FASHION SCHOLARSHIP FUND BUSINESS STRATEGY CASE STUDY 2025

# ZARAFitLab

ZARA'S BOLD STEP INTO IMMERSIVE SHOPPING AND AVATAR INTEGRATION

THE INTERSECTION OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AND FASHION

# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

With the introduction of Zara's FitLab, customers will enjoy an immersive shopping experience, enhanced by an advanced virtual fitting room developed in collaboration with BODS, a leader in integrating gaming technology into the fashion industry. As one of the largest global fashion brands, Zara continues to influence over 150 markets through both ecommerce and physical stores. Virtual fitting rooms are known to reduce return rates, boost conversion rates, and increase engagement, offering a more refined and seamless shopping journey for today's digital consumers. With this strategy, Zara will Improve customer satisfaction, enhance product sizing, implement seamless checkout technology, and increase engagement to drive higher sales.

With this initiative, Zara not only enhance the shopping experience but also strengthens its competitive edge in the fashion industry, ensuring continued growth through innovation, customer-centric solutions, and the seamless integration of technology into the retail landscape. The FitLab aims to improve Zara's overall consumer interaction.





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# **BRAND INTRODUCTION**

Zara is a **leading clothing brand** that has already begun integrating technology into its operations, **successfully reaching multiple generations** and **global reach**.

# PRODUCT —

Zara is one of the world's most renowned fashion retailers, celebrated for its **diverse** range, affordable price points, and stylish designs. The brand offers clothing for men, women, and children, along with an expanding selection of home and beauty products.

# DISTRIBUTION

Zara's manufacturing network is primarily based in Asia and Europe, with key partners located in **Turkey, Spain, China, and Pakistan**. The retailer's production process is both vertically and horizontally integrated, encompassing **1,866 suppliers** and **7,232 factories**.

# CHANNEL —

Zara operates through both e-commerce and brick-and-mortar stores, with online shopping available in over 100 countries and a presence in 213 markets.

# €26 Billion

**Net Sales** 

In 2023

# **\$11** Billion

**Brand Value Worldwide** 

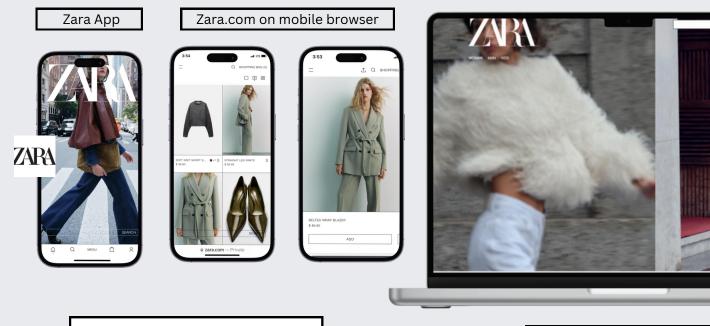
In 2023

10%

Growth

From 2022- 2023

\$6.3 Billion
Online Sales
In 2023



Financial Performance

Zara.com on desktop browser

"Zara | Company Overview & News." Forbes. Accessed October 6, 2024. https://www.forbes.com/companies/zara/.

# **CURRENT STRATEGIES**

RFID Tag System

Real Time Analytics

| Machine Learning | Tech Integration

### **AR IN-STORE MODELS**

In 2018 Zara created phone filters that featured models wearing their collections in 120 of their stores, allowing customers to try on outfits with overlays. The two-week campaign used AR and VR technology.

### **JETLORE AI**

This AI based program helps retail stores develop **personalized marketing** according to the consumer's actions. By predicting consumer behavior gathering analytics, the system develops marketing tailored to the consumer, increasing conversion rates.

### **JUST-IN-TELLIGENT**

The AI method is trained to **optimize merchandizing** by identifying inventory that is in demand in actual time. It categorizes products that should be added or kept at minimal quantity.

Zara.com. "Find Your Zara Store: Explore Our New Arrivals: Zara United Kingdom." Find your Zara Store | Explore our New Arrivals | ZARA United Kingdom. Accessed October 14, 2024. https://www.zara.com/uk/en/z-stores-st1404.html.

### **SELF CHECKOUT**

Zara has recently added their self checkout area where customers place their items in a smart box-like platform that instantly recognizes the items. The customer can play in different methods including through the Zara app.

