Market Authority Index

Fashion, Apparel and Personal Style

Sector Executive Summary

Q2 2026 | 17 brands in this sector out of a total of 131 Assessed brands.

Average Market Authority Index: 70.8/100

Median: 75 | Certification rate: 70.6%*

*(achieve a score of 65 or above)

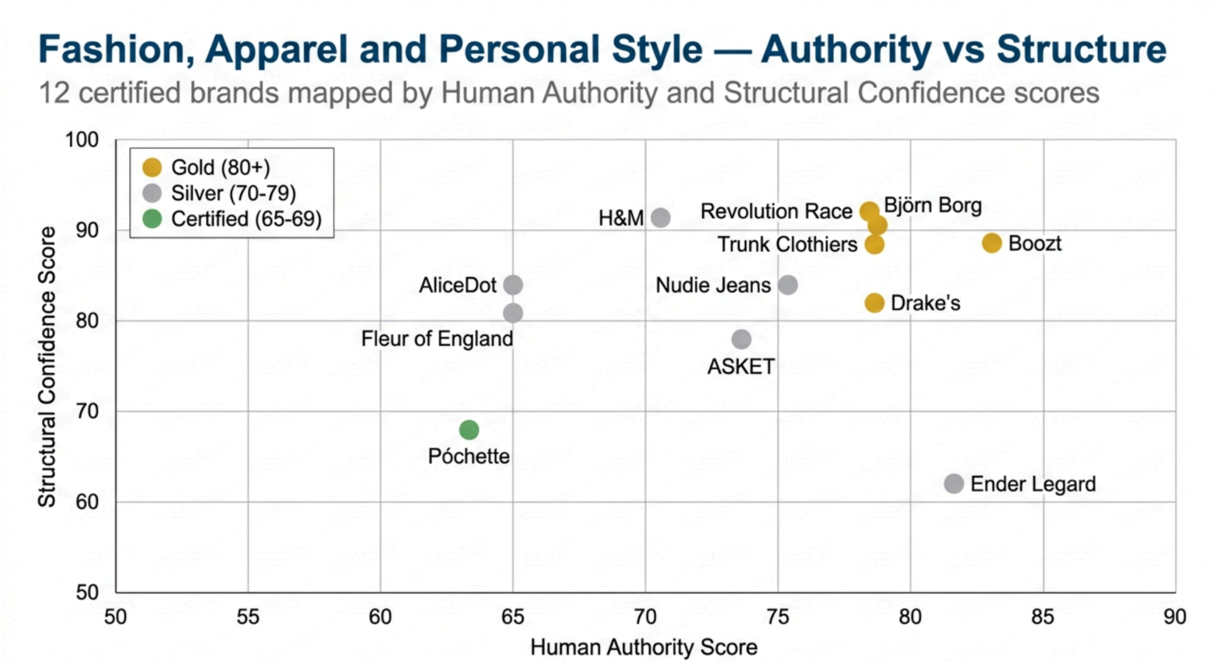
10 July 2026

Sector Executive Summary

Prepared by Digital Scorecard

Sector Overview

Fashion, Apparel and Personal Style is one of the highest-performing sectors in the Q2 2026 Market Authority Index benchmark, scoring 70.8 on average against a cross-sector portfolio average of 64.1. The sector's median score of 75 places the typical fashion brand firmly in the Strong band, and nearly two-thirds of assessed brands score 70 or above.



For buyers, this means fashion brands are generally easier to find, evaluate, and trust than brands in most other sectors. When a buyer searches for a product category, compares options, or asks an AI recommendation engine for guidance, the brands with higher Market Authority Index scores are more likely to surface, present credible evidence, and convert that discovery into a purchase decision.

The sector covers 17 brands spanning mass market retail, premium menswear, sport and activewear, sustainable fashion, lingerie, maternity, and knitwear. Business models range from pure e-commerce to omnichannel retail with physical store networks.

For organisations seeking to strengthen their Market Authority Index score, structured authority assets can be developed upon request by Digital Scorecard.

Where Fashion Brands Are Strong

Fashion brands outperform the portfolio average on every Human Authority sub-pillar. Strategic Positioning is the standout at 20.3 out of 25 (portfolio average: 18.7), reflecting the sector's investment in brand narrative, differentiation, and market positioning. Trust Infrastructure scores 18.9 (portfolio: 16.7) and Market Presence 17.5 (portfolio: 14.9), both comfortably above average.

Pillar	**Fashion (/25)**	**Portfolio (/25)**
Strategic Positioning	20.3	18.7
Proof and Validation	14.7	11.8
Trust Infrastructure	18.9	16.7
Market Presence	17.5	14.9

Brands combining physical retail presence with e-commerce achieve the highest scores in the sector at 79.0 on average, reinforcing that omnichannel presence strengthens authority across all pillars. Pure e-commerce brands average 68.5, still above the portfolio norm but noticeably lower than their omnichannel counterparts.

