

The Social Sustainability of Campus T-Shirts

Honors Project

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Introduction

This topic is of interest to me because it reflects my college career at ISU. I personally have a collection of 27 college-related custom t-shirts and counting (and a long sleeve shirt). The low level of concern on campus regarding the production of these shirts concerned me. The ease of ordering these shirts surprised me. I knew collecting all of these shirts impacted the world and I wanted to learn how. These shirts come from student organizations, given away for free, or included in another activity/event registration. I have been involved on campus since the start of my college career which in part explains the size of my custom t-shirt collection.

Researching the sustainability of t-shirts obviously relates to my Supply Chain Management major. The production and distribution of shirts requires a variety of supply chain partners around the world. It was also during college that I discovered my love of international travel, visiting some of the places these operations take place. My studies abroad took me to China and the United Kingdom.

My passion for sustainability really inspired this project idea. This passion was not new in college but certainly developed as I learned more/my knowledge grew. This passion inspired me to run for the Director and Assistant Director for the Government of the Student Body/Student Government. From the start of my college adventure, I have been a member of the Green Umbrella student organization. This club fosters the education of environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

As a First-Year Honors Program Co-Leader, we were tasked to read *Where Am I Wearing?* by Kelsey Timmerman. This is Kelsey's story of traveling to the parts of the world where some of his favorite items of clothing were made. He meets some of the people that could have been involved in the production of these items and therefore explores a human-side of globalization. Kelsey incorporates global travel, behind-the-scenes learning, and exploring the human side of global supply chains. All of which I hope to do more in the future. We were also fortunate to listen to Kelsey Timmerman himself when he visited ISU for a lecture. I currently serve on the ISU Committee on Lectures and work these events.

I also interned for a global transportation company, Werner Enterprises, while at ISU. Werner Enterprises is the kind of company that clothing manufacturers could hire to import and transport goods into the United States to reach consumers.

Mentor Selection

I thought this project would encapsulate my college career nicely. After brainstorming my idea, I searched campus for possible research mentors. Through researching potential mentors online and reaching out to faculty in the Supply Chain Information Systems and Apparel Merchandising and Design departments, I identified Frank Montabon as my mentor.

Methods & Data Collection

To determine which t-shirt brands to compare, I identified t-shirt brands frequently purchased by student organizations. I emailed a survey to a sample of the treasurers of student organizations. The first step in creating this survey was determining what information/data I needed to collect. I then drafted five survey questions (see Exhibit: 1). The main information needed was the organization where student organizations

ordered shirts and the brand of shirts sourced. In hindsight, I realized I should have also directly asked for the brand of shirt ordered, since some organizations can source several apparel brands.

Then I drafted the survey email to be sent to student organization treasurers. Next, I had Frank look over the survey questions and email draft. After I updated Frank's suggestions, he approved the invitation email and survey itself. Frank and I determined a sample size of 100 (in reality 109 organizations were contacted) was adequate with a realistic expectation of 20-30 responses. The survey invitation was sent to these 109 treasurers.

To compile the list of student organizations' treasurer, I tried to download/access the complete list of official student organizations from the Student Activities Center. I was not provided this information. Instead, I entered the name of all 896 student organizations as of winter break 2016/2017 into a spreadsheet. Then I assigned each group a randomly generated number between 1 and 896. For the groups with a number between 1 and 109 I entered the organization's treasurer name and NetId from the student organization database from the Student Activities Center.

Results

After the roughly three weeks the survey was open, 57 responses were recorded. Of these 57 responses, 24 provided at least some information I was seeking to obtain and was used in research process. See Exhibit 2 and 3 for specific organizations sourced from and brands sourced.

It is important to note that the results above are not as simple as they may seem. I only asked for the organization the student organization sourced from to determine the brand of t-shirt. Four of the five most listed businesses offer a variety of brands for customers to choose from. So I reached out to CustomInk, Dogtown University, Geneology, University Tees via phone, email, or online chat to determine the most popular brands sold.

My initial goal was to research the four most cited brands. In the end, I researched two different companies. This is because Gildan, Comfort Colors, and American Apparel all made the top five most popular list and are all owned by Gildan.

