

‘Visionary or lunatic?’

Daring entrepreneur launches online platform to digitise consumer wardrobes and advance the circular economy.

By Chris Remington



Jack Ostrowski, the founder of sustainability solutions provider Yellow Octopus, has developed a new consumer-facing app and brand plug-in to spark drastic changes within the fashion sector.

His concept, the Loop Digital Wardrobe, strives to digitise the public's wardrobes by enabling them to download data relating to new products and establish a log of their purchase history.

Ultimately, this is all in the name of accelerating circularity within the industry, as consumers with an online archive of their clothing will be able to connect with various circular solution providers and platforms – think resale marketplaces and repair shops – to keep their items in circulation.

According to Matthew Chandler, an investment manager at Octopus Ventures (no connection) – which has backed the likes of Depop and Hurr Collective, to date – there's never been a better time to move into this space.

He tells *Ecotextile News* of a



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*Jack Ostrowski,
founder of Loop
Digital Wardrobe*

“real and significant mindset shift” from consumers on the sustainability front, and that “companies entering the market now have a wider pool of potential customers”.

“We first backed Depop back in 2018, with our thesis being around Depop having a large, engaged and loyal user base amongst predominantly creative young people. The platform provided users with a selling and social platform, a global pool of buyers to leverage unique communities and inventory, and enabled users to generate their own brands and build revenue channels.

“This tapped into a key trend in retail for millennials,” he added.

Ostrowski admits he's acknowledged the successes such platforms have enjoyed, but not for the sake of emulating key features.

“To be honest, we mainly looked at what doesn't work on both Depop and Vinted and how we could improve the user experience while reselling and looking to buy on these types of platforms,” he told us.

“I think we succeeded in making the whole process simpler, faster and more fun. The Loop marketplace enables users to see the best offers from Depop, Vinted, Stock X, Vestaire Collective and all the other marketplaces, as well as all the offers posted in the Loop marketplace.”

What's unique is that the Loop Digital Wardrobe will allow users to sync their digital wardrobes with social media sites such as Instagram to tap into the social aspect Chandler mentioned.

As well as sharing new purchases with friends, the app will enable users to create digital wish lists, curate fashion boards and play around with styling ideas.

“We don't ask people to support the circular economy. We designed the whole system where sustainable behaviour is simply an outcome because the whole Loop experience is just pure fun,” the company's founder said.

Changing the game

Of course, the level of consumer engagement Ostrowski hopes to drum up

will be predicated on the brand partnerships his team can forge, as the online plug-in will sync purchase data to the app.

It's here where the founder of Yellow Octopus can leverage his extensive experience to onboard companies.

Yellow Octopus has collaborated with the likes of ASOS, Boohoo, George at ASDA and Primark to date, notably working with the latter to install donation bins throughout UK stores – which have collected more than 23 tonnes of waste since being introduced in 2020.

“Having a good reputation in the industry both personally and with Yellow Octopus really helps,” Ostrowski admits, adding that he's been “overwhelmed” by early interest.

For brands, it's not just the opportunity to promote circular practices amongst consumers that'll entice them, but the data Loop can generate.

“We are really the first tool out there to offer retailers true insight into the post-purchase behaviour of their customers and what happens to the product after it's sold. We also gather information about how many of each customer's friends liked the product they've bought. This is all new data which will enable better trend measurement and savings on marketing and customer acquisition,” Ostrowski explains.

With that scintillating prospect, the company's founder admits he's had offers from the investment arms of various brands keen to explore financing opportunities.

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▼ Loop Digital Wardrobe enables users to share news of new purchases with friends and family.



Ostrowski has declined such approaches thus far, telling us: “I have slightly different plans for Loop growth financing and do not want to be associated with a single retailer or brand as this service is designed to connect all the fashion players.

As such, he reached into his own pocket to fund the whole development stage and will soon launch a seed funding round as his team look to secure around £2 million (US\$2.6m) from interested parties.

“We will lead the seed funding round ourselves by putting up a third. By doing so, we want to show our commitment and how much trust we have in the product we've created.”

Another third will be available to venture capital outfits, but Ostrowski has stressed that they're looking for “smart money” from the “right matches”.

The last third of shares will exclusively be made available to “friends of Loop” via an “invite only” mechanism, the company's founder says.

“These are mainly very senior people from the retail sector who will buy tickets ranging from £25,000, £50,000, up to £100,000. This group is made up of mainly fashion company founders and C suites who will be acting as Loop board of advisors in the future and supporting our growth.”

Seed round investors will also have an opportunity to earn ‘Loop tokens’, a currency to be launched in the summer. To coincide with the platform's efforts to digitise the fashion sector, it believes online currencies will be quintessential to bridging the gap between physical and digital inventories.

“We have a team of US developers with a proven track record in the crypto world currently working on Loop tokens which will be offered to ecosystem partners such as investors, influencers and users as part of scaling sustainability much faster,” Ostrowski tells us.

“I'm not happy with the current pace of change. Loop is my way of making a positive impact much faster on a much larger scale.”

For now, the service is available in the UK, but this will soon be expanded across Europe and the US. The company's ‘stage three’ of rolling out the platform will see it launched around the rest of the world when possible.

“Our ambition is for Loop to do for the fashion industry what Tinder has done for dating... changing it forever,” the firm's founder says. “Let's wait and see. History will tell if I am a visionary or a lunatic.” ■