Sector Leaders

Five brands achieve Gold certification (score of 80 or above), the highest concentration of any consumer sector in the benchmark:

Brand	Market Authority Index	Subsector
Boozt	85	Mass Market Fashion Retail
Trunk Clothiers	82	Premium Menswear
Revolution Race	82	Sport and Activewear
Bjorn Borg	82	Sport and Activewear
Drake's	80	Premium Menswear

What these brands have in common is not size or price point but consistency across all four Human Authority pillars. Boozt, the sector leader at 85, scores above 19 on every sub-pillar including Proof and Validation (19 out of 25), placing it among the strongest proof profiles in the entire benchmark. Bjorn Borg achieves the highest Proof and Validation score in the sector at 21 out of 25, demonstrating that structured customer evidence is achievable even in categories where brand image traditionally dominates.

A further six brands hold Silver certification (70 to 79): Nudie Jeans, H&M, Ender Legard, ASKET, AliceDot, and Fleur of England. Together, the eleven certified brands represent the sector's competitive core -- the group most likely to be discovered, recommended, and chosen as buyer channels evolve.

Where the Gap Remains

Proof and Validation remains the weakest pillar at 14.7 out of 25, with a standard deviation of 4.9 which suggests a lot of variation. While this is above the portfolio average of 11.8, it remains the area of greatest variance within the sector. Some fashion brands have invested heavily in customer evidence and third-party validation; others rely almost entirely on brand positioning without structured proof. The stand out leaders are shown in the table.

Brand	**Proof and Validation (/25)**	**Market Authority Index**
Bjorn Borg	21	82
Boozt	19	85
Seraphine	22	64

Bjorn Borg (21/25) and Boozt (19/25) are the strongest and they're both Gold-certified brands with high overall scores and they demonstrate that strong proof is achievable alongside strong positioning.

Seraphine (22/25) is interesting because it actually has the highest Proof and Validation score in the entire Fashion sector, but its overall Market Authority Index is only 64 (below certification) as it is dragged down by its lower Structural Confidence score. That's a compelling example in a different way, strong proof alone isn't enough if the structural foundations aren't strong.

The gap between brand positioning and proof matters because buyer decision-making is shifting. As AI-driven recommendation and discovery channels increasingly prioritise verified, structured evidence over brand claims, the brands with strong proof infrastructure will be recommended more consistently than those relying on positioning alone.

Score Distribution for Fashion, Apparel & Personal Style

Band	Score Range	Brands
Exceptional	80-100	5
Strong	70-79	6
Developing	60-69	3
Emerging	40-59	3

No brands in the sector triggered the Structural Confidence cap, and no brands fall into the At Risk band, indicating that fashion brands generally maintain sound structural foundations even when their authority scores vary.

What This Means for Fashion Brands

The sector's strength in Strategic Positioning and Trust Infrastructure means that fashion brands are, on average, better positioned than most sectors to be discovered and recommended as buyer channels evolve. But discovery is only the first step. A buyer who finds a brand still needs a reason to trust it and evidence to justify the purchase.

The Proof and Validation gap is where competitive differentiation will increasingly be won or lost. Brands that score well on positioning but poorly on proof are visible but unconvincing. In a market where buyers can compare dozens of options in seconds, and where AI-driven recommendation engines prioritise verifiable evidence over marketing claims, the brands that can demonstrate real customer outcomes will convert at higher rates than those relying on narrative alone.

The Gold-certified brands in this sector show that it is possible to score highly across all four pillars. The question for every other fashion brand is whether their proof infrastructure matches their positioning ambition.

It is also clear from the sample that small fashion retailers can perform well and really compete with the larger well established ones. One case in point is AliceDot., a specialist retailer that performs very well, almost akin to a community driven business. The lesson is clear for the smaller brand. Have a clear market in mind and work to that with clarity and leadership.

As the number of companies in the Market Authority Index grows we expect to include a greater variety of businesses. The current base has a lot of leaders in each sector as this is a way to set a baseline. Over time we are expecting the average scores to drift downwards with a greater variability. We will monitor and report on this as we process more companies, sectors and benchmarks each quarter.

What Should Fashion Brands Do Next?

The data points to three practical priorities for fashion brands looking to strengthen their Market Authority:

1. Close the Proof and Validation gap. This is the single biggest opportunity in the sector. Fashion brands score 20.3 out of 25 on Strategic Positioning but only 14.7 on Proof and Validation. That means most brands are excellent at saying what they stand for but significantly weaker at demonstrating it with structured evidence. Concrete actions: invest in verified customer reviews, build case studies around real outcomes, seek third-party endorsements, and make proof findable rather than buried. Bjorn Borg (21/25) and Boozt (19/25) show this is achievable without diluting the brand.

