

## CROWDF(O)UNDING AN ECO CLOTHING BRAND

 FASHION & BEAUTY

We've already highlighted many examples of the **customer-made** trend, in which consumers are given a chance to contribute to a product's design or features. Now **nvohk** (pronounced 'invoke') is taking the notion a step further to create a crowdfunded, eco-friendly clothing company that's directed in large part by consumers. Launched just before the holidays, Los Angeles-based nvohk aims to create the first community-managed, environmentally conscious, surf-inspired clothing company. It is currently recruiting a minimum of 20,000 members (capped at 40,000), each of whom will contribute USD 50 in exchange for the chance to co-develop the nvohk brand. Members will make major business decisions including logo, web and product design along with advertising; they'll also receive 35 percent of nvohk's net profits in the form of points that can be redeemed to purchase products, as well as 25 percent off all nvohk goods. nvohk, meanwhile, will donate another 10 percent of its net profits to environmental organizations selected by its members. Brendan Lynch, nvohk's president, explains: "Consumers are concerned with the environment and want to be associated with brands that are too. With nvohk, members have the opportunity to make critical decisions that not only affect the direction of the brand, but also make a positive impact on the world around them." nvohk has just started to recruit members, with only 400 or so signed up by early January, so it's still too early to tell whether it will meet its target number. Assuming it does, however, this will test the power of the crowds on a new level. Joint corporate decision-making by tens of thousands of people should make for an interesting ride; on the other hand, with a common interest in surfing and a shared concern for the environment, they just may have what it takes to make it fly. One to watch! Spotted by: Bjarke Svendsen

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