

CIRCULARITY IN THE OUTDOOR APPAREL INDUSTRY



2025 Masters of the Environment Capstone Project

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Brand Overview

Buttnski is a start-up outdoor lifestyle apparel company created from the same passion many of us share of spending time outside doing what we love. They are a woman-owned and operated business in Summit County, Colorado.

Their brand values are rooted in community, making high quality garments, social & environmental responsibility, and FUN.



Acknowledgements

Capstone Partner:

Kelly Mazanti

Advisors:

Dr. Natalie Ooi & William

Shutkin

Alice Reznickova

Amanda Carrico

Our Local Industry Leaders
and Partners

Project Context

A previous Capstone Team working with Buttnski was tasked with creating a Sustainability Strategic Plan (SP) that worked to hone the brand's mission, vision, and values.

As the second phase of this project, the 2025 Capstone Team was focused on circularity specifically and creating a related SP & Media Engagement Plan (MEP) to effectively communicate findings.

92M

Tons of textile waste
produced each year

-36%

Decline in garment
usage in past 15 years

Lost each year due to
under-wearing and
failure to recycle

\$500B



Project Objectives

- Understand circularity in the apparel industry
- Establish a brand-specific definition of circularity

Deliverables:

- Create a Circular SP
 - Covers Product Design, Manufacturing, and End-of-Life (EOL)
- Create a Media Engagement Plan



Phase I: Research & Framework Development

The first phase of this Capstone Project included conducting extensive background industry research into circularity in the apparel industry.

This directly informed our Key Focus Areas and Pillars of Circularit y that served as our definition of circularity for Buttnski specifically in order to create recommendations tailored to the brands' scale and values.

Phase II: SP & MEP Recommendations

After establishing this framework for circularity, we began creating the Circularit y Strategic Plan that outlines key recommendations for Buttnski in best-practices in circularity.

In aim to successfully communicate these sustainability initiatives, we then created a Media Engagement Plan. This MEP outlines the ways Buttnski can effectively communicate their movement in the circularity space, founder updates, community engagement opportunities, and newsletter content for LinkedIn, Instagram, and emailed newsletters.

Implementation:

This work will facilitate Buttnski's movement towards circularity through the following avenues:

- Bring in new revenue streams through second-hand sales.
- Design for circularity, use ethical manufacturing, and transition to circular packaging options.
- Form partnerships with gear repair companies & garment testers.
- Effectively communicate sustainability efforts and build consumer loyalty.

