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The Value Fashion Paradox: The Changing Face of Value Fashion

White Paper

An RPG Company

Balancing Affordability, Speed, and Responsibility in the New Era of Value Fashion

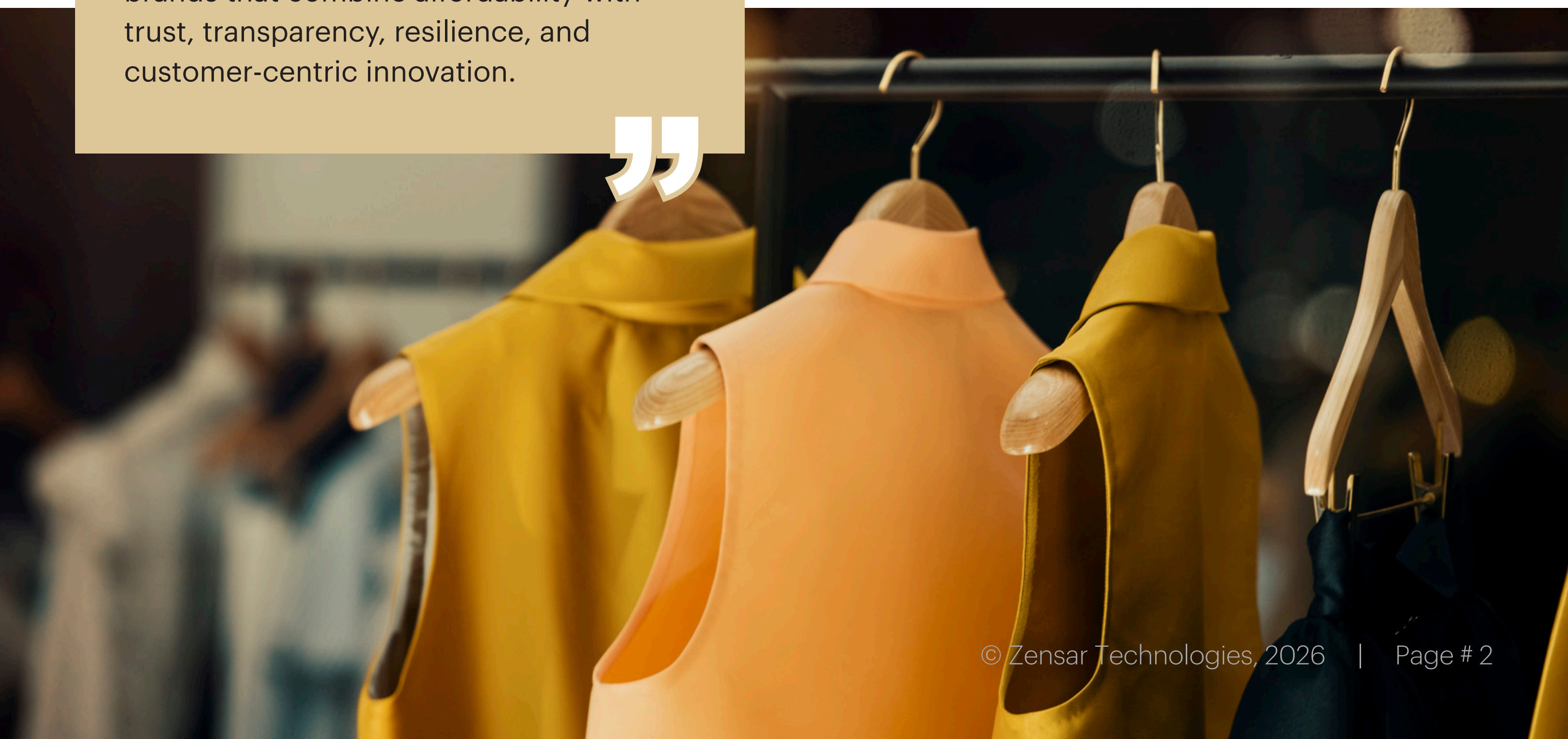
The global value-fashion market was valued at **$278.4 billion in 2024** and is projected to reach **$290 billion in 2025.** Retailers such as Primark, SHEIN, Boohoo, ASOS, Jet, Ackermans, Pep, Mr Price, and TFG continue to drive this growth, with **SHEIN generating $41.9 billion in revenue in 2025** and **Primark reporting £9.49 billion in annual sales.**

Prior to 2020, consumer purchasing decisions were primarily driven by price, style, and availability. Post-pandemic, sustainability, ethical sourcing, quality, and transparency have become key considerations. At the same time, geopolitical disruptions, inflation, and rising supply chain costs have reshaped the industry, while digital adoption and social media have created more informed consumers.

> The future of value fashion will be won not by the lowest-price retailers, but by brands that combine affordability with trust, transparency, resilience, and customer-centric innovation.

