

The Benefits of the Digital Product Passport for the Consumer

Consumer Research

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Consumer Research on the Digital Product Passport (DPP)

- The study examined how Finnish consumers perceive the opportunities brought by increasing product data and transparency in the textile and fashion industry.
- The aim was to understand which values, attitudes, and needs the Digital Product Passport (hereafter abbreviated as DPP) could serve, and which factors hinder or promote its use in everyday life and along the customer journey.

Key findings:

- Consumers' information needs and motivation vary: the study identified three user profiles based on different value backgrounds and life situations. In addition, the research includes three partly speculative profiles that were less represented in the actual study but emerged during the background research. The purpose of these profiles is to support the design of products, services, and communications targeted at consumers.
- The benefit of DPP and the related information and services for consumers is mostly indirect. Active interest is mainly related to basic factors such as the quality of materials, responsible manufacturing, and extending the product's lifecycle (e.g., repair, maintenance).

Transparent and easily accessible product information can strengthen trust in brands and support more responsible choices—when the consumer is able or inclined to make such decisions.

Conclusions:

Companies cannot expect that information provided through the DPP alone will lead to more responsible decisions: the data must be turned into communication or services.

Companies should target product information and related services to different profiles in relevant ways—for example, by creating clearly distinguishable views on sustainability, quality, and practical value. The DPP is not just a technological solution, but an opportunity to create new consumer value and stand out in the market.

The research was conducted as part of the Finnish Textile & Fashion (STJM) project Digital Transformation in the Fashion Industry (2025), in collaboration with Solita.

Research background

The aim of this study is to explore how Finnish consumers perceive the opportunities to utilize increasing product data and transparency in the textile and fashion industry. In particular, the objective was to understand what kinds of values, attitudes, and practical needs the Digital Product Passport could serve, and which factors hinder or support its use along the customer journey.

Additionally, the study seeks to identify how consumers' information needs vary based on motivational profiles, and how the development of the Digital Product Passport can take into account these different users and their expectations.

This consumer study was commissioned by the Finnish Textile & Fashion (STJM) as part of the development work for the Digital Product Passport (DPP). The research is a component of STJM's Digital Transformation in the Fashion Industry project, funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture through the EU's NextGeneration funding.



How was the study done?

1. Individual interviews

- Individual interviews (8 in total) were conducted as contextual encounters, where Finnish consumers with varying consumption behaviors were selected.
- Participants were selected through a screening process carried out by a recruitment partner. The screener examined, for example, factors influencing purchasing decisions, resale habits, and practices related to clothing care and recycling.
- In-depth interviews were conducted in contexts where the interviewees typically make purchasing decisions: six interviews took place in stores by walking around with the participants, and two were conducted via Teams. Each interview lasted approximately 1.5 hours.
- As preparation, participants completed a pre-assignment where they analyzed their previous clothing or accessory purchases.

2. Group interviews

- Participants in the group interviews (2 sessions) were selected in the same way as the individual interviews, with screening question emphases and age ranges taken into account.
- Group interviews were conducted remotely, with four participants in each session (8 in total). The sessions began with an open discussion, followed by statements derived from the individual interviews and background research.
- In addition to reacting to the statements, participants were asked to provide feedback on different solution hypotheses, which were preliminary concepts aimed at identifying how concrete and interesting product data might be and how it could be used in solutions. These same hypotheses were also explored in the individual interviews.

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Key findings

1. The Digital Product Passport is not an everyday tool for consumers

The Digital Product Passport is easy and appealing to approach through the assumption that consumers actively seek and compare product data. The passport could help consumers, for example, compare product features, enabling them to find higher-quality, more suitable, and more responsible items to purchase.

However, people's everyday lives are busy, and our behavior is not solely guided by facts, logic, or deliberation.

Numerous factors influence our purchasing decisions: price, shopping habits, emotions, hurry, life and identity-related conventions, established routines, expectations, and cultural norms that shape our ways of acting. Information alone is not enough if it doesn't align with a person's needs, priorities, or values in the moment.

We each have a different threshold for information overload. In physical stores and online, the amount of information is often already overwhelming—and we rarely hope for more.

