

Book Summary: Social Responsibility in the Global Apparel Industry

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1. Level	FE, UG, PG
2. Pre-requisite knowledge required by educators	A. No background knowledge required
3. Pre-requisite knowledge required by students	A. No background knowledge required
4. Number of students	Any number
5. Length of time required	Adjustable
6. Type of activity	Book related
7. Discipline	Business, Cross-curricular
8. Topics covered	Campaigns, Child labour, Companies, Consumers, Corporate social responsibility, Environment, Gender, Globalisation, Health and safety, History, Home-based workers, Informal work, Legal initiatives, Multi-stakeholder initiatives, Migrant workers, Purchasing practices, Supply chains, Trade, Trade unions, Wages, Workers' rights, Working conditions



Educators in fashion related fields will, early in 2009, have a new resource available for use in the classroom. Our book, *Social Responsibility in the Global Apparel Industry*, published by Fairchild Books of New York, provides foundational knowledge on how leading apparel and footwear manufacturers and retailers approach and attempt to maintain social responsibility in the design, production, and sourcing of their products and in business operations. The book primarily focuses on topics associated with achieving improved labor standards and working conditions. We address the complexity of identifying and finding solutions for problems found throughout global apparel and footwear supply chains, such as child labor, harassment and abuse, discrimination, excessive hours of work, low wages, factory health and safety, and limits on freedom of association. We introduce various supply chain stakeholders, what they demand, and how they have influenced the industry's movement toward greater social responsibility. We highlight trends in global production and sourcing and the social responsibility field. In addition to issues related to labor and working conditions, we introduce how environmental concerns important to the industry are being addressed.

The book is based on a wealth of information we have gained through research involving a variety of first-hand experiences with the topics. We have conducted interviews with individuals who work for multinational corporations, NGOs and labor groups, and factory management in the US and off-shore; made observations in numerous factory visits in various regions of the world, including China, Guatemala, Hong Kong, Thailand, Turkey, and Vietnam; participated in the decision-making and leadership of an organization (the Fair Labor Association) that focuses on improving labor conditions in apparel and footwear factories; and analyzed research articles, corporate and NGO reports, and editorial and news reports from the international press.

We describe a range of labor and environmental problems that are encountered in the production of apparel, linking them with human rights and respected international agreements regarding workplace standards. Macro factors including politics, economics, and culture are analyzed for the ways they shape business response to labor and environmental issues. Various stakeholders associated with global apparel supply chains are introduced and we advise on how to effectively engage them. We analyze how codes of conduct for labor standards are implemented and the shortcomings of their monitoring, and describe the new divisions that apparel brands and retailers have created to manage labor compliance, as well as multi-stakeholder and business initiatives that have formed. A variety of strategies that apparel brands and retailers might use to address environmental concerns are explored. Finally, we offer possible new solutions for social and environmental problems. Throughout the book, various theories are explained and drawn upon for understanding and analyzing the action of businesses.

IDEAS FOR USING THE BOOK

There are a variety of ways that you might consider using this book. Instructors in the apparel field could develop an undergraduate course that would focus on social responsibility in the global apparel industry, using this book as its primary text. Alternatively, you might use the book to supplement a course examining economics, trade, sourcing, and other topics related to the global apparel industry. The book could also be used for graduate level courses focused on current issues in the global apparel industry. Educators from other disciplines - including business, sociology, women's studies, international economics, and others - could use the book as an industry sector case study when examining business and society, globalization, and international development.

This is an excerpt from:

Sustainable Fashion: A Handbook for Educators

Edited by Liz Parker on behalf of Fashioning an Ethical Industry, UK, and Marsha A. Dickson on behalf of Educators for Socially Responsible Apparel Business, USA.

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Publishers

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