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## Case study

# Lindstrom Group and sustainable business



## Case study – Lindstrom Group

### Introduction

This case study looks at the Lindstrom Group ([www.lindstromgroup.com](http://www.lindstromgroup.com)). Lindstrom is a Finnish family business founded in 1848. It operates in more than 20 countries in Europe and Asia. The company has more than 5000 employees and more than 250,000 customers. It provides textile services to companies and organisations in various industries. The company offers textiles such as workwear, carpets, restaurant textiles, hotel textiles, industrial towels, and healthcare textiles. Lindstrom's services include the textiles themselves, their washing and maintenance, and recycling discarded textiles. (Lindstrom Group, 2023a)

### Activities supporting sustainable development

Lindstrom's activities in support of sustainable development are not limited to its activities but are part of a broader effort to promote sustainable development. In addition to environmental issues, the company's sustainability activities also cover social and economic responsibility. The company is involved in various organisations and working groups that influence industry developments, standards and legislation. This involvement demonstrates Lindstrom's commitment to work as part of a broader ecosystem and to promote responsibility in its community and among its stakeholders. Lindstrom monitors and reports several sustainability indicators. This reporting increases transparency and helps the company's stakeholders assess its progress towards its sustainability goals.

The company has already achieved significant results in the area of sustainable business. It is committed to continuous improvement and innovation. At the same time, it has developed a broader sense of responsibility throughout the supply chain. Open communication in support of sustainability is essential for responsible business. In sustainable business, Lindstrom Corporation's decision-making is guided by environmental responsibility, social responsibility, ethical principles, stakeholder involvement, long-term sustainability, compliance with legislation and continuous innovation. The company invests in textile recycling and closed-loop recycling.

Lindstrom is committed to a wide range of sustainable development principles to promote the environment's and society's well-being. Lindstrom's activities are tangibly reflected in the promotion of several sustainable development goals (SDGs). The company invests in water conservation and textile recycling while promoting responsible production (SDG 6 and 12). Lindstrom reduces its carbon footprint through energy efficiency and sustainable transport solutions and supports the fight against climate change (SDG 13). It also promotes employment and economic growth by creating sustainable jobs and contributing to the development of local communities (SDGs 8 and 11). The company emphasises cooperation and partnerships to achieve the SDGs (SDG 17).

Lindstrom is investing in its environmental responsibility while at the same time striving to improve its social and corporate responsibility. The company analyses corruption risk through both internal and external audits. Lindstrom is also committed to preventing slavery and human trafficking in its operations and supply chain. The company has a whistleblowing channel, through which an anonymous report can be made of any suspected wrongdoing. Lindstrom also focuses on the well-being and safety of its employees, while promoting skills development, diversity and equality. The company also seeks to ensure the responsible behaviour of its suppliers through regular audits. In this way, Lindstrom intends to provide a more responsible service to its customers and at the same time promote sustainability among its customers (Lindstrom Group, 2023a).

In terms of circular economy approaches, Lindstrom promotes its own goal of recycling textile waste from its own operations, such as worn or broken workwear. Recycling makes it possible to recover the fibres from these workwear to make new fabric. That fabric can then be used to make new workwear.

Each year, Lindstrom publishes its sustainability score as part of the company's sustainability report. Lindstrom's sustainability report shows that the company is already well advanced in terms of circular economy. This is despite the fact that the textile industry is one of the biggest contributors to environmental problems. The closed-loop recycling process is constantly being developed with customers, partners and suppliers. When textile waste is recycled into new fibres from which new textiles are made, the amount of waste is significantly reduced. At the same time, resources are saved. A business based on the circular economy is therefore an effective way to optimise production (Lindstrom Group, 2023b).