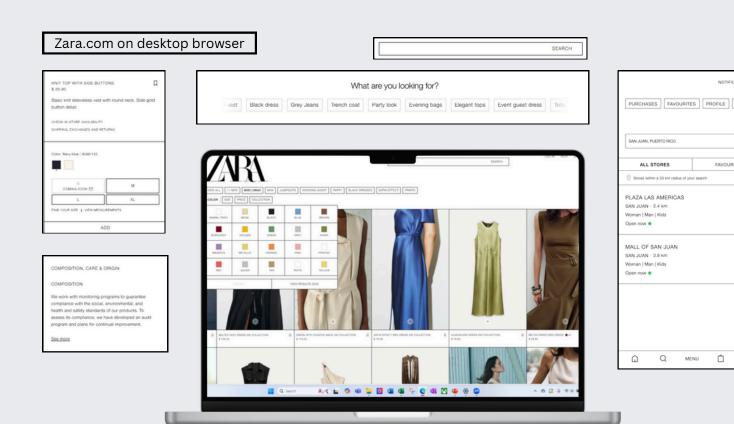
### **TYCO MICROCHIPS**

Tyco's security and cloud technology tracks its inventory to reduce theft at an advanced level, allowing hosts to access security cameras from around the world.

### FITTING ROOM BOOKING

Through the app users are welcomed to separate fitting room slots in real time. Upon arrival, customers can skip lines and go to their designated room.

"ECommerce News Archives." Intelligent Reach. Accessed October 2, 2024. http://www.intelligentreach.com/news/ecommerce-news.



# **CLICK & COLLECT**

Zara shoppers can checkout their carts online and pickup their items at their nearest store

# **ZARA STREAMING**

After successful integration in China, the brand will expand its livestream feature in the Zara app and website, allowing customers to shop instantly.

Stambor, Zak. "Shein and Zara's Pushes into Livestream Shopping Show the Channel Is Gaining Momentum." EMARKETER, September 18, 2024. https://www.emarketer.com/content/sheinzara-livestream-shopping.

"Three Keys to a Just-in-Telligent Supply Chain."
SupplyChainBrain RSS. Accessed October 1, 2024.
https://www.supplychainbrain.com/blogs/1-think-tank/post/36405-three-keys-to-a-just-in-telligent-supply-chain.

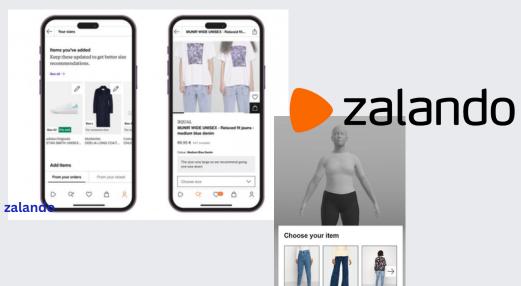
# **AVATAR CREATOR**

H&M launched its avatar concepts in 2021, since then the concept has expanded in their stores around the world. Stores have 'Avatar Creator' capsules that capture the customers 360° body measurements. The AvatarCloud App then shows users their avatar and garments to try-on. NeXR Technologies provided the programs to bring the idea to life.

H&M customer received the concept openly and enjoyed the product. H&M simultaneously launched an immersive showroom. The brand hopes to expand these concepts by allowing customers to personalize garments in their virtual fitting rooms.

https://www.intelligentreach.com/news/ecommerce-news

# **COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS**



# **ZALANDO VIRTUAL FITTING ROOM**

In April 2023, Zalando created a 3D avatar space for users to try-on a range of 22 denim jeans. After providing their sizing information, users were able to see what sizes and styles would fit them the best. personalized Customers also received size recommendations according to the results.

30,000 customers were able to test the platform by trying on Puma and Zalando pants. The program successfully reduced returns by 10%.

In the near future Zalando's sizing team will expand the program, allowing users to apply their body measurements into the avatars and increasing accuracy.

THE INTERSECTION OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AND FASHION

https://corporate.zalando.com/en/about-us/what-we-do



Two years ago, the sports and athleisure company Adidas introduced it's NFT AR and AI avatar platform. The system, named ALTS, was created in partnership with Ready Players.