Gildan Certification #1: Oeko-Tex Standard 100

According to their website, Gildan and Anvil brands were Oeko-Tex Standard 100 certified ("Gildan: Stakeholders & Partners"). Gildan notes it annually renews its certification for all Gildan and Anvil branded products manufactured at our facilities in Central America, the Caribbean Basin, and Bangladesh. "In addition, many of our other branded products are also Oeko-Tex Standard 100 certified" ("Gildan: Stakeholders & Partners"). I did not find what these 'other branded products' were.

Overview

Oeko-Tex Standard 100 is a worldwide independent testing and certification system focused on consumer product safety ("OEKO-TEX | STANDARD 100 By OEKO-TEX").

Who Sponsors?

All of the research in this subsection is from the STANDARD 100 By OEKO-TEX website at oeko-tex.com. “The International Association for Research and Testing in the Field of Textile and Leather Ecology (OEKO-TEX) is a union of 18 independent textile research and test institutes in Europe and Japan and their worldwide representative offices” (“STANDARD 100 By OEKO-TEX”). The member institutes are responsible for the joint development of test methods and limit values which form the basis of the production site certifications according to STeP by OEKO-TEX (Sustainable Textile Production) and the chemical management tool DETOX TO ZERO by OEKO-TEX. They are also entitled to carry out the corresponding laboratory tests and site audits. OEKO-TEX builds trust within the supply chain through/to the consumer and ensures independent verification through continuous improvement.

Requirements

All of this information is from the Certification website at oeko-tex.com.

- “Written application from manufacturer to one of the authorized test institute or official representative offices around the world” (“OEKO-TEX | STANDARD 100 By OEKO-TEX - Certification”).
- Sample materials submission to be tested only at the member institutes in Europe and Japan.
- Declaration of conformity by manufacturer states, “...tested textile samples shall correspond at all times with the quality of the products manufactured or sold throughout the twelve month license period” (“OEKO-TEX | STANDARD 100 By OEKO-TEX - Certification”).
- “...company audit at the site of the applicant where the certified items are produced” (“OEKO-TEX | STANDARD 100 By OEKO-TEX - Certification”).
 - “For initial certifications, company visits are carried out by the auditors of the commissioned OEKO-TEX member institute within at least the first six months after filing of the application, checking for quality assurance and production processes” (“OEKO-TEX | STANDARD 100 By OEKO-TEX - Certification”).
 - After initial certification, company visits will be carried out every three years.
- OEKO-TEX members are required to be subject to product controls. Product controls are the purchasing of labeled goods in stores to check if actual products match test samples.

What Does It Cover?

All of this information is from the STANDARD 100 by OEKO-TEX website at oeko-tex.com.

- Raw, semi-finished, and finished textile products at all processing levels
- Accessory materials
- Raw and dyed/finished yarns
- Woven and knitted fabrics
- Accessories including:
 - Sewing threads or labels
 - Ready-made articles of various types (garments of all types)

Gildan Certification #2: Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production (WRAP)

“All of Gildan’s sewing facilities are certified with the Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production (WRAP) or are currently in the process of being re-certified ("Gildan: Stakeholders & Partners"). The four contractor sewing facilities producing for Gildan in Haiti are also WRAP certified” ("Gildan: Stakeholders & Partners").

According to their website, Gildan’s integrated textile and sewing facility in Bangladesh received first WRAP certification in 2015. “This is the first Gildan-owned, vertically integrated facility to receive this certification.” ("Gildan: Stakeholders & Partners").

Overview

All of this information is from the About WRAP website at wrapcompliance.org.

- “WRAP is an independent, objective, non-profit team of global social compliance experts dedicated to promoting safe, lawful, humane, and ethical manufacturing around the world through certification and education.” ("About WRAP Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production What Is Social Compliance").
- Standard-setting body in social compliance
- Largest independent facility certification program in the world

Who Sponsors?

