

NEW NONPROFIT LAUNCHES TO ADVANCE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS

The Material Innovation Initiative unites scientists, entrepreneurs, retailers, and consumers to fill a void in eco-friendly manufacturing

(San Francisco, CA) – May 4, 2020 From your car’s interior to the clothes on your back, the materials we interact with every day have a profound impact on the environment. According to [Kering](#), 72% of a brand’s environmental impact comes from their choice of raw materials. Consumers and companies alike are searching for sustainable solutions that are functional, fashionable, and cost-effective, but today’s options are few and far between.

The newly launched [Material Innovation Initiative](#) (MII) is working to solve this problem by accelerating the development of sustainable materials for the fashion, automotive, and home goods industries. The animal-based materials currently used across most manufacturing sectors are linked to climate change, chemical pollution, and resource depletion. Plus, many of today’s animal product replacements are petroleum-derived plastics. According to the [Higg Index](#), leather is the worst material for the environment, followed by silk. Wool is fifth.

“Brands and consumers alike are genuinely interested in sustainable materials, but have trouble finding them” says MII co-founder Stephanie Downs. “MII will help connect them with the innovators they’re looking for.”

MII seeks out materials with remarkable potential, from under-explored biological materials like mycelium to options like leather grown directly from cells, not cows. Production technology has also made it possible to upcycle existing materials in new ways. MII fast-tracks the introduction of these sustainable materials to the marketplace by aligning key players in the materials ecosystem. The organization applies the same strategies its founders used successfully in the plant-based meat ecosystem.

“We can transform the materials industry and solve enormous environmental problems,” says MII co-founder and Executive Director Nicole Rawling. “We’re bringing together scientists and entrepreneurs to provide brands with the technical insights and expert support they need. Together we can meet sustainability goals and embrace new materials that consumers—and the planet—are demanding.”

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The Material Innovation Initiative is a nonprofit that accelerates the development of high-performance sustainable materials for the fashion, automotive, and home goods industries. MII partners with brands, scientists, startups, and retailers to bring these critical innovations to market. Founded by experts in the cultivated foods industries, MII works to replicate the success of food technology in the materials industry and usher in a sustainable future.

MaterialInnovation.org

Stephanie Downs is a serial entrepreneur with over 20 years of experience founding, building and selling businesses. She also spent over a decade as a Corporate Social Responsibility Consultant advising companies on alternatives to animal materials. She founded her first company in 1999, an internet marketing company which she sold in 2014. She founded her most recent venture in 2016, Good Dot, which quickly grew to be the largest plant-based meat company in India. She sold her interest to embark on helping build more innovative material companies.

Nicole Rawling is a lawyer with over 13 years of experience advising corporations and nonprofit groups on legal, finance, human resources, and management issues. In her most recent role as the director of international engagement at the Good Food Institute, she built the organization's international programs and oversaw all international operations and strategy. She worked with scientists, entrepreneurs, companies, investors, and governments all over the world to help create the plant-based food revolution. Before that, she spent seven years in a top international law firm advising Silicon Valley executives in securities issues.

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