Users are able to create characters that embody an idealized version of themselves in the style of Adidas Originals. They can wear garments and adapt their characters to their liking. The avatar can be used in the Metaverse and clothes can be personalized to the customer's aesthetic.

SOURCE: Adidas https://collect.adidas.com/drop/alts

# Strengths

**Optimized AI Tech:** Zara has successfully implemented ai in most of it's processes creating seamless systems that assist in a range of processes from product development to merchandising and marketing. These acquisitions have proven to be cost effective for the brand.

**Financial Health**: Zara's strong cash flow and financial success are clear indicators of its financial health, enabling the company to make further investments.

**Underperforming Ecommerce Channel:** Zara's website faces challenges with accessibility and the overall shopping experience. Customers often have difficulty finding clear and sufficient information regarding sizing, fit, and product quality.

Weaknesses

Lack of Sustainability Tracking: The brand has recently faced challenges with the younger generation, who are increasingly demanding companies to demonstrate ethical, social, and environmental responsibility

# Opportunities

**Advancing Al integration:** Leveraging Al to address website experience issues, enhance product development, and streamline the checkout process.

**Immersive Experiences**: Developing immersive experiences to generate intrigue, acquire new customers, and increase connection with existing consumers.

**SOURCE: ZARA** Zara.com/home

# **Threats**

**Safety breaches:** Al systems may be infiltrated by third parties or hackers and access Zara's intellectual property of customer information.

**High Competition:** Other luxury and bridge companies are successfully implementing avatar extensions, virtual try-ons, and metaverse features.

# TECH & ECOMMERCE TRENDS

# UNDERSTANDING TECH TRENDS TO **PROMOTE EVOLUTION**.

## [DRIVERS]

Consumer Expectations Increasing Demands
Crossing Technology with Reality
Skepticism over Environmental & Concerns
Fast-Paced Fashion Trends and Production
Need for Optimization
Immersive and Wholistic Business Approach
Emotionally Driven Preferences

# [TRENDS]

- Increase of Phygital Stores
- Hyper Personalization
- Virtual Fitting Rooms
- Seamless Checkout
- Live Shopping
- ESG Driven Businesses
- —o Metaverse and Immersive Shopping
- Al for Product Development,
   Merchandising, and Marketing

# In conclusion

# Modern problems. Modern solutions.

Businesses are successfully leveraging cutting-edge technology and big data to tackle challenges more effectively than ever before ————

# SEZEARCHI of co shop shop

of consumers favor shopping online over shopping in retail stores

### 41%

of consumers want to shop in virtual spaces.

### 61%

of Gen z & Millennials would rather spend time online.

### 37%

of Millennials & Gen Z would rather test products than buying them

### 70%

of Gen z wants to experience virtual worlds outside of gaming worldwide.

# 45%

of Consumers want personalized product offering

Dawkins, Jennifer Ortakales. "Virtual Try-on Tech Is Tackling a \$280 Billion Problem in Fashion Retail and Offering Customers a Different Way to Shop." Business Insider. Accessed October 6, 2024. https://www.businessinsider.com/artificial-intelligence-trends-retail-virtual-try-on-2023-10.

"ECommerce News Archives." Intelligent Reach. Accessed October 2, 2024. http://www.intelligentreach.com/news/ecommerce-news. **SOURCE: STATISTA**E-commerce worldwide Report
study\_id10653\_e-commerce-worldwide-statista-dossier (1).pdf

# INDUSTRY RESEARCH



Sizing problems lead to: customer returns

According to *Coresight Research*, **24.4%** of all soft-goods purchased online are returned to the retailer. **77%** of these items are returned due to inaccurate sizing issues.

Research suggests that companies based in brick and mortar retail are **not effectively using their online channels,** increasing the number of online returns.

The fashion industry's return, costs the retail industry over **\$38 billion** in 2023. The processing costs of these returns are an estimated **\$25.1 billion**.

**80% of customers use size charts**, which increases conversion rates.

# **OTHER INDUSTRY CHALLENGES: PLAYEMENT FRICTION & ENGAGEMENT**

# Payment friction points

17% of customers don't shop online because of their preferred payment was not an option. | 2024

The preferred payment method on ecommerce platforms was digital wallets and mobile money by **50%.** | 2023

**60%** of shoppers would spend more if checkout was quicker and had less friction.

Low engagement leads to: Low conversion rates

Brands who used personalization surpassed their goals increasing revenue by 9.9%

54% of brands saw improvements in conversion rates,61% of them reported higher engagement,61% noticed an increase in their average order value,57% of them saw an increased customer satisfaction.

