

An Antidote to Fast Fashion

The Value of Consignment Shopping

Consignment shopping is not a new concept but it is a new practice for many consumers. Concerns regarding what is happening to the planet are motivating consumers to be more environmentally conscious than ever before. The David Suzuki Foundation makes the point that “Everything ends up somewhere” (David Suzuki Foundation, 2025). With this in mind, what is the remedy? According to Uniform Market as of 2025, “fast fashion is the third biggest polluter in the world” (Uniform Market, 2025). One remedy to this problem is acquiring secondhand apparel through consignment shopping.

What is defined as consignment? Key terms include the ‘consignor’ meaning the person who owns the items and retains ownership until the item is bought by a customer. The ‘consignee’ is the person who sells the items, prices the items and stores the items. They also receive a percentage of the proceeds. The consignor and the consignee have to agree on the price, the commission and how long the item is kept by the consignee. The consignee receives payment from the customer, keeps the previously agreed upon commission and then the consignor is paid the difference (Grant, 2024).

As consumers, consignment is how we can make “our chosen skin” more environmentally friendly. It includes more than trends and price. It is part of the “citizen’s response” to mass production (Morgan, 2015).

One of the key benefits for the retailer or ‘consignee’ is that they do not have to buy a lot of inventory upfront. The consignor contacts the consignee directly regarding the clothing items they are looking to sell. Sherry Casarin, owner of Posh Consignment Boutique, explains that often the negotiation first takes place over the phone and then the consignor comes into the store to present the clothing items (S. Casarin, personal communication, 2025). Clothing is selected based on signs of wear and brands. As a consumer, when you are looking for clothing items, consider items from Canada. When considering consignment, it is also important to look closely for fair trade brands. Burberry, mentioned by Casarin, is a sought after brand by customers (S. Casarin, personal communication, 2025). Burberry has over 40 responsibility specialists and “100% of key raw materials in their products are certified or responsibly sourced.” They are additionally committed to paying colleagues in a way that is both fair and equitable (Burberry, 2025).

Another benefit of consignment is the variety it provides to the consumer. This means that consignment attracts a wide range of consumers. As mentioned by Casarin, those who shop consignment are represented by every age group from young women entering the workplace to retirees who are looking for specific brands or bargains (S. Casarin, personal communication, 2025). According to ThredUp, thrifting transcends generations (ThredUp INC, 2024). This, in turn, allows the consignee to offer a broad range of items. It contributes to the appeal of the “treasure hunt”. “Thrift or consignment store shopping is an art and a treasure hunt. Help build a circular economy – choose a wardrobe of used and pre-loved clothes” (David Suzuki Foundation, 2025).

The circular economy model “involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling existing materials and products as long as possible. In this way, the life cycle of products is extended” (European Parliament, 2024). The reduction of waste through consignment isn’t confined to clothing items. The industry can include furniture, vehicles as well as art and antiques. Casarin is passionate about consignment and feels there should be more consignment stores for everything that consumers buy including household items, baby items and bridal wear (S. Casarin, personal communication, 2025).

The bridal industry is a billion dollar industry. A recent Forbes article brings attention to this by stating that “according to the Bridal Wear Global Market Report 2024, the bridal wear market has shown an increase from \$62.2 billion in 2023 to an estimated \$65.6 billion in 2024” (Zhuang, 2024). How many gowns are only worn once? This doesn’t just include bridal gowns. The market encompasses bridesmaid dresses, tuxes and suits. I have been in 6 weddings and the bridesmaid dresses were not re-wearable. I have had the privilege of repurposing them through consignment. As the documentary *The True Cost* highlights, “fashion should not be looked at as a disposable product” (Morgan, 2015). Ask ethical and economically friendly questions. The Forbes article explains further by stating that “consumers are increasingly focused on sustainability, seeking out bridal wear brands that offer eco-friendly and ethically produced collections” (Zhuang, 2024). This demonstrates that consumer choices are noticed and can impact the fashion industry.

As Casarin brought out, consignment is a way of keeping clothes out of landfills. As well as re-homing the unsold items through women’s shelters, churches and other charitable organizations (S. Casarin, personal communication 2025). A ThredUp report discovered a “growing enthusiasm for secondhand items that could keep millions of used products out of landfills, creating a shift toward a circular economy” (ThredUP Inc, 2024)

What is the future of consignment? The 2024 ThredUp report revealed that “the global secondhand apparel market is estimated to reach \$350 billion by 2028, growing three times faster than the overall global apparel market” (ThredUP Inc, 2024). Consignment supports sustainable fashion and it can have a positive influence not only environmentally but also socially and economically.

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Link for First-Hand Interview: <https://quickshare.samsungcloud.com/a93zFvkaT2Em>