WRAP is an independent, objective, non-profit organization ("WRAP Frequently Asked Questions"). WRAP is politically neutral, non-industry organization that is governed by a, “...10-member Board of Directors, the majority of whom are required ... to be from outside the apparel and footwear industries” ("WRAP Frequently Asked Questions"). The organization is not funded by charitable donations, grants, or membership dues. ("WRAP Frequently Asked Questions").

Requirements

See 12 principles

What Does It Cover?

Apparel, footwear, and sewn products in regard to the 12 principles ("About WRAP Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production What Is Social Compliance")

12 Principles

This information comes from the WRAP'S 12 Principles Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production Social Compliance Principles website at wrapcompliance.org.

1. Compliance with Laws and Workplace Regulations
“Facilities will comply with laws and regulations in all locations where they conduct business” ("WRAP's 12 Principles Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production Social Compliance Principles").
 - a. Includes local, national, and applicable international laws

2. Prohibition of Forced Labor
“Facilities will not use involuntary, forced or trafficked labor” (“WRAP’s 12 Principles Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production Social Compliance Principles”).
 - a. This includes prison, indentured, or bonded labor
 - i. Bonded labor is when slavery becomes a security against a loan (“Bonded Labor | Debt Bondage Or Peonage - End Slavery Now”).
 - b. Follow employment laws and free of coercion (“including imposing substantial fines or loss of residency papers by workers leaving employment or restricting a worker’s ability to voluntarily end his/her employment”) (“WRAP’s 12 Principles Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production Social Compliance Principles”).
 - c. When hiring workers through an employment broker or agency, “facilities will ensure that the workers’ passports are not withheld, all written contracts are in the native language of the workers, and recruitment fees are not borne by the workers themselves” (“WRAP’s 12 Principles Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production Social Compliance Principles”).
3. Prohibition of Child Labor
“Facilities will not hire any employee under the age of 14 or under the minimum age established by law for employment, whichever is greater, or any employee whose employment would interfere with compulsory schooling” (“WRAP’s 12 Principles Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production Social Compliance Principles”).
 - a. “...where permitted by local law, a facility employs young workers (defined as workers whose age is between the minimum age of employment and 18 years), the facility will also comply with any applicable legal restrictions on the nature and volume of work performed by such young workers, as well as any other requirements imposed by law” (“WRAP’s 12 Principles Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production Social Compliance Principles”).
4. Prohibition of Harassment or Abuse
“Facilities will provide a work environment free of supervisory or co-worker harassment or abuse, and free of corporal punishment in any form” (“WRAP’s 12 Principles Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production Social Compliance Principles”).
5. Compensation and Benefits
“Facilities will pay at least the minimum total compensation required by local law, including all mandated wages, allowances & benefits” (“WRAP’s 12 Principles Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production Social Compliance Principles”).
 - a. “Facilities will ensure proper compensation for their employees for all the work done, by providing in a timely manner all the wages and benefits that are in compliance with the local and national laws...” (“WRAP’s 12 Principles Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production Social Compliance Principles”).
 - i. Includes overtime premiums, holiday work, mandatory social insurance, any other allowances or benefits required by local laws
6. Hours of Work
“Hours worked each day, and days worked each week, should not exceed the limitations of the country’s law. Facilities will provide at least one day off in every seven-day period, except as

required to meet urgent business needs” (“WRAP’s 12 Principles Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production Social Compliance Principles”).

- a. “Facilities are required by local law to adhere to any limits set on regular working hours as well as any limits set on overtime work” (“WRAP’s 12 Principles Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production Social Compliance Principles”).
- b. Extra requirements exist for long-term certification. I was unable to determine if this is true for any facilities Gildan uses.

7. Prohibition of Discrimination

“Facilities will employ, pay, promote, and terminate workers on the basis of their ability to do the job, rather than on the basis of personal characteristics or beliefs” (“WRAP’s 12 Principles Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production Social Compliance Principles”).

8. Health and Safety

“Facilities will provide a safe and healthy work environment. Where residential housing is provided for workers, facilities will provide safe and healthy housing” (“WRAP’s 12 Principles Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production Social Compliance Principles”).

9. Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining

“Facilities will recognize and respect the right of employees to exercise their lawful rights of free association and collective bargaining” (“WRAP’s 12 Principles Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production Social Compliance Principles”).

- a. Facility must respect freedom of employee to join worker’s association or not, discrimination not tolerated.
- b. Facility and all employees act in lawful manner according to all relevant laws.
- c. Facilities will ensure an effective mechanism is in place to address any workplace complaints.

10. Environment

“Facilities will comply with environmental rules, regulations and standards applicable to their operations, and will observe environmentally conscious practices in all locations where they operate.” (“WRAP’s 12 Principles Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production Social Compliance Principles”).

- a. “Facilities will ensure compliance with all applicable legally mandated environmental standards, and should demonstrate a commitment to protecting the environment by actively monitoring their environmental practices” (“WRAP’s 12 Principles Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production Social Compliance Principles”).
 - i. Note this clause is optional
- b. “Facilities ensure proper waste management, including monitoring the disposal of any waste material - whether solid, liquid or gaseous - to ensure such disposal is done safely and in a manner consistent with all relevant laws” (“WRAP’s 12 Principles Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production Social Compliance Principles”).

11. Customs Compliance

“Facilities will comply with applicable customs laws, and in particular, will establish and maintain programs to comply with customs laws regarding illegal” (“WRAP’s 12 Principles Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production Social Compliance Principles”).

- a. “Facilities will ensure that all merchandise is accurately marked or labeled in compliance with all applicable laws” (“WRAP’s 12 Principles Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production Social Compliance Principles”).
 - b. “...facilities will keep records for all materials and orders, as well as maintain detailed production records” (“WRAP’s 12 Principles Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production Social Compliance Principles”).
12. Security
- “Facilities will maintain facility security procedures to guard against the introduction of non-manifested cargo into outbound shipments (i.e. drugs, explosives biohazards and/or other contraband)” (“WRAP’s 12 Principles Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production Social Compliance Principles”).
- a. “Facilities will ensure adequate controls are in place to safeguard against introduction of any non-manifested cargo” (“WRAP’s 12 Principles Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production Social Compliance Principles”).
 - b. “...WRAP recognizes the United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP)’s C-TPAT Guidelines for Foreign Manufacturers as a best practice program, and has adopted those guidelines under this Principle” (“WRAP’s 12 Principles Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production Social Compliance Principles”).

Gildan Manufacturing Program #1: The Maquila Solidarity Network (MSN)

All of this research comes from the About Us website at maquilasolidarity.org. The Maquila Solidarity Network is a “labour and women’s rights organization that supports the efforts of workers in global supply chains to win improved wages and working conditions and greater respect for their rights” (“About Us | Maquila Solidarity Network”). MSN works primarily in Central America and Mexico and works with women and labor rights organizations “...on cases of worker rights violations and on joint projects and initiatives focusing on systemic issues” (“About Us | Maquila Solidarity Network”). This organization works with brands and suggests policies and actions to, “...tackle systemic issues, such as lack of respect for freedom of association, poverty wages, precarious employment, and gender-based discrimination” (“About Us | Maquila Solidarity Network”).

Gildan Manufacturing Program #2: Worker Rights Consortium (WRC)

All of this research comes from the MISSION website at workersrights.org. “The Worker Rights Consortium (WRC) is an independent labor rights monitoring organization, conducting investigations of working conditions in factories around the globe”(“WRC: Mission”). The purpose of the WRC is to combat sweatshops and “protect the rights of workers who make apparel and other products (“WRC: Mission”). I did not find out what these ‘other’ products were. This organization “...conducts independent, in-depth investigations; issues public reports on factories producing for major brands; and aids workers at these factories in their efforts to end labor abuses and defend their workplace rights...” (“WRC: Mission”). It mainly works with the factories that produce higher education-related apparel. There are 187 member college and university affiliates including the University of Iowa but not ISU.