Photo by Ron Lach : <https://www.pexels.com/photo/fashion-clothing-paper-box-9594426/>



2. Information only supports decisions if it is available at the right moment

Based on the research, decision-making rarely follows a carefully planned rational model; instead, many decisions are made intuitively, under situational demands, or influenced by individual habits, simple rules of thumb, and past experiences. Even consumers who are actively interested in product transparency and sustainability often focus on highly practical matters, such as material feel and fit. Product information must therefore be visible and accessible at the moment when the consumer needs it most.

Even if the Digital Product Passport provides detailed individual-level information, it remains unused if that information isn't delivered at the right moment, in the right channel, and in the right format that matches the consumer's needs.

Without contextual accessibility, and without the ability to reach the consumer precisely when they are making a decision, the digital passport risks being just another layer of background noise. At that point, it no longer supports concrete decision-making.

Photo by Angela Roma : <https://www.pexels.com/photo/t-shirt-with-tag-hanging-on-counter-7319172/>





3. Responsibility as a value or intention does not directly translate into responsible consumption

Even though responsibility is widely considered a societal value and important in corporate actions, when actually making a purchase, comfort and emotional motivations often outweigh it. Many consumers express that they appreciate responsibility and use responsibility-related information to justify their purchase decisions afterward—rather than it being the starting point.

The attitude-behavior gap is a key phenomenon: values and intentions related to responsibility do not automatically translate into responsible actions.

The impact of accurate responsibility information in the form of a digital product passport often remains marginal in actual consumer purchasing situations. Responsibility must compete with many other factors. What kind of responsibility information do companies offer? At what product level? And how clearly and concretely is this information presented?

Photo by Ron Lach : <https://www.pexels.com/photo/friends-exchanging-clothes-8274733/>



4. Too much information can backfire and hinder decision-making

Information overload and excessive choice are everyday realities for modern consumers. Instead of added product data automatically leading to better decisions, excessive and poorly filtered information often results in decision fatigue, anxiety, and postponement of choices.

The “paradox of choice” becomes real: more options and more information do not improve outcomes—they reduce decision quality.

The Digital Product Passport should offer clearly prioritized and context-specific information tailored to the situation, not a comprehensive "everything for everyone" data dump.

* Barry Schwartz: The Paradox of Choice (2004)

Photo by pascal Stöckmann on Unsplash

5. Companies aren't the only ones concerned about the costs of the DPP – and who ends up paying

Although companies are primarily focused on the costs of developing the Digital Product Passport (DPP), many selected consumers also questioned its potential impact on prices and freedom of choice. Some interviewees expressed concern about whether DPP would favor larger players and whether, in the end, consumers would bear the cost.

The question isn't only about technical solutions, but about perceived fairness and the functioning of market mechanisms.

Consumers expect transparency—but not at any price. The value of the DPP must be concrete and visible—not hidden in fine print.

Photo by Polina Tankilevitch: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/white-long-sleeves-shirts-on-brown-wooden-clothes-hanger-3735641/>



