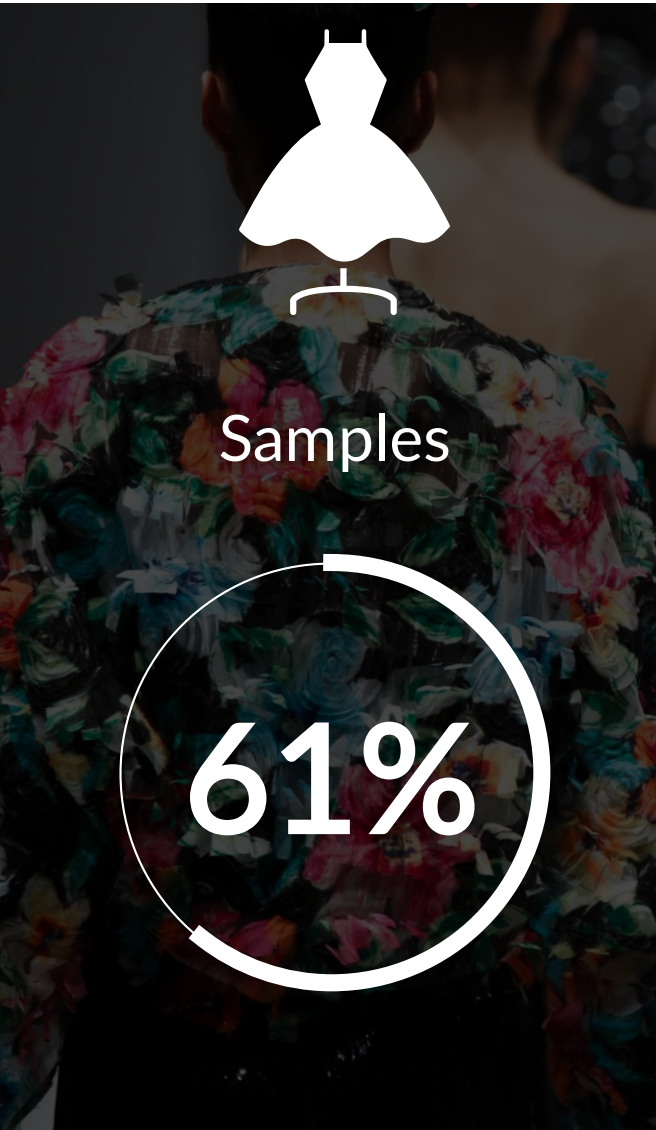
The vast majority of fashion designers are already highly conscious of the need to minimize waste generated in making the products shown at NYFW. They are opting to use recycled materials and to reuse and repurpose samples and fabrics after the show or event. Some have also reduced the number of samples created specifically for NYFW by presenting their ideas to retailers in digital form, rather than via physical shows.



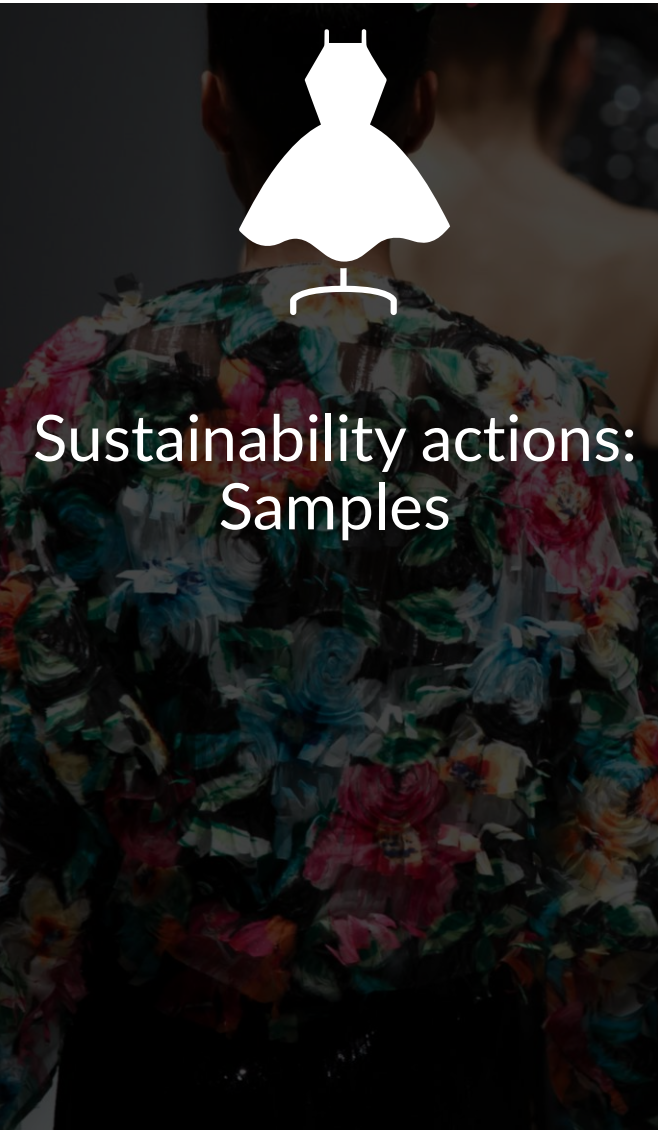
Most fashion brands also aim to produce their samples from sustainable fabrics made by ethical manufacturers.




Still, the dimension with the greatest room for improvement in the impact area of samples is energy. More designers could leverage renewable energy sources more effectively when producing samples and choose more sustainable methods of shipping them.