2. Build for AI discovery, not just human browsing. The brands that score highest on Market Authority are not necessarily the biggest or best-known, they are the ones whose credibility is structured, verifiable, and machine-readable. As buyers increasingly discover products through AI recommendation engines, comparison tools, and conversational search, the brands that are shown will be those with strong proof infrastructure, clear positioning, and consistent trust signals across every touchpoint. Fashion brands should audit their digital presence not just for how it looks to a human shopper, but for how it reads to an AI evaluating credibility.

3. Treat structural foundations as a competitive asset. Structural Confidence accounts for 30% of the Market Authority Index, and brands with weak corporate governance, lapsed filings, or thin financial transparency pay a real penalty. Fashion brands often underinvest here because it feels like back-office work. But the data shows that brands with strong structural foundations consistently outperform and the Structural Confidence cap means that any brand with an SC score below 40 can never achieve certification, regardless of how strong their authority position is.

Assessed vs. Full Dataset Comparison

The table shows how the sector compares to all businesses in the directory to date. Fashion brands outperform the full dataset on every measure. The sector's average of 70.8 sits 3.7 points above the cross-sector average of 67.1, and the median of 75 exceeds the full dataset median of 70 by five points. The certification rate of 70.6% is also above the dataset-wide rate of 63.9%, meaning Fashion brands are more likely to achieve certification than the average brand in the benchmark.

This positions Fashion, Apparel and Personal Style as one of the strongest verticals in the Market Authority Index. The sector's investment in brand positioning, trust infrastructure, and increasingly in customer evidence means that fashion brands are, on average, better equipped to be found, recommended, and chosen as buyer discovery channels evolve.

But it must be noted that we have a bias at this time as many of the assessed brands are the leaders. We are also currently seeing a bias in requests where many of those that request assessment are leaders. Leaders tend to be leaders for a reason and look for ways to improve. This bias will reduce as we expand the directory to cover more and more brands. In addition the full dataset includes many sectors that are poor in terms of market authority such as many B2B sectors, so the superiority of the Fashion sector may be overstated when looking at this comparison.

Metric	Fashion Assessed (n=17)	Full Dataset (n=695)
Mean Market Authority Index	70.8	67.1
Standard Deviation	11.2	12.8
Median	75	70
Certification Rate (65+)	70.6%	63.9%

The lower standard deviation in Fashion (11.2 vs 12.8) means the sector is more tightly clustered — less extreme variance than the full dataset. Combined with the higher mean, it suggests fashion brands are more consistently strong rather than having a few outliers pulling the average up.

About the Market Authority Index

What It Measures

The Market Authority Index is a composite score (0-100) that measures how discoverable, credible, and recommendable a brand is from the buyer's perspective. It combines two dimensions:

- **Human Authority (70% weight):** The strength of a brand's buyer-facing credibility, measured across four pillars; Strategic Positioning, Proof and Validation, Trust Infrastructure, and Market Presence. Each pillar is scored out of 25, for a maximum of 100. It is a measure of Market Visibility.
- **Structural Confidence (30% weight):** The soundness of a brand's corporate and operational foundations, including filing compliance, financial risk signals, governance stability, and operational longevity. It is a measure of business strength and durability.

Formula

Market Authority Index = (Human Authority x 0.70) + (Structural Confidence x 0.30)

Structural Confidence Cap: If a brand's Structural Confidence score is below 40/100 and regardless of its Human Authority score, the Market Authority Index is capped at 65 regardless of the formula result. This prevents structurally unsound but authority-rich brands from achieving misleadingly high composite scores.

Certification Tiers

Tier	Score Threshold
Gold	80 or above
Silver	70-79
Certified	65-69

Brands scoring below 65 are not certified but receive a full diagnostic assessment.

Assessment Methodology

All brands in this sector summary have been assessed using the full Market Authority Index methodology as defined in the Market Authority Standard (Version 1.1), details here. This includes a complete Human Authority audit across all four sub-pillars, Structural Confidence verification using public filings and financial data, and scoring against the standardised framework.

The Market Authority Index is based entirely on publicly observable, buyer-facing information. It does not use self-reported data, and assessment is conducted independently of the brands being scored.

The Benchmark Dataset

This sector summary draws from the Q2 2026 benchmark portfolio of 138 fully assessed brands across 20 sectors. The full Market Authority Index dataset includes 695 brands scored across three tiers:

Tier	Brands	Average Score	Method
Assessed	131	64.7	Full audit methodology
Estimated	361	69.1	Structured signal analysis
Expected	203	65.0	Observable market signals

For the full cross-sector analysis, methodology details, and complete benchmark data, refer to the Market Authority Index Benchmark Intelligence Report 2026, Q2 Edition here.

Explore all assessed Fashion, Apparel and Personal Style brands in the Market Authority Index Certified Directory: https://digitalscorecard.com/sector/fashion-apparel-personal-style/

This report has been produced by Digital Scorecard. The Market Authority Index is based on the Market Authority Standard.

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Data snapshot: Q2 2026

Sector portfolio: 17 brands