

Stylish **SUSTAINABILITY**

In an era where sustainability is often mere marketing jargon, brands like Stanley/Stella (STST), who are truly authentic to this mission, cut through the noise.

JEAN CHABERT
CEO, Stanley/Stella



Launched in 2012, the innovative Belgian apparel company walks the walk with premium, environmentally conscious clothing.

Unlike many, STST and its founder, Jean Chabert, are unapologetically sustainable—even if it means sacrificing margins.

Chabert’s philosophy? “We like to ‘say what we do and do what we say’, as we believe that sustainability is first and foremost a question of commitment and transparency.”

This story of conviction makes STST not just a brand but a compelling case study in the real power of sustainable business.

The birth of an empire

In the bustling student corridors of UCLouvain in 1990, Jean Chabert started selling T-shirts.

His belief was that while the quality of imprint T-shirts, such as the stitching, the colour and so on, was good, the style at the time wasn’t what European customers were looking for.

After scratching a few entrepreneurial itches, two companies later, Chabert eventually

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set up B&C in order to create T-shirts with specific appeal for Europeans. B&C would go on to turn over €70 million annually and sell to Kwintet in 2008.

Returning to the imprint market four years later, he launched Stanley/Stella, strongly positioned at the premium end of the market, doubling down on high quality, sustainable clothes.

Naturally, this makes the target audience a little smaller. “In the imprint business, most of the time, it is a question of price; people don’t

want to spend a lot of money,” says Chabert, who splits the imprint market into segments. One is where price is all that matters, which he compares to Ryan Air, but another is “[where] some people are ready to pay; they want the perfect service and the perfect product.”

In real terms, this means that STST targets around two percent of the imprint Dealers or Decorators—with the main goal to remain selective when choosing dealers they want to work with, setting sustainability as a non-negotiable standard.

From day one, STST has chosen to use only 100 percent organic cotton, grown from seeds that have not been genetically modified and cultivated without the use of chemical pesticides and fertilisers.

“This is our differentiator. We create something premium and sustainable, which helps us stand out in a market where most care only about being affordable,” says Chabert.

The cost of conviction

Chabert knows this approach will not appeal to everyone.

“Sustainability is a cost, a conviction. It



never provides money—many brands preach sustainability to show that they are relevant or to try and be different, but this won’t last more than 2-3 years. In the long term, you need to build a business around this.”

With many marketing efforts filled with greenwashing—when companies falsely claim their products or practices are environmentally friendly to seem more sustainable than they are—to hear Chabert’s candiddness around the cost of sustainable choices is refreshing.

“Many have come along and said, ‘If we keep manufacturing this way, it is too expensive’. I have said, ‘Yes, but this is the price we have to pay’.

“We only offer garments made in a responsible way. We make no exceptions,” Chabert reasserts, adding that when these standards are not met, change happens. “We visited the facilities we had previously partnered with and discovered discrepancies between their claims and what we actually received. We sought new partners who not only meet but exceed certification standards, ensuring that we’re not solely reliant on external validation.”



To maintain STST’s high standards, especially concerning cotton, they employ a local field worker who conducts daily inspections of the bales they purchase. This hands-on approach, combined with their knowledgeable managers focused on sustainability, ensures that STST knows precisely what to look for to maintain their commitment to quality and environmental responsibility.

Going the distance

Stanley/Stella’s foundational DNA and unwavering commitment to quality and sustainability is mirrored in the careful selection of their suppliers, who are considered part of the STST ‘family’. This goes beyond mere business transactions to forge partnerships rooted in shared values and visions.

Chabert articulates this ethos with pride: “I’m proud of the fact that we’re fully transparent about how we work, who we work with, and where. Like most global fashion brands, we don’t own the mills, factories, and production facilities that make our garments. Still, we see it as our responsibility to ensure a safe and →



fair working environment. That’s why we partner only with suppliers who share our vision.”

This commitment to transparency and ethical practices extends to the buyer and dealer side as well. STST works with a carefully chosen selection of dealers, ensuring that, when combined with their design skills, it guarantees a perfect end product every time.

Addressing new markets with such stringent criteria for partners and detailed attention to every aspect of the supply chain presents unique challenges. Chabert shares a lighter moment, reflecting on their meticulous market research: “Right now, we are looking at Japan and South Korea. We are even spending a lot of time looking at what colour T-shirts people in South Korea like to wear,” he half-jokes.

“We’re fully transparent about how we work, who we work with, and where.”

The company has dedicated several years to assembling a team focused on expanding their business into the USA, signalling the next

phase of global expansion. “Our goal is to open in the US market. It will require a different approach as the local needs are completely different from the European market. It’s a market with huge potential in our business, but also one where sustainability is coming more on the agenda,” Chabert explains.

By choosing to walk a path less travelled, Chabert proves that genuine commitment to the planet and its people is not only possible but profitable.

As Stanley/Stella looks toward expanding their sustainable footprint into new markets, their story remains a showcase for when a brand chooses to say what they do and do what they say, with no exceptions. 🌱



“Teaming up with Stanley/Stella is a true delight. Their commitment to sustainability echoes our own, enabling us to provide eco-conscious clothing solutions without compromising on style or quality. It’s a harmonious collaboration founded on shared values and a vision for a greener future.”

M NAIMUL BASHER CHOWDHURY
Director, Interstoff Apparels Ltd.



Interstoff Apparels Ltd.

Bangladesh

OUR MISSION
We are committed

To Our Employees
Good work environment and compliance with national and international rules.

To Our Customers
On-time delivery of quality products and services.

To Our Society
Creation of a better tomorrow.



In our journey towards sustainability, we prioritize people, envisioning a future where their well-being harmonizes with a thriving planet, crafting a world where the health of both humanity and our environment are indivisible.