### SOURCE: CORESIGHT RESEARCH

The True Cost of Apparel Returns: Alarming Return Rates Require Loss-Minimization Solutions—Survey Insights | Coresight Research

### **SOURCE: FORBES**

https://www.forbes.com/sites/zengernews/2024/07/11/virtual-try-ons-will-change-fashion-jobs-forever/

### **SOURCE: DELOITTE DIGITAL**

https://www.deloittedigital.com/content/dam/digital/us/documents/insights/insights-20240610-personalization-report.pdf

### SOURCE: STATISTA

E-commerce worldwide Report study\_id10653\_e-commerce-worldwide-statista-dossier (1).pdf

# Image by Open-AI Dall\_E

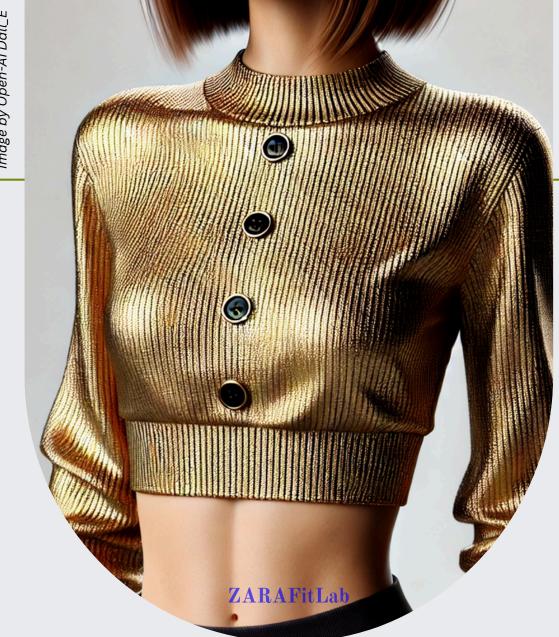
# THE IMPACT

Leveraging technology can streamline processes and enhance efficiency. Upon evaluating the existing deficiencies within the fashion industry, it is apparent that technology can provide solutions to enhance operational efficiency while simultaneously attracting a broader customer base with minimal effort.

Al and AR impact Zara by: decreasing returns, increasing, customer engagement, improving Zara's brand perception, increase conversion rates, and positioning Zara as a tech innovative brand.

# WHICH INTERNAL PROCESSES WILL THE FITLAB AFFECT?

Web development
Employee Training
Merchandising
Marketing
Inventory management
Payment and checkout
IP information & safety
Technology & infrastructure
Consumer information & safety



a look into the *near* future

85%

of fashion retailers are looking to use virtual-try-on technologies

# Using Ai is already helping businesses increase...

productivity and cost efficiency by **75%** customer satisfaction by **72%** innovation & personal marketing **69%** 

### SOURCE: CORESIGHT RESEARCH

The True Cost of Apparel Returns: Alarming Return
Rates Require Loss-Minimization Solutions—
Survey Insights | Coresight Research

### SOURCE: FORBES

https://www.forbes.com/sites/zenger news/2024/07/11/virtual-try-onswill-change-fashion-jobs-forever/

# **TARGETING**

# **TARGET PRODUCT**

**NEW AND EXCLUSIVE COLLECTIONS FROM** 

**WOMEN'S CLOTHING AND APPAREL** 

MEN'S CLOTHING AND APPAREL

# **ZARA CONSUMER**

Zara's customer base, primarily **aged 18 to 40, represents the demographic that shops online** the most, according to Statista. This makes the FitLab an ideal tool to assist and enhance their shopping experience.