Gildan Manufacturing Program #3: Sedex, the Supplier Ethical Data Exchange

All of this information is from the About Us website at sedexglobal.com. Gildan is a member of Sedex, the Supplier Ethical Data Exchange. Sedex is a global non-profit, "...making it simpler to do business that's good for everyone" ("About Us | Sedex"). Sedex is the, "...world's largest collaborative platform for sharing responsible sourcing data on supply chains..." ("About Us | Sedex"). This data exchange has 40,000+ members in 150+ countries. "Tens of thousands of companies use Sedex to manage their performance around labour rights, health & safety, the environment and business ethics" ("About Us | Sedex"). Sedex works with brands, factories, producers, and industry experts. Sedex services, "...enable members to bring together many kinds of different data, standards and certifications, to make informed business decisions..." across value chains ("About Us | Sedex"). Their goal is to make this simple. Sedex does not perform audits and is not a certification program.

Gildan Manufacturing Program #4: Fair Labor Association (FLA)

Gildan's labor compliance program was accredited by the Fair Labor Association on June 13, 2007 ("Gildan: Stakeholders & Partners"). According to their website, "FLA is a collaborative effort of universities, civil society organizations and socially responsible companies dedicated to protecting workers' rights around the world" ("About Us | Fair Labor Association"). FLA notes it helps companies improve compliance systems. FLA utilizes a third party complaint process to address severe labor rights violations and publishes 'transparent and independent' assessments online ("About Us | Fair Labor Association"). Members commit to ten Principles of Fair Labor and Responsible Sourcing, ten Principles of Fair Labor and Responsible Production, and a workplace code of conduct ("Code Of Conduct | Fair Labor Association"; "Principles Of Fair Labor And Responsible Sourcing And Production | Fair Labor Association"). Companies voluntarily meet these 'internationally recognized' labor standards where their products are made ("About Us | Fair Labor Association"). Since organizations only voluntarily pledge to follow these requirements FLA is Gildan partner, not a certification.

Gildan Manufacturing Program #5: Sustainable Apparel Coalition (SAC) & Higg Index

Gildan joined the Sustainable Apparel Coalition (SAC) in 2013 ("Gildan: Stakeholders & Partners"). According to the Sustainable Apparel Coalition, the heart of the SAC is the Higg Index. The Higg index is a suite of self-assessment tools for brands, retailers, and facilities worldwide, "...to measure their environmental and social impacts and identify areas for improvement" ("The Higg Index – Sustainable Apparel Coalition"). The Higg Index measures environmental, social, and labor impacts and "...delivers a holistic overview of the sustainability performance of a product or company—a big-picture perspective..." ("The Higg Index – Sustainable Apparel Coalition"). The SAC notes the goal of the Higg index is to increase transparency within supply chains of apparel, footwear and home textiles brands. SAC members commit to use the Higg Index and work together to revise and improve it ("The Higg Index – Sustainable Apparel Coalition").

For Brands (all information from Brand Tools website at apparelcoalition.org):

- Improve environmental and social footprint
- Get deeper transparency into supply chain
- Source sustainable materials from credible suppliers
- Improve efficiency and promote innovation

For Facilities (all information from Facility Tools website at apparelcoalition.org):

- Make assessments easier
- Share data with brands
- Strengthen supply-chain relationships
- “Users conduct the assessments at least once a year and the Environmental Module assessments are now being verified by SAC-approved, on-site assessors” (“Facility Tools – Sustainable Apparel Coalition”).

Gildan Manufacturing Program #6: International Labour Organization’s Better Work Programme

Gildan participates in the International Labour Organization’s Better Work Programme through its third party contractors in Haiti (“Gildan: Stakeholders & Partners”).

The rest of this information in this section is from The Programme website at betterwork.org. The International Labour Organization’s Better Work Programme is a “...collaboration between the United Nation’s International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group – is a comprehensive programme bringing together all levels of the garment industry to improve working conditions and respect of labour rights for workers, and boost the competitiveness of apparel businesses” (“The Programme – Better Work”).

IFC is a member of the biggest global development institution focused on the private sector in emerging markets, the World Bank. This organization works with 2,000 companies worldwide to “... leveraging [leverage] their capital, expertise and influence to help the private sector end extreme poverty and boost shared prosperity” (“The Programme – Better Work”). ILO promotes “...social justice and internationally recognized human and labour rights, pursuing its founding mission that social justice is essential to universal and lasting peace.” (“The Programme – Better Work”). This organization unites governments, employers and workers representatives of 187 member States, “to set labour standards, develop policies and devise programmes promoting decent work for all women and men” (“The Programme – Better Work”).

