
THOUGHT-STARTER: HOW CAN SHOE BRANDS BE MORE SUSTAINABLE?

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Following in the footsteps of fashion, deputy foresight editor Kathryn Bishop explores how the shoe industry is embracing sustainability, not only through materials and assembly, but also through far-reaching communications.

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'There are more than 20bn pairs of shoes manufactured each year, emitting 700m metric tonnes of CO2 into the atmosphere,' **explains** Tim Brown, co-founder of sustainable footwear brand Allbirds. 'The footwear industry [hasn't] undergone significant changes for almost a century, relying primarily on synthetics and cheap leathers.'

Following reports by **Nielsen** that 41% of consumers are willing to open their wallets for organic products, an increasing number of footwear brands are making sustainable material development part of their internal R&D. Several are developing compounds that reveal new directions in how plant-based fibres can be re-engineered for sustainable footwear. One example, US-based eco-footwear label **Allbirds**, has spent almost three years developing SweetFoam, its proprietary, carbon-negative material for the soles of shoes.

Explore the Sustainable Footwear Market **[here](#)**.