

# CIRCULAR PACKAGING BRIEF

## Patagonia Worn Wear

Anti-Greenwashing Communication Strategy for Reusable Packaging System

Client: Patagonia, Inc. | Worn Wear Program Date: October 2025

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# 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## CURRENT SITUATION

Patagonia Worn Wear uses polybags made with 40% post-consumer recycled content. Although functionally effective (99% of garments arrive perfect), only 22% of customers perceive the packaging as environmentally friendly.

## STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY

Develop a reusable packaging system that:

- Reinforces the circularity message of the Worn Wear program
- 100% complies with EU anti-greenwashing regulations (Directive 2024/825)
- Is functional for 50+ uses (consistent with "wear more, buy less")
- Visually differentiates Worn Wear from new products

**70%**

**50K**

**100%**

**Target Sustainable Perception**

**Plastic Eliminated/Year (lbs)**

**EU Compliance 2024/825**

## EXPECTED OUTCOME

A circular packaging system that eliminates 50,000 lbs of plastic annually (internal target data from Patagonia Reno DC) and increases sustainability perception from 22% to 70%+.

# 2: WORN WEAR CONTEXT

## PROGRAM KEY DATA

Metric	Data
Launch	2013 (pilot) → 2017 (permanent)
Repairs/year	50,000 in North America   30,000 in Europe
Garments resold	120,000+ to date
2028 Goal	100,000 repairs/year
Repair centers	110+ globally

## CIRCULAR BUSINESS MODEL



## MEASURED REAL IMPACT

- Buying used vs. new reduces carbon footprint by 60%
- Extending garment life by 9 months → 20-30% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub>/water/waste (WRAP)
- USD \$500B lost annually in barely worn clothing (Ellen MacArthur Foundation)

# 3: CURRENT PACKAGING ANALYSIS

## CURRENT SITUATION (POLYBAGS)

Aspect	Status
Material	40% PCW polyethylene (60% virgin)
Protection effectiveness	99% of garments arrive in perfect condition
Customer perception	Only 22% view it as eco-friendly
Recyclability	Requires specific receptacles

## CUSTOMER FEEDBACK (INTERNAL SURVEYS)

### ✓ POSITIVE:

- Effective packaging for protection
- Customers try to recycle/reuse

### × NEGATIVE:

- Uncertainty about recyclability
- Demand for more sustainable options
- Low eco-friendly perception (22%)



### KEY INSIGHT

Tests showed a 14% increase in satisfaction when using paper mailers without polybags, but these suffered considerable damage before leaving the Reno DC.

# 4: ANTI-GREENWASHING REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

## DIRECTIVE (EU) 2024/825 - GREEN CLAIMS

Prohibitions from 2026:

- Generic environmental claims without substantiation
- Carbon offsets as primary claim
- Labels without external certification

Obligations:

- External verification of all claims
- LCA documented according to ISO 14040/14044
- Public access to methodology



### **PENALTIES:**

- Fines up to €10M or 10% of annual global turnover
- Immediate withdrawal of products from the EU market

## REGULATION (EU) 2023/1542 - PACKAGING

Requirements 2030:

- Minimum 65% recycled content (plastic)
- Design for reuse mandatory
- Clear and visible composition labeling

# 5: COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

## BIG IDEA

"This packaging lasts as long as the clothing it protects"

## MESSAGE PILLARS

1

**Radical Transparency**

- Show verifiable real data
- Honestly explain limitations
- Link to complete LCA methodology

2

**Functionality = Sustainability**

- Packaging is useful beyond shipping
- Designed for travel, storage, return
- Durability as a core value

3

**Part of the Worn Wear System**

- Packaging participates in the circular cycle
- Visual consistency with "wear more, buy less"
- Integrated take-back program

## PATAGONIA TONE OF VOICE

✓ DO	× AVOID
Direct and unembellished	Empty aspirational marketing
Honest about limitations	Exaggerated claims
Educational without pedantry	Visual greenwashing
Invites concrete action	Unnecessary complexity

# 6: CIRCULAR PACKAGING PROPOSAL

## STRATEGIC CONCEPT

Format: Durable reusable bag that the customer uses 50+ times Recommended material: Certified organic cotton

## WHY ORGANIC COTTON

- ✓ Consumers understand it immediately
- ✓ Patagonia already uses it - brand consistency
- ✓ Certifiable (GOTS, Fair Trade) - legal backing
- ✓ Biodegradable - clear end-of-life narrative
- ✓ Quality perception - justifies premium

## CIRCULAR USE SYSTEM



Packaging is not just packaging - it's a useful product that actively participates in the Worn Wear cycle.

## VISUAL DIRECTION

- Avoid saturated greens (visual greenwashing)
- Use natural/earth colors that convey authenticity
- Functional design that communicates durability
- Highlighted claims with verifiable data

📄 Note: Technical production specifications are defined by the Patagonia product team. This brief establishes the communication strategy.

