THE ASOR COLLECTIVE — TREND INTELLIGENCE

SS26 SALE SEASON

What sold, what didn't, and what's on the rack—
June 2026



WHAT THE SALE RACK ACTUALLY IS

Every brand heading into production wants the same thing: to sell everything at full price, retire the season cleanly, and move into the next one with cash flow intact and customers satisfied. That is the goal. It is always the goal. The sale rack is not the plan. It is what happens when the plan meets reality.

Sometimes that reality is internal. A fit issue that slipped through the sample round. A colorway that looked entirely different under production conditions than it did in development. A rush to market that compressed the time needed to get the product right. A marketing message that did not connect the right customer to the right piece at the right moment.

Sometimes the reality is external. A geopolitical crisis that shifts consumer confidence faster than any forecast could model. Tariff changes that reset price points mid-season. A stretch of unseasonable weather that compresses the selling window. An economic environment that pulls discretionary spending tighter with little warning.

There is also a third category worth naming: product that is deliberately created for the sale channel. A supplier moving to an updated fabric with remaining stock at a favorable price. A brand holding a position in a material and creating a known-performing style to work through it. In these cases, the sale price is built into the cost structure from the beginning and the product serves a clear commercial purpose. The distinction matters because it reflects intentional inventory strategy rather than a failure of design or forecasting.

WHAT "GOOD" ACTUALLY LOOKS LIKE

> *Industry Sell-Through Benchmarks — FashionUnited*
> *The benchmark in fashion retail is a 70% sell-through rate before the sale season begins. 80% or above is considered strong performance. Rates falling below 60% are a signal that something in the design, production, marketing, or demand- forecasting chain needs attention.*

These targets exist because overproduction is genuinely costly, not just to brands but to the communities on the receiving end of what does not sell. The Business of Fashion and McKinsey's State of Fashion 2025 report valued the global fashion industry's overproduction problem at $70 to $140 billion annually in excess stock and inventory mismatches. The 2026 edition identified leftover inventory as a persistent challenge plaguing brands across every segment, and noted that incoming legislation in Europe and California will now attach real financial consequences to unsold stock and take-back requirements.

THE STAKES ARE HIGHER FOR SMALL AND MID- SIZE BRANDS

A large retailer carrying excess inventory absorbs the cost across thousands of SKUs, spreads the markdown across a broad customer base, and moves on. For a small or mid-size brand, a single season of significant unsold inventory can be the difference between staying in business and not. It ties up cash that should be funding the next production run. It forces discounting decisions that can permanently damage brand perception. And it compounds: a brand that discounts deeply in one season trains its customer to wait for the sale in the next one.

Industry research and trade reporting widely cite that the majority of fashion brands do not survive their first five years. The reasons are multiple, but inventory mismanagement, overproduction relative to demand, and the cash flow consequences of unsold stock are consistently among them. For founders building at smaller scale with tighter margins and without the capital reserves of larger players, the sell-through benchmark is not an industry abstraction. It is a survival metric.

LIKELY MARKED DOWN

These SS26 directions over-indexed editorially and under-delivered at the register. Expect significant markdowns beginning in June as retailers clear inventory for AW26.

TREND-FORWARD, LOW SELL-THROUGH

All-Over Chartreuse

The season's "it color" read too costume-y in saturated head-to-toe garments. Full chartreuse pieces are likely on significant markdown. Accent pieces and accessories in the color held considerably better. The tone worked as punctuation, not as a statement.

Rococo Revival

The season's most theatrical direction — heavy ruffles, brocade, layered aprons — was a runway story more than a retail one. Expensive to produce, narrow customer base, and hard to style outside editorial context.

Pirate Cosplay / Costume Maximalism

Individual trend elements performed well. The complete "look" worn as a full outfit rarely made it out of the fitting room. Brands that leaned into the costume end of this spectrum are clearing it on markdown now.

Bubble Hems in Bold Colorways

The bubble hem worked in elevated fabrications and neutral tones. The same shape in oversaturated colors carried significant inventory risk and is clearing now ahead of AW26. If you are a bubble hem fan, now is your time to stock up.

Dad Sneaker Silhouettes

Footwear retailers explicitly confirmed this direction is waning. Chunky retro sneakers are already on heavy markdown. The market has pivoted toward low-profile, refined sneaker silhouettes.

