



Partnership agreements between New Zealand brands, such as Ruby, and their factories, are contributing to an increased commitment to high-quality, equitable working practices | Photo source [pina messina](#) on Unsplash

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FASHION INDUSTRY COLLECTIVE INCREASES SUPPLY CHAIN TRANSPARENCY

 FASHION & BEAUTY

Brands working together help bring about broader, more rapid change in an industry full of challenges

Spotted: New Zealand's Mindful Fashion cooperative aims to lead by example. Set up by a group of designers and textile suppliers, the collective works to increase the traceability of fabrics, ensure fair working practices in garment factories and support local business.

The fashion industry's supply chains are notoriously complex, which contributes to a general opaqueness in sourcing. Now one year old, the collective's effectiveness is growing as its membership increases. Partnership agreements between New Zealand brands and their factories, both overseas and domestic, are contributing to an increased commitment to high-quality, equitable working practices.

By bringing competitors together to collectively advocate for positive industry-wide change, Mindful Fashion is able to address problems and challenges that are often too large or overwhelming for individuals and small businesses to approach on their own. Now dealing with the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, many brands are finding new ways of working. Ruby, for example, a New Zealand-based clothing company and member of the collective, has begun selling a small selection of its patterns.

Finding new ways to create an emotional connection via digital interaction is one of many brands' biggest current challenges. Switzerland's premier [watch fair](#) recently held its 2020 event online for the first time ever, and a new [handbag collection](#) sells each piece as a single flat piece of leather for home-assembling.

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Takeaway:

With much of the world's travel on pause, many businesses are looking closer to home, for both inspiration and opportunity. Partnerships and products exclusive to a specific area are two ways brands can turn isolation into collaborations. Changes to working practices and closures of retail and production spaces are also incentives for experimentation with everything from materials and products, to processes and goals. It's an exceptionally difficult time, as organisations attempt to balance planning with maintenance and survival.