Shifting Expectations in Value Fashion

The value-fashion industry is evolving from a price-led retail model to one shaped by digital intelligence, personalization, and operational efficiency. While early growth was driven by expansion and sourcing advantages, retailers today compete through omnichannel experiences, localized offerings, and data-driven operations. Drawing insights from South Africa and India, two rapidly evolving value-fashion markets, retailers are increasingly demonstrating how affordability can be combined with digital innovation and customer engagement. South African brands such as Jet, Ackermans, Pep, Mr Price, and TFG are strengthening customer value propositions through digital capabilities, loyalty programs, and enhanced shopping experiences. As consumer expectations continue to evolve, retailers are placing greater emphasis on operational agility, data-driven decision-making, and customer-centric growth strategies.



Prestige to Purpose

Luxury brands are responding to the rise of value fashion by reinforcing their strengths in craftsmanship, exclusivity, heritage, sustainability, and product longevity, while also investing in AI-driven demand forecasting, hyper-personalization, clientelling, and seamless omnichannel experiences to deepen customer engagement. At the same time, value-fashion retailers are leveraging AI-powered trend prediction, inventory optimization, dynamic pricing, and personalized shopping experiences to improve speed, efficiency, and customer relevance. Looking ahead to 2030, competitive advantage will increasingly depend on AI-driven personalization, supply chain intelligence, transparency, and the ability to deliver differentiated customer experiences. The future of value fashion will be shaped by four competing forces that retailers must balance simultaneously: affordability and quality, speed and sustainability, personalization and privacy, and innovation and operational efficiency.

A clear example is ASOS uses AI-powered recommendation engines and visual search capabilities to deliver personalized product suggestions based on customer preferences, browsing behaviour, and purchase history, helping shoppers discover relevant styles more efficiently.

Affordability vs. Profitability

- Price-conscious consumers increasingly demand affordable products without compromising quality or experience.
- Rising sourcing, labour, logistics, and compliance costs pressure margins.
- Brands must improve efficiency without eroding value perception.

Speed vs. Sustainability

- Fast trend adoption remains a key competitive advantage.
- Overproduction and short product lifecycles increase environmental concerns.
- Retailers must balance rapid product drops with responsible sourcing and circular practices.

Accessibility vs. Exclusivity

- Broad market reach drives scale and growth.
- Consumers increasingly seek differentiated products and personalized experiences.
- Brands must remain accessible while building stronger brand loyalty.

Transparency vs. Supply Chain Complexity

- Customers expect visibility into sourcing and manufacturing practices.
- Global supply chains remain fragmented and difficult to monitor.
- Digital traceability and supplier accountability are becoming business necessities. AI forecasting can improve forecast accuracy by 20-30%.

These competing forces create the central paradox of value fashion: consumers expect affordability and speed while increasingly demanding sustainability, transparency, and quality. The brands that successfully balance these expectations will define the next phase of industry growth.

Shaping the Next Era of Value Fashion

As the value-fashion industry evolves, success will depend on a retailer's ability to balance affordability with innovation, resilience, and responsibility. What began as a price-driven model has transformed into a consumer-centric ecosystem shaped by digital commerce, AI-driven decision-making, supply chain transparency, sustainability expectations, and changing global economic conditions.

Looking ahead, competitive advantage will increasingly come from the effective use of predictive analytics, intelligent inventory management, digital traceability, personalized customer experiences, and responsible sourcing practices. Retailers that combine operational agility, customer trust, and technology-enabled innovation will be better positioned to meet the expectations of increasingly informed and value-conscious consumers while driving sustainable long-term growth.

- Are we equipped to turn transparency and sustainability into competitive advantages?
- How can data, AI, and automation help us improve efficiency while enhancing customer value?
- What steps are we taking today to remain relevant to the next generation of value conscious shoppers?

At Zensar, we help retailers navigate this transformation by combining digital engineering, data and AI, supply chain modernization, and customer experience innovation. By enabling retailers to build agile, intelligent, and customer-centric operating models, we help them create sustainable growth while delivering meaningful value in an increasingly connected marketplace.

Those who invest today in AI, transparency, and customer-centric innovation will be best positioned to create lasting value in an increasingly connected and conscious marketplace.

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At Zensar, we're 'experience-led everything.' We are committed to conceptualizing, designing, engineering, marketing, and managing digital solutions and experiences for over 145 leading enterprises. Using our 3Es of experience, engineering, and engagement, we harness the power of technology, creativity, and insight to deliver impact.

Part of the $4.8 billion RPG Group, we are headquartered in Pune, India. Our 10,000+ employees work across 30+ locations worldwide, including Milpitas, Seattle, Princeton, Cape Town, London, Zurich, Singapore, and Mexico City.

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