

Levi Strauss & Co, Nike, Gap and Timberland Told about Their Best Practices in Purchasing

“As You Sow”, a nonprofit organization, dedicated to increasing corporate environmental and social responsibility, has released a report on a research, which is based on interviews with 7 leading footwear and apparel manufacturers including **Nike, Gap, Levi Strauss & Co, Phillips-Van Heusen** and **Timberland**.



The report titled “[Best Current Practices in Purchasing: The Apparel Industry](#)” highlighted “*how apparel industry leaders have made changes to their purchasing practices—and even their corporate structures— in continued efforts to improve working conditions in factories and to reap the benefits of having an effectively managed supply chain.*”

The researchers studied the companies’ initiatives—in the pilot phase or recently implemented—in 5 categories: designing and buying, corporate culture, forecasting, pricing, and production management. The first and foremost aim of the research was to share the valuable experience with the professional community and inspire other representatives of the industry to move forward to a more improved level.

Here are several must-dos from the summary. According to it, Brands should:

Manage through technology. The development of web-based tools for project and capacity management, tracking, sampling, forecasting, and traceability enable two-way communication from headquarters to suppliers.

Integrate best practices in purchasing into the corporate culture. Train and incentivize executive staff on the social health of factories producing product for the company as well as on meeting productivity and budget criteria. Train all participants in the production cycle to understand how their decisions impact factory workers and the total cost of products, and develop trust with suppliers so that they can provide honest, substantive feedback into the success of corporate practices.

Insist on best practices with retailers. Retailer pressure creates a bullwhip effect on brands and, in turn, factories.

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