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nxtile: Innovating benefit partnerships with Sea Shepherd



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At the beginning of March we visited Portugal on a work trip, accompanied by our non-profit collaboration partner Sea Shepherd. Our visit reconfirmed the benefits of long-term alliances built on trust and shared value. It also inspired us to explore new partnership models that will appeal to nxtile B2B clients. An interview with Jeroen Botter, Partnerships and merchandise director at Sea Shepherd, and nxtile co-founder Jos.

Long-term partnership

As part of our commitment to ensure product quality and maintain good working relations, we regularly visit the production and logistics partners in our international Dragon network. We recently travelled to India (read more [here](#)). Next on the agenda was Portugal.

Sea Shepherd is a non-profit marine conservation organisation on a mission to defend, conserve and protect marine wildlife and the world's oceans. Our collaboration started

back in 2019. At **easyessentials**, we produced Sea Shepherd face masks during the pandemic and a limited-edition set of [beautifully printed t-shirts](#), all made from 100% organic cotton.

The products are offered to the loyal Sea Shepherd supporter base and help finance campaigns to save the oceans.



Visiting the Portugal garment production facility with the Sea Shepard team

Craftmanship and innovation

Jeroen Botter, Partnerships and merchandise director at Sea Shepherd, knew the Portugal visit was a not-to-be-missed opportunity. The trip lived up to his expectations, he says, recently returned back home.

“We have been closely collaborating on marketing and delivery of the products for a couple of years now,” Jeroen explains. “This was the first time we could take a personal look around the production facilities and meet the people who manufacture the products for our supporters.”

Jos introduced him and the local Sea Shepherd representative Chris Storey to the garment production facility and the knitting factory where the 100% organic materials are manufactured. They also visited CITEVE, a research institute that tests and approves the quality of the textiles.

“The tour gave us insight in how it all works socially and technically,” Jeroen says. “We met up with two family-run businesses, which fortunately is common in Portugal even

today, as opposed to our home country. It is great to see that the craft is still alive in the region. At the same time, I was impressed by the capacity for innovation in waste reduction and the adoption speed of new materials.”

Importance of trust in long-term collaboration

The shared value of collaborations is built on the certainty that partners can count on each other. In good and bad times. “Our long-time collaboration with Sea Shepherd has been a game-changer,” Jos recalls. “It pulled our local production partners in Portugal through the pandemic and for us, it was a major test of our capacity to deliver timely and on-demand, against all odds.”

When no other company approached by Sea Shepherd was able to produce sustainable face masks which included a 100% organic strap, **easyessentials** could. Jos: “Within two weeks we delivered the first order and then things really kicked off. From Portugal, we exported to Sea Shepherd outlets all over Europe and even the US.”

Jeroen has always appreciated the smooth working relationship with the **easyessentials** and **nextile** founders: “Jos and Léon have had the patience and flexibility to accommodate our organisation’s needs,” he affirms. Beyond just products, there is the shared mission: “We are both in it for the same reasons: serving a good cause and changing the business model for textiles.”



Our t-shirts for the Sea Shepherd webstore, in support of their mission to save the oceans

Exploring new options for B2B benefit partnerships

On the road in Portugal, Jeroen and Jos discussed new opportunities for the near future. “Working with our **nextile** business clients, we meet many large companies who want to leverage their commitment to helping the planet by ‘doing something with NGO’s’. But

how? They don't know exactly," Jos explains, "Engaging in a benefit partnership involving our 100% recycled cotton offer and Sea Shepherd as an action-oriented nature conservation organisation can be an appealing strategy."

The details will be defined in the upcoming months. Jeroen: "We know **nxtile** has a good package when it comes to recycled cotton, proven impact and the chain behind it. That makes it interesting to continue working together. By shifting the main focus from B2C to the B2B market, especially in terms of employee engagement, I think we can do great things together."

Interested to learn about opportunities for benefit partnerships with your company? We'd love to exchange ideas. Just get in touch and we can schedule a discovery call.

[CONTACT US](#)

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