The Swap: a clothing exchange to benefit the Planet

I have the privilege of working for adidas, one of the leading retailers within the sport and lifestyle industry. adidas has a storied past that has influenced major sport and cultural milestones, globally. It is also a company that has stood for the Planet long before it became the widespread consumer priority that it is today. In fact, the brands efforts began in 1990’s and have evolved to meet the needs of consumers, but more importantly- the Planet – through initiatives like Parley and Loop.

The planning, preparation and resources that are required to build employee engagement and training platforms can be challenging to provide, in general. Scale needs to that of a global, highly matrixed company and the challenges become even greater. What is widely understood, however, is the power of education and knowledge transfer within an organization. Unfortunately, when stacked against the myriad of other priorities, upskilling employees on sustainability topics (general or otherwise) falls to the bottom of the priority list.

But we are in a state of climate emergency. And it is imperative that employees command at least the basic information that empowers them reduce their impact on the Planet.

At adidas North America (Portland, OR) we are starting with engagement. We are creating an experience that educates employees on the circular economy by bringing an unfamiliar subject into a familiar territory- the retail environment. The ambition is to create a bi-annual retail experience where employees can swap their gently used products with each other to extend the lifecycle of the things they own- reducing their overall footprint and educating them on why reducing their footprint matters.