

CASE STUDY

EXTENDING THE USEFUL
LIFE OF PRODUCTS THROUGH
REFURBISHMENT AND UPCYCLING



One planet
inform with care

GreenSole®

GREENSOLE

INITIATIVE: GREENSOLE

SECTOR OF ACTIVITY: CONSUMER GOODS

IMPLEMENTATION AREA: INDIA

STRATEGY FOR PRODUCT LIFETIME EXTENSION:
REFURBISHMENT AND UPCYCLING

Product lifetime extension is the postponement or reversal of the obsolescence of a product through deliberate intervention. The extension of products' lifetime makes a compelling case towards circularity as it enables a radical decrease in the use of natural resources and in waste generation, while preserving the economic value embedded in the products. This case study is part of a series that aim to showcase how consumer information tools can be used by organisations to address product lifetime extension.

WHAT?

Reusing the Entire shoe



Greensole is an Indian-based social venture whose mission is to refurbish discarded shoes with soles still in good condition and donate them to children in vulnerable situations. Greensole also upcycles the discarded shoes and sells them to new owners. Shoes are collected through direct donations of previous owners or through partnerships with companies. The aim is to keep non-biodegradable shoes out of landfills whilst protecting people from being infected by diseases that could be prevented by wearing proper footwear. In addition, the company creates employment opportunities for women in rural areas through a skill center.

HOW?



Greensole started its journey in 2013 when the two founders decided to convert the intact soles of quality sports shoes into slippers. As athletes, Shriyans Bhandari and Ramesh Dhami used to run through three to four pairs of sports shoes every year when they realised that although the shoe sides tore within months, the soles were in good condition.

A bit of research led to the idea of refurbishing them into slippers. Greensole recycles all shoes except the ones with heels and kids' footwear. Old shoelaces are washed, sanitized and hand-weaved to make uppers for slippers.

USE OF CONSUMER INFORMATION

Greensole makes extensive use of information tools to support consumers to extend the lifetime of their shoes by making them available for refurbishment instead of discarding them. The company uses different communication channels, such as website, [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and a [YouTube](#) channel in order to inform and involve consumers in their initiatives. For instance, they regularly organise live events with their team on Instagram, so that followers can ask questions and be updated on the company's initiatives. The objective of the consumer information tools is to induce a positive consumer attitude towards product refurbishment and upcycling.



Skill center

In 2018, Greensole launched its first skill center in collaboration with Tata Steel and Lion's Club. This is where underprivileged people are trained, skilled, and employed, by receiving instructions and training on how to use the machinery in the refurbish-ment process. More than 100 people have been trained since then. The company plans to open more than 30 skill centers across India in the next few years, and to employ the disabled.

RESULTS

So far Greensole has benefitted 350,000 children across rural India. Also, the company saved more than 1,660,000 LBS of CO2 emissions by upcycling old footwear to new slippers and preventing them from ending up in landfills. Greensole has currently 55 corporate partners to support its initiatives by conducting shoes collecting drives in their offices and paying Greensole to refurbish. Corporate partners include Tata Group, Axis Bank, India Bulls and ONGC. Since 2016, Greensole is also associated with adidas to increase the donation of footwear. Through this partnership, Adidas has carried out donation drives of upcycled footwear.

Do you want to learn more?

The One Planet network's [Product Lifetime Extension Hub](#) collects resources and tools on the topic of product lifetime extension. You can access reports, case studies and other relevant materials on measures and processes to be taken by the private sector, governments and consumers, to accelerating the circular economy by extending the useful life of products.