

WHAT'S MISSING FROM YOUR STYLE SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE

20 Feb 2020



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Between fashion subscription boxes, rental services, and try-before-you-buy programs, today's retail climate is responding to the increased demand for sustainable + convenient alternatives to traditional shopping.

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The services are most directly aimed at busy folks who care (or are required to care) about their wardrobes but loathe the process of shopping and choosing outfits. To this segment of shoppers, taking away the shopping / styling aspect, as well as the labor of maintaining the garments (assuming you're using a rental service) may sound like a dream. Yet, we've had a hoard of customers coming back for the "real thing", who are at best underwhelmed, and at worst disappointed, with this so-called personalized service.

Here's why the seemingly perfect solution to your wardrobe woes often ends up feeling stale.

Fit has way more to it than the size on the label.

We often say "ignore sizes, not us". This is true for both men and women - bodies are delightfully varied from person to person. Retail is finally shifting towards size inclusivity, but again, things typically stop at a surface level.

One of the biggest complaints we hear from clients who have used these services is the unintuitive fit of the items. While they boast diverse sizes, the nuances of body shape are ignored, making the number of the tag essentially worthless. The truth is, no matter who, *you need to be seen to be styled* - at least for the first time at a new establishment.

There are "hidden" environmental costs.

Between the packaging, back-and-forth transportation, and mass-maintenance (think about how many wash cycles the returned items endure - that's a *lot* of water) - the overall carbon footprint of these services nearly matches that of traditional retail.

Another issue is the mass-appeal model these businesses use - if an item carried by the service is proven to be unpopular, it will be rejected from the collection and likely sold /sent back to the wholesaler, where it will end up right back where it started - sold at a discount, and as a result treated as a disposable.

You're far better off investing in styles that work off one another, focus on fit and are true expressions of your identity, rather than one-and-done trend heavy pieces. A minimal wardrobe with well-tailored styles has always been, and will always be the most sustainable option.

Your wardrobe is personal, whether you like it or not.

Clothing is an aspect of outward appearance that you cannot divorce yourself from. It affects how we are seen and treated, and, most importantly, it affects how we feel about ourselves. Style is a framing device for how you want to be seen - finding that voice requires *a lot* of nuances.

These services use a specific formula to appeal to the widest range of customers, a few deviations in color schemes and style genres that create a guise of personalization. You will not find anything that has not already been well-established in the fashion life cycle within these boxes - you can forget about anything avant-garde, independent, or experimental in design. There is no room for risk-taking when a service is trying to maximize growth and minimize in-house labor.

The luxury of a "personal stylist" sounds hollow in this context because it is. In wardrobe-building and styling, little matters more than the client *feeling like themselves*. Taking individuality out of the equation will leave them feeling more like they're wearing someone else's clothes - so that core goal is missed.

Changing the mindset.

With new startups springing up left and right, there seems to be a mass blind eye to these glaring issues.

The disconnect here is caused by two factors. People rarely consider a well-built wardrobe to be an aspect of self-care. When prioritizing spending, investing in well made, well-fitting, versatile clothing often falls behind even having the latest iPhone or hopping on a new juice cleanse. In addition to this, services like personal styling + tailoring seen as frivolous expenses, unlike more common service-centric luxuries such as seeing a hairstylist or eating at an upscale restaurant.

It is important to understand that a well-built and truly personalized wardrobe will not only save the consumer a significant amount of time and stress, but improve both physical appearance and self-esteem.

The point here is not that there's no solution for easy shopping - just that these services may not be it.

In-store services like personal styling, our style registry, and our style concierge have changed a lot of minds already. We can set you up for wardrobe perfection in less than an hour, help with alterations, and budget your spending while making sure none of your items, or your money, is spent in vain.

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