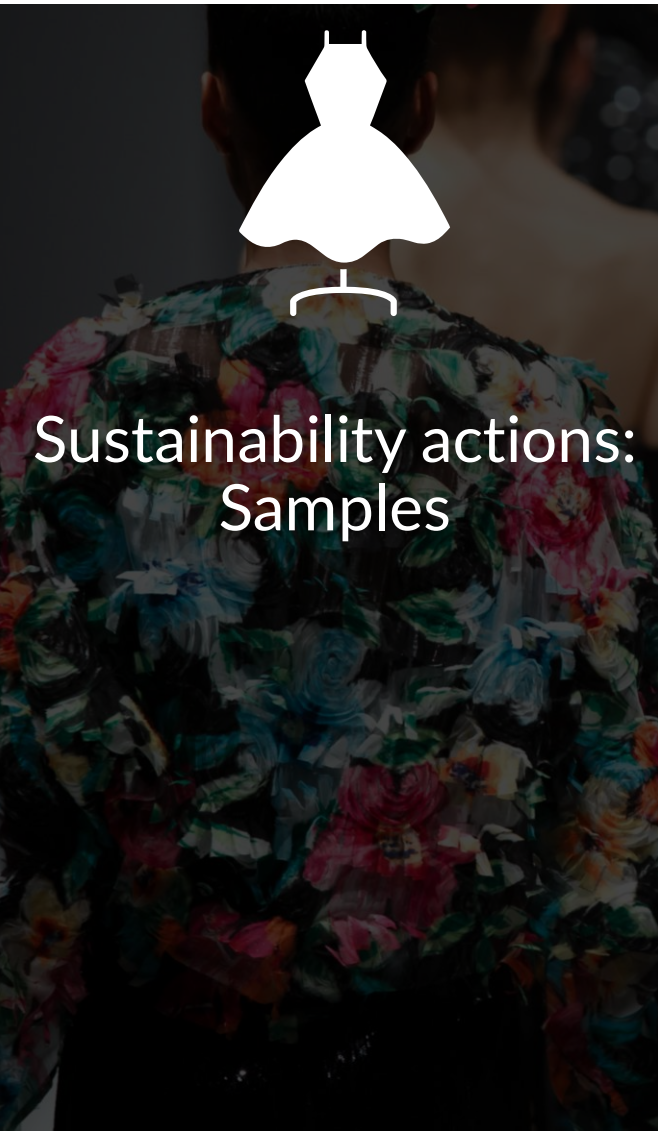
SAMPLES






Sustainability dimension	Action	Weight of impact ¹	% yes from survey
 Waste	Use recycled/upcycled materials when putting together samples	Moderate	77%
	Use reusable/recyclable (vs. single-use) items—e.g., garment bags, hangers—for the show	Moderate	76%
	Minimize the number of samples produced	Moderate	90%
	Minimize the amount of packaging for samples	Moderate	85%
	Reuse/repurpose/recycle/upcycle/donate samples after runway show	Moderate	86%
	Reuse/repurpose/recycle/upcycle/donate any unused materials	Moderate	91%
	Leverage digital resources in place of physical ones, whenever applicable	Moderate	69%

1. Based on assigned size and extent of impact.
Source: CFDA x BCG Sustainability of NYFW survey.

SAMPLES



Sustainability actions: Samples

Sustainability dimension	Action	Weight of impact ¹	% yes from survey
 Materials	Use or partner with manufacturers who use sustainably sourced materials	Low	76%
	Minimize the number of rush orders/ changes	Moderate	89%
	Don't use fur or exotic skins in samples	Moderate	76%
 Energy	Use renewable energy sources when producing samples	Moderate	43%
	Produce samples locally (in New York)	High	69%
	Choose ground/sea travel (vs. air) to ship samples	Moderate	45%
 Partnerships	Partner with manufacturers with ethical labor practices	Low	88%

1. Based on assigned size and extent of impact.
Source: CFDA x BCG Sustainability of NYFW survey.

PRODUCTION

Set building, creation of décor and props, and other logistics matters related to putting on shows and events during NYFW



Overall, production is the impact area where stakeholders are doing the most to be more sustainable.



Fashion brands and production houses alike are trying hard to reduce waste by repurposing and reusing set materials, props, and décor during and after the show.



Most stakeholders are also conscious of the sourcing of their catering and materials, actively pursuing organic, natural, and locally sourced options.



Reducing energy use in production remains a challenge. Most participants work with local partners to minimize their carbon footprints, rather than flying in artisans and other vendors from far away. But they could make greater efforts to use renewable and clean energy sources on set, and they should compensate for any unavoidable emissions they create during the week.


Production

67%

PRODUCTION



Sustainability actions: Production



Sustainability dimension	Action	Weight of impact ¹	% yes from survey
 Waste	Reuse materials from prior shows for the show/events	High	47%
	Reuse/repurpose/recycle/upcycle/donate materials after the show/ events	High	67%
	Rent (vs. purchase) materials	High	91%
	Use hair and makeup products with minimal or recyclable packaging	Moderate	61%
	Use recycled/upcycled/recyclable/ compostable material (vs. plastic) for décor, props, sets, etc.	High	82%
	Partner with collectors of show waste	Low	59%
	Reuse materials from prior shows for the show/events	High	47%

1. Based on assigned size and extent of impact.
Source: CFDA x BCG Sustainability of NYFW survey.

PRODUCTION



Sustainability actions: Production

Sustainability dimension	Action	Weight of impact ¹	% yes from survey
 Materials	Use organic/natural makeup and hair products	Moderate	69%
	Serve organic/locally sourced food, snacks, and beverages	Low	74%
	Partner with suppliers who source set materials sustainably	Low	63%
	Partner with restaurants/caterers that offer organic/locally sourced food/ goods	Low	83%
 Energy	Use low-carbon/renewable energy sources both on and off sets	High	51%
	Minimize/offset the carbon emissions generated from transportation related to production	High	40%
	Partner with local vendors/artisans	Low	96%

1. Based on assigned size and extent of impact.
Source: CFDA x BCG Sustainability of NYFW survey.

VENUE

The physical location of shows and events during NYFW



Venue

45%



NYFW's many activities occur at multiple venues around the city, giving this impact area significant room for improvement. Some venues have higher sustainability standards than others (for example, LEED or BREEAM certifications, or reliance on green energy sources).



