The world of fashion is complicated. Waste occurs every day as fast fashion brands produce more and more at the expense of others. Although strides are made in order to limit this waste, small businesses and organizations have struggled to quit fast fashion brands. However, Vico Style, a local, fast-growing company has taken the world of vintage fashion by the reigns. With locations in Cambridge and Beacon Hill the greater Boston area is fortunate enough to have carefully curated and sustainable fashion available at their fingertips.

Fast Fashion poses a threat to many that has never been seen before and in many ways, the world is suffering as a result. Unfair wages, worker abuse, and environmental repercussions result from continued support of fast fashion organizations and the world does not seem to be batting an eye. A shocking 85% of fast fashion textiles end up in landfills each year. Unfortunately, secondhand fashion is not much better. Although one is not buying directly from the producer, the garments being sold secondhand may be products of fast fashion which keeps the cycle going. Because of this, customers are turning to Vintage Fashion...

Vico Style, owned and operated by Bentley Alumna Cecilia Hermawan, strives to provide customers with a satisfying and sustainable shopping experience. Vico Style's mission is simply “To help you be sustainably bougie on a budget by reclosetting vintage fashion pieces that may otherwise end up in landfills or incinerated”. Vintage fashion is a hot commodity in today’s fashion market. But so is maintaining a “bougie” or fashionable appearance without going broke. This is where many run into an ethical dilemma. So, we must ask ourselves: Fast Fashion, Secondhand, or Vintage?

Vintage fashion must meet certain requirements in order to be advertised as actually being vintage. Despite the fact that many stores claim to sell vintage goods, to maintaining credibility, certain measures must be taken. For example, the clothing sold must be twenty years or older to merit that label. Vico Style ensures all curated pieces are in fact vintage throughout a meticulous sourcing process. This sourcing process consists of working with vintage wholesalers, state cleaners, as well as on occasion, individuals or families. More often than not, Vico Style buys in bulk. Cecelia identifies her role as a single parent and aspiring MBA graduate student as her inspiration for starting the company. Sustainability has always been a top priority. There was not a lot of money to spend on fashion. However, supporting fast fashion was also not an option. Thus, Vico Style’s motto emerged; “Bougie on a Budget”.

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Vico Style is an excellent representation of the true meaning of "practice what is preached" within business. The valuation of not only its customers but also its team members is important to consider the next time you are in the mood for vintage fashion. With locations in Cambridge and Beacon Hill, Vico Style is a must visit for your next ethical and sustainable trip to Boston!

Vico Style holds itself to high ethical standards. Stores, employees, and products must all meet specific criteria. First, the stores are furnished with over 75% secondhand fixtures, holding true to the sustainable stance taken by Vico Style. Packaging is also repurposed and measures are taken to maintain complete sustainability. Team members, who are also called vintage fashion curators, are cared for and elevated. For example, she promotes from within to match their specific passions. Everything done within the company reflects the ethos of Vico Style and so for the brand to be well-represented, all members of team must be treated with equity. In everything, a passion for sustainability is the highest priority. Cecelia notes that it is of utmost importance for the entirety of the company.

As Vintage Fashion grows in popularity, competition is inevitable. This is common in the Boston area, as small local businesses can be found on almost every block. However, Cecelia uses this as a great metric to determine if she is in the right. Who doesn't love a little competition? In this field, there is no "Apples to Apples" comparison. All vintage is different. Vico Style is a direct-to-consumer organization and is one of the only vintage stores with a strict commitment to sustainability. This is only one among many steps being taken by Vico Style to ensure that there will be no direct competitor.

FEATURED NEWS IN BUSINESS ETHICS

When New Hires Get Paid More, Top Performers Resign First
Harvard Business Publishing
MARCH 5, 2024

There are consequences of when new hires receive higher salaries than existing employees, emphasizing the impact on top performers. Utilizing data from over 4 million employee records, the study found that delayed pay adjustments for existing employees lead to increased turnover, especially among high performers who feel undervalued. The research suggests that organizations should promptly address pay disparities to prevent the loss of key talent, recommending strategies such as raising pay equity awareness, conducting regular audits, and adopting agile compensation adjustment processes.

Bring Human Values to AI
Harvard Business Publishing
MARCH 4, 2024

The introduction of GPT-4 by OpenAI emphasized not just technical improvements but also its alignment with human values, a significant evolution in AI development. This approach acknowledges the growing importance of embedding ethical considerations into AI technologies. Businesses developing AI must now balance traditional performance metrics with ethical alignment, facing challenges in defining values, implementing ethical guardrails, and ensuring human feedback. Successfully addressing these issues offers a competitive edge, reflecting a broader shift towards responsible AI innovation.
**Ethics Ratings of Nearly All Professions Down in U.S.**

**Gallup**  
**JANUARY 22, 2024**

The 2023 Gallup poll reveals a broad decline in trust towards 23 professions in the U.S., with nurses being the most trusted despite a decrease in their ratings. On the other end, Congress members and car salespeople rank among the least trusted for ethics. Only labor union leaders maintained their trust level since 2019. The findings also highlight a divide in trust based on education and political views, with college graduates and Democrats generally more positive. Overall, the trend indicates a significant drop in ethical trust across various professions compared to previous years.