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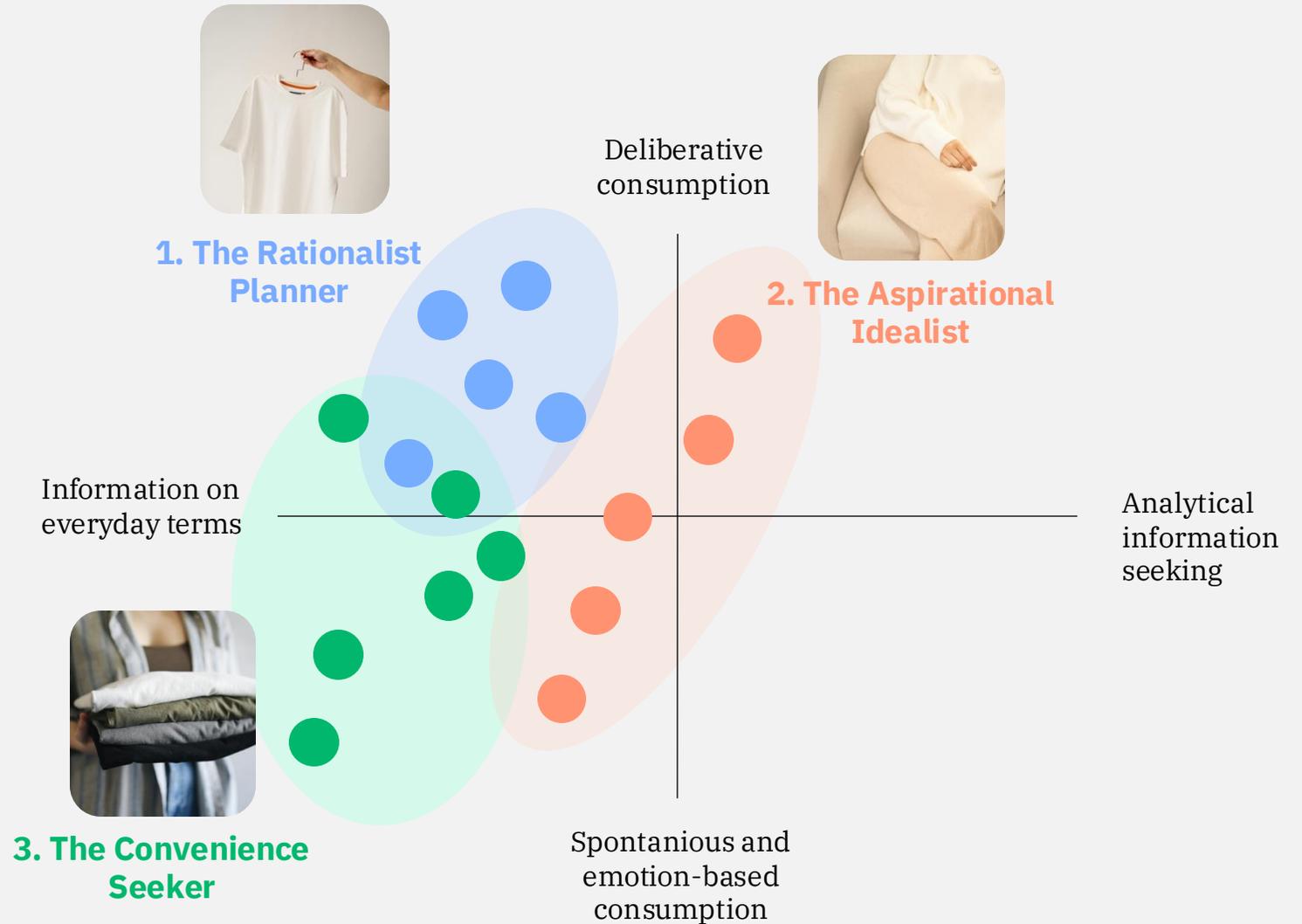
Motivational consumer profiles

Consumer profiles

From the perspective of developing the Digital Product Passport and utilizing information, it is important to understand not only consumption behaviors and information use, but also values and motivations.

These profiles were created through these lenses and are intended to support the development of product-based services, communication, and experiences built on product information.

There are three primary profiles. They represent different motivations and needs in order to make the diverse expectations and requirements regarding product data utilization more understandable.



What unites all participants?

1. The Rationalist Planner



2. The Aspirational Idealist



3. The Convenience Seeker



One factor clearly emerged as a unifying theme across profiles—regardless of age, gender, values, or general consumption habits:

People want information on their own terms, regardless of what drives their consumption behavior.

Even those who see themselves as sustainability-minded and value responsibility are unlikely to actively seek out detailed data, compare products, or engage deeply with services offering such information. Accessibility is assumed: consumers expect information to be available—without requiring significant effort on their part.

The Rationalist Planner

The Rationalist Planner makes clothing purchases thoughtfully and with a practical mindset.

Their consumption decisions are guided by personal need, experience, and careful consideration. This doesn't mean emotions play no role, but they primarily want to see their decisions as grounded in reason.

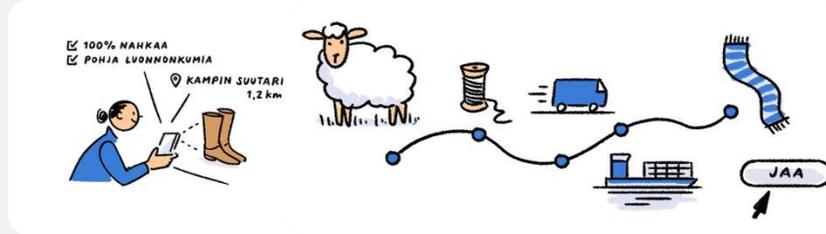
VALUE PROPOSITION FOR PROFILE

We provide product information and repair instructions that support smart and long-lasting use.

Solution hypotheses

Most interesting DPP solutions

From the Rationalist Planner’s point of view, the most interesting solutions are practical and support the kind of information that matches their needs and confirms their decisions. If they want to know more, the data should focus on quality: such as durable materials, product longevity, or expert-led product development.



DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

- **Create a need** by describing product features they will appreciate once informed.
- **Emphasize** practicality, reliability, cost-benefit, and durability.
- **Avoid** emotional storytelling; instead, focus on simple, product-related facts.
- **Show** why a certain usage situation makes one option the rational choice. Don’t generalize—focus on real-life use contexts.

Provide relevant information at the right time and in a usable way

- Product
- Durability
- Materials
- Care and washing instructions

Carry the data with the product

Ensure that key data is easily available during use: for example, material content, origin, and care instructions.

Explain how the product and actions improve production

Communicate how actions are rational, responsible, socially or environmentally beneficial. Keep the message practical and grounded. Highlight what the brand is doing to improve its operations.

Example service

A digital maintenance log where you can record the product’s care history and repairs.



The Aspirational Idealist

For this profile, emotions and self-expression are central in decision-making and product choices.

Information-seeking tends to focus more on brands and their perceived trustworthiness than on individual products. Brand awareness is primarily shaped by social media, news, trusted recommendations, and advertising.

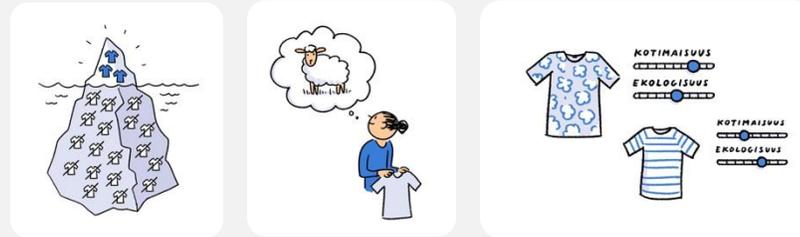
VALUE PROPOSITION FOR PROFILE

**We help you express who you are
– make choices that reflect you.**

Solution hypotheses

Most interesting DPP solutions

The Aspirational Idealist seeks responsible products that resonate with their values, but may not be inclined to verify detailed facts. They favor brands and prefer to choose from “good options only.” This profile values aesthetic, values-based storytelling and wants curated choices that align with their ideals.



DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

- **Support identity** by creating relatable life narratives tied to the product and its use context. Communicate not only product features but the surrounding story. Build emotional connection. Use relatable examples and testimonials.
- **Highlight** quality, responsibility, and other positive brand associations.
- **Consider** the best ways to display impact or service benefits: “This garment saved 10 liters of water” or “This product is suitable for resale or rental platforms.”

Tell the product or brand story

Highlight the brand’s important values: such as animal welfare, social and ecological responsibility, and a lifestyle that reflects their identity.

Support expression of identity

Create ways to help users make choices that match their values, e.g., with simplified DPP content like “responsibility scores.”

Offer a curated selection

The Digital Product Passport could recommend or filter product choices that align with the user’s preferences, only offering good alternatives.

Enable comparison to find the best fit

Comparison tools can appeal to this profile when focused on key features: looks, materials, ethics, and durability. Information should be visual and easy to digest.



The Convenience Seeker

Practicality, everyday smoothness, and ease strongly guide this profile's choices. The purchasing process must be seamless and pleasant.

Information that helps ensure a successful choice is valued, but this person will not actively seek it out. The brand or seller is expected to surface anything additional on their behalf.

For this consumer, shopping is not about identity: it's primarily about making everyday life easier.

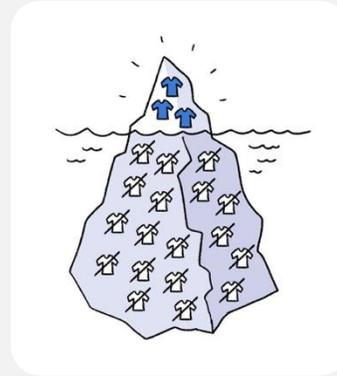
VALUE PROPOSITION FOR PROFILE

**An easier, successful choice:
everything essential at a glance.**

Solution hypotheses

Most interesting DPP solutions

The Convenience Seeker doesn't want to look for extra information or actively use the Digital Product Passport to browse products or services. They want the work done for them. Information should help them find the most suitable product in the easiest possible way (e.g. correct sizing, material info).



DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

- **Create smoothness:** offer a small but well-suited selection, good service, and remove hassle.
- **Personalize:** consider their size, taste, and preferences.
- **Create** clear info visuals, like simple traffic-light icons.
- If you want to guide them toward certain choices, make availability or responsibility indicators easy to use.

Recommendations

Repetition and familiarity in online shopping is key: for example, a service that remembers your size and whether you usually return items if they're too big or small, and recommends products and sizes accordingly. The DPP could support this as a tool for the seller, helping them suggest the best option with minimal effort.

Pre-curated selections

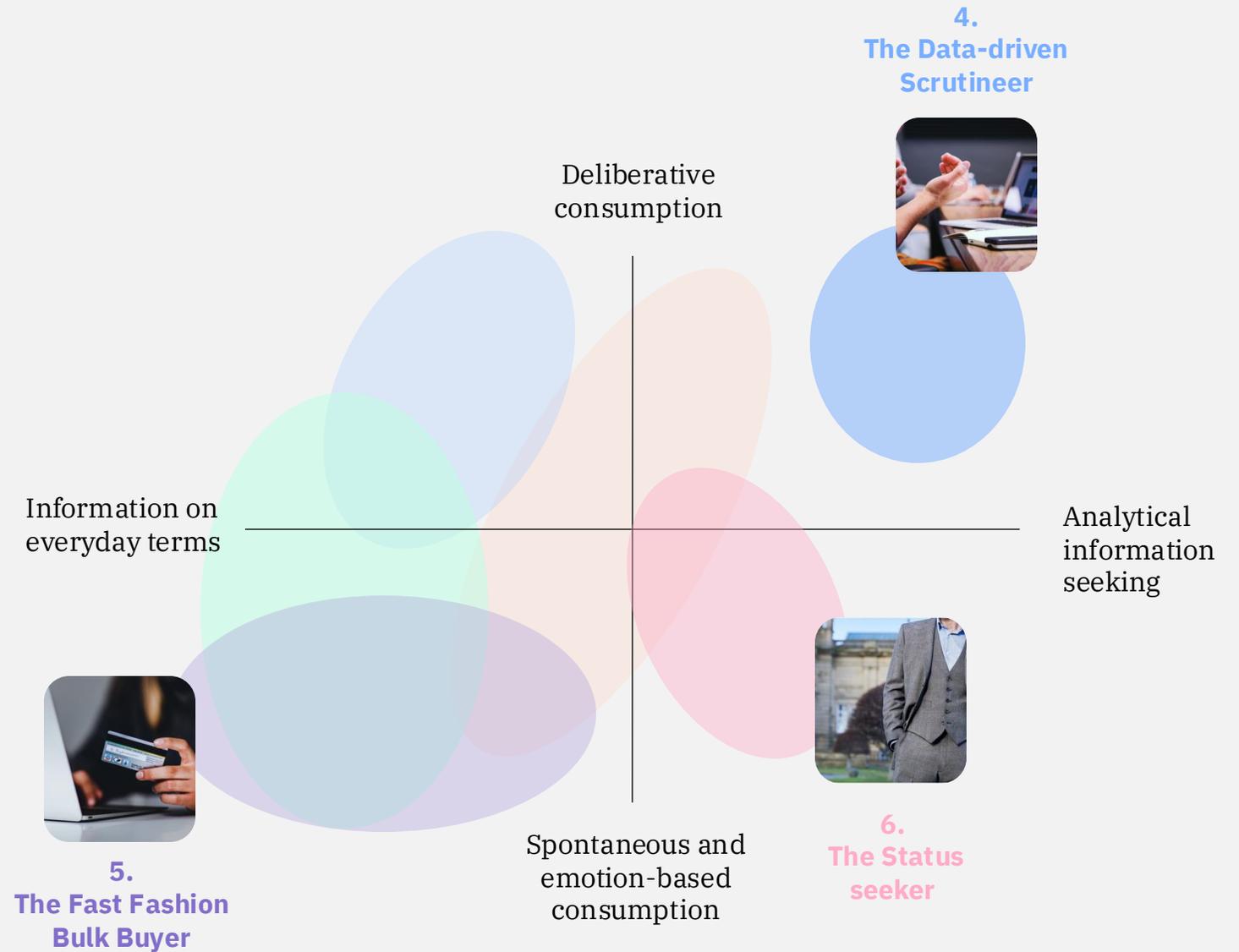
The Digital Product Passport is more of a tool for the brand or seller, helping them offer only the most relevant choices to the consumer.