Participants already take some measures to reduce waste in venues, such as by promoting recycling and eliminating single-use plastic water bottles.




Few stakeholders, however, use their runway venues for other events they hold during NYFW, or share their venues with other brands to pool resources, or work with other brands to minimize the distance between venues.



Brands should look for ways to ensure that their show venues are more energy efficient, too—notably, by finding facilities that comply with green energy standards.

VENUE



Sustainability dimension	Action	Weight of impact ¹	% yes from survey
 Energy	Choose a venue location that complies with “green” energy standards	Moderate	35%
	Partner with other brands to minimize distance between shows	Moderate	27%
 Waste	Have water-filling stations or offer boxed/sustainably packaged water (vs. plastic water bottles)	Low	73%
	Have recycle bins onsite	Low	89%
	Share venue with other brands	Moderate	37%
	Repurpose venue after the show for other events	High	51%

1. Based on assigned size and extent of impact.
Source: CFDA x BCG Sustainability of NYFW survey.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

All external-facing activity related to the marketing and promotion of NYFW shows and events



Many NYFW stakeholders have taken measures to reduce the waste their PR activities generate—shifting to digital invitations for events, for example, and providing recyclable gift bags or forgoing gift bags entirely.

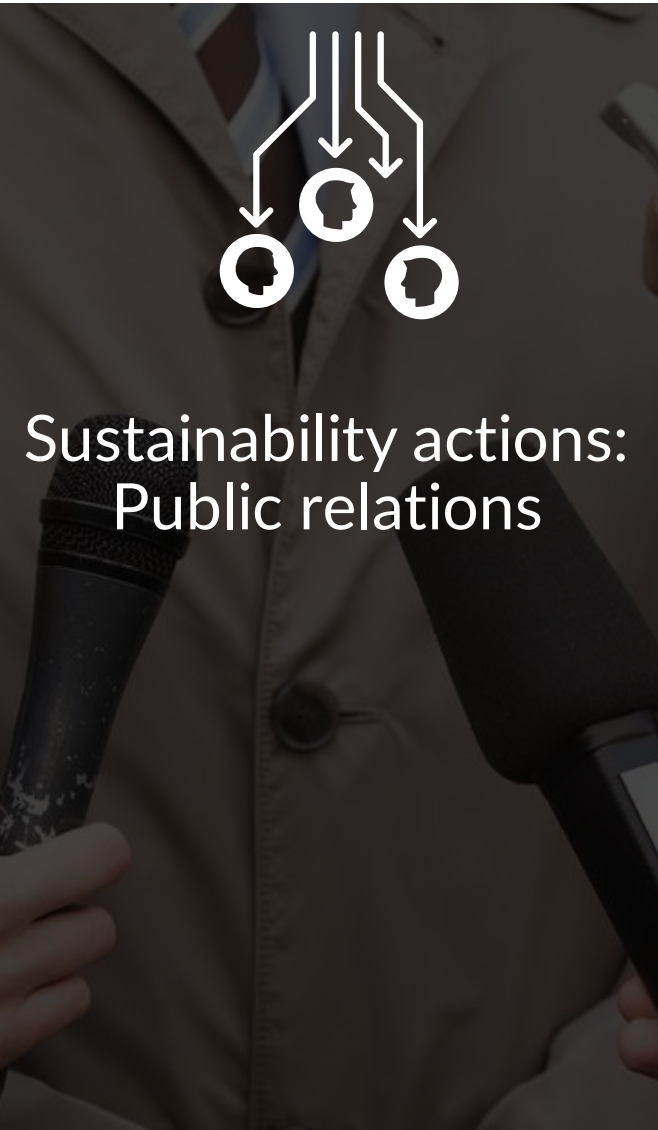




Stakeholders should use their PR skills and networks to reinforce and promote NYFW's sustainability, turning down sponsorships from companies with poor sustainability records and partnering with other brands to promote sustainability during NYFW.

Public relations

54%

PUBLIC RELATIONS



Sustainability dimension	Action	Weight of impact ¹	% yes from survey
	Waste		
	Send digital (vs. paper) invitations and show notes to guests	Moderate	91%
	Use recycled materials in physical invitations	Moderate	58%
	Partnerships		
	Give out recyclable/compostable gift bags or do not provide gift bags	High	90%
	Partner with organizations to put on events during NYFW promoting/increasing awareness of sustainability	Low	40%
	Do not accept sponsorships from brands that do not have sustainable practices	Moderate	50%
	Send digital (vs. paper) invitations and show notes to guests	Moderate	91%

1. Based on assigned size and extent of impact.
Source: CFDA x BCG Sustainability of NYFW survey.

TRANSPORTATION/LOGISTICS

Transportation and logistics related to guests, staff, teams, and models during NYFW for shows and events



Transportation/
logistics



Most carbon emissions generated during NYFW come from transporting people and equipment to the show and to and from its many venues.



Some participants try to consolidate travel between events, offering shuttles, ferries, and other ridesharing options. But few offset the emissions that their travel needs generate during the week, although these are the main source of NYFW's GHG emissions.





