

Wesfarmers Coles Sordid Practices Exposed Yet Again

by Ben Butler via shopper - SMH Tuesday, Jun 25 2013, 12:27am

international / prose / post

Since drawing the attention of the media, regulators and other groups to the reprehensible, arrogant, deceitful and insulting to customers practices of Coles supermarket chain, particularly the management of the Eastgate Bondi Junction Store, who are known to verbally abuse (scream at) staff and slander customers, more and more sordid revelations have been forthcoming from the mass media.



Going down and staying Down

We are not surprised by the latest revelations that Coles has been exploiting underdeveloped nations and their workers to such an extent that the personal safety of workers has been compromised -- it is all characteristic of an Aussie company gone bad by adopting the reprehensible, and exploitative to the extreme, practices of US mega-Corporations like Walmart, infamous for exploiting Mexican labour and turning a blind eye to illegals in order to take advantage of the situation.

I would advise Wesfarmers Coles that this is AUSTRALIA and your problems have only just begun.

As promised, a website dedicated to the grievances of customers, staff and suppliers will soon be available on the Internet, as it is known that Coles arrogantly ignores valid complaints.

Not long ago stores were given a degree of autonomy to settle minor grievances in-house; however, now that Coles has adopted the counter-productive and hugely costly American (insular) top-down approach, which clearly does not work in Australia, things have been going downhill for Wesfarmers Coles since. Wesfarmers Coles seem to have forgotten who they depend on for a living and exactly who gives them their bottom line -- take note all major Aussie corporations, especially the Banks. The 'knock-on' effect is very real in these situations.

Story from the SMH follows:

Coles accused of underpaying Bangladeshis

Supermarket group Coles has been accused of paying so little to its Bangladeshi suppliers that it is impossible for them to run a safe factory.

"What I remember most is the screaming. I hear those screams in my dreams."

Coles, Target, Cotton On and Forever New were named as retailers using low-cost labour in Bangladesh, where a factory collapse in April claimed more than 1100 lives, by

ABC TV's [Four Corners](#) program on Monday night.

The Australian retailers are the latest to be drawn into controversy over the use of Bangladeshi suppliers. On Monday, Fairfax Media reported that Kmart, Big W and Rivers were among Western companies manufacturing in the poverty-stricken South Asian country.

Four Corners reported the Gous Fashions factory, in Bangladesh's second largest city, Chittagong, started supplying Coles in May 2011.

Managing director Anwarul Azim told the program Gous Fashion had ceased previous abusive practices against employees, including demanding excessive overtime and locking female workers in the factory.

Mr Azim said Gous Fashion would not take any more orders from Coles because it was "impossible to be a compliant factory with the Coles offer prices".

"Actually if they want to do the business, they'll have to go to the non-compliant factories, like you know you have seen the Savar tragedy," he said. "So many people died."

The April 24 collapse of the Rana Plaza building in Savar, on the outskirts of capital Dhaka, was the deadliest structural collapse of the modern era, excluding the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York.

Workers who had abandoned the eight-storey building because of safety fears were forced back into it on the morning of the collapse.

The building's politically connected owner, Soheil Rana, insisted that people were "exaggerating" the risk from "a hair line crack".

He has since been arrested and a Bangladesh government report in May recommended he and the owners of five factories inside the building be sentenced to life in jail.

Survivors of the disaster told Four Corners of their ordeal.

"What I remember most is the screaming," "Sujan" said. "I hear those screams in my dreams. They wake me from my sleep."

Four Corners reported that workers at Northern Fashions, which makes for Forever New, earn \$4 a day.

According to accounts filed with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission, in 2011-12 Forever New sold \$198 million worth of clothes and made a profit of \$6.2 million.

Four Corners also reported that a manager at manufacturer Eve Dress Shirts denied a claim by workers that they were making clothes for Rivers.

Following the collapse of Rana Plaza, retailers around the world, including parts of Coles owner Wesfarmers, have signed up to an accord to improve factory safety in Bangladesh.

Wesfarmers brands Kmart and Target signed the accord on June 7.

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<http://tinyurl.com/phrydve>

Jungle Drum Prose/Poetry. <http://jungledrum.lingama.net/news/story-655.html>