# **CONSUMER IMPACT**

The FitLab aims to improve Zara's omnichannel strategy and support customers by:

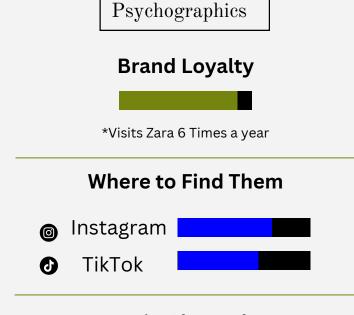
- -Helping customers pick the right size
- -Find ideal styling options
- -Minimize time spent shopping
- -Quick checkout

**FSF CASE STUDY** 

# FITLAB TARGET CONSUMER

# Demographics

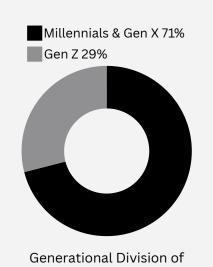
- 18-30 years old Gen Z & Millenials
- Female
- Medium-high income
- Current student or junior level employee
- Single
- Vals personasAchievers Experiencers Believers



# **Main Channels**

Zara App In-Store Shopping





Online Shoppers

 $\begin{array}{c} 77\% \\ \text{of Millennials} \\ \text{made online purchases in 2023} \end{array}$ 

 $76\% \\ \text{of Gen Zers} \\ \text{made online purchases in 2023}$ 

| 11

### SOURCE: STATISTA

Generational distribution of fashion online shoppers worldwide | 2023 Inditex and the fashion industry in Spain

Flores-Marquez, Paola. "US Social Network Usage by Generation." EMARKETER, July 26, 2023. https://www.emarketer.com/content/us-social-network-usage-by-generation? \_gl=1%2Aj7qnue%2A\_gcl\_au%2AMTk4NTgwODgzMy4xNzI3MjcxOTU5%2A\_ga%2

# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

# FRICTION POINTS

# **Product presentation & information**

Ineffective size naming
Unreliable sizing chart
Insufficient product information

# **Inefficient In-store fitting room**

Long lines that lead customer dislike Some customers don't have store access Fitting room try-ons take too long

### Inefficient checkout

Long checkout process

Long instore checkout process

# STRATEGY

Introducing the FitLab, a that feature allows customers to visualize how clothing would fit using a personalized avatar. Customers can virtually try on different sizes and styles, experimenting with outfits as they prefer. The system will also offer a checkout streamlined process, make tailored product recommendations, and assist customers in finding their perfect size for an enhanced shopping experience.



# **OUTCOMES**

The FitLab feature aims to

Leverage Artificial Intelligence and Augmented Reality to eliminate friction points in product acquisition phases, enabling more seamless and efficient systems.

Advanced tech and big data can help Zara: reduce returns, improve online shopping experience, encourage customers to shop more items, reduce fitting-room lines, quicken checkout process.



# **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

# **CONVERSION RATE**

Helps track weather *FitLab* feature is driving higher sales after implementation.

**GOAL: ESTABLISH A C.R. OF 40%** 

## **RETURN RATE**

Measures if returns are reducing because of the *FitLab* sizing accuracy.

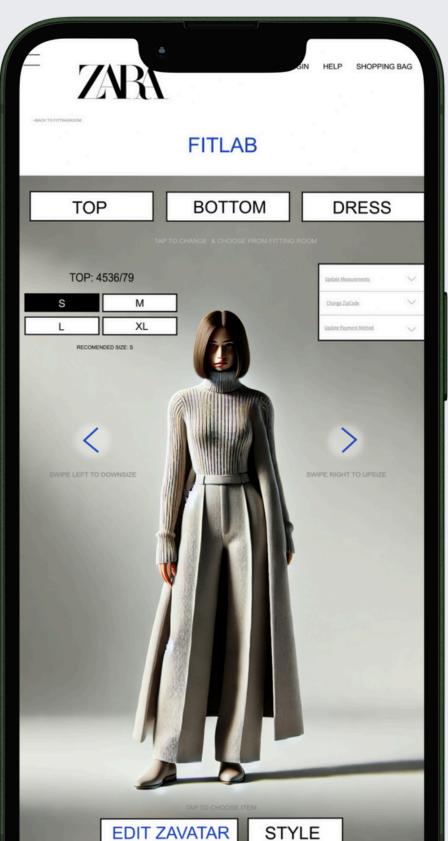
**GOAL: REDUCE RETURN RATE BY 30%** 

# **AVERAGE ORDER VALUE**

Tracks weather *FitLab* increased sales, customer satisfaction, and if customers shopped other product categories.

