

## About Upcycle It Now - Background

From the very beginning, Liz Bordessa was an entrepreneur with a keen eye for business development. She shared her entrepreneurial spirit with her daughter, Christina Johnson. Together, they have created a thriving, environmentally friendly, sustainable business – Upcycle it Now.

Located in Long Beach, California, Upcycle It Now is a design and manufacturing company, specializing in waste reduction and sustainability consulting services. The company manufactures custom fashion accessories and other items using promotional, pre-consumer and post-consumer materials otherwise destined for the landfill. The company also provides consulting services to businesses seeking ways to reduce, reuse and upcycle materials to manage waste and preserve the environment.

The vision for Upcycle It Now dates back to Johnson's early days as an aspiring fashion designer attending college. Through the design program at UC Davis, Johnson was introduced to the many environmental issues surrounding the textile industry. It was at that time that her passion to become an agent for change in the textile industry took shape. The vision was cemented in her mind following a six-month internship she secured in India, with a sustainable design company, where she realized the urgent need for sustainable manufacturing. Bordessa visited Johnson in India and together they saw the connection between their collective experience and the growing environmental need. Johnson and Bordessa agreed to begin a new venture and, in February 2011, leveraging Bordessa's vast experience with apparel design and tailoring, and Johnson's passion for sustainability, Upcycle It Now was formed.

At first, Bordessa and Johnson saw their business primarily as a design and manufacturing company that used reclaimed material to make fashion products. To get the new business off the ground, Bordessa connected with a contact in her hometown - the City of Long Beach – who gave the partners some of their street banners to use for sampling and testing out new ideas. From that material, Johnson and Bordessa created a solid set of samples and took their business on the road. Their first call was to the Aquarium of the Pacific, which soon became their first client. Upcycle It Now was on its way.

Since their partnership with the Aquarium of the Pacific, Bordessa and Johnson have successfully piloted new upcycled product lines for companies like the Long Beach Museum of Art, Bower Museum, Northrup Grumman, Port of Long Beach, Disney, Hurley, and Patagonia. They have also completed rigorous audits with both Disney and Patagonia, securing the coveted “approved vendor” status with both companies.

Since opening the doors, Upcycle It Now has expanded its offerings to include consulting services for sustainable practices. Johnson also does public speaking and participates in special events like Earth Day. The product line has expanded as well and now includes a set of standard products that clients can choose from, along with custom new designs to fit individual client

needs. Among their most popular products are dog coats created from previously used rain coat material and down or fleece jackets provided by Patagonia. Other products include bags, wallets and accessories, along with employee promotional items shared at Earth Day events. The vision for Upcycle It Now has evolved from a design and manufacturing business to a solution-based consulting and design company that finds or creates processes so nearly all textile industry materials continually re-enter the manufacturing stream with little to no waste. They want to help companies reduce and better manage their pre- and post-consumer waste, directing it to the appropriate channels to be reused.

Upcycle It Now is gaining momentum, but generating awareness for the upcycle concept still poses a challenge. However, while some companies have yet to discover the exciting new world of upcycle manufacturing, most already have some kind of sustainability initiative and welcome Upcycle It Now as a partner. As with many high impact ideas, upcycling is a concept that, once established, offers virtually limitless opportunities.

For more information about Upcycle It Now and the innovative products they offer, visit [upcycleitnow.com](http://upcycleitnow.com).