# 7: ANTI-GREENWASHING COPY

## PACKAGING FRONT

WORN WEAR PACKAGING Made to last 50+ uses

Materials: → 100% Organic Cotton (GOTS) → Natural Dyes (OEKO-TEX) → Fair Trade Certified™

Measured Impact vs PE Polybag: ↓ 68% CO<sub>2</sub> emissions\* ↓ 82% water consumption\*

\*LCA according to ISO 14040. See data: [patagonia.com/wornwear-packaging](https://patagonia.com/wornwear-packaging)

## INTERIOR/REVERSE

HOW TO USE THIS PACKAGING

For years: → Store your Worn Wear clothing → Use it as a travel bag → Bring it to any store for exchange

At the end of its useful life (estimated 3-5 years): → Recycle it in textile stream → Find your drop-off point: [patagonia.com/recycle](https://patagonia.com/recycle)

This packaging eliminates 50,000 lbs of plastic annually at our Reno, NV facility.

Designed to last years, not minutes. The best packaging is the one you use until it's worn out.

WORN WEAR Because the best thing we can do for the planet is get more use out of stuff we already own.

## INNER LABEL

100% Organic Cotton Fair Trade Certified™

Care Instructions: [according to Patagonia standard]

Recyclable in textile stream [patagonia.com/recycle](https://patagonia.com/recycle)

 Note: Exact copy and technical specifications are defined by the product team.

- Verifiable Data: All % with link to full LCA
- Clear Comparison: "vs PE polybag" establishes baseline
- Honesty: "Designed to last years, not minutes"
- Concrete Action: Specific links, clear steps



# 8: LIFE CYCLE ASSESSMENT (LCA)

## WHY WE NEED AN LCA

EU Directive 2024/825 requires external verification for any quantitative claim. Without a verified LCA, we cannot legally state "↓68% CO<sub>2</sub>".

## WHAT THE TECHNICAL TEAM NEEDS

- Hire ISO 14065 accredited certifier
- Conduct LCA according to ISO 14040/14044
- Compare proposed packaging vs. current polybag
- Obtain verifiable data for communication

## EXPECTED IMPACT CLAIMS

Based on public data for similar materials:

Metric	Estimated Reduction
CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions	60-70% less vs. polybag
Water Consumption	75-85% less vs. polybag
Lifespan	25-50x greater (50 uses vs. 1-2)



CRITICAL: Use ONLY data from the verified LCA in final communication. These are estimates for the brief.

## HOW TO COMMUNICATE THE IMPACT

On the packaging:

Impact measured vs. PE polybag: ↓ 68% CO<sub>2</sub> emissions\* ↓ 82% water consumption\*

\*LCA according to ISO 14040 See data: [patagonia.com/wornwear-packaging](https://www.patagonia.com/wornwear-packaging)



### KEY DATA POINT FOR STORYTELLING

Elimination of 50,000 lbs of plastic annually at the Reno, Nevada Distribution Center.

This data is real (internal Patagonia objective), tangible, and local - perfect for communication.

# 9: DESIGN BRIEF

## DESIGN OBJECTIVES

### 1. Communicate circularity without greenwashing

- Avoid clichés: leaves, planet, saturated green
- Use real data as design (clean infographics)

### 2. Reflect Patagonia Worn Wear aesthetic

- Functional, durable, outdoor heritage
- "Used but loved" (not pristine)

### 3. Facilitate intuitive reuse

- Practical and functional design
- Clear visual instructions

## CREATIVE DIRECTION - WHAT TO COMMUNICATE

Key Visual Messages:

1. Visible durability: The design must convey "made to last"
2. Honest functionality: Show that it's a useful tool, not just packaging
3. Clear circularity: Visually intuitive use cycle
4. Data as design: Integrate impact % as graphic elements

## COLOR PALETTE - PRINCIPLES

- Natural colors that reflect honesty and durability
- AVOID "greenwashing" - use authentic earthy tones
- Consistency with Patagonia palette (blues, naturals, blacks)
- Sufficient contrast for claims legibility

## TYPOGRAPHY - PRINCIPLES

- Legibility first: Claims scannable in 5 seconds
- Brand consistency: Typographic family consistent with Patagonia
- Clear hierarchy: Highlighted impact data

## VISUAL REFERENCES

Aesthetic Inspiration:

- Fjällräven Kånken: Visible durability, simplicity
- Topo Designs: Functional outdoor, robust construction
- Patagonia Black Hole bags: Brand consistency

# 10: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

## PHASE 1: PILOT PROGRAM (Q1-Q2 2026)

Aspect	Detail
Test Markets	Europe: Amsterdam, London, Berlin, Paris, Barcelona US: Chicago Worn Wear Store + Ventura HQ
Volume	5,000 units
Duration	6 months

Pilot KPIs:

