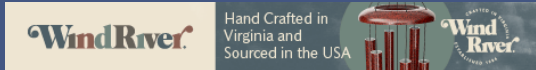


INDEPENDENT RETAILER



Products & Suppliers Retail News Marketing & Management E-Commerce

Trade Show News

Fair Trade For Better Business

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Fair trade is a social movement with a goal of helping artisans, makers, farmers, and producers, usually in developing countries, realize better trading conditions and promote sustainability. It's a way of doing business that promotes respect and tries to draw a clearer, straighter line between the maker of a product and the end consumer in international trade. The World Fair Trade Organization prescribes ten principles that fair trade organizations should follow in order to ensure actual fair trade practices. The ten principles are:

1. Opportunities for Disadvantaged Producers

Fair trade aims to reduce poverty by supporting small producers such as family businesses, associations, and cooperatives and enabling them to move away from income insecurity and into self-sufficiency.

2. Transparency and Accountability

Management needs to be transparent and accountable. Employees, members, and producers are all involved in any decision-making processes and there are healthy communication channels throughout the supply chain.

3. Fair Trade Practices

Companies do not maximize profit at the expense of the producers, makers, farmers, or artisans that supply products. The social, environments and economic wellbeing of small producers are taken into consideration.

4. Fair Payment

All payments are fair prices that are mutually agreed upon by all.

5. No Child Labor, No Forced Labor

Adheres to all national and local laws, as well as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

6. No Discrimination, Gender Equity, and Freedom of Association

The organization does not discriminate in hiring, access to training, promotions, termination, or retirement based on race, social class, religion, nation of origin, disability, gender, sexual orientation, political affiliation, age, etc. There are policies to promote gender equality, and the organization respects the rights of all employees to form and join trade unions of their choice.

7. Good Working Conditions

Fair Trade companies provide safe and healthy working environments for all employees.

8. Capacity Building

Fair trade companies develop the skills and capabilities of employees and members for their own personal growth.

9. Promote Fair Trade

Raises awareness for greater justice in world trade through Fair Trade.

10. Respect the Environment

Fair trade organizations maximize use of raw materials from sustainably managed sources, and always buy local when possible.

In the United States, the Fair Trade Federation and Fair Trade USA are two of the largest nonprofits advocating for the fair trade industry and certifying fair trade businesses. Their values and principals are based on those of the World Fair Trade Organization. Fair trade is an important movement that empowers people in other countries, especially women and children. It helps grow small businesses around the world, by bypassing the middleman and larger manufacturers big retailers typically purchase from. As an independent retailer reselling fair trade products, you are helping to support other small businesses.

In addition to helping the small business cause, fair trade products are beneficial to your business because they give you an edge over chain and mass-market retailers. Fair trade products are usually handmade, so each item is unique. It's a way to offer a different kind of product from competitors. Each item has a story behind it and shows customers your commitment to giving back.

Choosing Fair Trade Suppliers

When it comes to choosing a fair trade supplier, there are several things to keep in mind. Of course, selecting merchandise that suits your demographic, and prices that fit your budgets are a no-brainer. You will also want a supplier who has strong connections to the artisans they partner with for products. There are many suppliers who are certified as fair trade from the Fair Trade Federation and Fair Trade USA. However, there are many who have not filed for certification, yet still adhere to fair trade guidelines. As a retailer, it is up to you to use your best judgment and ask questions when selecting fair trade suppliers. To get you started, here are five of *Independent Retailer's* favorite fair trade suppliers: