

Emily Allen

Dr. Bednar

Capstone

Analysis

Introduction:

For my project, I will be analyzing the company Coachtopia through both their online and instagram platforms through how they promote their products and the company itself as sustainable. I will also be looking at a video created by an instagram influencer named tanner.leatherstein, who makes claims against the Coachtopia brand for “Greenwashing”, and being dishonest to their audience. In my methodology I will be taking apart the Coachtopia website and instagram and analyzing how the company is appealing to their audience, specifically Gen-Z. The ethics that are being promoted by the brand with the production of sustainable items, and the use of branding and brand name on the clothing. This is through the use of celebrities and wording, video methods, and how the website is set up. I will then be analyzing the video made by tanner.leatherstein and his claims against Coachtopia of greenwashing, along with his appeal to Gen-Z as well. His claims of authenticity, and his platform.

What I will be focusing on the Coachtopia instagram is what is being said, and what is not. For instance, if one product is being pushed and the details are explained of how the product is made. Where another item has limited explanation, and would require further research to understand. On the Coachtopia Website, I will be looking at what information is present and what is hidden to viewers as well. Examples of this are product showcasings, quotes on the website, sustainability claims, bag promotion, and customer service. In the tanner.leatherstein

video, I will be looking at what he does to promote trust and knowledge to his audience that can make his claims powerful enough that his audience would lose trust in a large brand like Coachtopia.

Coachtopia Website:

Coachtopia's website is a connection to the Coach website. With its own title, and quotes the brand takes a life of its own by presenting the bags in a way that seems more relaxed and trending to its Gen Z audience, with pictures of the bags for sale and models holding the bags. Under each model there is a quote that promotes the purchase of a product. Under a picture of Elle Fanning holding a square stitched shoulder bag, a quote says, "Your next chapter. Step into spring with a bag made of scraps"(Coachtopia Website). Another photo shows a different model holding a blue leather stitched bag. The quote underneath the photo says, "beautiful beginnings bestselling shoulder bags made with leftover coach leathers"(Coachtopia Website). These quotes and photos are promoting the bags in a positive way that not only promotes the purchase of the products for fashion, but pushes the message of how each item is sustainable as well. The quote, "step into spring with a bag made of scraps," is also encouraging the meaning of scraps is something positive and trending.

Scrolling through the different bags to the bottom of the website, a quote reads, "Coachtopia Bags and Clothes. Explore our collection of Coachtopia bags, clothes, and accessories, made with at least 50% recycled materials and inspired by the community working towards a better future for our planet. Shop our selection of partially recycled handbags, spacious tote bags, and fashionable clothes and accessories for every occasion and for every season. The Coachtopia line reflects a dedication to circularity, not just using recycled materials but also through its commitment to reducing waste in every stage of production. Each item in the

collection is carefully crafted from upcycled leathers, fabrics, and hardware, giving new life to materials that might otherwise end up in a landfill. This results in unique, stylish pieces that are both eco-friendly and incredibly versatile”(Coachtopia Website). The website locates this quote at the bottom of the website, so that while the information is present and the claim of sustainability is known, the bags and other items will not be out shown. Coachtopia also uses phrases such as “carefully crafted” and “giving new life”, to describe the “upcycled leathers”. These words and phrases are also relevant to creating a positive image of the products, and giving a positive outlook on the recycling of products that the company is making known would have been garbage.


The messages on the Coachtopia website also has a separate website tab titled “circulatory”, which is a website dedicated to the sustainability practices of the company and sharing these information with customers who look through the website. The sections of the web page are titled with different sustainability organizations that the brand participates in, such as “2025 Climate Week Catchup. Reflecting on our progress and looking ahead to the future we are creating together”(Coachtopia Website). The Page also includes different artists and collaborators that the brand is showcasing. The bottom of the page has a tab titled “How to Coachtopia. Tips tricks and tutorials to help you get the most out of your Coachtopia products as well as out circular services”(Coachtopia Website). Think link has three slots underneath, which are titled, “how to trade in we'll take back any coachtopia product, regardless of age or condition. Here's how it works”(Coachtopia Website), “how to connect your product every coachtopia product comes with a unique digital passport. Here's how to access yours”(Coachtopia Website), and “how to re-lace your tote our re-laceable tote is fully reversible – all it takes is a few knots” (Coachtopia Website). While Coachtopia has an information page and uses it. They are locating

the important information for customers seemingly at the bottom of the page and hidden away, unless the information is looked for. Such as with bag repair, and bag trade-ins. This is because while the company is pushing sustainability, if they had to mention to customers that bags would wear with age or need to be resealed, then the product would seem less luxurious. So, while the brand has the information on the page, customers would not know and might possibly feel the need to buy a new item instead of exchanging or repairing.

Coachtopia Instagram:

The first video pinned to the Coachtopia Instagram page was released October 28th, 2024. The description below the video reads, “Behold the @coach Quilted Tabby and the Alter/Ego Shoulder Bag. Do they look different? Yes. Are they long-lost siblings cut from the same leather? Yes, that too. 😊 (S/o to our craftsman @malvarado70.) Introducing the Alter/Ego collection: a new range of bags crafted with the specific leather scraps left over from the creation of iconic @coach styles—including the Tabby, Brooklyn and Hamptons bags—that might otherwise have gone to landfill. With this collection, we’re working to design out waste from the outset as part of our mission to build a more circular future for fashion” (Coachtopia instagram). With the description, the first thing that can be noticed is the wordplay, such as describing the two bags from seemingly different companies as “long lost siblings”. With this comparison, the Coachtopia brand is now being connected to the Coach brand, but saying that they are related but different. How they are different is also expressed through the way they are made, the Coachtopia Alter/Ego collection is said to be made from the scraps of leather that makes the original bags the brand Coach sells. The reasoning behind this movement is to be more environmentally friendly. “We’re working to design out waste from the outset as part of our mission to build a more circular future for fashion”(Coachtopia Instagram). Why Coachtopia,

and Coach wants to appear more environmentally friendly, is so that they may appeal to younger generations such as Gen-Z. This can also be referenced throughout the video, and with the use of words like “behold” and the angel face emoji. The use of slang in the description provides a disarming appearance to the viewer, where the brand appears not harmful but humble. The video opens with a man speaking over a man bringing two purses to the center of the camera. The voice is giving a narrative appearance that is popular in social media platforms, and gives the video a soft appeal, as the man is speaking in a calm way. He opens the video by saying, “The Coach Quilted Tabby and its counterpart, The Coachtopia Alter Ego Shoulder Bag. Here, in their natural habitat, they come to life together.” (Coachtopia instagram). The two purses are then put to the center of the camera, one is the classic tote style that is referenced to Coach. The leather is black and quilted with a Silver metal C in the center of the bag as a symbol of the Coach brand, this bag gives off elegance and vintage refinement that is representative to the Coach brand. The Coachtopia bag is not nearly as refined, with a more sluggish hand sewn design, the bag looks as it is said to be made, with sewn black leather squares. The video then follows the man, who is identified as a “master craftsman”, while he selects materials to create the tabby first. Then, the leftover material from the creation of the tabby purse is used to create “the alter egos slouchy form” (Coachtopia Instagram). How the alter ego is created, is by taking squares of the leftover leather, and sewing them together into the new purse. The voice ends the video stating “Timeless Coach craftsmanship, reimagined for a circular world”(Coachtopia instagram). The purpose of the video is to take the audience behind the scenes of how the bag is made, and to differentiate Coachtopia from Coach, while still saying that the bag has the same luxury qualities with the production of the Alter Ego bag.

Coachtopia promotes the alter ego style bag, and ones similar to it the most on the instagram platform, while using models posing with the bags in modern ways such as walking the street or taking a selfie. These poses, while not traditional to Coaches original audience, who are more spread out between all generations. The Coachtopia Website caters to the Gen-Z audience with these poses and the style of the bags. One post that was released February 24th, 2026 Shows two models standing near a brick wall and each holding purses. Both models are dressed similarly in short black skirts and leather jackets, but with small differences between the two. The model farther away from the camera holds the black quilted Tabby bag produced by Coach, she has straight blond hair and has nothing on her face. The model is also facing closer to the wall, as if to give the second model the cameras full attention. The second model holds the black and white checkered alter ego bag, and is facing the bag towards the camera as if to show it off. The model has a short brunette hairstyle and is wearing bright yellow sunglasses. The sunglasses and the short hairstyle give the model a youthful and fun appearance, which is meant to appeal to Gen Z, where the other model has a more reserved look that appeals to the older generations. With this picture Coachtopia is pushing that the brand is meant for Gen-Z, and is trendy and cool. However with The Coachtopia model being the only one wearing glasses, the brand could be seen as wanting to hide something by covering the models face, or having a secret. The description below the picture says, “it’s happening  the original patchwork alter/ego comes back tomorrow around 12:30 am est (north america only)” (Coachtopia instagram).Coachtopia is not using the Coach name while referencing the bag, but only using the image of Coach. This is to gain trust with their audience, by promoting the authenticity of Coachtopia and not having Coach be completely involved in advertising.