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**Boeing’s manufacturing, ethical lapses go back decades**

**The Seattle Times**  
**JANUARY 22, 2024**

The Boeing’s recent 737 MAX cabin incident underscores the need for a comprehensive investigation into the company’s chronic issues with transparency and lawfulness, reflecting a problematic corporate culture dating back decades. Despite facing multiple fines and public apologies for ethical and criminal violations, Boeing has repeatedly failed to enact genuine reforms. This pattern of manufacturing flaws and safety lapses, including a $2.5 billion fraud settlement related to the 737 MAX, raises serious doubts about the company’s capacity to rectify its deep-rooted issues.

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**Farewell to our Graduating Scholars!**

**Keren Gabriel**

**A thing at Bentley she will miss the most:** I will miss the community that Bentley fosters through various organizations and events on campus. Throughout my time here I have had the opportunity to meet and get to know some amazing individuals who have helped shape my experience these past four years.  

**Future Plans:** I plan to attend Law School and pursue a career as an attorney.  

**Statement of gratitude towards HCBE:** Being a Sullivan Scholar during my time at Bentley has been a true blessing. There was always a sense of family and belonging at the center which was beautiful to witness and be a part of. This truly speaks to the amazing people that make up the HCBE. I will always be grateful for the means and the space created by the HCBE for me to be successful in college. This scholarship significantly alleviated my financial burdens allowing me to focus on my academics. I have learned a great deal about business ethics and more through my work as an intern and the insightful conversations that always take place at the center. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to be part of the HCBE family.
Augustine Peprah

A thing at Bentley he will miss the most: One thing I will genuinely miss is the various communities through the clubs that I've been part of. I'm eager to witness the development of these groups even after I've left the university.

Future Plans: I plan to spend the next 9 to 10 years working in corporate America before returning to Ghana to start my own business.

Statement of gratitude towards HCBE: Receiving the Sullivan Scholarship during my time at Bentley has been an incredible blessing. Without it, attending this university would not have been possible for me. The center provided a safe environment where I could truly be myself, highlighting the wonderful community within the HCBE. This scholarship greatly relieved my financial stress, enabling me to dedicate myself to both my studies and extracurricular activities, as well as to enjoy a more vibrant social life on campus. Working on the newsletter taught me the critical role of business ethics in shaping the decisions of various organizations. My conversations with Jeff and Gail about creatively utilizing the center’s funds were truly enjoyable, and I will deeply miss my involvement with the HCBE. My heartfelt thanks to the HCBE!

UPCOMING EVENTS

EXECUTIVE LECTURESHIP IN BUSINESS ETHICS

Online Safety...At What Price?
A Conversation with Kathryn Kosmides
Thursday, April 11, 2024
4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Adamian Building, Wilder Pavilion
Register for Webinar
In-person attendees do not need to register

BROWN BAG BUSINESS ETHICS RESEARCH SERIES

So You Are Selling Asbestos: The Ethics of Threatened Industries?
Ewan Kingston, Leavey School of Business, Santa Clara University
Friday, April 12, 2024
12:30 p.m. to 1:45 p.m.
Zoom Registration
Hoffman Scholarship in Business Ethics

The Annual W. Michael Hoffman Scholarship in Business Ethics at Bentley University rewards outstanding pieces on business ethics with a $1,000 scholarship prize! The scholarship is open to both undergraduates and graduates and requires papers to include a business ethics component. Topics can range from corporate social responsibility, corporate political activity, sustainability, organizational DE&I, conflicts of interest, ESG investing, social entrepreneurship, and much more. Submissions are evaluated on four criteria: ethical content, depth of analysis, originality, and writing quality.

Applicant submissions can take various forms ranging from: essay, short story, case analysis, research paper, or any other type of written assignment. Additionally, there is no set page limit. Eligibility requires graduation in May 2024 or walking with no more than two classes remaining. Co-authored papers need at least one co-author graduating in May 2024. Applicants should feel free to reach out to the Hoffman Center of Business Ethics, for any questions they may have. We wish all applicants the best of luck on their submissions!

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ABOUT THE W. MICHAEL HOFFMAN CENTER FOR BUSINESS ETHICS

Established in 1976 at Bentley University, the W. Michael Hoffman Center for Business Ethics (HCBE) is among the world’s oldest and most highly-respected business ethics research and educational institutes.

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VISIT US! HCBE has an extensive business ethics library, and all students, staff, faculty, and the general public are welcome to visit and make use of our resources as well as those on our website.

Contributors to this edition of the newsletter are the following current HCBE Leon Sullivan Scholars: Elina Crosby and Augustine Peprah. Augustine and Elina serve as editors of the newsletter. Sullivan Scholars work as interns at the W. Michael Hoffman Center for Business Ethics during their undergraduate years to experience the true meaning of “business ethics.”