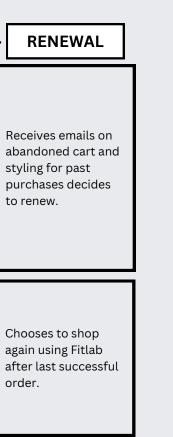
**GOAL: INCREASE AOV BY 30%** 

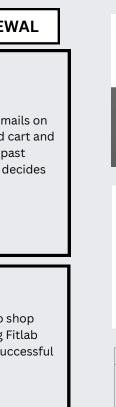


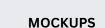


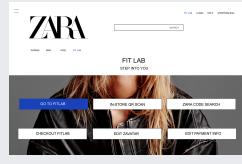
The FitLab aims to help customers to find their ideal size, reducing returns and increasing online sales.

Available for customers though Zara's mobile app and website. Users will be able to shop and see how clothes behave on the customized avatars by logging into their Zara profiles and selecting the "ADD TO FITLAB" option at different touch points.















**RESEARCH AWARENESS** 

Sees organic social

Zara.com Landing

Page Promo, and

Email marketing

Sees Screen Displays

and Window Displays

media posts,

**DECISION** 

Searches FitLab

action. Sets up

FitLab profile.

Asks associate,

code and

profile.

scans in store QR

downloads the Zara

app. Sets up FitLab

Starts testing feature and it pops up 1st and looks at Q&A ranking on Google section. Watches mini Search, sees tutorial. landing page with receives immediate promo, goes to email upon FitLab intro video, subscription with or follows social media's call to

supporting content. Chat Bot asks If any assistance is needed.

> Customer watches mini tutorial after setting up Zavatar profile. Chat Bot and store associates ask if any assistance is needed.

and receives emails with recommendations. They are asked to add payment info for quick

**ONBOARD** 

Customer starts

adding items to cart

checkout. Uses recommendation tool.

Customer finds style options that are available online only and in-person. Customers choose to use app while simultaneously shopping in person to test accuracy and use recommendation features.

Receives email asking for feedback on ordering process

**SUPPORT** 

Customers proceed to payment, they can choose to use the click-andcollect feature, self-checkout, or quick checkout through the Zara

**USAGE** 

All items are in

the cart.

Scans-In-store feedback QR

Chooses to shop again using Fitlab after last successful

# **TECHNOLOGY INTRODUCTION**

# ZARA'S BOLD STEP INTO IMMERSIVE FASHION AND AVATAR INTEGRATION

### ZARA X BODS

To develop the FitLab, Zara will partner with BODS, an avatar technology provider that uses advanced gaming technology to create high-quality, dynamic representations of garments, bringing them to life in a realistic and engaging manner. BODS is currently working for Balmain in releasing the house's avatar try-on. They have already partnered with companies like Reformation and been in headlines of magazines such as Vogue, BOF, and Forbes.

BODS uses Generative AI, AR, and gaming systems to develop innovative solutions in the fashion industry.





Image courtesy of BODS

Forbes estimates that virtual fitting room technology can:

- Rise Conversion Rates to 320%
- Boost Sales by 30%
- Decrease 20% of Returns
- Increase AOV by 33%
  \*Average Order Value (AOV)

Solutions-Survey Insights | Coresight Research

The True Cost of Apparel Returns: Alarming Return Rates Require Loss-Minimization