Through advertising with the use of the Coach name, but not the brand being completely involved. Both Coach and Coactopia are expressing use of power in branding. First with the use of using Coach as a reference to the quality of the bags, but not saying that the bags are the same brand, then with having the models in the instagram post showcase the bags together, but not mention the Coach brand outright. This is giving the audience the message of “if you know, you know.” Which, if the audience then purchases a Coactopia bag, then they will be in on the secret as well.

The second video pinned to the Coactopia Instagram is a behind the scenes look into how the *Coactopia Leather* is created. The Coactopia Instagram does not promote the Coactopia leather as it does the leather sewn bags such as the Alter Ego design. The video is the second video pinned to the top, and was released June 12th, 2023. The most recent post referencing a purse made of Coactopia leather on the instagram page was posted July 18th, 2025. The post is a video of a woman walking while holding a black and white handbag, with the description, “bags for pool hopping and garden hanging 🌻#coactopia” (Coactopia Instagram). The advertisement, while of a Coactopia leather bag, does not reference the make of the bag at all, or the materials. While looking for the bag on the website, I discovered the materials of the bag to be Coactopia leather. And this is similar for other bags on the Coactopia website, where instagram will advertise the bag, but not say what the bag is made of. Such as with the leopard print bag that was posted November 23rd, 2025. The bags description says, “leopard is a neutral for anyone wondering 🐆❤️”(Coactopia Website). While looking at the advertisement, there is no indication of what the bag is made of, but with the other advertisements like the one of the Alter ego bag being made, the audience can only assume that the bag is made of recycled leather in a similar way as well. It is not until looking at the website, and seeing the bag that the truth is

revealed. The bag is a “Coachtopia Loop Bow Tote Bag”, and is made of “at least 98% recycled PET plastic”(Coachtopia Website”. While Coachtopia is using the brand as a way to promote environmental safety practices within the brand, the company is also providing a need-to-know basis with its audience, by only promoting the show of how some products are made, but not others. This is leaving deceit to the audience, because they are being forced to come to their own conclusions for how the products are made, and having to rely on the trust of the Coach related brand.

This message of a need to know basis is seen in the video of the Coachtopia Leather production. The description of the video says, “Get your pencils ready. 🖋️ In this Coachtopia convo, we’re answering questions we’ve seen in our comments. What exactly is @Coachtopia Leather, anyway? How do we take scraps (that would otherwise go to landfill) and turn them into new materials—eventually the supple leather used in our bag linings? Here, @coach VP and leather technologist David Wright visits our factory and speaks with John Kennedy, founder and CEO of @genphoenixltd, a company creating the new generation of sustainable materials.”(Coachtopia Instagram) The description lays out an image that the company is taking the audience on a secret, behind the scenes tour that will explain exactly how the coachtopia leather is made. The description uses slang that appeals to the audience such as, “get your pencils ready.” These types of quotes make the audience feel good, because it is saying that the company trusts them to understand their product's design, and that the company is being honest with their audience. The video was posted June 12th, 2023, and opens with two men walking through a factory. One man introduces himself as David, with a box of words coming over the screen stating that he is “VP & Leather and Technologist Coachtopia”. David introduces himself with the video panning to his sweatshirt that says “Coachtopia, Welcome to Coachtopia a world in

