

Beyond the Pilot: Succeeding in Textile Recommerce from CIRCULAR REPUBLIC FESTIVAL 2025

Key Learnings



Ecosystem Partnerships Compound Value

Large companies won't rely on single startups due to supply chain risks. At the same time, startups cannot shoulder infrastructure costs alone. The solution lies in systematic collaboration. This "bundling the power of many" approach combines complementary capabilities and creates collective value rather than zero-sum competition. The key is identifying win-win opportunities by listening to understand different partners' specific operational needs.

Operational Pilots Reveal Strategic Reality

Surveys capture intentions, not behavior. Focus on a "learning by doing" approach as operational complexity emerges through the hands-on testing of your business model. High stated interest in circular solutions often translates to problematic integration with existing lean processes. This behavioral friction is often invisible in research. Run collaborative pilots with operating partners to understand true market dynamics and integration challenges.

Product Lifetime Value Requires System Visibility

The shift from selling products to managing "product lifetime value" requires maintaining visibility across extended lifecycles. This requires infrastructure for product identification, tracking, and condition assessment, as well as coordination of multiple partners to keep items circulating. This operational complexity extends far beyond traditional point-of-sale relationships. Invest in identification systems and partnership frameworks to enable re-engagement with products throughout their extended lifecycles.

Start by Fostering a Sustainability Mindset

Sustainability often conflicts with short-term financial priorities. A common mistake is to treat sustainability as a departmental add-on, or give someone dual operational-sustainability roles, which creates inevitable resource conflicts. Success requires embedding sustainability in the company's core mindset. This must happen from leadership down to frontline staff. The key is to start securing genuine C-level commitment to sustainability as a business strategy.

Listen to the full episode here:

<https://circularity.fm/beyond-the-pilot-succeeding-in-textile-recommerce/>