Only a handful have sought partnerships with sustainable hotels and car fleets to minimize their carbon footprint. More partnerships between NYFW stakeholders and transportation and hospitality providers—for example, to encourage or provide ridesharing for attendees—would do much to increase NYFW's sustainability.

TRANSPORTATION/LOGISTICS



Sustainability actions: Transportation/ logistics



Sustainability dimension	Action	Weight of impact ¹	% yes from survey
 Energy	Consolidate travel as much as possible (offer ridesharing/public transportation reimbursement options to/from the show and events)	Moderate	43%
	Offset the carbon emission generated from air travel of guests, teams, and models	High	23%
	Offset the carbon emission generated from ground travel of guests, teams, and models	High	32%
	Partner with car fleets powered by electricity to transport guests	Moderate	13%
	Partner with hotels with sustainable practices	Moderate	19%
 Partnerships	Consolidate travel as much as possible (offer ridesharing/public transportation reimbursement options to/from the show and events)	Moderate	43%




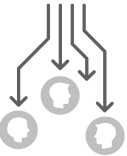

1. Based on assigned size and extent of impact.
Source: CFDA x BCG Sustainability of NYFW survey.



NYFW'S UNSUSTAINABLE CARBON FOOTPRINT

NYFW'S CARBON FOOTPRINT SPANS FIVE OF THE SIX IMPACT AREAS

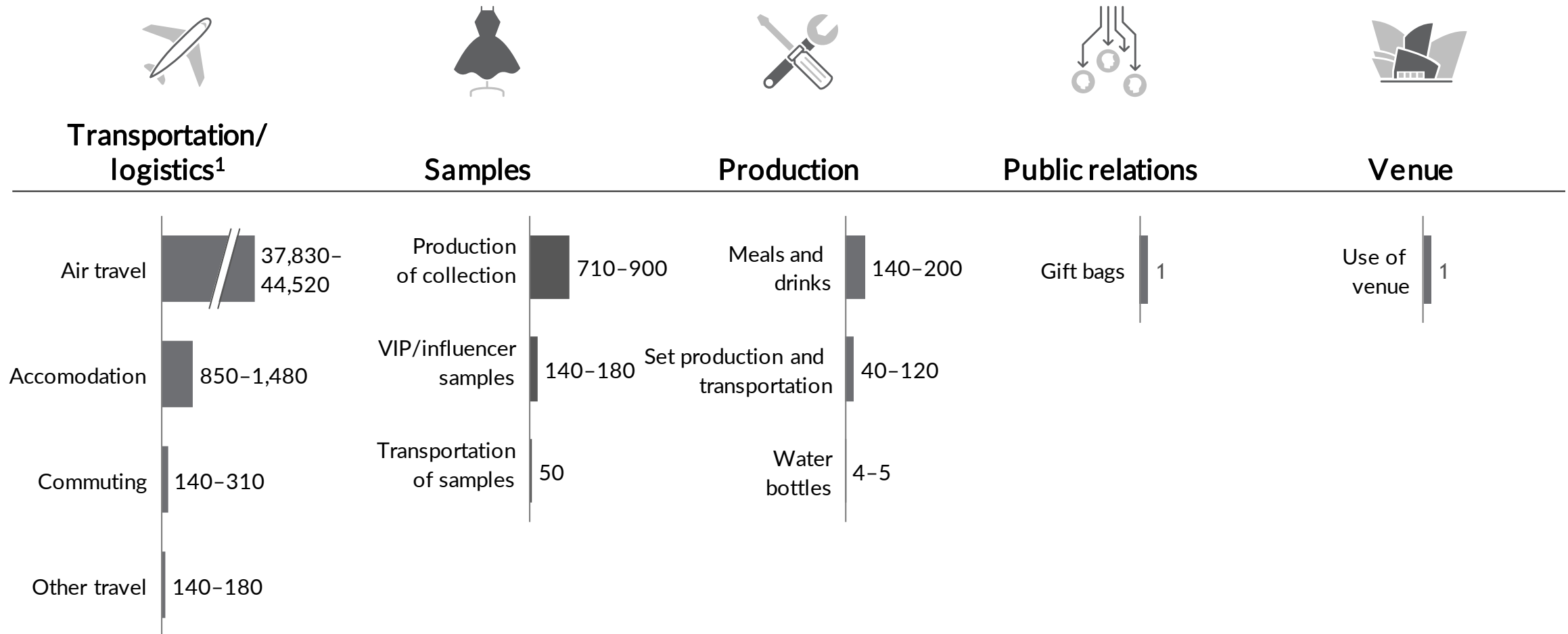
Impact areas

	Samples	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Production of samples for collection, showroom, or VIP/influencer dressing• Transportation of samples
	Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meals and drinks• Water bottles• Production and transportation of set, including set materials and florals
	Venue	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use of space• Generator and electrical equipment such as lighting and audio equipment, catering heating, and hair dryers
	Public relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Events outside shows (footprint captured across other impact areas)• Gift bags
	Transportation/logistics¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Travel to NYFW, including air and ground transportation• Commuting at NYFW• Accommodations

1. Specific to guests, models, and crew.
Source: BCG analysis.

AIR TRAVEL PRODUCES THE LARGEST AMOUNT OF CARBON EMISSIONS BY FAR

Estimated emissions for NYFW Autumn/Winter 2020 in aggregate (*in mTCO₂e*)



1. Specific to guests, models, and crew.

Sources: CFDA Fashion Calendar; BCG expert interviews; Terrapass; BCG analysis.