progress.” The shirt and the words provide a sense of importance, because the brand is promoting sustainability and change. With the words such as “progress” Coachtopia is saying that they are making changes that are beneficial to not only the company and the environment. David starts the video by saying, “Today, we are looking at Coachtopia Leather, how its made.” (Coachtopia Instagram). The other man is introduced as John, from Gen X. John says he will be “Showing David where the magic happens” (Coachtopia Instagram). David and John walk through the factory and discuss the main product that is used. The product is a large wheel of what is referred to as “Wet blue” which is a “wet chrome-tanned leather that is still in the manufacturing process” (Gusti Leather). The bale is made of what seems to be scraps of wet blue, that are waiting to be processed. John states, “our technology and innovation really is around being able to make new material with this. And the great thing about our collaboration is that we can jointly turn this into a luxury product” (Coachtopia Instagram). The video then pans to where the wet blue is being shredded by a large circular machine. John explains, “We are just checking that it is pure before it goes into the process” (Coachtopia instagram). The men then walk over to a pile of grey shreds that are said to be the wet blue. David remarks, “What are you doing with this? Because this is nothing” (Coachtopia Instagram). John explains to David by showing through a machine process how the scraps of leather are thinned and separated. John remarks that the process involves, “no chemicals, no nasty business going on here.” (Coachtopia Instagram). Then the fibers are made into the material, which the fibers are described by John as the “building block” for the material. The fibers are then brought through another machine, where they are woven together by “using the power of water” (Coachtopia Instagram). The video ends by David asking about the quality of the product, to which John replies, “Really really strong, its really really durable” (Coachtopia Instagram). John discusses how the company Gen

X is involved in creating bus seats and plane seats, and wanted to provide a product that “Works into luxury space.” With the brand Coachtopia.

With the video taking the audience through the production process of Coachtopia leather, there are a lot of questions left unanswered. The video concludes with the introduction of the fabric binding with water. There is no showing of any purses or bags being made, and no video pinned of how a bag is made with coachtopia leather on the Instagram platform. The video makes claims that the bags are made with no chemicals, but only water and fabric, but does not show a final product. The message to the audience from this video is to trust the company, because of their name and message. And while the finished product is not seen in the video, the bags on the website and the instagram page look trustworthy and luxurious enough that the brand can be trusted on its word alone.

The Coachtopia Instagram also uses celebrities to promote their bags, and gain trust with their audience. For example, Coachtopia released a series of videos with *The Summer I turned Pretty* actress Lola Tung presenting different products such as Coachtopia jeans, and purses. The page also has different celebrities such as Coach representative Elle Fanning showing off a brown alter ego bag in a post from February 26, 2026. The videos and pictures posted of both Lola Tung and Elle Fanning are taken in a way that seems relaxed and candid. With both women seen smiling or joking, while promoting the product. Coachtopia uses their advertisements of these models and actors to appeal to their audience as fashionable and trending. The brand is saying that these actors and models are normal as well with the Coachtopia products, that they are like everyone else and care about the environment while wanting to carry luxury products. This is mainly appealing to the Gen-Z audience because these celebrities are also relevant in pop culture and public media.

While using the videos of behind the scenes and celebrities to promote the purses, Coachtopia is gaining trust with their audience by showing proof. This way of showing proof is saying that they are authentic in their message, and willing to share that information with social media, and that while the bag is recycled materials, there is honesty in the making of the products. However, by not saying the make of the bags in the posts and videos, especially for the ones made of recycled plastic and coachtopia leather. The brand is also leading the audience to unknowing deceit, by having the audience believe that by first look, each bag is created in a similar fashion to that first video, where the leather scraps are sewn together to make a purse, and with no plastic or chemicals involved.

Gen Z appeal By Coachtopia:

Coachtopia is a brand created by Coach to reach younger audiences, such as Gen-Z. The brand is also meant to impress people who love sustainability and fashion by combining the two, and creating products that are good for the environment. Gen-Z is a target audience for the brand, and this is noticeable with how the company produces and advertises its products. The brand name “Coachtopia” is made to sound very young and trending, like a theme park that has not been explored yet.. The word could also be an extension, such as its Coach but for a younger audience that cares about the planet.. The purses are not the same as the classic vintage style of Coach either, which Coach purses are known for solid and elegant designs. The designs of Coachtopia are more youthful and wild, with the bags being in prints of cherries, or multicolored sewn leather that has a more distressed and worn look, and leopard print as well. The brand also uses relevant celebrities to the Gen-Z audience, such as Lola Tung and Elle Fanning to promote the products, because they want the brand to relate to the Gen-Z audience through who they know from the shows they watch, or movies they have seen.