Their website notes “...factories have steadily improved compliance with ILO core labour standards and national legislation covering compensation, contracts, occupational safety and health and working time” (“The Programme – Better Work”). At the same time, facility productivity and profitability increase. This program is active in 1450 factories and employees more than 1.9 million workers in seven countries. Better Work advises factories to “collaborates [collaborate] with governments to improve labour laws, and with brands to ensure progress is sustained” and advise unions “how to give workers a greater say in their lives...” (“The Programme – Better Work”).

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Audits

All of the information from this section is from Gildan's Auditing Methodology website at genuinegildan.com. Gildan facilities have been audited by internal auditors or third party auditors for ten+ years. All Gildan owned and third party contractor facilities receive at least one internal audit every 18 months. Internal audits are unannounced and "...are conducted by internal regional monitors who are thoroughly trained on our monitoring guidelines and social compliance programs" or third party auditors ("Gildan: Auditing Methodology"). Annual performance evaluations for internal compliance auditors highlight training gaps to create personal training plans.

Gildan can require third party audit service providers to perform internal audits. These staff and/or third party monitors must:

- Know Gildan’s Code of Conduct
- Speak regional language except in Haiti where Creole interpreters are used
- Know all local, regional, and national laws
- Use Sedex, or FLA, or their own tools
- Know “Gildan Corporate Citizenship Program and internal monitoring system and tools such as the Gildan Corporate Social Responsibility Database” (“Gildan: Auditing Methodology”)
- Work with FLA, WRAP, or customer monitoring audits

“External audits are also conducted on an ongoing basis at Gildan owned and contractor facilities” (“Gildan: Auditing Methodology”). These audits are performed by third parties required by FLA, WRAP, Better Work, and customers.

Auditing and monitoring tools include:

- Facility self-assessment questionnaire
- Guidelines and ‘management action plan’
- Management interviews
- Employee interview guidelines
- Monitoring guidelines

Remediation follow-ups are performed by internal auditors and results are added to Gildan’s ‘Corporate Citizenship’ database. “All evidence of remediation is verified by our auditors on an on-going basis to ensure that corrective measures have been implemented to address initial findings” (“Gildan: Auditing Methodology”). On-site follow-ups conducted if needed.

Gildan’s acquisition due diligence and integration process includes accounting for social and environmental risks. This process includes “...examining any gaps on their existing social and environmental policies and compliance programs and helping them develop the corresponding action plans in order to implement any corrective actions in a timely manner” (“Gildan: Auditing Methodology”). Other actions include rolling out of the Gildan Code of Conduct, employee awareness training, and training auditors. When acquisition is finished, the company receives assistance meeting these social and environmental policies and compliance programs standards. See Exhibit 4 for more details regarding Gildan’s Monitoring Guidelines.

Comfort Colors

Comfort Colors was the most popular brand sourced from two of the top organizations cited by student organizations. Comfort Colors is owned by Gildan and is the ...“leading supplier of garment-dyed undecorated basic T-shirts and sweatshirts for the North American printwear market” (“Gildan: Our Brands”). All information that applies to Gildan also applies to Comfort Colors.

These details of the acquisition are all from Gildan’s Auditing Methodology website at genuinegildan.com. Gildan completed the Comfort Colors acquisition in 2015 and during this time reviewed past “...external social compliance audits conducted by their customers...” (“Gildan: Auditing

Methodology"). Full integration was expected to be completed by the end of 2016. This includes meeting Gildan's social compliance standards in this timeframe. I am not sure when or if this has happened by now.