Underwear as Outerwear

Strong editorial content, weak sell-through. Required high styling effort and did not translate broadly outside major metro markets.

HELD FULL PRICE / STRONG SELL-THROUGH

These categories converted reliably at full price across boutique and mid-market retail. The "why" behind each is often more useful than the category itself.

STRONG COMMERCIAL PERFORMANCE

Jewelry and Accessories

McKinsey and the BoF State of Fashion 2026 confirmed jewelry outperformed every other fashion category, with unit sales growth exceeding all peers. Accessories function as the entry-point purchase for budget- conscious consumers who still want to engage with seasonal direction.

Artisan and Handcraft Pieces

Crochet, fringe, and lace in wearable silhouettes performed well, especially in mid-range and sustainable-positioned brands. The craftsmanship narrative drove both conversion and repeat purchase.

Linen Basics and Washed Naturals

Washed linen separates, soft cotton pants, and lightweight layering pieces had strong sell-through, particularly in neutral and earth tones. These anchor the wardrobe without effort.

Romantic Separates in Soft Pastels

Lilac, soft peach, ice blue, and sage in romantic silhouettes performed consistently across boutique and mid-market retail. The mood was feminine and considered without being theatrical.

Performance and Comfort Footwear

Hoka, New Balance, and Brooks held strong all season. In fashion footwear, ballet flats, heeled thongs, and low-profile sneakerinas moved cleanly through the season at full price.

Curated Capsule Drops

Brands that launched smaller, edited drops saw better sell-through than those maintaining large SKU counts. Constraint, when framed intentionally, is a commercial advantage.

WHAT TO EXPECT ON THE RACK

Heading into June and July, these categories are most likely to hit 30-50% off as retailers clear floor space for AW26.

JUNE-JULY CLEARANCE LIKELY

Chartreuse and Neon Yellow

Full pieces in the season's loudest colorways. Good for color-story research and styling reference. Harder to wholesale into AW26 without restyling.

Theatrical Outerwear

Feather-trim trenches, heavily embellished coats, and outerwear that leaned editorial over wearable. These pieces did not find their customer outside fashion- forward urban markets.

Puff Silhouettes in Trend Colors

The shape carries into AW26 in a more refined architectural form. The SS26 version in volume- forward seasonal colors will clear in June-July.

Maximalist Print Clashes

The boldest color-clash pieces overperformed editorially but under-delivered at retail. Brands that bought deep into the Glamoratti direction are clearing now.

Fast Fashion Micro-Trend Interpretations

The end of de minimis and tariff increases mean oversupply of cheap trend interpretations will hit the secondary market at deep discounts.