Tanner.Leatherstein Video:

The video being discussed was released January 9th, 2026. tanner.leatherstein posted an Instagram reel, opening with the words “Coach just scammed their customers with sustainable leather claims, and here's the proof”(tanner.leatherstein). From the introduction of the video, he makes a bold claim to his audience that a brand that is known for luxury items is lying to the public. To which he then follows with his proof, in the video with a leather Coach bag, and a Coachtopia bag made with “Coachtopia leather”. He states he is going to take apart each of the bags and go through how they are similar and different. Tanner.leatherstein opens the video expressing his love for the quality of Coaches bags, “They are one of the few brands that delivered quality consistently”(Tanner.leatherstein)., then says how when they released the brand Coachtopia, he was interested. He then says, “ Upon checking the website, the marketing language didn't make sense, it smelled like greenwashing”(Tanner.leatherstein). He then brings out a purple and yellow “Ergo” bag made in Coachtopia leather, that he says cost \$250, and he begins to take the bag apart. He uses a knife to run along the top of the purple leather which begins to crumble, He then says, “Here is what Coachtopia leather actually is. On top is P.U, or plastic fake leather with tapestry waste and wet glue shaving glued to the back. I guess technically, because there are leather fibers on the back, they can legally call it ‘leather’”(Tanner.leatherstein). He continues through the video saying the fake leather of this bag is bad for the product, because the shavings making the bags structure ad, “zero performance, zero durability, zero value, They just let Coach label it as Coachtopia leather because its a cool innovation”(tanner.leatherstein). For him, the irony of the sustainable leather, is that the Coach original leather bags are more sustainable because of their durability. “Durable leather that lasts decades is more sustainable than plastic marketed as eco-friendly”(tanner.leatherstein). The

video concludes with tanner.leatherstein encouraging his audience to buy the original Coach bags, instead of the Coachtopia bags. “They will outlast the greenwashing by decades” (tanner.leatherstein).

He uses the term greenwashing to refer to how the bag is made poorly and dishonestly. “Greenwashing” is a negative phrase to use for a product that is not really healthy for the environment, but is instead causing more harm to the environment such as through plastic and chemicals, which is what he is saying is in the materials. For reference, this is the same leather that is seen being made in the Coachtopia warehouse out of the wet blue, where what was last added to the leather was water in the video. Tanner.leatherstein makes the claim of greenwashing against Coachtopia, because he is saying that the brand is hiding the truth of how the products are made. And, the brand is also using harmful materials to make the product, which goes against the brands promotions of sustainability.

The video created by tanner.leatherstein does not completely call out Coach as the brand itself, he makes no claims to not purchase from Coach again because of the negativity surrounding Coachtopia’s products. Tanner.leatherstein is using his audience's trust to promote his own business, by calling out the “Greenwashing”, and false claims of sustainability that he believes the brand is creating. How he receives the audience's trust, such as with his Gen-Z audience, is by purchasing the purses with his own money, and taking apart the purses on camera. By doing these things, he is saying to his audience that he takes his job, his platform, and his fans seriously. He also treats his audience like they are important, and informs them about the products in a way that seems scientific and logical. Such as explaining his research as he takes apart each bag. Tanner.leatherstein is using his research in this way to promote himself as a trustworthy source, and as ethical, while disproving the claims of larger corporations, but he

is also becoming a large corporation while doing this himself, by gaining a larger audience each time he calls out a different brand, or supports one.

Conclusion:

The Coachtopia Website and Instagram have a main purpose of attracting the Gen-Z audience. This is done through the pushing of products by young celebrities, and being authentic through “how it's made” social media videos. However, while the brand is appealing to the younger generation, there is a lack of authenticity in how certain products are promoted. While the Alter ego bag of leather squares is continuously promoted and said how it's made. Other products, such as coachtopia leather bags are not promoted or discussed on social media. This leads to deceit with the products, because the audience would not understand that the item is different compared to what is seen on screen. The same is said for the website, with the promotion of celebrities and merchandise taking the lead, the customer care is not available unless it is searched for on the website, along with the quotes at the bottom of the page. Coachtopia, while claiming to be sustainable, is also neglecting to give valuable information to its audience. This is what gives tanner.leatherstein the ability to produce his own video, revealing the issues of the Coachtopia brand, such as the issue of plastic fake leather. Tanner.leatherstein gives his audience the knowledge, and allows them to trust him through his work and explanation of how the purses are wrong. Both platforms use generational promotion, claims and brand names to grow their businesses.

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