Bella + Canvas

According to their website, all of their American facilities are WRAP Platinum accredited. The company is in the process of getting all international facilities certified ("WRAP Certification | Bella+Canvas"). Without a list of their facilities, I am unable to verify their WRAP status. Their website says their supply chain is 100% no sweat shop ("Responsible Tees | Wholesale Clothing, Wholesale Apparel | Bella+Canvas"). Sweat shop was not defined or clarified. "Every one of our styles that are produced overseas are fair trade (we're also always in contact with these factories to ensure they're following our ethical policies)" ("Responsible Tees | Wholesale Clothing, Wholesale Apparel | Bella+Canvas"). I was not able to verify their product's fair trade status. Some of these claims do not appear to be verified. Bella + Canvas provides extremely limited information to the public regarding their operations.

American Apparel

The LA Times reported American Apparel was purchased by Gildan on January 10, 2017. Their website provides no information regarding how American Apparel branded products differ from other Gildan products. Some American Apparel wholesale products are made in the USA. Since this acquisition was recent, it is probably uncertain what changes will be made to American Apparel.

Lessons Learned

- Number of brands in the Gildan portfolio
 - Aside from Bella + Canvas, all of the most popular brands sourced from student organization apparel companies were Gildan brands including Comfort Colors and American Apparel. This made comparisons between brands much less useful since all information regarding Gildan applies to these brands.
- Little information available from brands regarding social sustainability
 - Bella + Canvas was the only most popular brand not owned by Gildan. Unfortunately, they provide little information regarding social sustainability including:
 - Facility audits
 - Certifications and manufacturing programs
 - Labor force
 - Hiring and firing practices
 - Temporary labor practices
 - Wages and benefits
 - Union membership
 - Age restrictions
 - Overtime
 - Training and development
 - Workplace safety
 - Number of work-related injuries
 - How does organization handle incidents?

- Training
 - Facility structure safety
- Product safety
 - Consumer safety
 - Raw materials sourcing guidelines
 - Product life cycle analysis

See Exhibit 7 for measures and indications of social sustainability student clubs (or anyone) should be aware of when buying custom t-shirts. Little information available regarding these areas makes brand research and comparisons difficult.

- I was surprised I was only able to really research Gildan
 - This is because data from the survey identified almost exclusively Gildan-owned brands. In addition, the other most popular brand, Bella + Canvas, provides little information to the public about their business operations.
- What certifications and manufacturing programs really tell you varies
 - A major explanation is the different nature of manufacturing programs not being certification programs. For example, Oeko-Tex certification means the certification body could actually buy products as a consumer and test them to match brand supplied information. Sedex and Higg Index are just tools for organizations. FLA participation only requires committing to ideals.
- The results of audits and remediation actions are tracked by Gildan
 - This ensures audits are not only informational but also are used to seek improvements for the lives of employees. I was happy to learn this.
- Some certifications and manufacturing programs provide public list of participating organizations and others do not
 - This information would be used to verify information from the brands themselves.
- Consumers are largely at company's will to learn more about their operations
 - I probably should not have been surprised by this but was.
- The four most cited businesses student organizations use to order shirts all allow provide customers a selection of brands to choose from
 - This gave me encouragement that brand comparisons would be useful and helpful to anyone purchasing custom t-shirts.
- Quantity vs quality survey response data
 - The survey had a 52% response rate. Of the 57 responses, 24 of them provided usable information for this project. So in reality, my response rate was more like 22%.
- Survey brands did not match my personal customer appeal collection.
 - Please see Exhibits 5 & 6

Hurdles Throughout Project

- Most popular brands identified by survey are owned by Gildan
 - Please see 'Lessons Learned' section
- Lack of public information regarding social sustainability provided from t-shirt brands
 - This is why the 'Bella + Canvas' section in this report is limited
 - Please see 'Lessons Learned' section
- Brand comparisons difficult to perform

- Please see 'Lessons Learned' section
- American Apparel was purchased by Gildan on January 10, 2017 (Li).
 - The only public information I could find was about acquisition
 - Changes likely to occur to American Apparel business model
- The Student Activities Center did not share a complete list of student organizations and their treasurers
 - a. I had to compile this information myself and I had limited time for this project. The survey probably would have been sent out to more student organizations if treasurer information was easier to obtain.
- Unhelpful survey responses from survey respondents
 - a. About 42% of survey responses could not be used in this project. This further limited the data I had to work with. This issues is possible due to survey design.
- Some certifications and manufacturing programs do not have member lists available to the public
 - a. Please see 'Lessons Learned' section

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Exhibit 1: Survey Questions

What student organization are you the Treasurer?

