

Work still needed on US retailer social compliance

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Many popular apparel companies doing business in the US are "lagging" when it comes to addressing social-compliance issues in the supply chain, a new report warns.

However, other major clothing companies including Levi Strauss, Walmart, Gap, Hanesbrands, Nordstrom and Gildan Activewear topped a new survey of global supply-chain compliance programmes.

The poll of apparel brands and retailers released yesterday by corporate responsibility group **As You Sow**, entitled *Towards a safe, just workplace: apparel supply chain compliance programmes* features a scorecard and report of publicly available comparable baseline data to evaluate the compliance programmes of many of the top apparel firms operating in the US.

According to **As You Sow**, the report ranks the resources allocated and actions companies are employing on key compliance actions such as factory auditing, remediation, continuous improvement, collaboration, company management accountability and transparency.

"The report demonstrates that several major brands are employing an impressive amount of resources to address social compliance in their supply chains, but that other popular brands are lagging," said Amy Galland, research director at **As You Sow**.

Major recommendations for companies highlighted in the report include putting more resources into continuous improvement and capacity building.

Clothing companies are also urged to integrate factory compliance performance into compensation packages for executives as well as analysing purchasing practices and committing more resources to improve practices.

"Global sourcing has sparked controversies over factory working conditions for more than a decade. We are pleased with the leadership shown by the top scorers in our survey, but more than 15 companies in this sector should be willing to publicly discuss how they are managing these issues," said Conrad MacKerron, senior program director at **As You Sow**.