

Ethical Retailing - France - 2023

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This report looks at the following areas:

- How the rising cost of living affects consumers' ethical consumption and shopping
- Consumer perceptions of what makes an ethical brand/company
- Ethical shopping behaviours over the last 12 months
- Motivators for ethical shopping practices
- Opportunities for retailers to promote ecologically and socially responsible products and services.

There is a large and diverse range of issues that can be considered to be "ethical" aspects of retailing. In France, 41% of consumers agreed that an ethical retailer can be defined by its efforts to promote sustainability and 35% by its fair treatment of workers. This variety of issues must be considered by all retailers, in part due to increasing legislation and regulation around the area, but also because of their growing importance for consumers.

The cost of living crisis is ongoing - at May 2023 44% of French consumers said they were worse off than a year ago. Shopping ethically can undoubtedly be more expensive, and the two most important factors that would encourage French consumers to choose an ethical product over a standard one both relate to price - 61% if they are affordable and 44% if they are on offer. Retailers looking to up their ethical credentials could look to position their products/services as either affordable or worth spending more on, identifying other aspects of value that can appeal to different consumer types.

One of the biggest problems for ethical retailers is the issue of trust - consumers are increasingly sceptical about the claims made by companies to improve the ethical aspects of their operations, and are demanding proof of the efforts being made and transparent measures of success.

This also creates a huge opportunity in retail. As and when the current economic squeeze subsides, ethical issues, such as sustainability, equality and



"Businesses have a lot to think about when it comes to the broad concept of ethical retailing, with issues ranging from sustainability and efforts to counter climate change to social aspects such as equality and diversity."

- **Natalie Macmillan, Senior European Retail Analyst**

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diversity, will move higher up people's agendas. Consumers will be willing to use their purchasing power to make a difference, and retailers whose efforts do not stand up to scrutiny risk being marginalised.



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Table of Contents

OVERVIEW

- Key issues covered in this Report
- Products covered in this Report
- Consumer research
- Market context

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **The five-year outlook for ethical retailing in France**
Figure 1: France: Outlook for ethical retailing, 2023-28
- **Market drivers**
- **Price and value has shifted priorities away from ethical shopping**
- **People believe they can make a difference**
Figure 2: France: Key factors driving consumer behaviour around Surroundings, 2023
- **France leads the way with legislation**
- **And also tries to make it easy for consumers to make ethical choices**
- **Launch activity and innovation**
- **Carrefour launches recycling kiosks in its car parks with TerraCycle**
- **FnacDarty expands repairs capacity**
- **Decathlon and Groupe Eram accelerate circularity in footwear**
- **Gémo develops its clothing rental offer**
- **DIY retailer ManoMano launches “Carbon Score”**
- **IKEA France delivering furniture by boat in Paris**
- **The consumer**
- **What is an ethical retailer?**
Figure 3: France: How consumers define ethical brands/retailers, 2023
- **Ethical shopping behaviours**
Figure 4: France: Ethical shopping behaviours, 2023
- **Motivations for shopping ethically**
Figure 5: France: Encouraging Factors for Shopping Ethically, 2023

ISSUES AND INSIGHTS

- **What the cost-of-living crisis means for ethical retailing in France**
- **Combine affordability with ethical-claims**
- **Emphasise other forms of value**

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- **Transparency for all to see**

MARKET DRIVERS

- **Squeezed budgets hold back spending on ethical products**
- **Increasing frequency of extreme weather events is heightening awareness**
- **But people believe they can make a difference**
Figure 6: France: Key factors driving consumer behaviour around Surroundings, 2023
- **Cost deters organic shopping**
Figure 7: France: Factors that would encourage buying of organic food and drink, 2023
- **Growing focus on reducing meat consumption to help the planet**
- **GNPD Data - Brands responding to consumers' sustainability demands**
Figure 8: France: ethical & environmental claims as % of all new product launches, 2018-22
- **Environmentally friendly packaging is top ethical claim**
Figure 9: France: Leading claims on new product launches with claims matching "Ethical & Environmental" 2023
- **Made in France – a need for clarity**
Figure 10: France: Reasons for buying domestically-made food and drink products, 2021
- **Making it easy to recycle**

REGULATORY AND LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

- **France has introduced many world-first legislative measures**
- **Loi EGalim**
- **AGEC – the Anti-Waste Law**
- **Repairability Index (indice-reparabilité)**
- **The Repair Bonus (bonus-reparation)**
- **The Loi Garot**
- **MaPrimeRénov - financial aid for environmentally friendly home improvements**
- **The 2023 anti-food waste certificate**
Figure 11: France: Anti-waste certificate, one, two and three stars
- **Legislating for seasonality**
- **Anti-greenwashing law came into force in January 2023**

LAUNCH ACTIVITY AND INNOVATION

- **Recycling and the circular economy**

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- **Carrefour launches recycling kiosks in its car parks with TerraCycle**
Figure 12: Carrefour Recycling kiosk in collaboration with TerraCycle
- **Boulangier buys back used electricals**
- **FnacDarty expands repairs capacity**
- **Nature & Découvertes collects and redistributes used products**
- **Decathlon and Groupe Eram accelerate circularity in footwear**
- **Gémo develops its clothing rental offer**
- **Product sustainability**
- **DIY retailer ManoMano launches “Carbon Score”**
- **For Digital Cleanup Day, Boulangier raises awareness about the sustainability of digital products**
- **Avoiding waste**
- **Carrefour grows commitment to tackling food waste**
- **Paper promotional leaflets are disappearing**
- **Auchan trials packaging-free shop-in-shop**
- **Promoting clean energy**
- **Carrefour Énergies now has 100 electric vehicle charging stations in France**
- **IKEA France is now delivering furniture by boat in Paris**
- **Helping consumers through the cost-of-living crisis**
- **E.Leclerc freezes prices on 1,000 Eco+ products**
- **Cashback to fight inflation at Les Comptoirs de la Bio**
- **Steps to improve diversity**
- **For World Autism Awareness Day Carrefour steps up its support**
- **Boulangier trains its employees in sign language**
- **Localism trend favours “Made in France”**
- **Système U promotes 100% French fashion**
Figure 13: Système U, Made in France clothing range
- **100% French 3D knitwear at Gémo**

DEFINING ETHICAL BRANDS AND RETAILERS

- **Retailers must embrace sustainability to be considered “ethical”**
- **Treat workers fairly**
- **Women define ethical as cruelty-free**
- **Inclusivity concerns young people most**

Figure 14: France: How consumers define ethical brands/retailers, 2023

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- Executive Summary
- Full Report PDF
- Infographic Overview
- Powerpoint Presentation
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Figure 15: France: How consumers define ethical brands/retailers, by age groups, 2023

ETHICAL SHOPPING BEHAVIOURS

Figure 16: France: Ethical shopping behaviours, 2023

- **Two thirds have bought locally produced**
- **The circular economy is growing**
- **Potential in reusable food containers**
- **Repairs can draw people into stores**
- **Niche potential for renting or hiring**

Figure 17: France: Ethical shopping behaviours, 2023

MOTIVATIONS FOR SHOPPING ETHICALLY

- **Cost is the main barrier to buying ethical products**
- **But value is more than price**
- **Clarity needed to avoid greenwashing**

Figure 18: France: Encouraging Factors for Shopping Ethically, 2023

APPENDIX – DATA SOURCES, ABBREVIATIONS AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- **Consumer research methodology**
- **Abbreviations**
- **Data sources**

What's included

- Executive Summary
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