



Simon and Helen Payne first started attending car boot sales to find stock to sell on their eBay shop | Photo source Sole Responsibility

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A SUSTAINABLE MODEL FOR SELLING SECOND-HAND SHOES

 FASHION & BEAUTY

A family-run company has developed an innovative model for reducing fashion waste

Spotted: It's no secret that the fashion industry produces huge amounts of waste each year. One reason is that returned and seconds stock often ends up incinerated or thrown away because they can't be sold. In fact, it's estimated that more than 300 million pairs of footwear alone are thrown away each year. Now, a small British company is working to reduce this footwear mountain. Their company, Sole Responsibility, sells only seconds or out of season shoe stock from big-name retailers, all of which were slated for destruction or the landfill.

Sole Responsibility was set up by couple Simon and Helen Payne, who started the business as a way to spend more time with their children. In the beginning, they frequented car boot sales to find stock to sell on their eBay shop. Then they began talking to retailers about buying up their surplus or returned stock.

In the process of growing a business based on reducing waste, the couple has also developed a model that is not only environmentally friendly but helps others as well. A percentage of every purchase is donated to the charity Smartmove, which helps to house the homeless. The company also receives items such as sleeping bags and warm coats from retailers, which it donates directly to the charity.

Simon Payne has described the business' focus as both sustainable and family-friendly. He explains that they "want to run sustainably ourselves, too – not just sell a sustainable product [...] The business has taken off so quickly so we're still learning, but we're making small changes, such as ensuring 100 per cent of the cardboard we use is recycled. We went into this business with family in

mind, so we also offer flexibility to our staff as well; if they need a day off to go to their child's sports day, we'll make it work."

Here at Springwise, we have taken a keen interest in the battle against waste in the fashion industry. Some recent innovations we have covered include the resurgence of a modern "make do and mend" movement, and a brand that makes accessories from [deadstock](#) Indian clothing.

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Takeaway:

Sole Responsibility has described itself as on a mission to educate UK consumers that buying seconds is a "crucial piece in the jigsaw of living a more sustainable life." Although seconds is not for everyone, there is a growing recognition among consumers that buying vintage and second-hand clothing is a great way to increase sustainability – which can be stylish too. The charitable aspect of the company, alongside its family-friendly policies, also demonstrate that it is possible to build sustainability in every aspect of a business and also remain competitive.