PROJECT OBJECTIVE

- Attempt to understand sustainability related systemic issues at West Elm
- Provide recommendations to accelerate sustainability in the organization and specific recommendations for sustainable materials strategy

ACTIVITIES

Onsite Interviews
Interviewed 20 West Elm teams, 7 external agencies (50+ people) in NYC and SF between Jan 6-23, 2015

Secondary Research
Industry and competitors’ trends, material certification research between Oct 2014—Jan 2015

Phone Interview
5 phone interviews with West Elm teams between Oct-Dec 2014

Analysis
Applied system thinking & analyzed the value chain and organizational teams and created prioritized issue map based on insights.

Deliverables
Recommendations to overcome the issues for the value chain and corporate teams were provided.

SYSTEMIC VIEW

Drivers

Consolidation of vendors
Goal Setting

Incentive to be certified

Drivers

Cost
Order Volume

Sustainable materials
Certified factories

Sustainable/Certified products

R1 Certification

R2 Sustainable messaging

R3 Sustainability initiatives

Cost Competition

Revenues

Consumer Awareness

Drivers

TOOLS USED

- Iceberg Model and Ladder of Inference—To understand the psychological reasons behind their actions and behavior
- Creative Tension—To ignite people’s aspiration
- Generative Dialogue—To find their solutions to their problems
- Shifting the burden—To derive solutions

LEADERSHIP LESSONS

- Strong interest and commitment to other team members’ growth is equally important
- With trust and patience, a leader should prioritize for the long-term consequences
- Team’s strength increases through recognizing and praising the strength of each individual
- Embracing weakness is tougher than proving strength