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Beyond Vinted: Designing a Sustainable Cross-Border Fashion Resale Platform for Europe

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Abstract. This case presents the strategic dilemma facing Christophe Canevet, a consultant advising an entrepreneur planning to launch a pan-European second-hand fashion platform to compete with Vinted, Europe's dominant resale marketplace. The strategy must address market selection and sequencing, sustainable logistics architecture, regulatory anticipation, and network effect development across diverse European markets. Using Vinted's business model as a diagnostic benchmark, the case examines how platform design choices, international logistics structures, and incentive systems contribute to an ethical consumption gap, widening the distance between users' stated environmental values and their actual purchasing behavior. Drawing on survey data from French users, EU regulatory trends, and delivery carbon footprint analysis, students are challenged to develop a comprehensive international market entry strategy for the new entrant by avoiding Vinted's structural contradictions. The case is positioned at the intersection of international business strategy, platform economics, circular economy, and behavioral economics.

Keywords: international market entry strategy, platform business models, sustainable logistics, cross-border e-commerce, ethical consumption gap, circular economy, behavioral economics, european second-hand fashion, network effects, choice architecture.

1. The Challenges of Competing Responsibility in the Second-Hand Fashion Landscape

In April 2025, Christophe Canevet stared at his laptop screen, the morning light filtering through his Paris office window. On his desk lay a signed consulting contract and a detailed brief from his newest client represented by Marine Legrand, a 38-year-old, with years of experience in sustainable retail, a solid network of impact investors, and an unambiguous ambition. She wanted to launch a pan-European second-hand fashion platform that would compete directly with Vinted, but do it *responsibly*, and do it *credibly*. The irony wasn't lost on him. How do you challenge a company that already claims to be saving the planet?

The mandate was clear. Within a couple of weeks, Canevet had to deliver a comprehensive strategic recommendation on which European markets to enter first, how to position and differentiate the new platform, what logistics model to build, and how to generate the network effects necessary to challenge an incumbent with 105 million members[1] across 20 countries. Legrand had secured an initial funding envelope, sufficient to build and launch, but not to experiment indefinitely. The strategy had to be realistic, sequenced, and defensible to investors who had heard too many sustainability promises dissolve into greenwashing.

As a transition manager and independent consultant specializing in digital business transformation, Canevet had seen his share of well-intentioned ventures. But this one felt different. With a value of 17,9 billion Euros in 2025[2], the second-hand fashion market was exploding across Europe, and Vinted had become its undisputed reference point[3]. Founded in 2008 and reaching profitability by 2023[4], Vinted had demonstrated something important: second-hand fashion could be mainstream, scalable, and commercially viable. That was the good news. The difficult news was everything else. The more Canevet studied Vinted's model, the more he saw a set of structural contradictions that Legrand's platform would need to navigate or exploit. Vinted marketed itself as a champion of circular economy and climate responsibility. Yet its logistics generated thousands of individual cross-border shipments daily, each consuming fuel and producing emissions that the platform systematically omitted from its user-facing interface. Its recommendation algorithms prioritized transaction velocity, not environmental impact. Its gamification rewarded volume, not sustainability. And its users, as preliminary survey data suggested (Exhibit 1), largely behaved in ways that contradicted their stated environmental values. He jotted a note in the margin of his brief: *"Vinted proved the market. But they optimized for growth, not for genuine sustainability. That gap is where the opportunity lives if we can turn it into a viable business model, not just a positioning claim."*

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