

BIOGRAPHY – FEDERICO MARCHETTI, ENTREPRENEUR

DIGITAL INNOVATOR AND SUSTAINABLE FASHION PIONEER

Chairman of King Charles III Fashion Task Force, Board Member of Giorgio Armani, Founder of YOOX Net-a-Porter Group (YNAP)

Federico Marchetti, tech entrepreneur and a pioneer in digital fashion, founded the world's first lifestyle e-commerce destination, YOOX, in 2000. By 2015, he led a merger with Net-a-Porter to create the world leader in online luxury fashion, shifting the shopping habits of millions of people. By now, who can say they haven't bought an item of clothing online? This certainly wasn't the case when Federico started 25 years ago. A New Yorker profile noted, "No-one has had more to do with bringing e-commerce to fashion than Federico" and The New York Times called him "The man who put fashion on the net".

After 21 years leading the company he founded, Marchetti has now channeled his devotion and drive into a new challenge, one of the greatest humanity today – the climate crisis, especially the manifestation in the industry he loves: fashion. In 2021 the Prince of Wales, now King Charles III, asked Marchetti to lead [The Sustainable Markets Initiative's Fashion Task Force](#), which includes brands such as Chloe, Armani, Burberry, Cucinelli, Stella McCartney and Prada. In a sector known for individualism, Marchetti has succeeded in uniting global luxury groups around a common goal of shifting towards a circular industry that is climate and nature-positive.

Marchetti and King Charles, who share a passion for sustainable craftsmanship and education, also worked together to found [The Modern Artisan](#) project in 2018. This programme, a collaboration between The King's Foundation and YOOX Net-a-Porter, was the first of its kind designed to encourage young people to work on sustainable luxury design and craftsmanship using data and technology.

Marchetti has also developed several other innovative and concrete projects that produced measurable change in the way sustainability is integrated into fashion. For instance, in 2018, Marchetti pioneered the use of a Digital Product Passport system at YNAP. The Digital Product Passport allows customers, using a simple scan with a smartphone, to access all of the information about any single item, including sourcing, sustainability of materials and means of manufacturing. This tool allows them to make better informed and responsible choices. The Digital Product Passport also helps consumers to care for and ultimately repair, resell, or recycle their purchases thus extending their life span.

Marchetti brought this innovation to the members of the Sustainable Markets Initiative Fashion Task Force who adopted it enthusiastically at the G7 in Rome in 2021. The brands are all now in the implementation phase. In 2022, he added a second area of focus: a Regenerative Fashion programme. For example, he designed initiatives in collaboration with the scientific expertise of the Circular Bioeconomy Alliance and fashion houses including Cucinelli and Armani to restore degraded landscapes in places ranging from the Himalayas to the Apulia region of Italy. The goal is to develop experimental agroforestry sites, to test and scientifically assess new ways to produce regenerative cashmere and cotton, while employing local staff and investing in rural economies.

Marchetti is applying his innovative mindset and business acumen to accelerate sustainability in all his endeavors. He believes that pushing the boundaries of technology will be instrumental in improving efficiency in business models and changing customer behaviour to save the planet.

These initiatives to drive responsible change within the fashion and retail industries are a product of his vast experience gained as Founder and CEO of the YOOX Net-a-Porter Group.

Long before the launch of Facebook and the iPhone, Marchetti invented YOOX with the concept that “good fashion never dies”, extending the life of fashion products beyond one season, significantly ahead of the industry’s focus on circularity that exists today.

In 2009, YOOX was listed on the Milan Stock Exchange and then became the first unicorn business in Italy. In 2015, Marchetti masterminded the merger of YOOX and Net-a-Porter creating a unique group with 5,500 employees with an average age of just 30, an Executive Committee made up of 50% women, and a zero gender pay gap.

Marchetti was the first in fashion e-commerce to forge significant global strategic alliances: a joint venture with the French luxury group Kering in 2012, another with Mohamed Alabbar, the most visionary entrepreneur in the Gulf in 2016, and with Alibaba in China in 2018. This followed YOOX Net-a-Porter’s acquisition for a 6 billion US dollars transaction value by Richemont, one of the world’s leading luxury groups.

Three years ahead of the Camera Nazionale della Moda Italiana’s Sustainability Manifesto, he launched YOOXYGEN, the sustainability platform with collaborations including Katharine Hamnett, Amber Valletta, and Vivienne Westwood. Marchetti’s team also developed YOOX’s fully recyclable and plastic-free “ECOBOX”, which is now in standard use across Net-a-Porter, Mr Porter and The Outnet.

Marchetti’s mission for sustainability also filtered through to the YOOX Net-a-Porter operations and customer experiences. For instance, each office and warehouse location uses 100% renewable energy and sustainable design. In Milan, the state-of-the-art distribution centre incorporated innovative solutions for heating, waste consumption and building management, with a fully electric powered regional delivery fleet. Marchetti also invented an AI-powered virtual dressing room that allowed customers to try clothes using an avatar, well ahead of the current metaverse trend, reducing returns and encouraging more conscious purchases.

Alongside sustainability, education and diversity have been central to the responsible approach that Marchetti has adopted in business over more than 20 years. He runs a mentorship program for aspiring entrepreneurs from backgrounds that are typically underrepresented in the industry. He is also a founding member of the Champions of Change Coalition Global Technology Group, which works to advance gender equality in the tech sector.

Marchetti himself has taught at digital education programmes that have now benefitted more than 10,000 young people across Italy and the UK.

Marchetti was instrumental in supporting many young emerging designers like JW Anderson, Simone Rocha, Stella Jean and Aquazzura, providing them with a global platform for their online debuts and serving as a jury member of French fashion award Andam, Council of Fashion Designers of America and Italy's Who's on Next prize.

Marchetti further extended his commitment to education when he accepted an invitation to teach at his alma mater, Bocconi University in Milan. He created and taught the course "Creating a start-up in the sustainable and digital economy" to students who went on to develop their own business plans that had sustainable philosophies at their heart.

In 2017, Marchetti was recognized by the President of the Italian Republic who knighted him as a Cavaliere.

In 2019 Marchetti was honoured with the amfAR Award of Courage, recognising "his profound commitment to important issues" and his ability as "an extraordinarily talented and innovative businessman." In 2024 Marchetti received the Positive Change Award by the Chambre Monégasque de la Mode, recognizing his role as a sustainable fashion pioneer.

In 2020 Marchetti became the first non-family member to join the Giorgio Armani S.p.A. Board of Directors. This appointment has been renewed through until 2025.

In 2021, he accepted positions on the Board of Directors of Highgrove Gardens and the Board of Trustees of The King's Foundation. Since 2021 he has been acting as Senior Advisor to The Carlyle Group on international private equity transactions.

In 2023 Marchetti published the book "Le avventure di un innovatore"/ "An American dream made in Italy (working title)", which made the Top Ten in Italy. The bestselling memoir tells the passionate story of how Marchetti created the world leader in online luxury fashion starting from nothing and against all odds. This book's message is relevant to a new generation of entrepreneurs who wish to combine innovation, business acumen, and AI with humanism, creativity and emotions: how to achieve the American dream in an Italian way.

As Marchetti explores new avenues, he stays true to the longstanding passions that have inspired his entrepreneurial journey since 2000: innovation and creating opportunities in harmony with Nature for the next generation.