- 'Eco-friendly' Perception: Target 70%+
- Circularity Message Comprehension: Target 80%+
- QR Code Engagement: Target 15%+

## PHASE 2: EUROPEAN ROLLOUT (Q3-Q4 2026)

Aspect	Detail
Scope	All Worn Wear Europe shipments
Volume	30,000 units/year
Communication	#WornWearForever Campaign

## PHASE 3: GLOBAL SCALE (2027)

Aspect	Detail
Scope	North America + Asia-Pacific
Volume	120,000 units/year
Take-Back Program	Incentive for used packaging return

## STRATEGIC JUSTIFICATION

- Brand Equity: Worn Wear customers already value sustainability
- Regulatory Compliance: Avoids potential fines of €10M+
- Differentiation: Zero competitors with natural fiber reusable packaging
- Merchandising Potential: Packaging can be sold standalone

# 11: SUCCESS METRICS

## KEY COMMUNICATION METRICS

### Brand Perception

Metric	Baseline	Target
"Eco-friendly" packaging perception	22%	70%+
Understanding circularity message	N/A	80%+
Claim clarity (no confusion)	N/A	90%+
Worn Wear brand trust	Base index	+15%

### Engagement and Behavior

Metric	Target
QR code interaction	15%+
#WornWearForever engagement	+25% vs previous campaigns
Sustainability media coverage	10+ specialized articles
Share of voice circular fashion	Top 3 brand

### Communicated Environmental Impact

Metric	Communication Target
CO <sub>2</sub> reduction vs polybag	~68% (LCA verified)
Plastic eliminated annually	50,000 lbs
Average packaging usage	50+ cycles

### Regulatory Compliance

Metric	Target
Greenwashing incidents	0
Compliance Directive EU 2024/825	100%
External LCA verification	Completed Q1 2026

## MONITORING DASHBOARD

Quarterly Monitoring:

- Brand perception (surveys)
- Campaign engagement (#WornWearForever)
- Message clarity (claim comprehension)
- QR code / landing page interaction

Annual Reporting:

- Brand tracking studies (trust, authenticity)
- Competitive analysis (share of voice)
- Media coverage (earned media value)
- Regulatory compliance (audits)

# 12: RISKS AND CONCLUSIONS

## RISK MATRIX

Metric	Likelihood	Mitigation Plan
Damage in transit	Medium	Test 1,000 units pre-scale. Reinforce if necessary. Target 99% perfection.
Low return rate	High	Store credit incentive. Clear take-back communication. 110+ return points.
Recycling confusion	High	Clear instructions + QR map. Partner H&M Garment Collecting.
Competitor copying	Low	Worn Wear™ registered trademark. First-mover advantage.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

This brief proposes a circular packaging system for Patagonia Worn Wear that not only meets sustainability objectives and regulatory requirements but also reinforces brand differentiation and customer trust. It is a natural evolution of the "Worn Wear" philosophy and Patagonia's vision for a more responsible future.

70%

### Sustainable Perception

Target increase in 'eco-friendly' packaging perception.

50K lbs

### Plastic Eliminated

Amount of plastic to be eliminated annually from operations.

100%

### Regulatory Compliance

Full compliance with EU Directive 2024/825.



### STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATION

#### ✓ PROCEED WITH PILOT PROGRAM IN Q1 2026

Gradual implementation will allow for effective learning, adjustment, and scaling, minimizing risks and maximizing positive impact.

## JUSTIFICATION

- Regulatory Timing:** EU Directive 2024/825 comes into force in 2026. Being first movers in this direction will grant us credibility and a competitive advantage.
- Customer Demand:** 78% of customers express a desire for more sustainable options, and customer satisfaction has been shown to increase by 14% with already implemented alternatives.
- Differentiation:** Currently, no competitors in circular fashion use reusable natural fiber packaging, positioning us uniquely in the market.
- Brand Narrative:** This circular packaging initiative perfectly aligns with Patagonia's 15-year history, from "Don't Buy This Jacket" in 2011 and the Worn Wear program from 2013-2017.

## IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS

01

### Week 1-2

- Strategic validation with internal stakeholders
- Briefing to designers (internal + agency)
- Start mockup development (3 variants)

03

### Month 2

- Refine creative direction
- Develop communication assets
- Test claim comprehension

02

### Week 3-4

- Develop communication prototypes
- Test messages with focus groups
- Start LCA baseline (contract ISO 14065 certifier)

04

### Month 3

- Adjustments post-feedback
- Prepare #WornWearForever campaign
- Develop educational materials (QR, take-back program)

# Contact and References

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## KEY REFERENCES

- Patagonia Internal Study (2021): Plastic Packaging Challenges
- Ellen MacArthur Foundation (2017): New Textiles Economy
- WRAP (2020): Valuing Our Clothes
- EU Directive 2024/825: Green Claims
- EU Regulation 2023/1542: Packaging & Waste

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