NYFW EMISSIONS ARE SMALL RELATIVE TO THOSE OF THE GLOBAL FASHION INDUSTRY, BUT NYFW'S INFLUENCE IS CONSIDERABLE



NYFW generates 40,000 to 48,000 tons of CO₂, a small portion of the 1.2 billion tons generated by the global fashion industry

The fashion industry generates around 10% of total global greenhouse gas emissions



NYFW's impact on the rest of the industry is far reaching

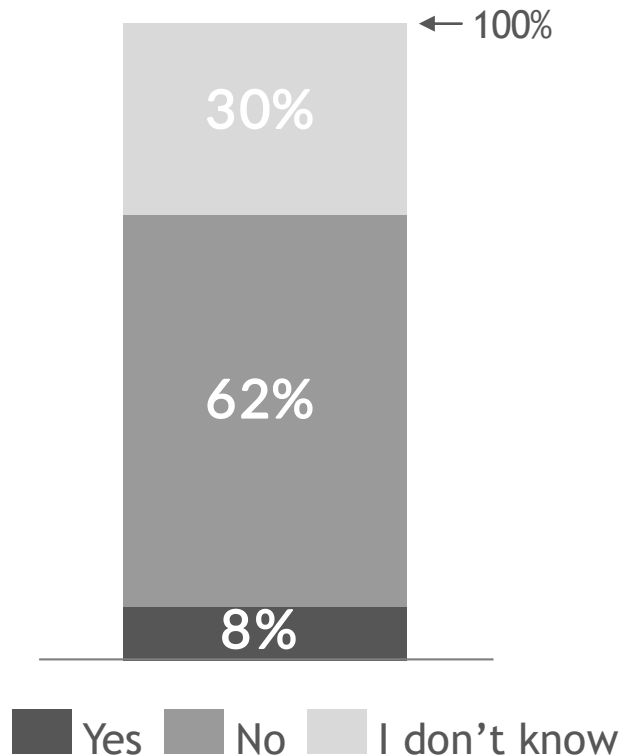
Decisions made for NYFW cascade into the broader fashion ecosystem:

- They determine material selection, production methods, supply chain decisions, and more
- They set precedents regarding production, partnerships, and sustainable practices for other events in the industry

Sources: Pulse of the Fashion Industry report (2017-2019); Common Objective; Better Cotton Initiative; Ellen MacArthur Foundation; UNFCCC; BCG analysis.

TODAY, ONLY 8% OF STAKEHOLDERS OFFSET THE GHG EMISSIONS THEY PRODUCE DURING NYFW

Q: Did your organization carbon offset the emissions generated from NYFW?



Q: How did your organization offset its NYFW carbon emissions?



Partnered with Terrapass. We also have a partnership with NRDC.

—*Production house*

Offset carbon generated from shipping planted trees, reduced travel, and offered virtual shopping experiences.

—*Fashion brand*

Donated to nonprofit organizations that provide goods and services that offset and reduce carbon emissions.

—*Event/PR planner*

Worked with EcoAct and offset the emissions through the Cardamom Forest Project in Cambodia.

