



What Fashion Can Teach Global Supply Chains About True Traceability

A case study in moving traceability from a compliance task to an evidence-based, consumer-facing advantage.

THE FUTURE OF TRACEABILITY IS BRIGHT

Traceability has moved from a niche sustainability concern to a defining issue for global supply chains. Across industries, organisations are grappling with increasing regulatory pressure, rising consumer expectations, and the growing need to manage risk in an era defined by climate disruption and geopolitical instability.

Yet, despite this momentum, significant blind spots remain. One of the most striking is the global market for animal-derived products, valued at over \$5.8 trillion, making it larger than oil (\$4.5T), automotive (\$4T), and fashion (\$1.8T), and comparable in size to the global tech industry (\$5.5–6T). Despite its scale and impact, this market remains largely excluded from both the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the latest EU regulatory frameworks.

This omission highlights a broader issue within traceability today: while many industries are making progress in mapping supply chains, much of that progress is partial, inconsistent, or limited to what is required for compliance. In many cases, “traceability” still means knowing a country of origin or a Tier 1 supplier, rather than understanding the full journey of a product, from source to shelf.

At the same time, supply chains themselves are becoming more complex and interconnected. Materials flow across industries, linking agriculture, fashion, food, pharmaceuticals, and beyond, yet data and accountability often remain siloed. The result is a system where risk is shared, but visibility is not.

It is within this context that a new model of traceability is beginning to emerge, one that is not just about compliance, but about evidence, interconnectivity, and value creation.



Meet Josefin Liljeqvist

Ahead of FutureChain, we spoke to Josefin Liljeqvist whose eponymous brand offers a useful case study because it starts where most systems stop: at the origin. Rather than treating traceability as a country-of-origin statement or a tier-one supplier checklist, Liljeqvist works, in their traceable leather goods, backwards from the farm and material level, then builds a connected chain of custody throughout the supply chain with all stakeholders involved: farm, transport, slaughter, saltery, processing, craftsmanship, and then continuing through the end-consumer and second-life. Creating a product and design value chain for a circular and long-lasting product life



Josefin Liljeqvist
Photo: Forbes

Why Josefin Liljeqvist's model stands out

In her model, the conventional technical specification becomes an ethical specification. The question is not only whether a material fits the product brief; it is whether its origin, handling and chain of evidence fit the values the brand wants to stand behind. That is a significant shift. It reframes traceability from internal admin into a core part of how the product is designed and sourced.

Each item is linked to a digital code that lets the customer access a product-specific record. That matters because it turns provenance into something visible and engaging. Instead of asking buyers to trust a vague sustainability claim, it invites them to inspect the evidence for themselves.

What fashion can teach other sectors

Fashion makes a strong test bed for traceability because the media has played a crucial role in exposing the fact that its supply chains are fragmented, global and highly visible to consumers. But the lesson does not end with apparel. Liljeqvist's focus on animal-derived materials points to a wider challenge: the same upstream realities often sit behind fashion, food, beauty, pharma and pet care, yet those sectors still tend to build traceability systems in isolation.

Her argument is that supply chains need to be understood as ecosystems, not silos. Better traceability is not only about proving compliance; it can also reduce waste, improve risk management, support resale and repair, and reveal where value is being created, and where it should be shared more fairly back across the chain.

A more credible path forward

One of the strongest aspects of the Liljeqvist approach is its realism. It does not assume that every supplier will adopt the same digital tools overnight or that perfect visibility appears in a single move. In some cases, paper records still matter. Progress comes from building workable systems that bring different partners along rather than forcing idealised ones that fail in practice.

For the wider market, that may be the most important lesson of all. The next phase of traceability will not be won by the brands making the broadest claims. It will be won by the ones willing to show what they can evidence, where the gaps still are, and how they are improving. Liljeqvist's brand points to what post-compliance traceability can look like: specific, collaborative and built to create trust.

Enter FutureChain 2026

FutureChain 2026 is designed to bridge exactly this gap between ambition and execution. By bringing together leaders from across food, fashion, beauty, and pharmaceuticals, the event creates a rare space for cross-industry collaboration. Through real-world case studies, practical workshops, and peer-led discussions, attendees explore how to embed traceability, data-sharing, and resilience into supply chains in a way that is both commercially viable and operationally realistic. In doing so, FutureChain moves the conversation beyond compliance, equipping organisations with the tools, partnerships, and mindset needed to build transparent, interconnected systems that reflect the full reality, and responsibility, of modern supply chains.



Securing Tomorrow's Ingredient Supply Chains

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