Corporate responsibility is assessed and reported comprehensively, taking into account environmental, social and economic aspects. One key indicator in Lindstrom's sustainability work is the reduction of emissions. This reduction is achieved through a long-term commitment to energy efficiency, optimising customer deliveries and minimising textile overproduction. Lindstrom is committed to achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

Another example of Lindstrom's sustainability metrics is the recycling of textile waste. The company aims to achieve a 100% recycling rate for textile waste by 2025. The company has a long history of reducing the amount of textile waste and also aims to minimise the use of virgin materials. Textile waste can serve as a raw material for many industries. The company promotes closed-loop recycling by using discarded textiles to produce new textiles. Efforts have also been made to improve the recyclability of carpets, but this has proved more difficult. Old carpets can be used for chairs, sofa cushions and acoustic elements (Lindstrom Group, 2023c).

For Lindstrom, customer satisfaction is also a key responsibility indicator. The company is committed to continuously improving and expanding its product range to meet customers' requirements and needs while considering its circular economy objectives. Lindstrom emphasises close cooperation with customers and partners and encourages innovation. This cooperation is an integral part of the company's sustainability work.

Sustainability reporting enables the company to communicate risks and opportunities, maintain a dialogue with stakeholders and guide and develop its sustainability work. The report is always tailored to the company's specific needs and its sector, reflecting current requirements and challenges. The reporting provides a comprehensive and balanced view of the company's sustainability performance, emphasising honesty and transparency. Materiality, accuracy and comparability are other fundamental reporting principles, and the report's content should be presented clearly and concisely.

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Since 2003, Lindstrom has published an annual sustainability report. Lindstrom's Sustainability Report follows the recommendations of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) standards. Unless otherwise stated, all information presented in the report covers the entire Lindstrom Group. This breadth of reporting means that Lindstrom has extended its sustainability practices to its foreign Group companies. (Lindstrom Group, 2023a)

Lindstrom's Sustainability Report examines the impact of the company's activities on the environment, society and the economy and has been audited by an external body. The report outlines measures to manage these impacts and discusses critical sustainability issues, targets and achievements. The main target groups of the report are the company's customers, partners and employees.

The Sustainability Report also looks at the future outlook over two different time horizons: the current strategic period, which extends to 2025, and the subsequent strategic period, which covers 2025-2030. This allows the Group, regions and country management teams to form a coherent vision of the future and to base decision-making on knowledge and shared assumptions about the future. At the same time, the aim is to work with stakeholders to identify the impacts and challenges that the identified trends and phenomena may have on Lindstrom's business model and value chain.

Lindstrom does not only publish sustainability reports as part of its sustainability communication. In addition, Lindstrom's sustainability communication includes press releases and articles, which are distributed mainly on the company's website and social media. The latest communication channels are webinars and a blog. The company has also produced various sustainability guides. Lindstrom is actively involved in several organisations, and its experts participate in various working groups to influence developments, standards and legislation in the industry. The company also engages in internal communication with its employees by publishing news and blogs on the intranet or through monthly online meetings (Lindstrom Group, 2023a).

## Conclusions

Lindstrom is an example of a company that takes sustainability seriously and seeks to integrate it into its business strategy. The company has adopted practices promoting a circular economy, particularly textile recycling. Lindstrom's closed-loop recycling process and cooperation with partners are positive examples of saving resources and reducing waste.

The company is also committed to working with its partners to promote sustainability, demonstrating its willingness to work as part of a broader ecosystem and promote sustainability in its community. Lindstrom monitors and transparently reports several sustainability indicators, allowing stakeholders to assess the company's progress towards its sustainability goals.

Lindstrom strives for transparency by openly reporting sustainability indicators and continuously striving to strengthen its position as a leader in sustainable development. The company's sustainability reporting is comprehensive and has successfully attracted employees interested in sustainability. Employee support and involvement in the company's sustainability work is a valuable asset and contributes to the company's competitive advantage.

Although Lindstrom is at the forefront of textile recycling, it still has room for improvement. Lindstrom has made significant progress in implementing sustainability in its operations. Consideration of the whole supply chain, especially regarding raw material sourcing and transport, remains essential but, in some cases, complex. Lindstrom has made and will continue to make determined and committed efforts to improve its sustainable business practices.

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