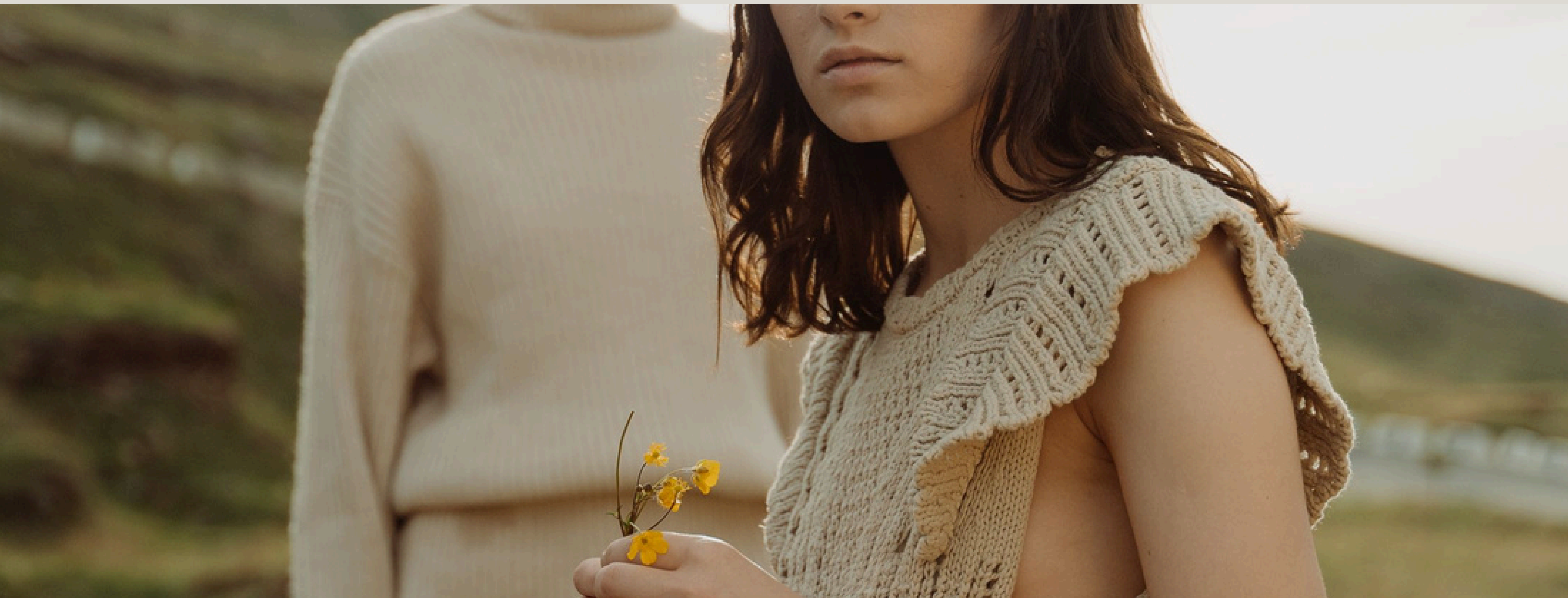
THE LARGER COST OF WHAT DOESN'T SELL

The unsold inventory from any given season does not simply disappear. A significant portion finds its way to secondary markets, donation systems, and in too many cases, to places that were never equipped to receive it.

The Atacama Desert in northern Chile has become one of the most documented endpoints of this system. According to reporting from Agence France-Presse, more than 59,000 tons of unsold, returned, or defective clothing arrive annually at the port of Iquique. Of that volume, at least 39,000 tons end up illegally discarded in the desert, according to figures from Desierto Vestido, the Chilean NGO documenting the crisis on the ground. An investigation by Atmos magazine found that 85% of the garments coming through the port are brand new, arriving with tags still attached. These are not donated garments. These are production decisions that outpaced demand, moving through the system until they landed in one of the driest places on Earth.

In Accra, Ghana, the Kantamanto Market, one of the largest secondhand clothing markets in the world, receives approximately 15 million garments every week according to the Or Foundation, the US and Ghana-based nonprofit working directly with Kantamanto traders and communities. The Or Foundation estimates that around 40% of what vendors cannot sell ultimately becomes waste, ending up in landfills and waterways. That figure is disputed by the Ghana Used Clothing Dealers Association, which puts it significantly lower. Both organizations agree that the volume is growing and that the communities living alongside these waste streams bear a disproportionate share of the cost.

A 2023 study from Brunel University London found that the fashion industry emits an estimated 1.2 billion tons of CO_2 annually, with projections indicating a 50% increase in its carbon footprint by 2030. For independent and sustainable founders, stepping outside the overproduction logic, making less and making it well, is not just an ethical position. It is a business strategy with a different relationship to the sale rack.



BUYER'S NOTE: BRIDGING SS26 TO AW26

The most strategic sale season question: which SS26 markdown pieces can be restyled into an AW26 context?

Oxblood and Wine Tones

Carries cleanly into AW26's saturated red and wine directions. Look for leather, chiffon, or structured wovens in this color family on clearance racks.

Fringe and Handcraft Details

Fringe carries from SS26 directly into AW26 in heavier weights and darker tones. Any fringe- trimmed piece in a neutral, earth, or jewel tone bridges naturally.

Lace in Dark Colorways

AW26's soft-gothic direction creates a direct bridge for SS26 lace pieces in black, ivory, or oxblood. What read as romantic spring becomes considered gothic-romantic fall with different outerwear.

Oversized Linen Layers

Styled over a turtleneck or under a heavy coat, the same SS26 linen piece bridges as a transitional layer. Look for these in sand, cream, and slate tones.

Avoid

Saturated chartreuse in full garments. High-exposure underwear-as-outerwear pieces. Bubble hems in spring-specific pastel colorways. These do not bridge and will sit in inventory.

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FOR YOUR PRODUCTION PLANNING

The SS26 sell-through data reinforces one consistent pattern: curated, smaller drops outperform high-volume seasonal buys. As you plan AW26 production, lean into pieces with strong cross-season utility over theatrical trend-specific pieces that drive editorial coverage but not retail conversion.