—*Fashion brand*

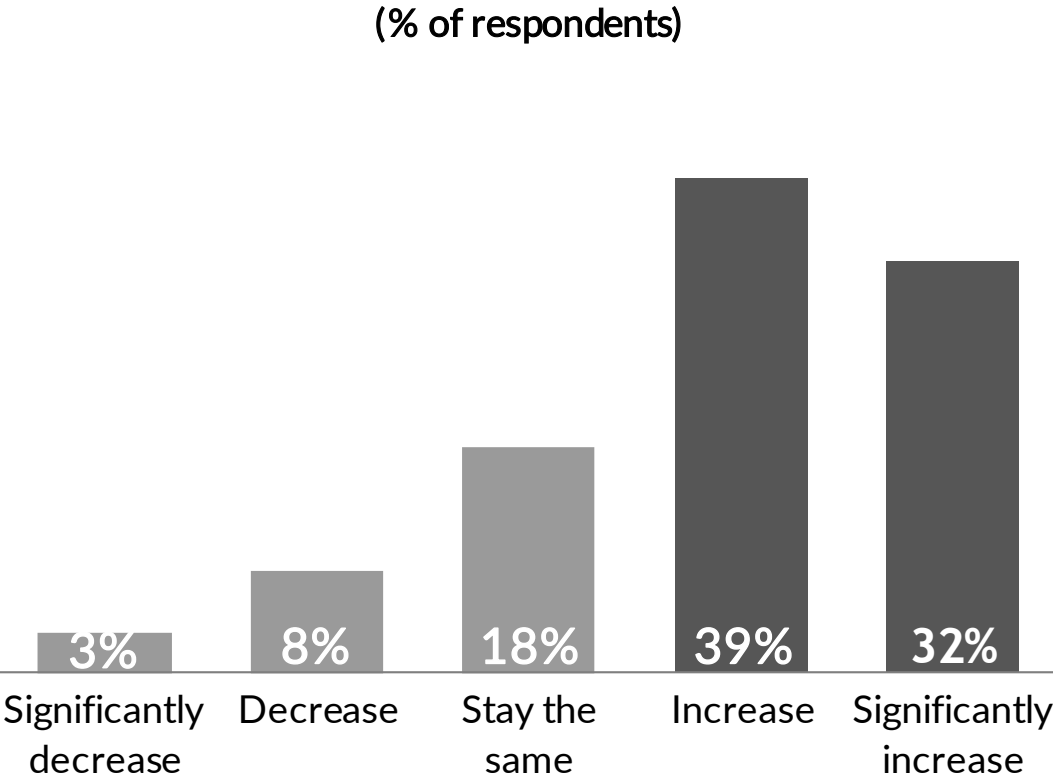




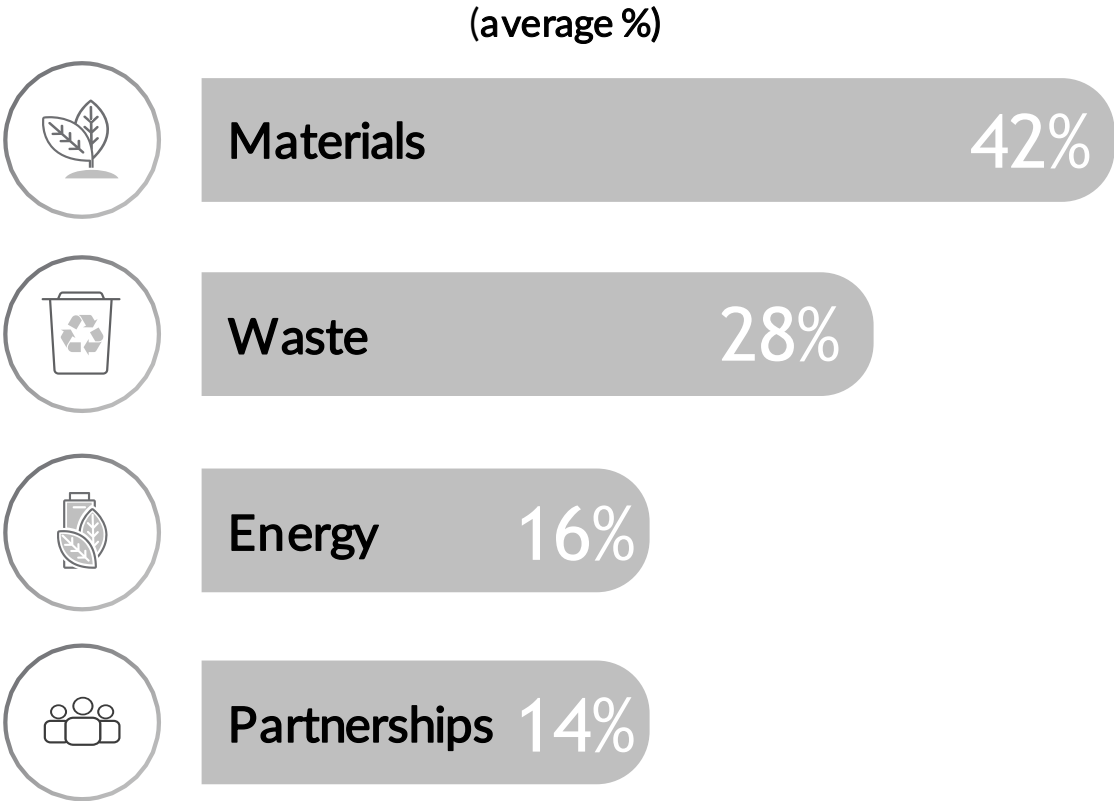
CHALLENGES REMAIN

A MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS EXPECT TO INCREASE THEIR EFFORTS TO DRIVE SUSTAINABILITY DURING NYFW, FOCUSING ON MATERIALS AND WASTE

Q: Looking forward, how do you expect your organization to **change its efforts and resource allocation** to achieve greater sustainability, specific to NYFW?



Q: Looking forward, how do you expect your organization to **allocate its time and resources** across the following sustainability dimensions, specific to NYFW?



Note: Percentages will not add up to 100% due to rounding.
Source: CFDA x BCG Sustainability of NYFW survey.

ACTIONS TAKEN REGARDING SAMPLES ARE PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT, GIVEN THEIR INFLUENCE ON HOW PRODUCTS ARE DESIGNED AND DEVELOPED

Non-exhaustive



Waste



- Use more recycled and upcycled materials in final products
- Limit the number of samples created for final products
- Minimize waste in packaging



Partnerships



- Produce samples in partnership with manufacturers that have ethical labor practices
- Source materials and fabrics from partners with ethical labor practices



Materials



- Increase the percentage of materials in final products that are recycled, upcycled, organic, vegan, locally sourced, and natural
- Provide more stable working conditions in factories and design rooms



Energy



- Leverage renewable energy sources when producing final products
- Increase the share of products produced locally
- Use the most sustainable shipping methods

CONSTRAINED TIMELINES, LIMITED BUDGETS, AND LACK OF KNOWLEDGE ARE THE MAIN OBSTACLES TO BECOMING MORE SUSTAINABLE DURING NYFW



Constrained timelines



Tight planning timelines require quick solutions that often are unsustainable

Examples

- Last-minute design changes require express shipping
- Limited time to research and find more sustainable options



Limited budgets



In general, being more sustainable is perceived to be more expensive

Examples

- Storing set materials for reuse is expensive in NYC
- Transporting materials to recycling centers costs money