Partly Speculative Supplementary Profiles

The framing research for this project also highlighted other potential profiles that were not strongly represented in the study interviews but emerged through broader observations. In this report, they are presented as alternative perspectives worth considering: for example, consumers who prioritize status or need services centered around following product trends. While there was limited support for these profiles in the interviews, broader quantitative or validated research might offer further insight into them.

The "Data-driven scrutineer" has been included as a potentially small but influential group: in addition to well-informed consumers, this may also include professionals such as journalists or public sector employees who use the DPP to track compliance, product chains, or transparency requirements.

These could be key target groups for your brand.



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Conclusions

The Digital Product Passport works best indirectly: by strengthening brand trust and product credibility

Since the active use of the Digital Product Passport in everyday life tends to be low, most of its value to the consumer comes indirectly—through brand-building or service experience. When the consumer knows that the passport exists and that the data is available and transparent, it reinforces trust in the brand and the purchase decision, even if they don't actively read all the information.

The passport can function as a kind of "background assurance": building the feeling that the product is trustworthy and that the manufacturer is acting responsibly.

This emotional trust-building is at least as important as delivering the information itself.

Photo by Ron Lach : <https://www.pexels.com/photo/fashion-clothing-paper-box-9594426/>



The Digital Product Passport helps companies make better choices – and the consumer enjoys the end result

DPP is both a carrot and a stick for companies

For manufacturers and retailers, the DPP is a key tool. It allows manufacturers to better choose and evaluate their partners and improve their own operations and product development. The Digital Product Passport may also serve as a form of pressure toward greater transparency.

For retailers, increased transparency and product data enable them to curate selections that align with their brand more effectively: for example, toward more ecological, socially responsible, domestic, or local offerings—depending on what they want to emphasize.

Transparency also helps companies justify higher product quality and price. If the consumer clearly understands what lies behind the price in terms of quality and responsibility, they may be willing to pay more. This could also provide a competitive advantage for Finnish fashion and textile companies.

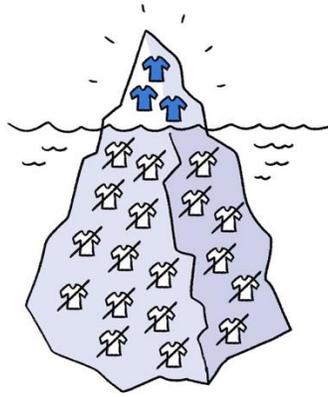


"If a brand can stand behind its words and has done the work to ensure transparency, that tells me more than just a list of facts."

Where should companies focus to create customer value through service?

1. Indirect benefit: better products or selections via manufacturers and retailers

- Enables even more accurate curation of product assortments for consumers.
- Skilled retailers, brand messages, and online store highlights that are well-aligned with product data.



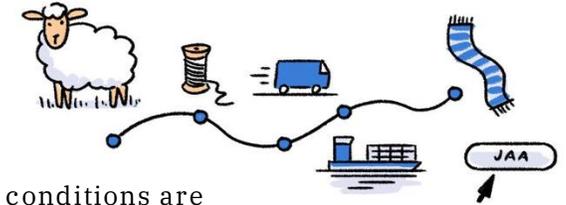
2. Information isn't lost, but travels with the product

- Even for clothing already in use, it's easy to check what the product is, what it's made of, and how it should be washed and cared for.
- Historical information can be added to a product, enhancing not just transparency but also emotional value.



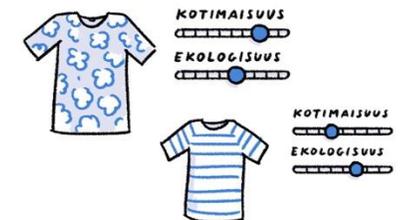
3. Opportunity to hear the product's story

- Expectations regarding production conditions are low: it's assumed that products have traveled far and that workers are treated poorly: fashion and textile industries are seen as socially and ecologically problematic.
- It's essential to communicate openly and honestly, including what is being improved (often more important than presenting a perfect image, which may trigger doubt).



4. Opportunity to compare

- Comparison across materials, sustainability, and other values is relevant when it fits the shopper's context (e.g., in online shopping).
- This allows curated options that align with what the consumer personally values.
- Comparisons can also be made using established external standards (e.g., food-grade-style labeling systems).





Thank you!

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