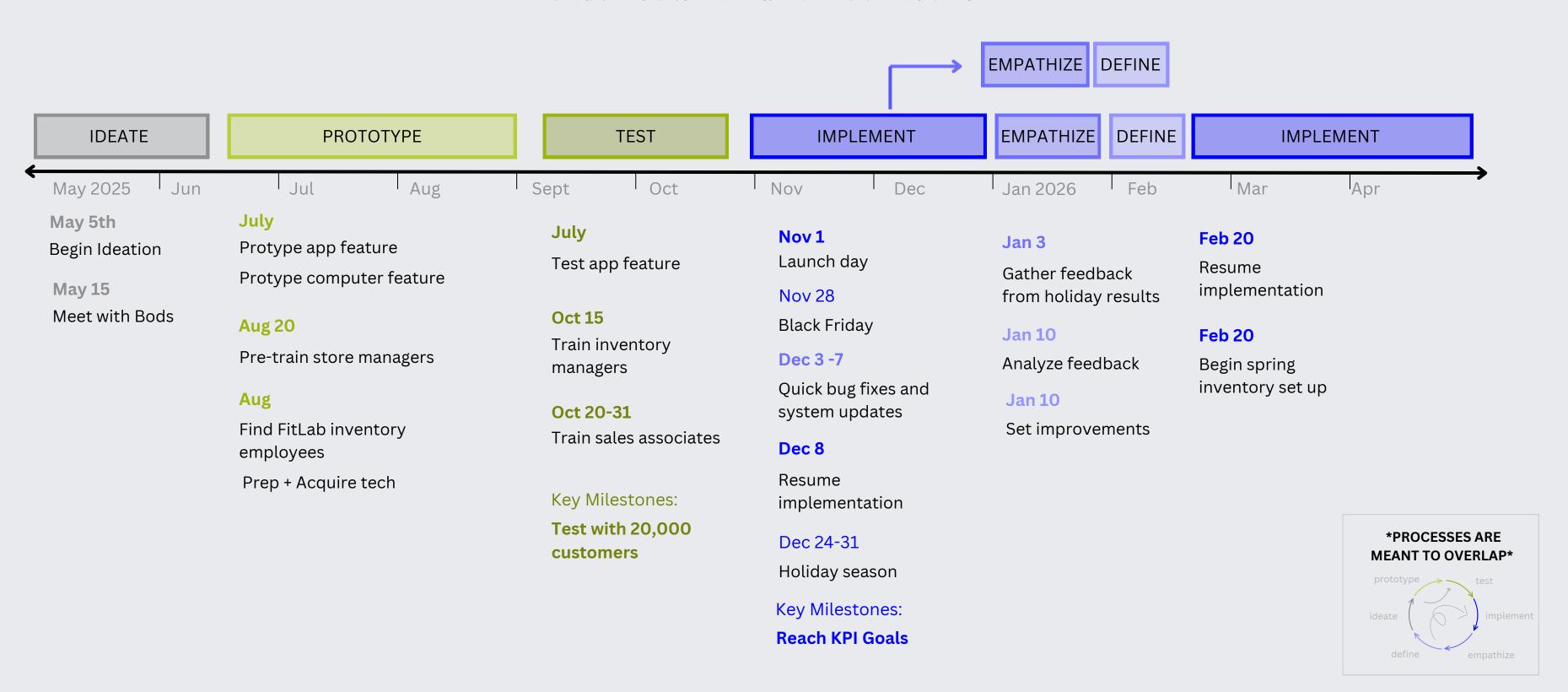
### **SOURCE: BODS**

Thttps://bods.me/#howItWorks

SOURCE: CORESIGHT RESEARCH

# **DEVELOPMENT & LAUNCH**

INTEGRATION ROADMAP & TIMELINE: 12 MONTHS



# FINANCIAL INVESTMENT

-		45	91	1
ZA	R.A	<b>Fit</b>	Lab	1
			1	12000
		16		777
		30	1	A
			10	9 1
		Sett.	7:10	

Concept	Investment	Total	Cadence
Integration cost (Bods)	\$650,000	\$650,000	One -Time
Technology Aquisition	\$800 (iPhone cost x 10 employees)	\$8,000	One -Time
Sales Associate Training	included in company budget	\$0	One -Time
Cost per Item	\$10 x yearly SKU 35,000	\$350,000	Recurring
Merchandising Employees	included in company budget	<b>\$</b> O	Recurring
			TOTAL: \$1,008,000

### Notes:

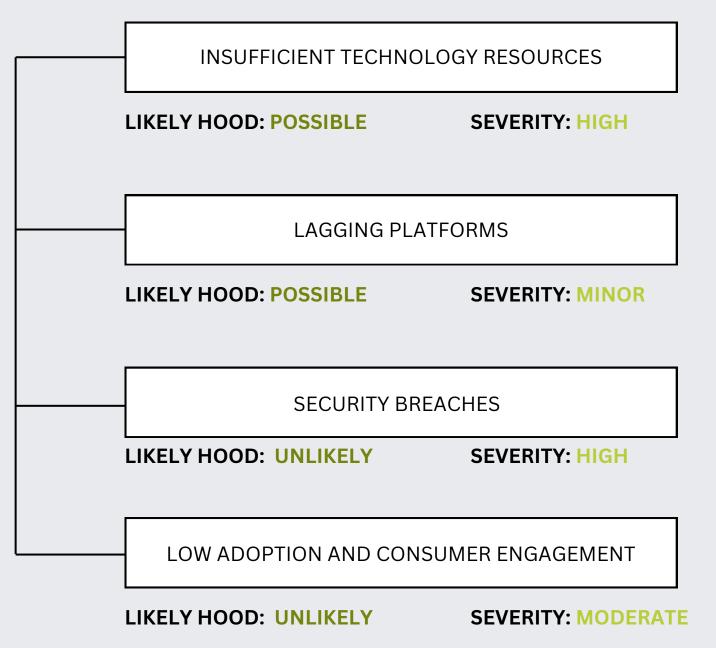
<sup>\*</sup> Sales associate training and merchandizing employee costs will be part of established company budgets.