Lack of knowledge



Companies don't know what sustainability resources and strategies are available

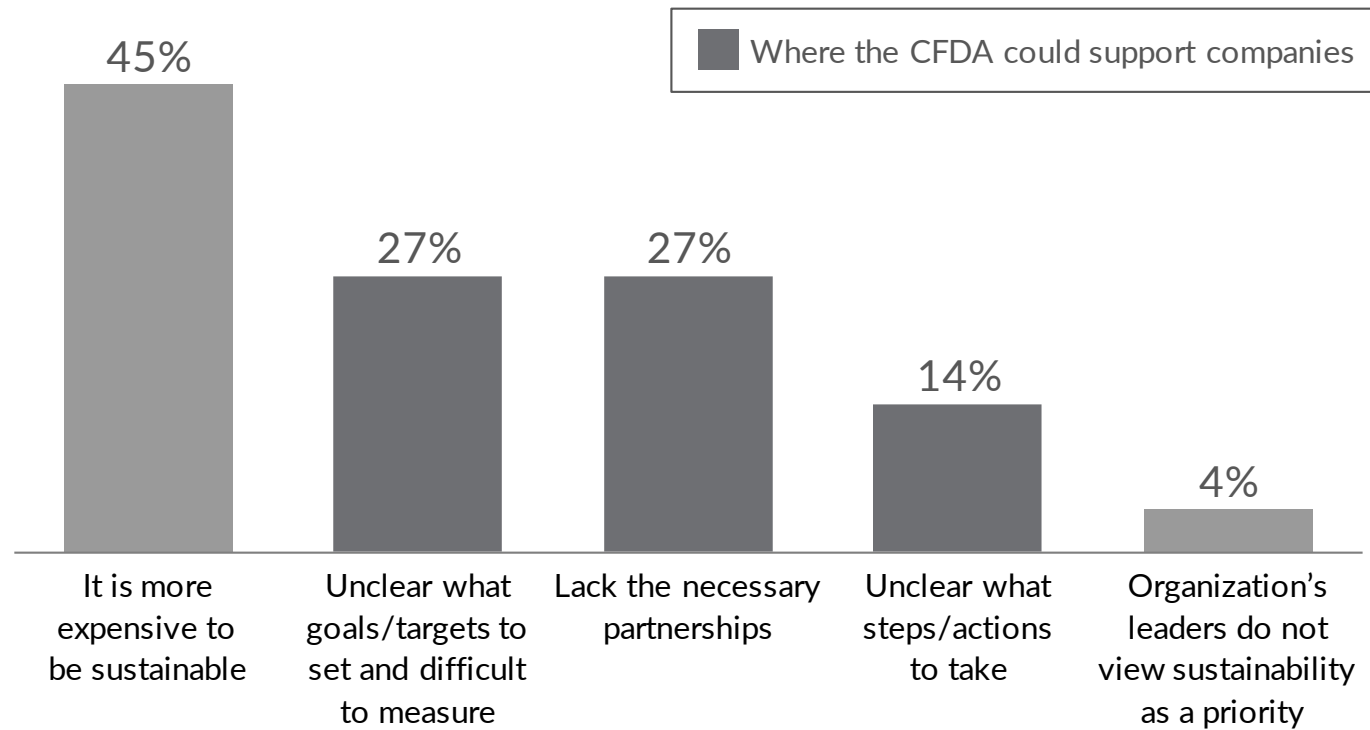
Examples

- Don't know how to reduce energy consumption; don't know how to offset carbon
- Don't know which materials are most sustainable

TIGHT BUDGETS AND UNCLEAR GOALS KEEP NYFW STAKEHOLDERS FROM BECOMING MORE SUSTAINABLE

Q: In your opinion, what are the **greatest obstacles** your organization faces in moving toward sustainability for NYFW?
Choose 2 at most

(% of respondents)



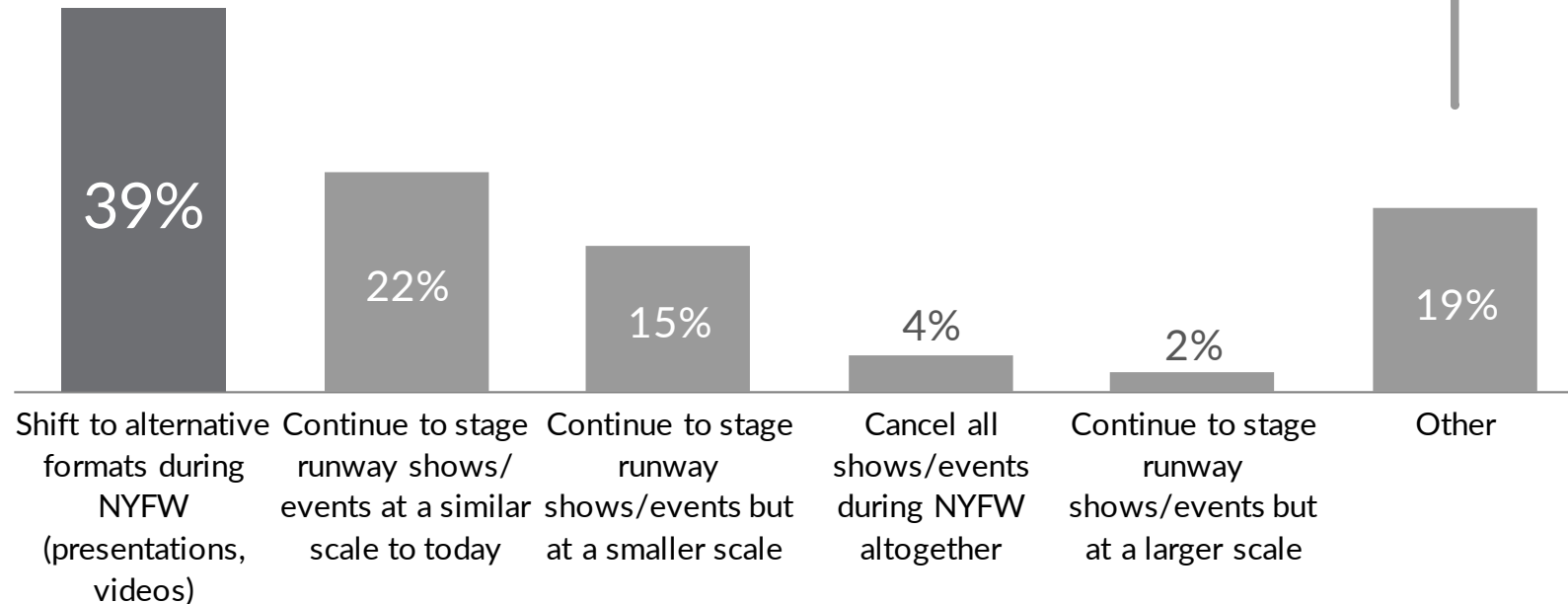
Note: Percentages will not add up to 100% due to rounding.
Source: CFDA x BCG Sustainability of NYFW survey.

