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Sweatshop-Free? New Report Grades Levi's, Gap, and Wal-Mart's Supply Chain

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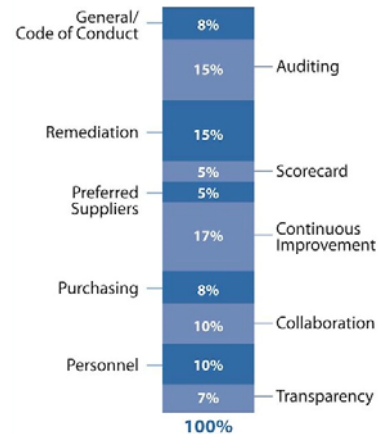
When it comes to [sweatshop-free](#) supply chains, does your favorite fashion brand make the grade?

More than a decade ago, in response to controversy sparked by sweatshop conditions in the U.S. companies' global supply chains, apparel brands adopted vendor codes of conduct to avoid risks. To date, it's been unclear which brands have actually adopted effective policies and programs to address the issue. A new report, released by corporate responsibility group

[As You Sow](#) reveals the apparel industry leaders in supply

chain compliance for fair working conditions, and the leaders just might surprise you...

The [As You Sow](#) report, called "Toward a Safe, Just Workplace: Apparel Supply Chain Compliance Programs," the first publicly-available analysis of its kind, provides a scorecard based on company programs, including factory auditing, remediation, continuous improvement, collaboration, company management accountability, and transparency. The diagram, below, shows how grades were determined by "weighted" standards.



The report is based on information gathered from a survey which was circulated to 33 of the largest U.S. apparel brands and retailers, 15 of which responded. According to survey results, many of the companies allocate substantial human and financial resources to ensure compliance with and implementation of codes of conduct. Participating companies include: Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., Target Corp., Nordstrom Inc., The Gap Inc., and Levi Strauss & Co. View their scores, below.

OVERALL SCORE	TOTAL SCORE	FINAL GRADE
Levi Strauss & Co	3.4	B+
Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.	3.3	B+
Gap Inc.	3.2	B
Hanesbrands Inc.	3.2	B
Nordstrom, Inc.	3.1	B
Gildan Activewear Inc.	3.0	B
Target Corporation	2.7	B-
J.C. Penny Company, Inc.	2.6	C+
American Eagle Outfitters, Inc.	2.3	C+
Columbia Sportswear Company	2.0	C
V.F. Corporation	1.9	C-
Under Armour, Inc.	1.9	C-
AnnTaylor Stores Corp.	1.9	C-
Liz Claiborne, Inc.	1.9	C-
Jones Apparel Group, Inc.	1.9	C-

Clearly Levi's, Gap, and Wal-Mart made the grade here, but overall key findings show: companies have publicly-available codes of conduct in place, the majority of the companies say that they have processes to follow-up on the findings of their audits and that they have remediation mechanisms in place, both positive results.

Areas that need improvement include: the further development and implementation of holding executives accountable for social compliance and increasing collaborations which is, according to the report, "a key tactic for improving conditions in apparel factories and in regions with less stringent rule of law."

Read the full report [here](#) (pdf) or view a [webinar at As You Sow](#), featuring speakers from Gap Inc., Levi's and the Fair Labor Association.