<sup>\*</sup>Technology Aquisition: iPhones will be used for internal merchandizing employees to scan clothing items and upload them to FitLab.

<sup>\*</sup>Costs per Item: includes any miscellaneous costs, calculation: 10\$ per item times Zara's yearly SKU# which is 35,000.

# CHALLENGE & RISK ASSESSATION OF NT

Zara may encounter several challenges, including adoption customer outdated or resistance, lagging technology, potential security breaches, insufficient technological infrastructure to support new initiatives. To maintain its competitive edge, Zara will need to address these issues proactively, ensuring the seamless integration of new technologies and the protection of customer data.



\*Impact on Isolated project, not overall company financials

# MISSING THE OPPORTUNITY

If Zara misses this opportunity, competing brands may gain a significant advantage, leaving Zara out of the retail innovation race.

### OVERALL RISK

When analyzing Zara's profits and sales, the *FitLab* integration will not propose a mayor threat to the company's financial health.

# **FUTURE GROWTH**

In the future, Zara's FitLab looks forward to ...



Integrating all Zara products including all apparel and clothing, kid's clothing, home, and beauty sections

Introduce a **virtual mirror with integrated FitLab** feature.

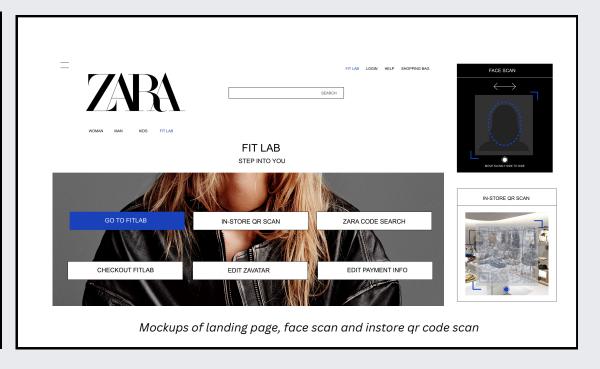
Improving user experience by integrating features such as allowing users to share on social media and adding Zara's iconic shopping music



Image by Open-Ai Dall\_E

Developing FitLab exclusive product lines and collections.

Expanding software to for users to adapt clothing to **Metaverse or create NFTS.** 





# CONCLUSION

The FitLab project represents a significant step forward in Zara's continued efforts to enhance the customer shopping experience through innovative technology. By integrating advanced virtual fitting rooms developed in collaboration with BODS, Zara will provide customers with personalized, immersive experiences that bridge the gap between online and in-store shopping. This initiative is designed to increase customer satisfaction by improving sizing accuracy, offering seamless checkout options, and reducing returns—ultimately driving higher engagement and sales. Through this forward-thinking strategy, Zara reinforces its position as a leader in both fashion and technology, setting a new standard for digital retail experiences in the global market.

### 2"Adidas Originals Introduces First-of-Its-Kind Digital Ozworld Experience." adidas News Site | Press Resources for all Brands, Sports and Innovations, April 5, 2022. https://news.adidas.com/originals/adidas-originals-introduces-first-of-its-kind-digitalozworld-experience/s/c29e6fdd-2c70-4362-b84a-c46c279d8faf.

"Avatars: Fashion Industry Relies on Virtual Models and Digital Style Consultants." Avatars: Fashion industry relies on virtual models | Berlin Fashion Week, November 14, 2022. https://fashionweek.berlin/en/blog/single-news/avatars-fashion-industryrelies-on-virtual-models-and-digital-style-consultants.html.

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# ZARAFitLab

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