How many unique t-shirts designs (excluding size and color) have you ordered so far this academic year?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Quantity of t-shirts

How many t-shirts designs do you anticipate ordering during the remaining part of the academic year (Spring 2017)?

0 2 3 5 6 8 9 11 12 14 15

Quantity of t-shirts

Where does your student organization order t-shirts?

Please enter up to five business(es) or website(s).

Business/website

Business/website

Business/website

Business/website

Business/website

What kind of t-shirt have you ordered or will order?

For example: Short sleeve, long sleeve, the same design each year, dri-fit, etc.

Exhibit 2: Organization Sourced

Brand	Count	Most Popular Brands
University Tees	5	Bella+Canvas, Comfort Colors
Custom Ink	4	Gildan and American Apparel
Dogtown in Ames	3	Gildan most popular Also popular: Hanes, Bella + Canvas, American Apparel
Geneologie	2	Bella+Canvas, Comfort Colors, American Apparel
Cited One Time	Alpha Copies, Adam Block, Barefoot, discountmugs.com, www.kotisdesign.com, Branding Impressions, BSN Sports, Eight Seven Central	

Exhibit 3: Brands

Brand	Count	Parent Company
American Apparel	2	Gildan
Comfort Colors	2	Gildan
Cited One Time	Gilden, Nike, Wolly Threads, SustainU	

Exhibit 4: Gildan Monitoring Guidelines ("Gildan: Auditing Methodology")

NUMBER OF WORKERS (EXCLUDING MANAGERS)	LENGTH OF AUDIT	INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS	TOTAL EMPLOYEES INTERVIEWED	WORKERS FILES ANALYZED (WORKING HOURS AND WAGE COMPLIANCE)	TIME SPENT ON INTERVIEWS
1-100	1 DAY	6 (OR TOTAL NUMBER OF WORKERS IF LESS THAN 5)	10	10	2.5 HOURS
101-500	2 DAYS	6	26	26	6 HOURS
501-1000	3 DAYS	12	42	42	8.5 HOURS
1001-2000	4 DAYS	20	52	52	12.5 HOURS
Over 2000	4 DAYS	30	70	70	15 HOURS

Exhibit 5: Brands from My Personal Custom Shirt Collection

Brand	Count	%
Gildan	14	48%
Fruit of the Loom	4	14%
Bella+Canvas	4	14%
District	2	7%
Where Your Clothing	1	3%
SustainU	1	3%
Port + Company	1	3%
Unknown	2	• 7%

Exhibit 6: How I Obtained My Personal Collection

How Obtained	Count	%
Given away for free	13	45%
Included with registration	9	31%
For work	4	14%
Purchased	1	3%
Unknown	2	7%

Exhibit 7: Social Sustainability Elements Student Organizations Should Consider When Purchasing Custom Apparel

Labor Practices

- Wages & benefits
- Collective bargaining (aka union membership)
- Hiring and firing practices
- Age restrictions
 - Brand policy & countries where facilities located
- Temporary vs permanent employment
- Employee ergonomic considerations
- Training & development
- Overtime
- Locally-hired management

Health & Safety

- # work-related injuries
- How does organization handle these incidents?
- Training
- Facility structure

Product

- Consumer safety
- Raw materials sourcing guidelines
- Product life cycle analysis

Look for Certifications

- What certifications really tell you varies
- Look into each to determine legitimacy
 - Ask these questions:
 - Who sponsors?
 - Requirements for certification
 - What's covered?

Audits

- Who conducts? Internal or external? Both?
- Announced or unannounced?
- What is covered?
 - Examples: facilities, safety, overtime
- Which facilities?
 - Company-owned, contractor, suppliers
- How often?
- New facilities audited before production?
- What do auditors have access to?
- Remediation follow-ups?

Questions?

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