What we heard from stakeholders

- “ We're working on being more energy efficient. Backstage, we use LED lights everywhere, but we're not using LED lights on the runway yet because it is very expensive
—*Production house*
- “ Arranging for transportation of guests between the show and events is quite expensive
—*Fashion brand*
- “ Although we've done a lot to be more sustainable, it's hard to set targets and actually measure how much we've reduced our environmental impact
—*Fashion brand*

ALTHOUGH BRANDS WILL CONTINUE TO HOST SHOWS DURING NYFW, MANY ARE CONSIDERING DIGITAL OR ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

Q: How do you expect your engagement with NYFW to evolve in the next 2-3 years?
(% of respondents)



"Other" responses

“ It depends on our inspiration and whether or not we feel inspired to show. If we do, it will be via presentation and with the idea to make the least amount of impact possible.
—*Fashion brand*

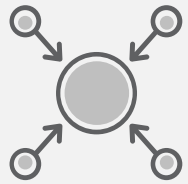
“ Currently assessing the value of runway programs and potential benefit to pursue other commercial measures to market product.
—*Fashion brand*

“ We will continue in presentation format as it is more sustainable for us, but amplify reach through digital channels.
—*Fashion brand*

Note: Percentages will not add up to 100% due to rounding.
Source: CFDA x BCG Sustainability of NYFW survey.

IN ADDITION TO THE OPPORTUNITIES ALREADY MENTIONED, RESPONDENTS POINTED TO OTHER WAYS TO DRIVE SUSTAINABILITY

Q: What do you think are the **biggest opportunities** for NYFW to become more sustainable?



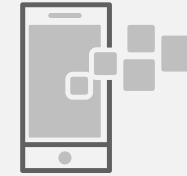
Centralization

"Centralize locations to minimize guest travel"



Venue sharing

"Brands should show together in the same location"



Digital

"Incorporate digital formats and experiences"



Government support

"Need more support from NYC government"



Sponsors

"Need show sponsors to get on board since they fund the shows"



Calendar

"Move to tighter calendar with fewer days and shows"

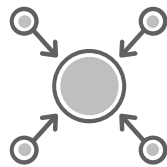
THE CFDA CAN PLAY A ROLE IN EDUCATING STAKEHOLDERS, PROVIDING RESOURCES, ESTABLISHING GUIDELINES, AND COORDINATING EFFORTS

Educate and offer resources



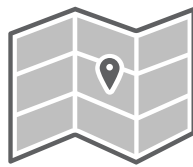
Educate stakeholders and provide directories, guides, and other resources that they can use in their journey toward sustainability during NYFW

Coordinate across brands



Define and enforce sustainability guidelines that brands must adhere to as a prerequisite for participating in NYFW

Establish guidelines



Encourage and facilitate resource and venue sharing across brands, serving as a liaison and central hub for cross-brand opportunities

Develop and facilitate partnerships



Form relationships with organizations that would move NYFW toward sustainability and facilitate introductions with NYFW stakeholders

“ As an entity that oversees all aspects of NYFW, the CFDA is uniquely able to identify opportunity areas for sustainability. The CFDA should set guidelines and educate brands on how to be more sustainable during NYFW.
—*Fashion Brand*

“ The CFDA should offer resources to brands to be more sustainable. For example, they could point to catering companies that have sustainable practices for partnerships. They could have a list of sustainable show venues and encourage designers to choose those locations.
—*Fashion Brand*

THE LARGER PICTURE

NYFW and other fashion weeks that take place around the world demonstrate in microcosm the industry's need to increase its sustainability. Concerns about NYFW's sustainability are now top of mind not just among stakeholders but among consumers, too, whose pocketbooks and devotion to fashion support the industry. As such, NYFW can serve as a valuable symbol of the industry's efforts to become more sustainable.

But NYFW must become more than that. There is much work to be done to ensure that the entire industry reduces waste, uses less water, and becomes carbon neutral. In the longer term, the industry should come together to support such efforts as transparent consumer-facing product certification and standardization, comprehensive materials databases, and across-the-board operational digitization. As part of such initiatives, the CFDA is already working with the UN Office for Partnerships and the Conscious Fashion Campaign to support the Sustainable Development Goals.

NYFW generates immense attention in the media, in the fashion industry as a whole, and among its enormous consumer base. Its success in meeting its sustainability goals will have an outsize effect on the industry's global commitment to sustainability. Let's keep up the good work.

IMPACT REPORT

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The Council of Fashion Designers of America, Inc. (CFDA) is a not-for-profit trade association founded in 1962 with a membership of 477 of America's foremost womenswear, menswear, jewelry, and accessory designers. The organization provides its Members with timely and relevant thought-leadership and business development support. Emerging designers and students are supported through professional development programming and numerous grant and scholarship opportunities. In addition to hosting the annual CFDA Fashion Awards, the organization owns the Fashion Calendar and is the organizer of the Official New York Fashion Week Schedule. The CFDA Foundation, Inc. is a separate, not-for-profit organized to mobilize the membership to raise funds for charitable causes and engage in civic initiatives

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